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ABSTRACT

This digest summarizes the underlying structure, concepts, and ideology of the Project NEXUS manual, "A Community Approach to an Integrated Service System" (CAISS). Project NEXUS is a 3-year project charged with the development and field-testing of a technical assistance manual to aid communities in the development and/or improvement of service delivery to children with disabilities and chronic illnesses, from birth to 3 years of age, and their families. The philosophy of Project NEXUS is that a community, working together, has the responsibility and the resources to provide such services, and by doing so the entire community benefits. Section I discusses systems in the context of a family-community systems model, encompassing family, community, service delivery system, and legislation. Section II describes how to foster an alliance of service providers, parents, citizens-at-large, and advocates through the development of a CAISS committee. Section III focuses on possible actions the committee might take to deal with the community's needs. The digest is not intended for implementation purposes; persons wishing to implement the process should refer to the manual in its entirety. (JDD)

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**A COMMUNITY APPROACH
TO AN INTEGRATED SERVICE SYSTEM:
A DIGEST**

by
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Preface:

This is a digest of the Project Nexus manual A Community Approach to an Integrated Service System. The manual is designed to aid communities in the development and/or improvement of service delivery for children with disabilities and chronic illnesses, ages birth to three, and their families. The digest is written as a brief summary of the contents of the manual. It is intended to provide interested persons with information regarding the process. This digest should not be used for implementation purposes. Persons wishing to implement the process should refer to the manual in its entirety. The manual will be available through Paul Brookes Publishing Co. in 1988. For a copy, please call 1-800-638-3775 and ask for Melissa Behm, or write

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OVERVIEW

A COMMUNITY APPROACH TO AN INTEGRATED SERVICE SYSTEM

Project Nexus is a three year project charged with the development and field-testing of a technical assistance manual to help communities create a plan for the improvement of service delivery to children who are disabled and chronically ill, ages birth to three, and their families.

Although the Project Nexus manual was not specifically developed to aid in the implementation of the recent federal initiative, Public Law 99-457, the new programs within the law emphasize comprehensive services for young children through coordination of the various service systems at the state and local levels, and they will necessitate coordination between the local and state systems, as well as within the community.

The philosophy of Project Nexus is that a community, working together, has the responsibility and the resources to provide or improve the delivery of services to children who are disabled or chronically ill and their families, and by doing so the entire community benefits. We are asking communities to provide continuity in the care of the needs of many families over long periods of time, and child advocacy in the coordination, support, and provision of needed services.

The technical assistance manual provides a process for the development of a working committee to look at a community's needs and resources and then to develop a plan of action. We call our committee a CAISS committee, an acronym taken from the manual's title, **A Community Approach to an Integrated Service System**. The **Community** in CAISS refers to the essence of the community as a unified body of individuals with common interests who live together in a particular area. **Approach** is the plan you develop for improving services in the community. **Integrated** means that agencies and others work together. **Service** stands for the programs and other assistance that are available or will be made available. **System** is the way in which the families relate to agencies, agencies relate to other agencies, and finally, the way in which all of them relate to the community as a whole. We believe if you begin to think of families in relation to a CAISS and a CAISS in relationship to families, you will have begun the first critical step to planning the improvement of the service delivery system in your community.

The procedures in the manual allow each community to plan for the services in their area, and to begin to develop them in a way that takes into consideration the community's resources. This

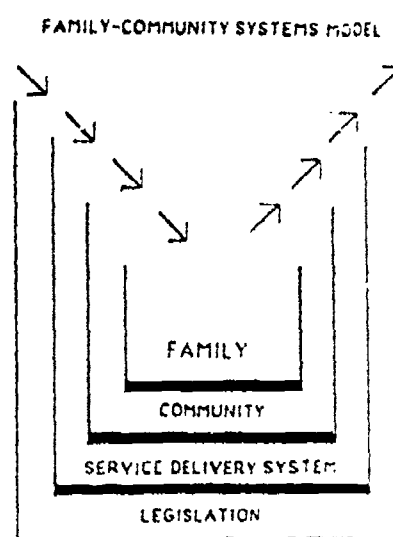
manual has been field-tested with individuals and with committees successfully implementing the process. Individuals who might use the manual are parents, physicians, educators, health care providers, agency administrators, and interested citizens. It has also been successfully implemented in many different types of communities ranging from the ghetto community in one of our largest cities to a very small rural community.

