

Role of the Family in Ratings Discussions

The family plays several important roles in Virginia's System for Determination of Child Progress, including team member, child information provider, rating participant and customer.

Team Member: Just as families are members of IFSP teams, they are critical to the assessment team. DEC Recommended Practices (2005) tell us "Early childhood assessment is a flexible, collaborative decision-making process in which teams of parents and professionals repeatedly revise their judgments and reach consensus..."

Information Provider: Child Indicator Summary Form (CISF) ratings rely on information about a child's functioning across situations and settings. Parent input is crucial: family members see the child in situations that professionals do not. The rest of the team will need to learn what family members know about the child- what the child does at home, at grandma's house, in the grocery store, etc.

Participant in CISF Rating Discussions: As members of the IFSP team, families are natural participants in the CISF rating discussion. Their role in the rating is child expert, while other members of the team will know child development and the skills and behaviors expected at various age levels.

Customer: Professionals need to be able to explain why the rating is being done and what it means.