



# Are We Really Family-Centred?

## Checklists for Families, Service Providers, and Organizations

FCS  
Sheet  
#18

This FCS Sheet is #18 of an 18 part series on family-centred service.

If you are interested in this FCS Sheet, you may also want to read:

- FCS Sheet #1: What is family-centred service?
- FCS Sheet #4: Becoming more family-centred

Key definitions and a list of the topics in this series can be found at the end of this FCS Sheet.

## Relevance

This series of FCS Sheets has explored many topics related to family-centred service. The following **checklists** bring together key strategies presented throughout the series. The checklists are designed to encourage families, service providers, and organizations to think about the things that they do (or could do) to promote family-centred service.

## Strategies for Using the Checklists

1. Review the items in the following checklists. When doing so, note that:

- Every family-centred relationship is different. Not all of the items will apply in all situations – there may be some things that do not apply to you or your organization.
- These checklists do not contain all of the ideas that are useful in family-centred relationships. The items represent key strategies in different areas and are written to stimulate your thinking and discussion with others.

2. Select and complete the checklist that is written for the group to which you belong (family, service provider or representative of an organization)

3. Review the checklists written for the other two groups.

4. Discuss the items in the checklists with others. Learn about the things that they value in family-centred relationships and work together to strengthen family-centred practices.

As stated above, the checklists in this FCS Sheet are just a starting point to get you thinking about things that support family-centred services – they are not designed for doing a formal evaluation. If you are interested in formally evaluating family-centred service, there are a number of tools that have been developed for this purpose. The following measures are examples of ones that have been developed and tested by our research centre.

- **Measure of Processes of Care (MPOC)** – The MPOC (King et al., 1996) is designed to be completed by the child’s parent (or primary caregiver). Parents are asked to rate the “extent to which” service providers do specific **behaviours** that reflect important aspects of family-centred service. A 20-item version and a 56-item version are available. Both have been found to be reliable and valid.
- **Measure of Processes of Care for Service Providers (MPOC-SP)** – The MPOC-SP (Woodside et al., 2001) is similar to the MPOC, but is designed to measure service providers’ perceptions of their own family-centred **behaviours**. The MPOC-SP has 27 items and it has been found to be reliable and to demonstrate evidence of discriminative validity.

- **Measure of Beliefs about Participation in Family-Centred Service (MBP-FCS)** – The MBP-FCS (King et al. in press) measures an individual's **beliefs** about family-centred service. The MBP-FCS is appropriate for use with parents and service providers. There is preliminary evidence of this measure's construct validity and it shows promise for use as a discriminative measure.

## Summary

Whether you decide to use an informal checklist or a more formal measure of family-centred service, we hope you take the time to think about your interactions with others and your beliefs related to family-centred service. An increased awareness of these two things can help you identify things that you can do to better support this approach to service delivery.

For more information about MPOC, MPOC-SP or other MPOC products, please contact [ccstore@mcmaster.ca](mailto:ccstore@mcmaster.ca) or visit our website at [canchild.ca/shop](http://canchild.ca/shop)

## Resources

King G, Kertoy M, King S, Law M, Rosenbaum P & Hurley P (in press). A measure of parents' and service providers' beliefs about participating in family-centred service. *Children's Health Care*

King S, Rosenbaum P & King G (1998). Parents' perceptions of care-giving: Development and validation of a measure of processes. *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology* 35 - 2

Woodside JM, Rosenbaum PL, King SM & King GA (2001). Family-centred service: Developing and validating a self-assessment tool for pediatric service providers. *Children's Health Care* 30: 23 -252

## Family-Centred Service – A Checklist for Families

Do you	✓	For more information, refer to FCS sheet...
...know what family-centred service means for the services you and your family receive?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#1 What is family-centred service?
...talk to the people who are providing services to find out what family-centred service means to them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#2 Myths about family-centred service
...know about the research that has been conducted on family-centred approaches?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#3 How does family-centred service make a difference?
...provide feedback to service providers and/or the organization on positive aspects of the service and about the areas where the service could be improved?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#4 Becoming more family-centred
...tell service providers your preferences for meeting times and location?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#5 10 things you can do to be family-centred
...tell service providers about the things your child and family enjoy and do well?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#6 Identifying and building on parent and family strengths and resources
...connect with other families to share experiences and resources, and to support one another?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#7 Parent-to-parent support
...ask questions when the information provided to you is not understandable or is incomplete?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#8 Effective communication in family-centred service
...share information honestly with service providers to make sure they know what is important to you and your family?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#9 Using respectful behaviours and language
...demonstrate respect when sharing personal opinions about service providers with other parents and other service providers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#10 Working together: From providing information to working in partnership

