



INTERSECT FOR ABILITY

Intersect for Ability: Guiding Principles Consensus Statement

Need and Intent

There is no doubt that necessary advances in Illinois' system of care for individuals with developmental disabilities have been hindered by a number of factors including, but not limited to: 1) inadequate funding and fierce competition for rapidly shrinking resources; 2) lack of consistent standards of care; 3) an unstable and poorly trained workforce; and 4) a crisis management, survival mentality that prevents collaboration toward long-term solutions. Providers express frustration at a "heads down, fox hole" mentality and a focus on crisis management that allows little opportunity to work within or across organizations to address important issues that have enormous effects on everyday operations. In recent years, this frustration has resulted in development of networks designed to address many of the factors outlined above. Public and private funding sources are beginning to embrace these network models as an economically efficient way to address the systemic issues facing the field of developmental disabilities and as a mechanism to develop, disseminate and sustain quality programs.



The Coleman Foundation, The Hope Institute for Children and Families and a variety of DD agencies in the greater Chicago Metropolitan area have convened Intersect for Ability; a network whose members hold a common philosophy and a commitment to common impacts and outcomes. Network members engage in program evaluation, technical assistance, shared leadership, collaborative program development, engagement of varied funders and a variety of efficiencies designed to reduce costs and enhance quality.

Network Membership

The network provides services, support and collaboration opportunities between agencies in the Chicago metropolitan area. Along with The Hope Institute for Children and Families, which serves as the managing partner, the following charter members provide for program development and network leadership:

Barbara Olson Center of Hope
Clearbrook
Countryside Association
Easter Seals Metropolitan Chicago
Elim Christian Services
Helping Hand Center
Little Friends Center for Autism
Misericordia Heart of Mercy
PACTT Learning Center
Park Lawn Association
Seguin Services

Philosophy, Planned Impact and Targeted Outcomes

Intersect for Ability participants have identified a philosophy of service that focuses on assisting individuals with developmental disabilities achieve their unique potential, optimal independence, self-confidence, sense of personal accomplishment and highest quality of life through coordinated action toward common outcomes including:

1. Employment: Our culture is replete with proverbs, axioms, and entire encyclicals extolling the virtue of work. Most people will acknowledge that work provides multiple benefits and has multiple meanings. Adults with developmental disabilities share this view of work—a good job is usually ranked in the top two on any personal goal list. Intersect for Ability understands the value of work and seeks to develop programs and services that expand opportunities for meaningful employment for individuals with disabilities.

Meaning in employment can be derived from:

- a. Intellectual and physical challenge
- b. Accomplishment
- c. Shared experience
- d. Identification with a group
- e. Independence
- f. A reciprocal relationship to the community
- g. Fair compensation
- h. Purposeful activity

Intersect for Ability has identified meaningful employment as a key outcome for the Network. Employment programs should result in work that meets the following basic criteria:

- a. **Client-centered:** Employment and enrichment activities that acknowledge and build upon client strengths and interests and provide a work environment that supports clients in areas of weakness. Client-centered employment provides opportunities for increased independence, skill and knowledge development and a sense of meaning and purpose (as defined by the individual).
- b. **Community-based:** Employment and enrichment activities based on individual assessments and meet individual needs; provides for maximum client-community interface. Community-based employment is employment that affords enrichment for the client and the community. Clients participating in community-based employment will experience an expanded field of interaction and will be able to see their impact on the larger community. *Macmillan and Chavis (1986) identified four components necessary to achieve a “sense of community” 1) membership; 2) influence; 3) integration and fulfillment of needs; and 4) shared emotional connection. Intersect for Ability seeks to promote employment opportunities that meet this definition of community for each individual.

2. Staff Training & Retention: The demand for qualified professionals in the developmental disabilities field is high. As recent as January 2006, this need was identified through a report to Congress from the Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, in consultation with the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, the Office of Disability, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services; the Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration; and the Department of Education’s National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research.

