

Early On[®] Family Rights



PART **4** OF THE *EARLY ON* GUIDEBOOK

This is Part 4 of the *Early On*[®] Guidebook. It contains brief, easy-to-read information about your rights while your child is involved with *Early On*. It also tells you who is responsible to help you be informed about and apply your rights. The information in this guidebook will help you if your family has any concerns at any time in the *Early On* process.

As you go through this part of the guidebook, you will find underlined words. These are words commonly used in *Early On* in talking about rights. They are defined within the text the first time you see them, and/or you can find them in the Glossary at the end of the book.

You will also find references to another document, the *Early On* Procedural Safeguard Standards. The Procedural Safeguard Standards contain the legal language about a family's rights when they are in *Early On*. This booklet explains these Procedural Safeguard Standards to you. References to these standards are in **bold type** in this section [i.e.: **PSS 340.1930(a)**]. If you would like to read the complete legal language about your rights, your Service Coordinator (your main contact in *Early On*) will give you a copy of the Procedural Safeguard Standards document. The standards can be found on the Web at www.michigan.gov/documents/ProcSafeStandards_55737_7.pdf.

Understanding This Guidebook

If you need help reading or understanding the contents of this Guidebook, please contact 1-800-EARLY ON (1-800-327-5966).

PART

4

YOUR LOCAL EARLY ON CONTACT

For additional copies, contact the above *Early On* Coordinator.

Early On Family Rights





What Are Family Rights?

As the parent of a child who may be eligible for *Early On*, you have rights. These rights are the checks and balances that are built into the *Early On* system to help make sure everything goes well for your child and family.

Sometimes family rights are called procedural safeguards. Procedural safeguards are part of the federal law called the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* that started *Early On*. Their purpose is to guard your rights and assure that the *Early On* process happens as it is supposed to for you and your child. They support a positive and high-quality experience with *Early On*. By applying your rights, you and the *Early On* system can make sure that you are fully informed and fully involved in every aspect of *Early On*.



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When Do Our Rights Apply?

Procedural safeguards (rights) begin with your first contact with *Early On*. They continue through the entire time you are involved with *Early On*. Your rights apply when any person or agency works with you and your child through *Early On*. They also apply to any *Early On* paperwork.



When Do We Learn About Our Rights?

Early On will inform you of your rights soon after they first contact you. Your rights will also be explained to you, and you will be given this booklet. You will be able to ask questions about your rights. [PSS 340.1902] The other Family Guidebooks (Parts 1–3) will also help you to understand how *Early On* works and how your rights apply as you move through *Early On*.

You and your Early On team will review your rights often. Your Early On team includes you, your service coordinator, and the people who provide services to you and your family. Knowing your rights will support you in making decisions about your child and family's involvement with Early On.



What Does Consent Mean?

Consent means that your Early On team must get your permission in writing (your signature) before they start or stop any activity that affects your child and family. [PSS 340.1931]

An important part of giving consent is that you are fully informed before you sign anything. Fully informed means you understand what will happen. You understand the benefits, responsibilities, and any consequences so you can make a choice about participating. [PSS 340.1902; PSS 340.1930(a)(1)] To make sure you understand what will happen, Early On will explain things to you in your native language. Native language means the language you usually speak, or in your typical means of communication. [PSS 340.1922] Any document you sign will also describe the agreed activity. [PSS 340.1930(a)(1)]

You give consent by signing a form. Your signature on the form means that:

- You have been provided with all the information you need to understand the activity.
- You understand the information you have been given.
- You agree that all available options were explored.
- You understand any responsibilities you might have in this activity.
- You understand whether there will be any financial charges related to this activity and, if so, you know what they are.
- You agree to carry out the activity, your responsibilities, and financial charges (if any). [PSS 340.1930(a)(2)]



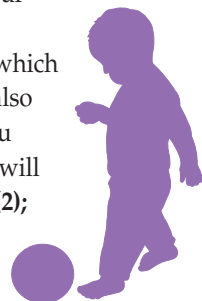
If you do not understand why you are giving consent, or what you are agreeing to, ask your *Early On* teammates to give you more information or answer your questions before you sign any forms, or call 1-800-EARLY ON (1-800-327-5966).

It is important to remember that giving consent for any *Early On* activity is voluntary. However, keep in mind that *Early On* cannot even begin if you do not give your consent. If you have given consent to an *Early On* activity, you may change your mind and withdraw your consent at any time. [PSS 340.1930(a)(3)]

When Do We Give Consent?