The manual is divided into four sections. Section I: Systems, provides the necessary background information to begin to implement a CAISS in your community. Section II: Make Your CAISS, is the beginning of the step-by-step procedures for improving services. Section III: The Future Development of Your CAISS, addresses the variety of issues that will face the CAISS Committee. Section IV contains blank copies of all the worksheets in the manual. Portions of the procedures are outlined in specific steps, other portions provide suggested options. Each section is followed by a bibliography of additional readings on the subjects addressed in the section and a number of appendices containing activities pertinent to the process.

This digest is intended to provide interested persons with information regarding the process the manual describes. Although this digest is not intended to be used to implement this process, we have attempted to reproduce the underlying structure, concepts, and ideology of the manual. Those persons desiring to implement the process in their community should refer to the manual in its entirety.

SECTION I: SYSTEMS

FAMILIES depend on their communities to provide services for themselves and their children. This section addresses the relationship between FAMILIES, communities, and services using the FAMILY-COMMUNITY SYSTEMS MODEL. The MODEL provides a comprehensive picture of the interrelationship between people within and between systems, and identifies the importance of communication, coordination, and collaboration of service efforts for the common purpose of helping FAMILIES. The concepts of the MODEL are illustrated below:



The FAMILY is represented in the center box because FAMILIES are the focus of the manual. The community, represented in the second box, includes individuals who are closest to and have direct contact with FAMILIES. The community develops resources to meet the needs of its citizens, including FAMILIES. The balance of resources are provided by the local, state, and federal level service delivery systems, represented in the third box. The purpose of these systems is to distribute resources to communities. The service delivery system is guided by legislation, represented by the fourth box. The boxes representing the four components of this model are open at the top to illustrate that there is an ongoing relationship between FAMILIES, the community, the service delivery system, and legislation.

This FAMILY-COMMUNITY SYSTEMS MODEL is the organizing framework for the chapters in Section I. The five chapters provide background information on FAMILIES and they describe how the service delivery system operates in the community. The chapters also provide a means for identifying questions and issues that may need to be addressed, and can serve as a guide for

establishing a working philosophy for a community's project to improve service delivery to children who are disabled and their FAMILIES.

The focus of Chapter 1 is THE FAMILY just as it is the focal point of the entire manual. We believe FAMILIES are the most important institutions in our society. The FAMILIES you are particularly concerned about have special needs because they have a child with a disability.

FAMILIES in your community have different structures which can influence how they react to their child's disability and the needs they have. Single parents raising their children alone or married adults raising children from previous marriages are examples of different FAMILY structures.

Other differences that influence FAMILY'S reactions and needs are the nature of their child's disability or illness, the FAMILY characteristics, and the personal traits of FAMILY members. The nature of the child's disability may require extensive home care thus taxing a FAMILY'S time, energy, and finances. A FAMILY may live on the "fringes" of their community, isolated from information or accessible services. Individual FAMILY characteristics and personal traits may influence how they react to disability or illness, the extent of their needs, and how they go about meeting those needs.

Each of these aspects of FAMILIES is important to consider as you plan for their various service needs. Knowing how these aspects can affect FAMILIES helps identify important issues that may need to be addressed by your community. The degree to which these issues affect individual FAMILIES depends on the resources available in the community to help meet their needs.

It is not necessary or possible for you and others to know all the individual differences among the FAMILIES in your community. The important point to remember is that FAMILIES have unique characteristics that affect their reactions and their needs. Consider the issues related to FAMILIES when you begin developing plans in your community for meeting their needs.

Chapter 2 provides background information about communities. The birth of a child with a disability is a critical event in the life of a FAMILY. In times of crisis, we turn to those closest to us for support, comfort, and assistance. The community is made up of individuals who are closest to the FAMILY, including relatives, neighbors, friends, service providers, and interested

community members. Considering the relationship between FAMILIES and the community can help to identify important issues such as how able FAMILY members are to communicate with each other and with their relatives, friends, and neighbors. They may, or may not, believe that others care for them and can be trusted and helpful.

