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ABSTRACT

Thirty papers are presented from a 1981 workshop on the relationship between health care and education for infants with special needs and their families. Following a synopsis of the keynote speech, "Assessment in Early Infancy as an Intervention" by T. Berry Brazelton, three theme speeches are presented: "Building Relationships: Year 1--The Dignity of Risk" (L. Gilkerson); "Building Relationships between the Medical and Educational Communities: What Is, What Was and What Might Be" (J. E. Swanson); and "A Grassroots Approach to Institutional Change" (E. Badger). Papers are then presented on four major topics (sample subtopics are in parentheses): preterm and postterm assessment (the role of communication in infant assessment); intervention strategies for newborns and infants (high risk nurseries, program evaluation, and staff competencies); parent and family involvement (multicultural families, siblings, and theories of maternal-infant bonding); and fiscal, legal, and ethical issues (strategies for insuring the survival of infant programs).
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A FRAMEWORK FOR STATEWIDE PLANNING

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PREFACE

The rationale for statewide planning arises from the complexity of providing services to young handicapped children. Service delivery is not a single-phased process nor do services usually arise from one source. The available services from federal, state and local agencies must be analyzed to appropriately design new services for the population.

The administrative complexity of designing, implementing and evaluating services is the primary component of efficacious state planning. The planning process described in this document is based upon an analytical decision-making process where both quantitative and qualitative data are used to make accurate, projective plans. Consequently, each of the phases or decision-making points can be considered both an apex of data analysis and the beginning of an ongoing plan for implementing and evaluating a state plan.

This document is designed to serve as a reference guide to assist states in the process of planning for comprehensive services to young handicapped children. It is divided into four sections: an introduction, which describes the basic elements of all planning processes, followed by descriptions of the three main phases of the planning process--preplanning, plan development and implementation. Each phase is broken down into a series of key steps which are illustrated by examples from existing planning models.

The three interacting phases and their respective elements comprise a general framework for an effective planning effort. Such a framework, however, is not intended to be used as a rigid set of rules. On the contrary, flexibility and overlap of phases are to be expected, and modifications and adaptations based on specific circumstances are encouraged.

A graphic display of the planning process showing the interrelationship of the elements in the process is presented on the following page.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

PREPLANNING

Identify Issue(s)
Analyze Issue(s)
Identify Constraints and Resources for Planning
Secure Administrative Commitment
Identify Participants

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Develop Purpose Statement
Conduct Needs Assessment
Arrive at Issue(s) Consensus
Develop Priorities
Formulate Goals and Objectives
Develop Alternative Strategies
Analyze and Select Implementation Strategies
Specify Tasks, Responsibilities, Timelines
Develop Plan for Evaluation
Assure Administrative and Public Support

IMPLEMENTATION

Disseminate Information
Evaluate and Report
Analyze Feedback and Revise

COMMUNICATION
COLLECT INFORMATION
GROUP DYNAMICS

INTRODUCTION

State planning is a dynamic process, requiring the active support and participation of groups and individuals both within and outside of state government. Its effectiveness depends on many factors. Among the most crucial are thorough, accurate data; good communication; and successful group dynamics. These three elements will affect each of the steps in the planning process.

Collection of Information. Although there are specific elements (needs assessment and evaluation) in the planning process that require the collection of information in order to make accurate and valid decisions, the process of collecting pertinent information must not be confined to any particular phase or component within the planning model. Rather, the collection of information should be viewed as an ongoing process relevant to every other component of the model. Each phase of the planning process, from the identification of issues to the development of specific tasks, must be based on the most reliable quantitative and qualitative data available at the time.

Communication. Effective communication is necessary on two levels--internal and external. On the internal level, it must begin with the Director of Special Education or the staff members responsible for planning. Good communication with these individuals is essential to the process of planning and to the final success of implementation. This communication may be through informal verbal presentations, formal written reports or a combination of the two. Whatever the communication mode, the director must be continually informed to insure his or her support at critical points of the process.

As the planning process progresses, internal communication should include other agencies represented by the planning group. As the network expands, the mode of communications may need to be more formalized through written agenda notes and meeting minutes. Ideally, the recipients of written materials will have some method through which they can provide immediate verbal feedback.

