

LEGAL & ADVOCACY

INTERAGENCY TEAMS OR CHILD AND ADOLESCENT SERVICE SYSTEM PROGRAMS (CASSP) TEAMS

Child and Adolescent Service System Programs or “CASSP” is an acronym sometimes used in Missouri for local interagency teams which come together to do cross-agency service planning and coordination for individual high-need children. Typically these children are being served by two or more state agencies, and typically they have very challenging disabilities. Recently, CASSP teams have been replaced by System of Care (SOC) teams in those areas of the state in which local SOC teams exist. However, in some areas of the state, CASSP teams remain the vehicle for collaboration between multiple agencies for children with complex support needs.

The term “CASSP” originated from federal grants disseminated to states in the 1980’s to develop infrastructure for Child and Adolescent Service System Programs, including interagency teams. Membership on such local interagency teams usually includes representatives from the Children’s Division, the Division of Comprehensive Psychiatric Services, the Juvenile Court, and the Division of MRDD. Depending on the individual child, other agencies such as the Division of Youth Services, the local school, or other local service providers may be invited to attend.

In the absence of such service coordination, agencies sometimes found themselves presenting conflicting clinical information or recommendations to court judges. Those judges are often then forced into the frustrating position of having to issue court orders about a child’s welfare without benefit of consensus from the very agencies that should be providing that consensus. By bringing together state agency representatives (decision-makers) who can work creatively to share limited agency resources and develop a coordinated plan, the Interagency Team or CASSP Team frequently offers the best feasible way to develop an effective child-centered and family-centered service strategy.