

**Interagency  
Protocol  
for  
Family Service  
Coordination  
In the  
Region of Thames Valley  
(Counties of Elgin,  
Middlesex and Oxford)**

June 2011

## **Vision**

All families can provide coordination of services for their children through an integrated system of service provision in the Thames Valley region.

## **Mission**

The protocol for family service coordination will promote a dynamic relationship between families with children birth to 6 years and community service providers that will result in an integrated, effective system of service provision in the Thames Valley region. Families will be supported and coached to provide coordination of services for their children to the best of their ability.

## **Definition**

Service coordination is a family centred process of developing, coordinating and monitoring one integrated and individualized family team plan of services and informal supports for children and families. The service coordination protocol outlined on the following pages should occur when more than one service is needed or desired to assist a family in promoting the well being of their child. Service coordination ensures the service providers work together with the family in an integrated and community oriented manner.

## **Guiding Principles:**

Service Coordination is an effective process that:

- ◆ Views the child in the context of the family
- ◆ Is driven by the strengths, priorities and needs of children and families
- ◆ Involves and is accountable to children and families.
- ◆ Is accessible to children and families in a timely, responsive and flexible way.
- ◆ Effectively uses a team of formal service providers and informal supports.

## **PRINCIPLES OF SERVICE COORDINATION**

1. Acknowledge that parents/guardians are the leaders in making decisions and directing the care of their children.
2. Focus on improving outcomes for the child and family.
3. Promote the best interest, protection and wellbeing of children.
4. Focus and build on child, family and community strengths.
5. Facilitate access to services and help guide families through a complex system.
6. Recognize that empowerment occurs by being responsive to families' capacities, values and priorities.

7. Support and strengthen the stability of children and families with the least amount of interference.
8. Support families who choose to assume the role of service coordination or aspects of the role for themselves.
9. Be sensitive to differences in culture, religion, background and physical and mental development.
10. Support effective communication as a key concept in the interchange among all persons.
11. Use consensus when at all possible to reach decisions.
12. Integrate access for children and families to appropriate services.
13. Minimize duplication of services.
14. Support an information management system based on partnerships and respecting confidentiality.
15. Children in need of protection will have CAS involved in the service coordination process.

### **Family Team Coordinator:**

The choice of who acts as the Family Team Coordinator for the child or family requiring service coordination is important and should be based on the following guidelines:

- ◆ Families may wish to act as their own Family Team Coordinator for their child or family.
- ◆ If agency representation is desired, the agency first determining the need for service coordination should act in this role until another Family Team Coordinator is determined.
- ◆ Family choice should have a key role in the determination of the Family Team Coordinator.
- ◆ The organization with the most contact with the family may be an appropriate choice.
- ◆ Children under 24 months of age who have been identified as living in high risk environment in London-Middlesex will have services coordinated by the local high risk community plan process.
- ◆ Children under 24 months of age who have been identified as at risk of morbidity/mortality in Elgin St. Thomas will have services coordinated by the local high risk community plan process.

### **ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF FAMILY TEAM COORDINATOR**

The Family Team Coordinator:

- Is aware of which services and agencies are involved with the family and their various roles and responsibilities.
- Supports and coaches the family to enhance their capacity to assume the service coordination role for their child.
- Ensures an effective communication process between the Service Providers and the family on a regular basis; the purpose is to ensure consistency, goal review, identification of significant changes/developments, consensus regarding decision making, and a conflict resolution process.

- Ensures a Family Service Plan is developed collaboratively, documented and circulated to the family team within two weeks of the meeting/review.
- Maintains an active dialogue with all members of the Family Team and also provides information about the expectations and accountability of all members of the Family Team.
- Coordinates routine review, reassessment and evaluation of the current Family Service Plan.
- Is accountable to the family and their own organization within the context of existing legislation and individual agency policies/procedures.

## **ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF SERVICE PROVIDERS**

### **The Service Providers:**

- Collaborate with all team members supporting family-centred and strength-based intervention.
- Ensure ongoing communication with the Family Team Coordinator regarding their involvement with the family, including changes within the family system and potential changes in their involvement.
- Attend service coordination meetings.
- Are accountable to the family and their own organization within the context of existing legislation and individual agency policies/procedures.