3. Program Evaluation: Agencies will be responsible for updating and maintaining existing program evaluation materials that were created during the 2010 grant cycle and to work with Managing Partner, Outcome Committee, Program Evaluator and collaborative partners to develop basic structures for evaluation and reporting on new programs. Agencies will identify and equip appropriate staff to conduct regular program evaluation activities, including participation in the outcome committee, response to repeated measures to assess network growth and stability, and maintenance of data collection forms, processes and procedures. Program evaluation processes and procedures will be reviewed by the Grantor. Program evaluation activities will include timely submission of accurate data through standard formats and coordination of regular reports per guidelines of the Grantor. Reports will also be compiled through the use of developed data collection procedures on a monthly and specified reporting timeline.

- a. All data is to be submitted in real time via standard procedures developed by the Managing Partner.
- b. For the purpose of data collection, a month is defined as being from the first to the last day of a calendar month.
- c. For the purposes of the network, reporting timelines are defined as:
 - i. September 1, 2010—November 30, 2010
 - ii. December 1, 2010—March 31, 2011
 - iii. April 1, 2011—June 30, 2011
 - iv. July 1, 2011—August 31, 2011
- d. Regular reports will be published to Network Partners for use in the Outcome Committee meetings, ensuring the achievement of network outcomes.
 - i. Monthly Reports will be published on the 15th of the month following the prior month’s end.
 - ii. Reports will be published by the Managing Partner on the 30th of the month following the previous reporting timeline’s end.

5. Technical Assistance: Identification and implementation of necessary technical assistance at individual agency and Network levels.

6. Network Development: Agencies will participate in developing the Network through network leadership and governance and through standard communication activities. It is the goal of the network to support growth and quality in its member agencies and to create products and services that can be shared, resulting in considerable cost savings. To that end, all inventions, created works and subject data (in aggregate) produced through Network activities including but not limited to curricula, clinical programs, data systems, and assessments will be made freely available to any and all Network members, the Managing Partner and the Grantor.

Agency to Grantor: Relationships between participants and the Grantor assume collaborative work with other Network agencies and the Managing Partner as outlined above. Agencies receiving funding will adhere to requirements as stated in the Grant Agreement. Grantor and/or Managing Partner will engage in activities and projects to communicate and promote the work of Intersect for Ability. Agencies will actively support these efforts. Additionally, agencies will communicate and promote Intersect for Ability through publicity and/or press releases which advance the goals of the program and enhance the possibilities of additional support by other funding sources.

Secondary: Secondary partners are not responsible for execution of the full proposal, but are responsible to allocate staff and resources to provide specific services and/or products to advance the overall objectives. The roles and responsibilities of secondary partners are clearly defined in the proposal and through Memorandums of Understanding between agencies which are regarded by Grantor as essential elements of proposed programs.

Full: Full partners share equal responsibility for the execution of the proposed program. Roles and responsibilities of each partner are defined in the proposal and through Memorandums of Understanding between agencies which are regarded by Grantor as essential elements of proposed programs.

Agency to Managing Partner: Relationships between participating agencies and the Managing Partner are defined through guiding principles developed by the Intersect for Ability Network Council and this Addendum. Participating agencies agree to work with the Managing Partner to accomplish the following:

1. Network Leadership: Agencies will provide consistent, appropriate representation to the Network Council and to the Outcome Committees.

a. Network Council

i. Membership composed of:

1. One Administrative or Executive staff member from each identified Network Agency
2. Managing Partner (The Hope Institute for Children and Families)
3. The Coleman Foundation

ii. Meetings to be held monthly at individual Agency sites

iii. Assignments, Roles & Responsibilities as defined by the Council

b. Outcome Committees

i. Membership composed of one participant per agency, with consideration given to ensure representation from each of the following categories:

1. Parents
2. Direct Support Staff
3. Programmatic Staff

ii. Meet quarterly to review monthly & quarterly evaluation reports

iii. Assignments, Roles & Responsibilities

1. Identify representative to report to Executive Council, ensuring mid-course corrections can occur, resulting in better outcomes network-wide

2. Outreach: Agencies will coordinate with Managing Partner and Grantor to conduct outreach activities for the purpose of building Intersect for Ability and improving services in the region. Outreach, conducted through an annual conference, monthly Executive Network Council meetings, quarterly Outcome Committee meetings and a variety of communication tools will include engagement of funders, community supports and new agency participants.