External communication refers to public awareness and is an important component of state planning. Communication lines should be opened with local administrators, agency service providers, training institutes, consumers and any other interested individual or group that may be affected by the plan.

Contacts can often be established through existing state agencies. For example, the child-find efforts of the state may be of some assistance in identifying key recipients and in disseminating information. Monthly newsletters may insure communication with those professionals not directly connected to educational agencies, and presentations can be made at meetings of advisory committees.

The general purposes of both internal and external communication are to disseminate information, to gain feedback and to promote widespread interest and involvement—which, in the end, promote support for decisions that are made. Without internal administrative support the plan may not be approved. Without external public support an approved plan may not be implemented.

Group Dynamics. Skill in human relations and group dynamics is important in any leadership role; it is essential in dealing with the variety of people involved in planning for and serving young children with special needs. Several models have been developed for facilitating group dynamics (Bennis, 1966; Gordon, 1961; Lippitt, 1978; Maier, 1963), however, the intent of this document is not to describe the process of these social skills. Instead, several examples are provided to suggest ways of facilitating group interaction in such areas as establishing priorities and selecting strategies. Those which most closely meet the needs of the group and facilitate the planning process activities should be utilized to assure that all participants have an opportunity for providing input.

PHASE ONE: PREPLANNING

The purpose of the preplanning phase is to determine the need for comprehensive planning and identify the critical elements for the plan development phase. The specific programmatic issues of planning are not addressed at this time. What are identified are the organizational issues or aspects necessary to implement meaningful planning. The elements considered in the preplanning phase are:

- Identification of Issues
- Analysis of Issues
- Identification of constraints and resources
- Securing administrative commitment
- Identification of participants

Identification of Issues. Problem identification begins with expression or identification of an unmet need. This may be an individual complaint that current practice is not adequately meeting the service need or may be identified through the passage of new legislation, regulations or judicial decisions. These actions change the standards by which events are compared, thereby creating a discrepancy between the standard and current practice.

Once identified, the issues must be verified as true needs. Early indicators of potential problems cannot be accepted on face value but must be substantiated. A variety of information sources might be referred to, including state plans, child-count data, review of guidelines, census data, review of the literature, statutes or public testimony. Each of these information sources will provide a perspective on the importance of a service need.

Although the above examples are generally quantitative, information which is more subjective or qualitative is also valuable in the planning process. Examples include attitudes of different state officials, local providers and consumers; existing values; and expectations based on past procedures. Although Van de Ven and Koenig (1976) warn that such qualitative information is often ambiguous and potentially conflict-laden and that it may have destructive influences on planning, they do state that it is an essential factor. The collection of subjective information will provide the planning group with an understanding of the needs and potential problems perceived by the plan's target population.

Analysis of Issues. Through an analysis of the adequacy of the current service system, a determination is made as to the scope of the needed change. In some cases the service need may be isolated and unrepresentative and may best be handled through direct, immediate

administrative intervention. In another case, a state education agency staff person might receive a variety of complaints concerning, for example, the lack of developmental services for infants. Initially, this may appear to be a service need requiring a plan, but review of existing legislation, interagency agreements and fiscal appropriations may show that a social and health services agency has the responsibility for providing the service and in fact, is funded to do so. This type of problem/issue may best be resolved through a policy clarification or administrative action.

If, however, there is no state agency either required or funded to provide the services, the issue/problem may be one which calls for statewide planning. At this point a potential planning issue is identified: that of inadequate or non-existent developmental services for handicapped infants.

Further analysis, aimed at discovering the cause of the problem, will help pinpoint the planning need. Some possible reasons for a problem include: lack of funds, attitudinal barriers, lack of personnel, fragmented service delivery or a combination of these reasons. As in the previous example, the analysis may reveal that several large urban school districts provide educational and related services to this population, but there is no system for providing comprehensive services in a uniform fashion throughout the state.

Information which may assist in the analysis of issues at this point include:

- Identification of state and local agencies serving the target population
- The variety of services provided
- Availability of services provided statewide
- Number of children/families receiving services
- Identification of pertinent federal and state mandates

It cannot be overemphasized that the data which is collected must be accurate and complete as possible. Otherwise, the use of the information is limited, as is the value of the decisions which are based upon it.