## Checklist for Families continued...

Do you	✓ For more information, refer to FCS sheet...
...let service providers know how involved you want to be in the planning and delivery of your child's services?	<input type="checkbox"/> #11 Negotiation: Dealing effectively with differences
...negotiate solutions with service providers when there is a difference of opinion?	<input type="checkbox"/> #12 Making decisions together: How to decide what is best
...gather as much information as possible to make well-informed decisions for your child and family?	<input type="checkbox"/> #13 Setting goals together
...tell service providers you would like your child to be able to do? Do you allow and encourage your child to do this when he/she is able?	<input type="checkbox"/> #14 Advocacy: How to get the best for your child
...advocate on behalf of your child when your child's needs or wishes are not being met?	<input type="checkbox"/> #15 Getting the most from appointments and meetings
...invite a friend or other supportive individual to attend meetings with you?	<input type="checkbox"/> #16 Fostering family-centred service in the school
...communicate openly and frequently with your child's teachers about things that are happening at home?	<input type="checkbox"/> #17 Family-centred strategies for waiting lists

## Family-Centred Service – A Checklist for Service Providers

Do you	✓	For more information, refer to FCS sheet...
...know how to work with families in a family-centred way?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#1 What is family-centred service?
...talk to your colleagues and the families you work with about what family-centred service means to them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#2 Myths about family-centred service
...understand the research on family-centred service and use this evidence to advocate for the use of family-centred approaches?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#3 How does family-centred service make a difference?
...discuss family-centred service with your colleagues and support each other in being family-centred?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#4 Becoming more family-centred
...offer families a choice of location and time to meet, and schedule appointments that work best for them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#5 10 things you can do to be family-centred
...ask parents about their strengths and resources, including the people they find supportive and their own skills?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#6 Identifying and building on parent and family strengths and resources
...ask families if they would like to connect with another family and provide resources to do so?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#7 Parent-to-parent support
...listen to what families tell you, believe them and trust in them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#8 Effective communication in family-centred service
...describe families in the same respectful way, whether or not they are present?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#9 Using respectful behaviours and language
...ask parents how involved they want to be in the planning and delivery of their child's services? Do you respect their decision?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#10 Working together: From providing information to working in partnership

## Checklist for Service Providers continued...

Do you	✓	For more information, refer to FCS sheet...
...negotiate solutions with families when there is a difference of opinion?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#11 Negotiation: Dealing effectively with differences
...present and explain all options to the family to allow them to make decisions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#12 Making decisions together: How to decide what is best
...collaborate in goal setting with the child, the family and others (such as pre-school or school personnel)	<input type="checkbox"/>	#13 Setting goals together
...help parents identify and navigate through the “systems” when they are advocating for their child?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#14 Advocacy: How to get the best for your child
...develop an action plan that outlines what tasks need to be done, who will do them, and timelines?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#15 Getting the most from appointments and meetings
...communicate openly and frequently with parents about things that are happening at school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#16 Fostering family-centred service in the school
...help families prepare for the first formal appointment or assessment by giving them a list of questions to consider?	<input type="checkbox"/>	#17 Family-centred strategies for waiting lists