In this report, it is made evident that higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment reduce turnover and lower recruitment and hiring costs.

Consistent with Intersect for Ability's focus on meaningful employment, Network agencies support staff training and retention initiatives that recognize and appropriately address staff strengths and weaknesses including the interpersonal and emotional skills necessary to provide high quality care to individuals with developmental disabilities. Staff training and retention programs supported by the Network will be:

a. Staff/Client centered: Staff initiatives will assess, enhance and utilize staff strengths to increase quality of work, professional growth, and client outcomes. Staff initiatives will include staff supports and activities that recognize and address the difficulties and joys inherent in working with individuals with developmental disabilities.

b. Community-based: Staff initiatives will provide opportunities for employees to interface with others in the agency and with the larger community of developmental disabilities workers. Through their work, staff will experience a "sense of community" including: 1) membership; 2) influence; 3) integration and fulfillment of needs; and 4) shared emotional connection (Macmillan and Chavis, 1986).

3. Life-Stage Transitions: Transition and continuous development are integral to life. This fact is evident in both everyday and once in a lifetime celebrations such as: birthdays, visits from the tooth fairy, graduations, first dates, promotional ceremonies, engagements, weddings, christenings, retirement parties, and funerals. The celebrations are our way of marking our progress and honoring the very real work that allows each of us to move forward. Intersect for Ability will promote the celebration of life-stage transitions for persons with disabilities and will provide programs, services and experiences that honor and support the life-stage transitions of persons with developmental disabilities.

A quick review of Erik Erikson's Developmental Stages is all it takes to realize that individuals with developmental disabilities are not so different from their typical peers. Erikson's model, which outlines eight core conflicts and emerging strengths, provides a general direction for Intersect for Ability's transition programs. Intersect for Ability transition programs will work proactively to ensure that persons with disabilities have the necessary experiences and supports to allow successful resolutions of the developmental stages outlined by Erikson resulting in:

a. An appropriate and productive balance of independence and dependence upon others (Erikson Conflict: Trust vs. Mistrust, Emerging Strength: Hope).

b. The ability and desire to act appropriately in accord with ones needs and the needs and demands of the larger community without undue fear of censure and with no more than "reasonable" self doubt. (Erikson Conflict: Autonomy vs. doubt, Emerging Strength: Will).

c. The ability, desire and opportunity to engage in purposeful action. (Erikson Conflict: Initiative vs. guilt, Emerging Strength: Purpose)

d. The ability, desire and opportunity to work toward and meet clear goals and appropriate goals. (Erikson Conflict: Industry vs. Inferiority, Emerging Strength: Competence).

e. The ability to determine and act upon beliefs, preferences, and individual plans. (Erikson Conflict: Identity vs. Role Confusion, Emerging Strength: Fidelity to a particular ideology and to a stable, cohesive view of self).

- f. The ability, desire and opportunity to align oneself with an intimate other. (Erikson Conflict: Intimacy vs. Isolation, Emerging Strength: Love).
- g. The ability, desire and opportunity to create a “product” that transcends oneself. (Erikson Conflict: Generativity vs. Stagnation, Emerging Strength: Devotion).
- h. The ability to maintain one’s identity, hope, meaning and engagement with others in the face of changes in individual capacities and/or opportunities. (Erikson Conflict: Integrity vs. Despair, Emerging Strength: Wisdom).