The various methods of information and data collection include: questionnaires, interviews, group meetings/discussion and public hearings. Of course, before collecting any information, one should consider what agency information is currently collected or scheduled to be collected.

Once the issues have been identified and analyzed, a preliminary statement of purpose can be formulated. This should be a short, general statement which outlines the content and extensive-

ness of the planning effort. An example might be to develop a comprehensive plan for services to preschool handicapped children in the state.

Identify Constraints and Resources. In most cases, the decision to undertake a planning effort represents a significant expenditure of resources and human energy. After determining that a plan is called for, initial resources should be identified. This includes determining how much money, time and other resources are initially available and from whom (which agencies, key offices and interest groups). Examples of such resources might include:

- Other state agency planning personnel such as Medicaid; Crippled Children's Services, Head Start and HCEEP staff
- Policy statements and directives developed by various groups
- Priorities for service developed by parent groups or other interested parties

Some potential constraints might be prevailing biases against planning, lack of information about current service systems, "turf" issues, time constraints or internal administrative problems such as insufficient personnel.

Secure Administrative Commitment. It is advisable to secure administrative commitment to both the purpose of the activity and to the resources necessary to undertake it. (Such resources may chiefly consist of human resources and time commitments.)

Two commitments are critical at this point. First, the appropriate decision-makers within one's agency must grant the authority to develop and implement a comprehensive plan. Without this administrative commitment, a plan may never receive the kind of support necessary for successful implementation. Second, channels of communication within one's organization should be established through a regular and periodic reporting procedure. Such a system of communication will enable the planning group to seek ongoing approval and feedback regarding revisions and/or modifications.

Identify Participants. The preliminary statement of purpose will serve as a guide to identifying participants for the planning process. But several other variables should be taken in consideration when determining the composition of the planning group:

- The immediate resources available in terms of funds and time
- The political process within the agency
- The interagency relationships within the state

In addition to these variables, the individuals identified should be capable of making decisions and accomplishing the proposed efforts.

Several models have been developed which describe methods for choosing participants (Meyer, 1970). Whatever method is chosen, every effort should be made to assure that the group will be able to provide appropriate input, adequately represent the population and be willing to commit the time necessary to complete the effort.

PHASE TWO: PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The plan development component of the planning model utilizes the results of the preplanning component and establishes the specific objectives and tasks to be accomplished and the techniques to be used. The issues identified previously and the initial purpose statement will need to be clarified, revised and further developed. The implementation of the plan depends upon the realistic, well-informed decisions of the planning group. For the process to be successful, the following conditions must be met: Each team member must actively participate in the process; Each decision point must be based upon thorough, accurate, qualitative and quantitative data. The leadership skills of the group facilitator become extremely significant to successful plan development during this phase.

The following are the basic tasks of the planning group throughout the plan development phase of the model.

- Develop Purpose Statement
- Conduct Needs Assessment
- Arrive at Issue(s) Consensus
- Develop Priorities
- Formulate Goals and Objectives
- Develop Alternative Strategies
- Analyze and Select Implementation Strategies
- Specify Tasks, Responsibilities, Timelines
- Develop Plan for Evaluation
- Assure Administrative and Public Support

Develop Purpose Statement. The first task of the planning group is to develop a statement of purpose—a broad and general statement which sets the overall planning goal and embraces all operations and activities. This statement serves as a guide for all further planning activities, and it links all aspects of an organization together with a declaration of a common outcome. Although broad, the purpose statement should be succinct, requiring only a few sentences or a short paragraph. An example would be:

To develop a comprehensive statewide plan for the provision of health, education and family services for handicapped children aged birth to two years.

The purpose statement has as its basis the results of the preplanning activities and should be developed at the first planning meeting. Ideally, it should reflect input from all participants, and it

must be agreed to by all the members, so that it becomes a basis for common understanding and individual commitment.

Conduct Needs Assessment. The next planning steps are geared toward developing a list of specific program goals to bring about the defined purpose of the plan. The first of these steps is the needs assessment. The needs assessment process is used to identify discrepancies between what should exist and what does exist. It usually consists of gathering information on current status, comparing current status to a standard and describing the discrepancies resulting from this comparison. It should be noted that there will not always be agreement on the standard to which the current information is compared. Different views, generated from diverse training programs and experience, suggest a need for a set of alternative standards that, although conceptually different, maintain a degree of compatibility across systems.

