

Some Things to Think About When You're Designing an Ideal System

Definition: A system is “an assembly of parts that form a unitary whole.”

The performance of a system is therefore a consequence of many factors, including:

- The clarity and appropriateness of its underlying intent.
- The quality of the parts.
- The quality and effectiveness of their interactions.
- The suitability of the resources it applies.

Two ideas that emerged from the ethnography round of work may provide additional insight.

One was the importance of parents (and others) in managing the quality of the human interactions in the process, and advocating for their child.

A second idea concerned the organizations and systems involved in providing or supporting the provision of care. Organizations and their programs are designed to manage to the norm in order to create efficiencies and stay in business. When exceptions or complications arise, organizations must adapt. Most of the cases of children with special needs are exceptional. Therefore, it's possible that a new type of organizational ability needs to be developed that allows them to manage exceptions as a matter of course.

Please consider these ideas as you explore the system of care.

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Here is some additional terminology concerning systems that may be helpful to you in designing an ideal system.

1. Environment
2. Goal
3. Strategy
4. Structure
5. Institution or organization
6. Connections
7. Process
8. Finance
9. Transition

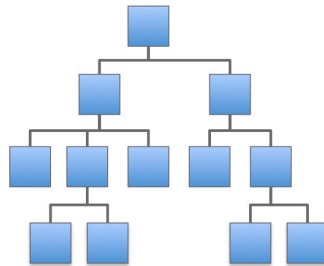
1. What's the **environment or context** in which the system will operate?

A system usually operates within a larger system or environment, much as a living creature occupies a niche in an ecosystem. Key trends in the environment may have significant influence on the system upon which we are focusing.
What are the key elements of the external environment?

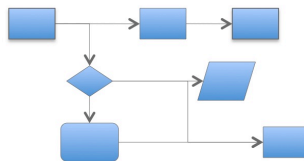
2. What's the **goal**?

Define the goal that the system is intended to achieve.
Goals may be quantitative as well as qualitative.
Please be as explicit as possible about the goals that your system is focused on.

3. What's the **strategy** to achieve the goal?
How will the goal be attained?
 Or, in other words, what must be accomplished in order to reach the goal?
 Strategy may be expressed as an overarching concept, as well a series of steps that lead to the goal.
4. What **structures** are necessary to achieve the goal?
 Structures include rules, regulations, policies, and laws.
 An organization chart is also a structure.
 Institutions and organizations may also be thought of as structures. (see below)



5. What **institutions** or **organizations** are involved in attaining the goal?
 These may be existing organizations or new ones, and each will have a specific roles or roles to play.
 A hospital is an institution, as is a clinic or an insurance company.
 Please be as explicit as possible concerning the roles that each will have to play in the functioning of the ideal system.
6. In what ways are the structures, institutions, and organizations **connected**?
7. What **processes** are necessary to achieve the goal?
 Processes are the things that individuals, organizations, or institutions *do*.
 They can often be shown on a timeline, where a sequence of steps takes place.
 For example, a medical treatment is a process.



7. How are the activities of the system **financed**?
 Where does the money come from?
 How is it used?
 How much is required?
8. If we were to implement a new system, how would we **transition** from operating in the old system to the new one without disrupting those who receive services from the system?