Benefits to Network Membership

There are many benefits gained from network membership. Through increased communication and trading of individual “best practices,” member agencies are able to improve the quality and quantity of their services. Through this quality increase, which stems from network membership, the well being and care of staff, clients and family is ultimately increased. Other benefits from the network approach include:

- Ability to replicate innovative programs across member agencies
- Greater utilization of resources and collaborative efforts to develop new resources (i.e. manuals, training expertise)
- Improved quality of initial and on-going program development as an outcome of network program collaboration
- Ease of implementation of new and expanded programs
- Cost reductions and efficiencies through collaborative efforts
- Identification of new funding sources, especially those not available to individual agencies

Network Structure

Intersect for Ability is comprised of participating agencies, a Managing Partner and Grantors working collaboratively under a shared intent and philosophy to identify common outcomes and to develop, implement, evaluate and share innovative programs. Intersect for Ability is led by a Leadership Structure including a Network Council and specific Outcome Committees (see attached). This leadership structure comprises the responsible decision-making body for the network.

The network membership recognizes that roles within the network will grow and change over time. A facet of this evolution involves an annual evaluation of the network; this will lead to further programmatic reviews and annual agency recommitment to the mission and goals of the network. In the future, this may also include the identification and involvement of new network partners.

It is evident that role of the Managing Partner is malleable, due in part to the ever-changing nature of the network. This is also due to expected annual funding fluctuations. In an effort to maintain consistency through change, the roles and responsibilities to and of the managing partner will be evaluated on an annual basis. Modifications to support the network will be made on an as-needed basis.

Intersect for Ability Participation Agreement

Intersect for Ability is a network of agencies initially convened by The Coleman Foundation for the purpose of increasing the quality and sustainability of services for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families and controlling related costs through collaboration with coordinated agency partners. The Coleman Foundation has identified The Hope Institute for Children and Families as the Managing Partner. The Hope Institute for Children and Families is charged with the responsibility of developing the network, including, but not limited to, program evaluation, technical assistance and network leadership. Network members are linked by their commitment to develop and implement programs to support common, agreed upon outcomes. Network agencies will work in collaboration with identified partners (through the relationships outlined below, through information sharing and through specific activities as described or referenced in grant agreements) to advance the activities and outcomes identified through the Intersect for Ability Network leadership activities.

Network relationships include: 1) Agency-to-Agency relationships between participating agencies; 2) Agency-to-Managing Partner relationships between participating agencies and the Managing Partner (Hope Institute for Children and Families); and 3) Agency-to-Grantor relationships between participating agencies and the Grantor.

Agency to Agency: Relationships between agencies participating in Intersect for Ability are defined through collaborative grants approved for funding; inter-agency agreements developed by specific agencies and through guiding principles developed by the Intersect for Ability Network Council. Agency collaborations within the Network have agreed to operate at one or all of the following levels on each approved proposal, each of which will be evaluated as part of program and network evaluation:

Advisory¹: While network agencies may have no specific agency involvement with a grant they will still be involved in advising and reviewing outcomes through their membership on the Network Council and/or Outcome Committee.

Observation¹: Network agencies may participate via direct observation and/or report reviews. Agencies participating at an observational level will dedicate a minimal level of resources with the goal of using observation and report review to inform decisions regarding future participation at a more advanced level.

Shadow: Shadow partnership assumes an interest in replicating a program in the future, staffing and resources adequate to minimal shadow activities, relevance and consistency with agency priorities. Agencies participating at the shadow level will allocate staff and resources to participate in training, consultation, and development activities. Shadow participation may range from training attendance to intensive resource development to support replication.

¹ Although the Network is designed to increase funding and support for agency activities that advance Network outcomes, participation in Intersect for Ability is not limited to agencies who receive funding through The Coleman Foundation. Agencies will not be required to implement unfunded programs, but will be asked to support the network outcomes through participation in Network leadership activities regardless of funding status.