The main point here is that the extent to which the community can meet the needs of a FAMILY depends not only on the FAMILY'S characteristics and personal traits, but also on the characteristics of the community in which the FAMILY lives. In the FAMILY-COMMUNITY SYSTEMS MODEL, the community is the closest to the FAMILY and brings their needs to the attention of the service delivery system and legislators. This is an important factor, because it is the citizens of the community to whom the service delivery system and the legislators are ultimately accountable.

The community also includes individuals who are referred to as "professionals." FAMILIES depend on professionals to provide many of the services needed by their children. Although agencies, institutions, and organizations are administrative structures that exist to link individual professionals and services with the FAMILIES who need them, the Model emphasizes individuals rather than the administrative structures. This emphasis is placed on individuals because administrative structures are impersonal, "man-made" creations. The individuals who administer and staff these structures, however, are citizens of the community and can provide the "human factor" that is necessary to make decisions and take action.

There are a number of issues associated with service providers and administrators that you are likely to encounter in your community. Service providers and administrators are often caught between the community and the service delivery system creating barriers that prevent them from meeting the needs of FAMILIES. For example, they may not know when they are serving the same children and FAMILIES or if they are providing identical or similar services in a community. The decisions made and the actions taken by these individuals are often determined by the structure of the system itself, rather than by their own preferences. You will need to be aware of these barriers as you go about getting services to FAMILIES in your community.

Information about the service delivery system is provided in Chapter 3 of the manual. The local, state, and federal levels of the service delivery system are the furthest from direct contact with FAMILIES, but they have a major influence on the types and amounts of services available to

FAMILIES in your community. A system is a means of organizing a number of different parts to accomplish a complex task. The service delivery system is organized into various agencies or programs that have specific roles in accomplishing the complex task of distributing resources.

Three characteristics of the service delivery system are: network, missions, and accountability. Agencies, institutions, and organizations that provide services are members of the service delivery system. They each carry out a particular function in the system's overall operation. They are independent links forming a chain of services referred to as a "network." Although there are three levels of the service delivery system--local, state, and federal--there is one system. There are issues such as disagreements about how certain policies should be implemented, that can exist at all three levels of the service delivery system. The outcome is most detrimental at the local level, however, where FAMILIES and service providers attempt to pull together the whole in order to address the needs of the community. Ultimately, lack of coordination, cooperation, and communication between members of the service delivery system network affects FAMILIES. One of your tasks will be to address these issues so the system can more effectively serve FAMILIES in your community. The promotion of coordination, cooperation, and communication will be an important aspect of your efforts to provide integrated and comprehensive services.

The service delivery system also has a mission. Its mission as it affects FAMILIES in your community is to deliver services to these FAMILIES. The members of the network are independent links in the system chain, and though they share a common mission, the way that mission is carried out is governed by the mandates, policies and procedures, eligibility criteria, and funding sources of each member agency or organization.

In addition, each agency, institution, and organization that make up the service delivery system is responsible for carrying out their functions in prescribed ways (i.e., they must be accountable for the funds they receive, the decisions they make, and the services they provide). They must perform their duties under the systems prescribed mandates, policies, and procedures. These characteristics create certain "systems issues" that you are likely to encounter. Therefore it is important that you become familiar with the mandates, policies, procedures, eligibility criteria, and funding sources of the agencies, institutions, and organizations that provide services to FAMILIES in your community.

This need to be familiar with policy related to community services is addressed in Chapter 4. The process of protecting the rights and interests of citizens, and meeting their needs often begins at the federal or state level. The provision of local services may be guided by the policies and guidelines developed by umbrella agencies or "systems" within state and federal governments. Legislation and policy are continually being formulated and modified at the state and federal levels, with each addition or change having a direct affect on local services to FAMILIES. Keeping up with changes and future planning efforts that occur beyond the community is difficult, but it is essential for coordination and implementation of local services.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of state and federal laws that guide the development and implementation of services to FAMILIES within the community. These laws are at the heart of the relationships between federal, state, and local service systems described previously, and therefore direct the types of services that FAMILIES receive. In addition to providing background information on the final level of the FAMILY-COMMUNITY SYSTEMS MODEL, the chapter also serves as a resource for communities as they begin to learn about their local service system and FAMILIES. Specifically, the chapter provides explanations of common terminology related to federal and state legislation and information on the major federal and state laws and policies that affect community-based services to young children and their FAMILIES. It provides information about the process through which federal laws are implemented, various types of federal and state assistance available, and state-by-state information regarding agencies that are responsible for services to the FAMILIES.