## **SERVICE COORDINATION PROCESS**

### **Initiating the Inter-Agency Service Coordination:**

Each service provider that receives a referral for service is responsible for working with the family to identify other agencies involved. Typically, the first service provider involved assumes the role of interim Family Team Coordinator (IFC). The IFC discusses the benefits of inter-agency service coordination with the family and the importance of the family's role. In partnership with the family the first service provider facilitates the first inter-agency meeting.

In preparation for this meeting, the IFC works with the family to assist them in identifying their strengths, family values, and priorities. The IFC works collaboratively with the family to develop the communication plan and the agenda. The family identifies information to be shared at the meeting and by whom. The IFC will ensure consent to share information has been obtained for all service providers attending the meeting.

### **Building the Family Team:**

The family is always the key member of the family team. Service Providers as well as other supports identified by the family make up the team. As more team members become involved in providing services for the child and family, service coordination plays a key role in communication. The service coordination process sets in motion the network of service providers who will work together with the family.

### **The Family Team Meeting:**

#### **Development of the Family Plan**

A family team meeting gives an opportunity to hear the family's perspective and priorities. The team collaboratively develops goals and determines a plan. The person responsible for each component of the plan will be identified. The Family Team Coordinator role will be negotiated at this time.

#### **Documentation**

At the first meeting the interim Family Team Coordinator will be responsible for documenting the plan, reviewing the plan with the family and circulating it to team members. In subsequent meetings the newly identified Family Team Coordinator will take on responsibility for this role.

#### **Review**

A plan for how the team will communicate is developed. The Family Team Coordinator will ensure the family team plan will be reviewed minimally every six months. This review may happen through team meetings, teleconferences, phone contacts, exchange of reports, etc.

#### **Plan for Transition and/or Discharge:**

The Family Team Coordinator ensures that the family is supported through transition and/or discharge.

### **DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

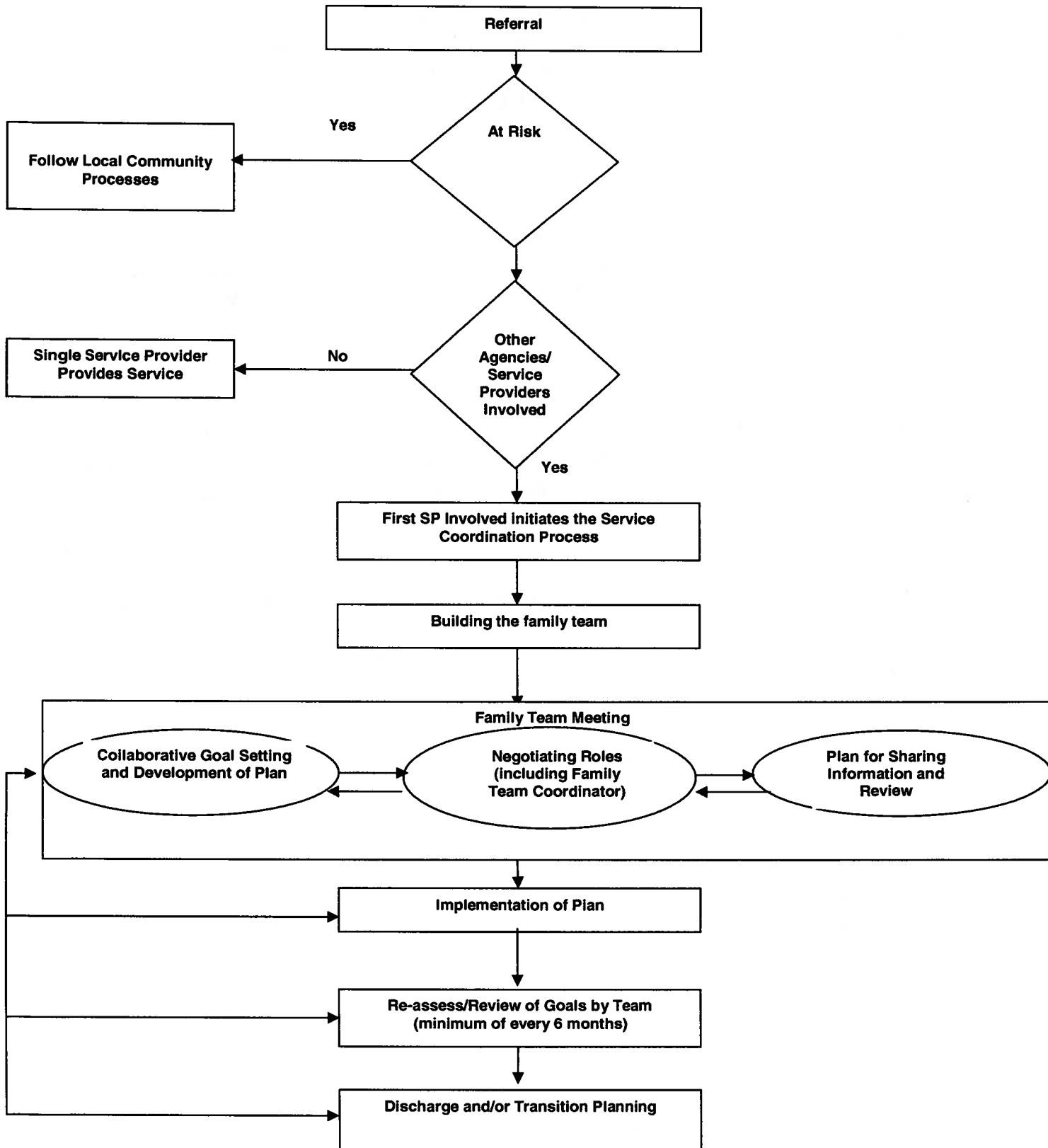
A strength-based solution focused approach will be used to facilitate the development of the Family Service Plan. At all times the goals and priorities of the family guide the decision making process.