Early On must have your consent (signature) before the following activities occur:

- **An evaluation to find out if your child is eligible for *Early On*.** Evaluation is a process used to learn if a child is eligible for *Early On*. If you don't give consent for an evaluation to take place, *Early On* is not able to see if your child is eligible for supports or services through *Early On*. [PSS 340.1931(a)(1)]
- **A family assessment to learn what your family needs to help your child grow and learn.** A family assessment is a process to let the family discuss their concerns, resources, and priorities to help them help their child grow and learn. Unlike the evaluation, this family assessment is voluntary. Your child can receive support even if you do not want a family assessment. [PSS 340.1931(a)(1); 34 CFR 303.322 (d)(3)]
- **Beginning supports and services that are listed in your Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).** An IFSP is your written plan that describes what supports and services (information and help) you will receive. You may choose which supports and services you will want to receive. You may also give consent for each of those supports and services. If you choose not to consent to some supports and services, you will still receive the others that you do want. [PSS 340.1931(a)(2); PSS 340.1930(a)(4)]



- **Changing the services in your Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).** As your child grows and changes, your IFSP will also change. You will need to give consent before any old services can end or any new services listed on your IFSP can begin. [PSS 340.1931(a)(2)]
- **New evaluations that you and your *Early On* team decide are needed for your child.** Ongoing assessment and monitoring of your child’s progress is not a new evaluation and does not require additional consent. [PSS 340.1931(a)(1)]



Who Can Give Consent?

Consent for *Early On* activities can be given by a parent, an adoptive parent, a guardian, or a person acting as the parent when the parent is not available. This could be, for instance, a grandparent or a step-parent who resides with the child. [34 CFR 303.19]

If a parent/guardian for the child cannot be identified or located, or if a parent’s rights have been terminated, a surrogate parent will be appointed on behalf of the child. A surrogate parent is a person who will represent the rights of a child eligible for *Early On*. [PSS 340.1935(a)] A foster parent may not give consent for *Early On* unless he or she has been formally appointed as a surrogate parent.

Once appointed, a surrogate parent has the same rights as a parent in all *Early On* activities including consent, evaluation, IFSP development, and services. [PSS 340.1935(b)]



How Is Information About Our Family Kept Private?

Early On may not share written or verbal personally identifiable information about your child and family with anyone else unless they have your permission to do so. [PSS 340.1931(a)(3)]

Personally identifiable information may include name, address, social security number, and other information that would make your child's or family's identity reasonably certain. [PSS 340.1901(e)]

Early On information is protected by a Federal law, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). FERPA says that written information related to a child's education cannot be shared without a family's permission.



Why Does *Early On* Share Information?

Early On might need to share information about your child and family in order to:

- Make referrals to supports or services.
- Gather information from other agencies or programs.
- Help coordinate services across agencies or programs.
- Transfer information within an agency (from one program to another).

Information about your child and/or family may not be used for anything other than carrying out *Early On*. [PSS 340.1912]



How Do We Give Permission to Share Information?

In order to share information, *Early On* must obtain your written consent (signature). *Early On* will work with you to make sure that you are fully informed before you give consent. [PSS 340.1902; PSS 340.1930(a)(1)] *Early On* will explain everything to you in your native language and describe the activity that you are agreeing to. [PSS 340.1930(a)(1)]

You give permission to share information by signing a form. Your signature on a form means that:

- You have been provided with all the information you need to understand why *Early On* shares information.

- You understand the information you have been given.
- You understand that the information may be shared in writing or verbally.
- You have chosen what information may be shared.
- You have chosen who can receive which pieces of information.
- You understand that your consent to share information expires in six months and must be renewed before any further information can be shared. [PSS 340.1912; PSS 1930(a)(2); PSS 340.1931(a)(3)]

If you do not understand why you are giving consent to share information, or what you are agreeing to, ask your *Early On* teammates to give you more information or answer your questions before you sign any forms.

It is important to remember that giving consent for *Early On* to share information is voluntary. If you have given consent to share information, you may change your mind and withdraw your consent at any time without penalty. [PSS 340.1930(a)(3)]

What if We Don't Want *Early On* to Share Information?

You do not have to give consent to share information in order to be in *Early On*. If you choose not to share information, you will still sign a form to make sure this choice is clear. [PSS 340.1931] It is important to know that if you decide not to allow *Early On* to share information, it may limit the ways in which *Early On* can help your family. Or, it can limit *Early On's* ability to gather information that can show if your child is eligible to participate. Allowing *Early On* to share information will enable you to get the best possible support to help your child grow and learn.





