



Champions for Inclusive Communities

What is the evidence to support Service Coordination?

What is service coordination?

A key strategy for helping better organize services for families is the provision of service coordination. Service coordination, often synonymous with care coordination and case management, generally refers to the ongoing coordination of needed services via a designated individual or team. Champions InC uses the term service coordination and defines it as **“a process in which needed services are identified, acquired, planned, and coordinated on an ongoing basis to ensure the needs of the child and family are addressed in a comprehensive and efficient manner.”**

Evidence that Supports Service Coordination

Twenty-four articles were identified that reported outcomes associated with service coordination. The various methodologies that were used are summarized in the following table:

Methodology (mutually exclusive)	No. of Studies
Experimental with Randomization	1
Pre-post with comparison	1
Pre-post without comparison	6
Cross-sectional with comparison	12
Cross-sectional w/o comparison	2
Trends comparison	1
Descriptive	1

Findings Regarding the Effectiveness of Service Coordination

The lack of controlled studies makes it difficult to draw strong conclusions about the effectiveness of service coordination. Based on the literature, outcomes fell into four categories:

1. Improved access to services
2. Improved family satisfaction with care
3. Improved child health and development
4. Improved family well-being



Outcome #1: Improved Access to Services

- Increase access to regular medical care
 - Patients communicated regularly with a physician and nurse
 - Decreased emergency department visits and less waiting room time
 - Improved ability of families to get doctor appointments
- Increase access to services
 - Access to respite care and transportation, outpatient care, child resources, mental health services, and emergency room care
 - Needs for dental care, medical equipment, and prescriptions were met
- Improve efficiency of care
 - Early developmental assessment; shorter time between assessment and program initiation
 - Less waiting time between making appointments and actual visits
 - Decreased time in obtaining nutrition and social work consultation
 - Earlier medical care for sick child
 - Increased access to medical advice over the phone from doctors

Outcome #2: Improved Satisfaction of Care

- Service coordinators were family-centered and responsive
- Families more satisfied with overall medical care
- Service coordinators who were direct service providers associated with greater satisfaction
- Service coordination not necessarily linked to satisfaction with other services

Outcome #3: Improved Child Health and Development

- Greater likelihood of meeting behavior treatment goals
- Improved day-to-day functioning
- Improved child health (although mixed)

Outcome #4: Improved Family Well-Being

- Less disrupted family stress and increased social relationships
- Increased family knowledge about their child's health



Characteristics of Effective Service Coordination Interventions

- Intensity of service coordination
- Being closely associated with other intervention programs
- Establishing partnership with parents
- Realization that results varied based on child and family characteristics

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