The needs assessment provides the planning committee with the information, both quantitative and qualitative, which is necessary to successfully identify a variety of issues. The process, as viewed by Casterline (Note 1), includes input from the local constituency, the state agencies and the federal agencies. Local input is important to insure meaningful public involvement and to clearly define a framework upon which the plan can be built; federal and state input are important to insure a coordinated planning effort.

One purpose of the needs assessment process is to define the values of a community and to ascertain how the local people, the state and the federal government feel about the educational status of young children. There are many ways to solicit local input. Among commonly used methods are: problem/need surveys sent to a wide variety of consumer and provider groups, community meetings, and ad hoc meetings of established organizations. The lists below may be of help in the needs assessment process.

Pertinent information about what is currently being done in a particular program area should include:

- The number of children identified
- The total number of children served by disability and by age
- The number of children served by placement category (e.g., private school institution, self-contained class, resource room, etc.)
- The number and types of teachers, support service personnel and volunteers
- The time required from referral to completion of assessment

The time required from completion of the assessment to service delivery

The needs assessment process should also include:

- Surveys developed to determine consumer values of services to these children
- Listing of constraints such as overlapping agency responsibilities
- Development of the ideal program as perceived by the planning group
- Description of services provided by other agencies
- Population projections
- State mortality rates for this age range
- Projected birth rate
- Cost of service delivery

Arrival at a Issue(s) Consensus. The goal of this step is to integrate information previously collected into a unified list of problems mutually agreed upon by the planning participants. These problems should be articulated and confirmed by the participants, and consensus on critical issues should be clearly established.

For the process to be successful, two things are necessary: 1) Solutions must not be hastily prepared; 2) Problems must reflect the concerns reported through the needs assessment process.

During this phase, group participation is especially critical. The leadership skills of the planners and effective group dynamics will assist the group in the development of cooperative dialogue and compromise. Van de Ven and Koenig (1976) suggest that planners should begin by setting up preliminary review meetings with key administrators and resource controllers and that they should focus on positive reactions and suggestions for improvement.

The outcome of this step should be a commonly agreed upon list of issues which then determine the parameters of future planning. Some examples might be:

- Services are not consistently provided across the state.
- Service definitions vary from one agency to another.
- Agency mandates vary as to age, disability and economic status.
- Consumer surveys identify confusion over service needs of this population.

Develop Priorities. Generally, the needs assessment process identifies a number of discrepant areas, each of which may be acted upon. The purpose of establishing priorities is to allow the participants to

identify the critical areas so that attention can be directed to the most important needs.

The planning participants will identify a number of needs within each issue statement. Project TEAMS suggests that each of these needs then be reviewed and analyzed (Norman & Galloway, Note 2). During this analysis it will become apparent that there is a considerable amount of overlapping among the needs expressed by different segments of the program. The number should be reduced as much as possible without losing individual concerns, and the remaining list should be grouped into categories (e.g., policies, administrative systems, program activities).

Once the grouping has been accomplished, each need statement should be put in priority order. In this process the planning team should consider local policies, federal legislation, state regulations and participant concerns.

Project TEAMS also suggests that the team establish a rationale statement for determining priorities. This will allow the group to place needs in priority ranking without the necessity of voting. A solution arrived at through voting will not carry the shared commitment of the total group, as some individuals are likely to see a statement that is important to them voted down.

As an example, the following is a list of priority needs developed by one planning group. (The needs were summarized from an original list of 37 need statements. In setting the rankings for the needs, the group experienced considerable difficulty and could achieve the task only after they developed their own rationale for establishing priorities.)

- Need for the development and adoption of comprehensive policy statements assuring a free, appropriate education for all children aged birth to two years with special needs.
- Need for the development of a system that guarantees consistency for screening and referral (both mass and individual) for this population.
- Need to expand awareness activities and establish ongoing community awareness programs.

Formulate Goals and Objectives. From the prioritized needs, goal statements can then be developed that clearly point to the result or outcome to be obtained. The result of this step should be a consolidated list of goals subsumed by the purpose statement, reflecting the issues developed from the needs assessment and meeting the priorities established by the planning group.