A key to community planning and service provision is the development of ongoing, cooperative ties with individuals, agencies, and organizations in other communities and at the state level. Communication is the major link between all parts of the service system and the vehicle for service coordination efforts that will benefit both providers and FAMILIES.

The final chapter in the section on Systems deals with promoting collaboration between state and local service systems. The intent of federal and state legislation is to protect and extend rights to FAMILIES--to provide assistance to people at the community level. The actual process of implementing laws, however, is often fraught with difficulties, especially when policies do not "fit" neatly within the structures established at the community level.

To be maximally effective, many of the programs established under state and federal laws require the coordinated efforts of all individuals who share the common goal of helping FAMILIES. The establishment of local level planning committees such as the manual describes is one component of the coordination process. Of equal importance to program coordination is the development of communication between community and state service systems. Chapter 5 discusses some practical ideas about how your community can initiate this process and develop a system of resources at the state level. The information for this chapter was derived from a telephone survey of state early childhood coordinators. The respondents identified some common barriers to communication between state and community service systems, as well as factors that promote communication. They emphasized the benefits of collaboration, both for service providers and FAMILIES.

Although there are no easy ways to break down barriers to communication, communities can play a critical role in enhancing relationships with the state system. It may be necessary for your community to take the first step. Efforts must be made by individuals within state and community service systems if true collaboration is to occur.

The manual contains information about what your community can expect from the state system and what the state system expects from communities. It is important to establish a relationship with the state representatives to identify the many people at the state level who are concerned with services for young children and their FAMILIES. You will want to promote interactions with those individuals who are genuinely concerned about community issues and who can provide direct assistance when needed. Other individuals who may not necessarily have the ability to interact directly with your community should be kept informed of local activities.

As your community becomes involved in planning and services coordination, the key to collaboration is communication. Communities can find a wealth of resources within the state system, and state representatives have the need for community input and support.

SECTION II: MAKE YOUR CAISS

There has been a great deal of progress at federal and state levels over the last few years in providing services to young children with special needs and their families. However, communities still need to coordinate existing services and advocate for new, needed services. Regardless of federal and state guidelines or mandates, the community is ultimately responsible for pulling together the various aspects of the systems discussed previously in such a way as to benefit FAMILIES.

Section II is about how to foster an alliance of service providers, parents, citizens-at-large, and advocates (all the people in the systems) through the development of a Community Approach to an Integrated Service System, a "CAISS" committee. The process described in the manual involves putting together a core group, the CAISS committee, who will assemble at an initial community meeting to begin to identify community needs and resources. The ultimate responsibility of the CAISS committee is to take into account the FAMILY-COMMUNITY SYSTEMS MODEL and to design and implement an integrated, comprehensive service delivery system that will enable FAMILIES to have most of their needs met within their own community.

Chapter 6 begins the nitty-gritty of developing a plan for improving the service delivery system. The work ahead requires time, and it requires people. The first step is to find a nucleus group that is willing to help you move forward. This group will be the steering committee whose job it will be to establish the initial community CAISS meeting.

In order to have the community part of a CAISS, the steering committee will need to decide what "local community" means for their purposes. For example, a health department may serve people across county lines, whereas a school district's boundaries may be the city limits. "Local community" may mean something different to each of these groups, yet issues for FAMILIES cross multiple services and, therefore, multiple systems. This is simply an informal process to help the steering committee begin locating the individuals they will need to make a CAISS become a reality in the community. A worksheet is provided in the manual to help you define your local community.

The steering committee will need to identify all the people in the community who are potential members of the CAISS committee. These community people are referred to in the manual as

"movers and shakers" because of their knowledge about FAMILIES, their knowledge about disabilities, or their influential positions in the community. You will want representatives from the family system (parents, grandparents, siblings, or guardians), the community system (persons involved with civic organizations, businesses, and especially those who have respect and influence in the community), the service system (service providers) and advocates (persons involved in advocacy organizations). It is very important to include representatives from each category--parents, professionals, and citizens-at-large--as each group has specific and unique qualities to bring to the efforts of the group as a whole. It is also a good idea to include elected or appointed government officials because these people are responsible to the citizens for much of the effectiveness of the service delivery system.