How Will We Know if *Early On* Has Shared Information About Us?

If *Early On* shares any information about you and your child, they must keep a record of that action. The record must show:

- What information was released from your file.
- When the information was released.
- Whom the information was shared with.
- Why the information was shared. [PSS 340.1904]



Where Does *Early On* Keep Information About Our Child and Family?

Early On keeps information in your *Early On* record. A central *Early On* record is kept for each child participating in *Early On*. [PSS 340.1906] Your child's *Early On* record includes any information collected about your child and family during your time in *Early On*. It includes information that was gathered with your consent, for example:

- Information from other sources, such as doctors or other agencies and programs.
- Information from your child's evaluation.
- Information from your family assessment (if you chose to have one).
- Information from your Individualized Family Service Plans.
- Information from any other papers during your time in *Early On*. [PSS 340.1901(b)]

Because many agencies and programs may provide services to your child and family during your time in *Early On*, other agencies and programs may also keep a record for your child and family. [PSS 340.1901 (c) & (d)]



What if We Want to See Our Records?

Upon request, you may see any of your child's and family's *Early On* records. [PSS 340.1903(a)] When you make a request to see your records, *Early On* must:

- Allow you to see the records unless the agency has a court order that says you do not have the right to see the records. [PSS 340.1903(c)]
- Provide you with the information within 15 working days. [PSS 340.1903(a)]
- Provide you with a list of the types and locations of *Early On* records kept by other agencies or programs. [PSS 340.1906]
- Allow you to see your records either one agency at a time or through the central record kept by *Early On*. [PSS 340.1906]
- Provide you with an explanation or interpretation of the records by a professional staff person if you do not understand the records. If you are deaf or English is not your usual language, you may have an interpreter. [PSS 340.1903(b)(1)]
- Provide you with copies of the records under certain conditions. Sometimes there may be a fee for copying records. [PSS 340.1903(b)(2); PSS 340.1907]
- Allow you to have someone you choose see the records. [PSS 340.1903(3)]



What if We Want to Change Something in Our Records?

If you believe that information in your child's and family's record is incorrect, misleading, or violates your privacy, you may ask that the records be changed. [PSS 340.1908(a)]

If you ask to have your records changed, *Early On* must:

- Decide within 15 working days whether to make the requested change. [PSS 340.1908(b)]
- Inform you if *Early On* or another agency refuses to make the change as you have asked. [PSS 340.1908(c)]
- Inform you that you have the right to ask for mediation (an informal process with a neutral person who meets with parents and agencies to see if they can come to an agreement about resolving their dispute) or a due process hearing (a formal process used to try to resolve disagreements) if your request is refused (see page 19). [PSS 340.1908 (c); 340.1909]
- Allow you to add an explanation of your concerns about the record to the file. [PSS 340.1908(c)]
- Include your explanation whenever the rest of the file is released. [PSS 340.1908(c)]

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What Happens to Our Record When *Early On* Ends?

When *Early On* ends for your child and family, you will be informed that your record is no longer needed by *Early On*. [PSS 340.1914(a)] *Early On* might end because a child has turned three, because a family no longer needs or wants services, or for other reasons. At that time, you have the right to ask that appropriate information be forwarded to other programs, agencies, or destroyed. [PSS 340.1914(b)] Destroyed means permanently removing all personally identifiable information. Once the personally identifiable information is removed, the rest of your record will be stored away for five years and taken out only if it is needed for program monitoring.

What Other Rights Do We Have?

Beside your rights about giving consent and sharing information, you have rights related to other *Early On* activities:

At the time of your referral to *Early On*:

- You will be notified that a referral has been made to *Early On*. A referral is a recommendation to have a child evaluated by *Early On*. *Early On* has ten calendar days to notify you about the referral and request consent to do an evaluation. [PSS 340.1921]
- A service coordinator must be assigned to work with your child and family as soon as possible. They support and assist the family to find and coordinate services the entire time they are in *Early On*. [34 CFR 303.343(a)(1)(iv)]

At the time of your child's evaluation for eligibility:

- Your child will be evaluated for eligibility for *Early On* within 45 calendar days of your referral. [34 CFR 303.322(e)]
- Your child's evaluation will be completed by people who are trained to do evaluations of young children. [34 CFR 303.322(c)(1)]
- Your child's evaluation (and family assessment, if you choose to have one) will be completed in your native language or in your typical means of communication. [PSS 1920(a); 340.1930(a)(1)]
- The evaluation and assessment materials used will not be racially or culturally biased. [34 CFR 303.323(b)]
- You will be informed of the results of your child's evaluation and whether your child is eligible for *Early On*. [34 CFR 303.344(a)(1)]