Since goal statements are long-ranged and broad, planners will find them difficult to measure. Therefore, it is advised that each goal statement be subdivided into specific objectives. These objectives are derived from goal statements and are more specific descriptions of the actions or events necessary to implement the goal. Day, Gentry and Nakao (Note 3) suggest that objectives should include the condition for performance, the expected performance and the criteria or standard for performance, with tasks, timelines and staff responsibility to be assigned.

An example of this type of objective development is provided below:

PURPOSE STATEMENT

	Condition	Performance	Criteria
To develop an ongoing community awareness program at the local school district level.	1.1 Upon the identification of the target population	A needs assessment will be developed identifying current awareness level of the community	A compilation of the results of the needs assessment will be prepared by December, 1981

Develop Alternative Strategies. Once goals and objectives have been formulated, the next step is identifying strategies for meeting them. Project TEAMS (Note 2) suggests the following guidelines for this process:

- The group should resist the temptation to jump to conclusions, such as "hire more psychologists," "get more money" or "increase T.V. announcements."
- Rather than project only one solution to each objective, participants should be encouraged to "brainstorm" as many strategies as possible. The more alternatives, the more flexibility in planning.
- No one alternative needs to be the final recommendation. A combination of strategies may offer the best approach to meet the need. If the group is willing to discuss a variety of approaches, it is quite possible that some innovative strategies may emerge.

Analyze and Select Implementation Strategies. The suggested method of choosing the best possible strategy is to subject each alternative listed to a "force field analysis" (Lewin, 1951; Lippitt & Schindler-Rainmon, 1972; Napier, 1973). This analysis views the positive and negative forces associated with the alternative. Once each alternative has been subjected to this analysis, the group is ready to make a recommendation. Factors to consider, include:

- **Availability of Resources.** Does the community or state have the staff, facilities and administrative support to implement the plan?
- **Level of Current Service.** Are services limited or extensive for the targeted population?
- **Capability of Data Collection and Evaluation.** Can accurate information be gathered in order to evaluate and modify the plan?
- **Public Acceptance.** Have public awareness efforts been successful? Are key agencies and professions adequately informed and prepared to accept full implementation?

One example of a force field analysis as developed by Project TEAMS (Note 2, p. 9) includes the following:

GOAL: To evaluate 100 preschool children.

Alternative 1 - Provide evaluations with a travel team

FORCES FOR	FORCES AGAINST
1. Would take minimum time of building personnel	1. Really is an extension of current practice of central office teams
	2. Would require new personnel and additional money
	3. Little knowledge of child and family
	4. Scheduling difficulty

Alternative 2 - Provide evaluations with teams at the local level

FORCES FOR

1. Maximum knowledge of child and family
2. Scheduling could fit both parent and school needs
3. Places authority with responsibility
4. Would create more teams resulting in more responsive system

FORCES AGAINST

1. Requires inservice training
2. Requires much time of local personnel
3. May require funds for personnel

When choosing strategies, one important consideration involves the level of the program: Will it be local or statewide? One approach is to conduct a field/pilot test or demonstration in a few selected sites. The advantage of this method is that it allows for problem-solving and plan modification and improvement on a small scale. It also allows other communities to observe the process prior to their expected participation. If community implementation is chosen, the variables of geographic diversity and ethnic diversity should also be considered.

The choice of strategies may be made at the administrative or legislative level. However, the planning group should carefully study the strategies and be prepared to advise the decision-making body.

Specify Tasks, Responsibilities and Timelines. After strategies have been chosen, specific tasks, responsibilities and timelines can be developed. This phase is oriented toward concrete action; some planning group participants may find it to be the easiest part of the planning process.

For each strategy, a list of necessary tasks is developed, and responsibility for each task should be assigned to particular individuals or groups. If the tasks are listed in chronological order, it is relatively easy to develop a timeline for each objective. However, when several objectives are to be undertaken simultaneously, responsibility should be compared across objectives so that the timeline can be developed in terms of overall responsibilities.

Develop Plan for Evaluation. At this point, and prior to implementation, sufficient information is available to allow the planning group to develop an evaluation process. Developing the evaluation design at this point of the process helps the planning group to clearly understand the criteria by which success will be determined. It helps in

determining the costs and staff time needed to conduct the overall evaluation. And it allows for collection of evaluation data throughout the implementation process—not just at the project's end.