Once the key people who need to attend the initial CAISS community meeting have been identified, you will be ready to plan the meeting and invite the participants. Chapter 7 describes this meeting--how to set it up and what will occur. The success of this first meeting is a critical factor in the success of the CAISS.

In order for all the participants to continue to work together, the outcome of the first meeting should be an understanding of the FAMILY-COMMUNITY SYSTEMS MODEL as it relates to your community's service delivery system. How is the system in your community working for FAMILIES? Specifically, by the end of the first meeting, there needs to be a list of issues identified by all the participants and a plan to begin to look at these issues. The manual describes several steps to accomplish this task.

The steering committee will be responsible for setting a goal for the initial meeting. For example, the goal might be to establish a Community Approach to an Integrated Service System (CAISS) committee in order to make the existing service delivery system work for the maximum benefit of young children with disabling conditions and their FAMILIES. Also, it will be the responsibility of the steering committee to plan the logistics of the meeting such as when will the meeting be and where will it be held. Finally, they must plan the agenda. When you begin to invite people to the first CAISS meeting, you will need to have a clear idea of the agenda. They will want to know exactly what they are being invited to.

Several things critical to the success of your efforts should occur at the first CAISS meeting. The participants must understand the effect of the service delivery system on the FAMILY. Unless

the relationship between all systems and FAMILIES is understood, it is unlikely the service delivery system can be responsive to FAMILIES. Care should be taken to select a facilitator that will be able to lead individuals through activities that eventually will allow the group to see themselves as a cohesive whole whose diversity in background and perspectives, yet common concerns, are necessary for a CAISS.

The manual offers several ways to achieve participant understanding of the effects of the service delivery system on FAMILIES. For example, an exercise called A Shoes Test, which involves the participants being asked to "walk in the shoes" of a FAMILY of a child with a disability is provided. The complete Shoes Test, including story and facilitator instructions, can be found in the appendices of Section II of the manual.

The participants must also understand the issues in their community. It is critical that the issues be brought down from the theoretical level to specific issues in your community. This is the crux of the first meeting. In many ways it is the true "starting point" of a CAISS. The identification of issues helps build a sense of solidarity, a sense that "we are all in this together," as well as provide a reason to move forward.

The manual suggests an activity called "Proud and Sorry" as a way to accomplish this objective. In small groups, the participants generate "Proud and Sorry" lists regarding the current delivery system by identifying the services, programs, and systems issues for which they are "proud" and those for which they are "sorry." After reviewing the list, the group as a whole determines the areas that they feel need to be addressed first. At the end of this activity, the participants will know something about resources available in their community, needs in the community, and have a general consensus on the priorities on which they will concentrate. The instructions for the Proud and Sorry activity are also found in the manual's appendices.

This CAISS meeting needs to be the community's meeting. The CAISS committee serves as a core group whose actions represent the intention of the whole community. The participants of this meeting, by their very attendance, have shown interest and concern for the FAMILY. You will want your meeting to end with a sense of purpose, a feeling that there are solvable issues to work on, and that someone is willing to take a leadership role.

As much of the future of the CAISS committee depends on the ability of the group to get along and work together, the final chapter in Section II of the manual deals with the problem-solving process of the CAISS committee and the many factors that influence that process. There is a discussion of the stages a group moves through and some specific suggestions as to how the group can monitor its progress. The manual supplies an Organization Dimensions Scale, a team process evaluation tool that can be used to monitor areas that affect the decision-making process. This is an important component of the total process of making the improvements in the service system for FAMILIES, because people will make the improvements. The ability of these people to work together as a CAISS team will be critical to achieving the goal of improved services.

SECTION III: THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR CAISS

Once you have determined the members of a CAISS committee, held your initial community CAISS meeting, and, through some type of activity, established a preliminary list of needs in your community, the question becomes, where do you go from here?

Section III of the manual deals with the future of the CAISS committee. It provides a description of possible actions the committee might take to become a functioning body, able to take positive steps toward dealing with the needs that have been identified in the initial community CAISS meeting and those needs that will continue to be identified as the committee evolves. The role of the CAISS committee from this point involves the following:

1. Study the issues.
2. Gather more information.
3. Set priorities regarding FAMILY needs and the delivery of services.
4. Design an action plan to meet those priorities.
5. Facilitate the implementation of the action plan.