### **REFERENCES:**

Oxford County Interagency Protocol for Service Coordination for Families with Children 0 – 6 Years (2007)

London-Middlesex Community Service Framework (2001)

**APPENDIX I  
Flowchart**





| Family Goals / Priorities | Action to Achieve Goals | Responsibility (see Family Team above) | Target Date | Results (record at review or when achieved) |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|-------------|---|
|                           |                         |  |             |   |
|                           |                         |  |             |   |
|                           |                         |  |             |   |
|                           |                         |  |             |   |
|                           |                         |  |             |   |

Family Team Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_

Method of team communication: \_\_\_\_\_

cc: Family Team



**APPENDIX III**

**Thames Valley Interagency Protocol for Family Service Coordination  
Collaborative Agreement**

The following agencies have agreed to enter into a collaborative agreement to improve the delivery of services to families with children ages birth to six years as described in the Interagency Protocol for Family Service Coordination in the Region of Thames Valley.

Agency

Date (Year/Month/Day)

THAMES VALLEY INTERAGENCY PROTOCOL FOR FAMILY SERVICE  
COORDINATION

Collaborative Agreement

The purpose of this agreement is to document a formal partnership and working agreement to improve the delivery of services to families with children ages birth to six years as described in the *Thames Valley Interagency Protocol for Family Service Coordination (May 2011)*. The Vision is "All families can provide coordination of services for their children through an integrated system of service provision in the Thames Valley region."

(AGENCY) \_\_\_\_\_ endorses and agrees to follow the *Thames Valley Interagency Protocol for Family Service Coordination (June 2011)*. This includes but it is not limited to:

- Initiating the Service Coordination process if we are the first agency involved with the family
- Building the family team
- Collaborating with the family to establish goals
- Negotiating roles (including Family Team Coordinator)
- Assuming the role of Family Team Coordinator if appropriate
- Collaborating in the ongoing provision of services to families
- Participating in family team meetings
- Supporting and coaching families to provide coordination of services for their children to the best of their ability
- Ensuring that staff participate in professional development opportunities related to successful service coordination

Dated the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2011

Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Revised January 6, 2011