The content of the evaluation should incorporate:

- Information on the attainment of the plan's goals and objectives, e.g., was the plan implemented?
- Pertinent quantitative data, i.e., number of children served; number of teachers certified; number of programs initiated; number of training activities conducted; amount of money spent, etc.
- Data on the effectiveness of the plan and additional benefits derived.

Methods of collecting evaluative information may include questionnaires, data forms, individual interviews, observations, group meetings or public hearings.

There are many evaluation formats, both internal (self-evaluation) and external (outside party). Van de Ven and Koenig (1976) suggest that an evaluation design is generally determined by four criteria: effort, effectiveness, efficiency and possible side effects. It is also important to understand the limitations of the evaluation design and to provide for flexibility as the implementation progresses.

Assure Administrative and Public Support. At this point, it is important to reconfirm the commitment of administrative support. Such a commitment should include support of the overall plan per se, as well as a commitment to secure the necessary resources for implementation of the plan.

Casterline (Note 1) suggests that administrative approval can be facilitated by a careful analysis of needs and public involvement in decision making. She states:

If the plan has been derived from an analysis of population need and with public involvement at every critical decision-making point in the process, the administration should be able to adopt the plan with a clear conscience as well as a dedication to the plan as the best blueprint for service. (p. 126)

Public support for the plan is an ongoing concern and a critical variable in the ultimate success of implementation. An active process of disseminating information and developing of support should

begin in the plan development phase and continue through implementation. The groups initially involved in identification of needs should again be contacted for final input and comments prior to implementation.

PHASE THREE: IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation component will determine whether the planning process has been realistic and viable and whether it meets the needs of the target population. Van de Ven and Koenig (1976) have pointed out four criteria which are critical to the success of implementation: 1) Commitment to the plan and direct involvement of line administration, 2) Technical assistance and training provided to staff in their new roles, 3) Monitoring and evaluation to provide feedback to staff, and finally, 4) The active participation of the program staff in making corrective adjustments.

It is important to stress the cyclical nature of the planning process. Implementation is one component of that cycle, but not the end of the process. Among other things, implementation contributes to the planning process in terms of: disseminating information, evaluating and reporting, and analyzing feedback and making revisions.

Disseminate Information. As previously stated, it is essential that communication be maintained throughout the planning process. The success of dissemination greatly depends on the effectiveness of the ongoing communication. If individuals, agencies and organizations which will be effected by the plan have been continually informed and involved throughout the planning process (possibly through a formal method of providing feedback and input to the planning group), they will identify with the plan and will be anticipating their involvement in its implementation.

The dissemination component includes a complete and clear description of the approved plan and the individual's or group's role in its implementation. This includes both internal information dissemination and external public awareness activities. Internal activities include identifying audiences in state government and informing them about the plan through a variety of means, such as presentations at meetings, one-to-one discussions with key individuals and departmental newsletters. External activities include identifying audiences outside of state government which will be effected by the plan (LEAs, hospitals/clinics, universities, professional organizations, private service agencies) and communicating the information through such means as public media, public newsletters, presentations at conferences and meetings, workshops, brochures and general technical assistance. Methods and contacts used by the state child-find efforts may also be useful in disseminating information.

Evaluate and Report. Evaluations will be conducted during the implementation phase, as established in the plan. The resulting data will form the basis for any revisions of the plan, including the evaluation process itself. During this phase, the planning group needs to consider the extensiveness of the evaluation, its cost factors, the personnel needed and how the evaluation information will be used. Internal and/or external evaluators may be involved in the actual evaluation of the plan.

Critical to the success of the plan is the dissemination of evaluation results. With actual data and indicators of success, additional support and/or funds may be more readily available from various agencies, parent groups and legislative bodies.

Analyze Feedback and Revise. Evaluation data and other feedback should be analyzed throughout the implementation phase. In some cases, this will result in recommendations to local program leaders who are actively involved in making corrective modifications and improvements. In other cases, it may be necessary to return to the planning process. It is this continual process of evaluation and analysis that best exemplifies the ongoing nature of effective planning.

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