Chapter 9 begins by helping to define the function of the CAISS committee and establishing an effective structure. Developing a group's organizational structure and procedural guidelines is a critical step in any group process. The CAISS committee can function in various ways. The group as a whole should decide which way, or ways, will be most helpful both to achieve the needs that have been identified and to allow the members to serve in the best ways they can.

You will begin by clearly defining the group's focal point to provide overall scope and direction to your efforts as a group and help you decide in what capacity the group will function. This involves establishing an overall mission statement and a planning goal for the group. This mission statement, the broad purpose of your entire effort, may change as the group proceeds.

There are various ways the committee might function. For example, your committee may choose to function as a governing/advisory board that guides and directs policy decisions, as coordinating case managers attempting to integrate the various systems providing services to FAMILIES, or as the actual facilitator of the developed plan of action. You may choose to function in a single capacity or in several. The committee should decide which way or ways will best serve the needs of the community.

Various aspects of member commitment should also be addressed by the committee. These include time, money, resources, and decision-making authority. Another decision will involve commitment of agency or business resources and personnel to the group. Finally, the group will need a commitment regarding the decision-making authority of the various members. If decisions are to be made, it is critical that members have the authority, within reason, to move on an issue without having to seek outside approval.

In addition to determining how the CAISS committee will function, the group will need to deal with the overall committee structure. This would include the size of the committee, meeting times and places, and formal vs. informal structure in regard to officer selection, method of voting, the general framework of the agenda, elective action requirements, etc.

Several other items should be considered relative to the overall function of your CAISS committee. The group should keep written documents to prevent misunderstandings and lend stability to the group's on-going activities. You should disseminate information to committee members and other individuals who should be kept abreast of the committee's actions and also provide information to the public to make them aware of your activities. Each meeting should have an established format to allow for discussion as to why they are there, time to talk about FAMILIES, and time to learn about each other. Finally, inservice training could have a major impact on how committee members function both as a group and in their individual capacities of serving or raising children.

During the initial community CAISS meeting the group participated in an activity designed to identify the services or programs in your community of which you are "proud" and those for which you are "sorry." Chapter 9 of the manual takes this activity one step further to determine which need or needs the committee should gather further information on in preparation for the development of an action plan. A worksheet is provided in the manual to structure this activity for the group.

This step in the process is not designed to find solutions, but simply to "brainstorm" to further define a particular need and to identify the information that should be gathered regarding it. A particular priority topic is assigned to a task force for further exploration. Possible obstacles one might face in attempting to address the need, the information one needs about the topic, where that information might be found, and existing and potential resources are also listed.

Once the brainstorming is done, the task force will report the group's findings to the committee. It will then be the responsibility of the committee as a whole to decide--based on this further definition of the priority--whether it is one on which to concentrate further.

The identification of priority issues related to community services for FAMILIES is the first crucial step in the planning process. Before your CAISS committee can decide if it will act on one or more of these issues, however, more information will be needed about each one. The process described in Chapter 10 of the manual yields a picture of the "status quo" of each issue--the who, how, and why--and a broader understanding of how individuals are affected by the identified problems.

The chapter describes several types of information that your committee may want or need to consider as they examine each issue, and provides suggestions as to where the information can be located. A Summarization Worksheet is provided in the manual to help summarize the information in a clear and concise manner so it can be easily used in the development of an action plan.

There is no one system for determining the types of information your committee should collect because each issue will raise a different set of questions that need to be addressed. Nor is there one source that can provide you with all of the information you need. The manual suggests that information regarding the target population (who does this issue affect) may be helpful. This information can be gathered using a survey form such as the Resource Analysis Survey devised to collect information related to the issues identified by your committee. This form can be found in the appendices of Section III.

A resource analysis can provide you with knowledge about the current system of services for FAMILIES and can be used to obtain policy, population, collaboration, and service issue information. Be certain to consider as resources not only all formal services available to FAMILIES, but those services such as city art and recreational activities for young children which are available to all community members. The breadth and depth of a resource analysis must be determined by the committee and should adhere to the stated goal for gathering service information.

Although your committee has identified one or more concerns related to services for FAMILIES, the views of the committee members may not reflect those of parents, service

providers, and others who were unable to attend the meeting. For this reason, you will want to validate the issues you have identified with other service providers and, of greater importance, with FAMILIES. Community Needs Assessment forms (Parent Survey and Service Provider Survey) are provided in the manual to survey parents and service providers regarding the prioritized issues. Where possible, your committee should utilize existing information.