## Family-Centred Service – A Checklist for Organizations

Do you	✓ For more information, refer to FCS sheet...
...demonstrate a commitment to family-centred service by including the term and relevant concepts in the organization's mission statement and/or vision?	<input type="checkbox"/> #1 What is family-centred service?
...provide a venue for families and service providers to talk about what family-centred service means to them?	<input type="checkbox"/> #2 Myths about family-centred service
...promote the use of family-centred service at your organization by sharing research evidence on family-centred service with service providers and families?	<input type="checkbox"/> #3 How does family-centred service make a difference?
...monitor the amount of time service providers need to carry out family-centred practices and assign caseloads accordingly?	<input type="checkbox"/> #4 Becoming more family-centred
...promote staff awareness of other community resources?	<input type="checkbox"/> #5 10 things you can do to be family-centred
...have a newsletter and/or a bulletin board for parents, with a section including family success stories?	<input type="checkbox"/> #6 Identifying and building on parent and family strengths and resources
...provide support for families to connect with other families (for example, parent discussion groups, information session, or parent to parent linking)	<input type="checkbox"/> #7 Parent-to-parent support  #14 Advocacy: How to get the best for your child
...get feedback from families and respond to their concerns?	<input type="checkbox"/> #8 Effective communication in family-centred service
...use person-first language in all of your organization's documentation?	<input type="checkbox"/> #9 Using respectful behaviours and language
...include families on the Board of Directors, in steering committees, and in job interview panels?	<input type="checkbox"/> #10 Working together: From providing information to working in partnership

## Checklist for Organizations continued...

Do you	✓ For more information, refer to FCS sheet...
...have a policy that outlines steps that families and service providers can use to resolve differences of opinion, including key individuals in the organization who can facilitate the process?	<input type="checkbox"/> #11 Negotiation: Dealing effectively with differences
...have a resource centre for parents and other family members, which includes information about resources in the community?	<input type="checkbox"/> #12 Making decisions together: How to decide what is best
...utilize policies and practices to implement collaborative goal setting between service providers and families?	<input type="checkbox"/> #13 Setting goals together
...allow service providers to meet with families at times and locations that are most convenient for the family?	<input type="checkbox"/> #15 Getting the most from appointments and meetings
...access all resources that will support a child at the school including the child's family and the community?	<input type="checkbox"/> #16 Fostering family-centred service in the school
...implement intake policies that are support families when they are seeking and waiting for services?	<input type="checkbox"/> #17 Family-centred strategies for waiting lists

## Key Definitions

**Family-Centred Service** – Family-centred service is made up of a set of values, attitudes and approaches to services for children with special needs and their families.

Family-centred service recognizes that **each family is unique**; that the family is the **constant in the child’s life**; and that they are the **experts on the child’s abilities and needs**

The family works with service providers to make informed decisions about the services and supports the child and family receive.

In family-centred service, the strengths and needs of all family members are considered.

**Service Provider** – The term service provider refers to those individuals who work directly with the child and family. These individuals **may** include educational assistants, respite workers, teachers, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech-language pathologists, service coordinators, recreation therapists, etc.

**Organization** – The term organization refers to the places or groups from which the child and family receive services. Organizations **may** include community programs, hospitals, rehabilitation centres, schools, etc.

**Intervention** – Interventions refer to the services and supports provided by the person who works with the child and family. Interventions **may** include direct therapy, meetings to problem solve issues that are important to you, phone calls to advocate for your child, actions to link you with other parents, etc.

Want to know more about family-centred service?

Visit the CanChild website:  
[www.canchild.ca](http://www.canchild.ca)

or call us at 905-525-9140 ext. 27850

## FCS Sheet Topics

The following is a list of the FCS Sheets. If you are interested in receiving any of these topics, please contact CanChild or visit our website.

### General Topics Related to Family-Centred Service

- FCS Sheet #1 – What is family-centred service?
- FCS Sheet #2 – Myths about family-centred service
- FCS Sheet #3 – How does family-centred service make a difference?
- FCS Sheet #4 – Becoming more family-centred
- FCS Sheet #5 – 10 things you can do to be family-centred

### Specific Topics Related to Family-Centred Service

- FCS Sheet # – Identifying & building on parent and family strengths & resources
- FCS Sheet # – Parent-to-parent support
- FCS Sheet # – Effective communication in family-centred service
- FCS Sheet # – Using respectful behaviours and language
- FCS Sheet #10 – Working together: From providing information to working in partnership
- FCS Sheet #11 – Negotiating: Dealing effectively with differences
- FCS Sheet #12 – Making decisions together: How to decide what is best
- FCS Sheet #13 – Setting goals together
- FCS Sheet #14 – Advocacy: How to get the best for your child
- FCS Sheet #15 – Getting the most from appointments and meetings
- FCS Sheet #16 – Fostering family-centred service in the school
- FCS Sheet #17 – Family-centred strategies for waitlists
- FCS Sheet #18 – Are we really family-centred? Checklists for families, service providers and organizations