Information on federal, state, regional, and local policies will be helpful to you in understanding the policies that affect services or parts of the service system that have been identified within the priority issues.

If one of the major issues identified by the committee entails service coordination, you will want to learn more about how the service delivery system works in your community. It is often helpful to look at services from the perspective of how the consumer enters and moves through the service delivery system identifying the components of intake, referral, service delivery, follow-up, and evaluation. This framework can assist in identifying strengths and weaknesses within a particular service and to determine gaps, overlaps, and communication and collaboration problems within the total system of community services. The crucial question is how the system affects FAMILIES.

Additional resources can be found in model services and programs, whether located within your state or somewhere else in the country. Just knowing that others have identified and addressed similar issues in their communities is often a motivator for moving from problem to the action phase.

As your committee is seeking information regarding each selected issue, you should keep two important methods of analyzing that information in mind: interest analysis and functional analysis. An interest analysis looks at all of the possible people who have a stake or interest in each issue and the eventual outcome. A functional analysis reveals who is doing what to whom, how, and why.

Incorporating these two types of analyses into the data collection and summarization processes: (1) a concern for the individuals affected by the identified service issues (interest analysis), and (2) the identification of how the service, program, or service system is currently working (functional analysis), provides a framework for raising and addressing critical questions related

to each issue and for formulating solutions that will be responsive to the needs of all involved. Chapter 11 of the manual provides such a system for summarizing the information you have gathered. Utilizing this information can then help in the development of a plan of action.

An Information Summarization Worksheet is provided in the manual allowing for both "interest analysis" and "functional analysis" of your information. It requires that a clear description of the need and subissues for a particular priority topic be stated. Information is listed regarding the incidence of need in the community, the eligibility criteria, a description of each program, and a delineation of what each service provider is legally responsible to provide and its funding sources. A description of the community's service system and input from FAMILIES, direct service providers, and agency or organization administrators is also included. Any other information that may be pertinent to the issue is listed, the committee's philosophy related to the service within the community, and any resources in the community that might be utilized. Finally, a recommendation as to whether the committee should develop an action plan for this issue--based on the information gathered--is made.

The next step is selecting the need or needs to be addressed by the CAISS committee. Several factors should be considered in this selection process including how those involved view the urgency of each need (importance), and how difficult the problem will be to resolve (feasibility).

When dealing with feasibility, it is recommended that the discussion focus on two types of issues--forces that would make it difficult to meet a particular need (obstacles), and forces that would be helpful in meeting a need (resources). The decision to address an issue should place emphasis on its importance to FAMILIES. If a particular service exists in the community but is identified as a need, parents should have provided input as to what problems are incurred in accessing the service or why they don't use the service. In addition, agency administrators and direct service providers should have indicated whether they feel the service should be developed or expanded and whether they view it as an unmet need.

Planning can be exciting. Everyone gets to contribute ideas and suggestions. Planning without action, however, gets you nowhere. At this point in the process, you have an identified need and you have identified some existing resources that can be used in your solution.

The manual provides a Community Planning Worksheet to aid in the development of an action

plan for each need that has been chosen to address. The objectives are stated in specific statements of what must be accomplished to deal with the need addressed by this plan. Possible resources that might be used to achieve your objective are identified. The tasks (assigned pieces of work to be finished within a certain time frame) and the activities necessary to carry out each task are listed with an anticipated completion date for each. The names of all persons who will be responsible for carrying out each activity are listed and each member of the planning team signs the worksheet. Signatures are important because they give the participants ownership in the process. When completed, the plan will be a detailed picture of what is to be done, by whom, and when.

If your committee decides to become a permanent part of the community's service delivery system, the membership may change and the overall mission and goals of the committee may change, but FAMILY needs and the community's responsibility to meet those needs will always be there.

REMEMBER, this digest should not be used for implementation purposes. Persons wishing to implement the process should obtain a copy of the manual by writing:

**Paul Brookes Publishing Co.
Attention: Melissa Behm
Post Office Box 10624
Baltimore, MD 21285-0624**

or calling:

**1-800-638-3775
ask for Melissa Behm**