At the time of your Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP):

- You and your *Early On* team will work together to write your IFSP. [34 CFR 303.343(a)(1)(i)]
- Your IFSP meeting will take place at a time and place that is convenient for your family. [34 CFR 303.342(d)(1)(i)]
- The date and time of your IFSP meeting will be given to you in writing. [34 CFR 303.342(d)(2); PSS 340.1920]


- Your IFSP meeting must take place within 45 calendar days from the date of your referral to *Early On*.
[34 CFR 303.342(a)]
- Your IFSP meeting can be delayed with your consent, though the reason for delay must be related to the needs of your child and family. [34 CFR 303.322(e)]
- You may invite anyone you choose to be a part of the team that helps you create your IFSP. This includes family, friends, other parents of children with disabilities, etc.
[34 CFR 303.343]

While you are receiving services:

- With your consent, your IFSP and services may be updated or changed at any time. [34 CFR 303.342(b)(1)]
- You and your *Early On* team will review your IFSP and services at least every six months. [34 CFR 303.342(b)(1)]
- If *Early On* wants to make changes to your child's eligibility status, IFSP, or services, you must be given written prior notice seven calendar days before the proposed change. Written prior notice means that written information is given to the family ahead of time to inform them about a proposed action or change. [PSS 340.1920(a)]
- The written notice must tell you about the proposed change, the reason for the change, and all of your rights related to the change. [PSS 340.1920(b)]
- If a change is made to your IFSP, *Early On* must obtain your consent before making the change. [PSS 340.1931(2)]

When you leave *Early On*:

- You and your *Early On* team will develop a plan to guide you and your child's transition out of *Early On*.
[34 CFR 303.148]
- If you are leaving *Early On* because your child is turning three, your transition plan must be developed at least 90 calendar days before your child's third birthday. [34 CFR 303.148(b)(2)(i)]
- You will decide what you want done with your *Early On* record. [PSS 340.1914(c)]



What Happens if We Disagree With *Early On*?

When a group of people works together, sometimes they don't agree. If you and your *Early On* team do not agree on something—for example, the eligibility decision, any parts of your IFSP, and/or proposed changes to your IFSP—there are several ways to try to resolve the disagreement. A first step is to try to resolve the disagreement informally, with your service coordinator, or with your local *Early On* Coordinator (your *Early On* Coordinator is the person in charge of *Early On* in a local county or counties). You can try to find other options that the team has not thought of yet. If this does not work, you can use mediation or a due process hearing to address the disagreement:

- Mediation is when you and *Early On* both agree to work with a mediator—a trained, impartial person—to help you discuss your disagreement and come to an agreement. [PSS 340.1945]
- A due process hearing is when you work with a hearing officer—a trained, impartial person—who listens to the evidence and arguments and decides what is right and who must do what. [PSS 340.1940(a)(1)]

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How Does Mediation Work?

There are options for requesting mediation services.

- To directly access mediation and facilitation services in your county or for more information, contact Dispute Resolution Educational Resources, Inc., phone 1-800-8-RESOLVE (1-800-873-7658), for the Michigan Special Education Mediation Program (MSEMP).
- You may submit a written request for mediation to the Michigan Department of Education. You will need to sign and date your request for mediation.
- If you wish, your service coordinator can help you submit your request for mediation. [PSS 340.1945]

If you decide to submit a written request to the Michigan Department of Education:

- The Michigan Department of Education will help identify a mediator or mediation service to work with you and *Early On* at the Department's expense.
- Selection of a mediator or mediation service is subject to the mutual agreement of both you and *Early On*.
- The mediation session will be scheduled in a timely manner and held in a location convenient to both of you.
- Your disagreement must be resolved and a written agreement made within 30 calendar days after you request mediation.
- If you do not reach an agreement, you may still ask for a due process hearing. [PSS 340.1945]

How Does a Due Process Hearing Work?

In order to have a due process hearing:

- You must submit a written request for a due process hearing to the Michigan Department of Education.
- You will need to sign and date your request.
- You will need to explain the reason you are making the request (explain the disagreement).
- Your service coordinator may help you to file your written request for a due process hearing. [PSS 340.1940]

Once your request for a due process hearing has been filed:

- The Michigan Department of Education will confirm that they received your request within five working days of receipt.
- The Michigan Department of Education will appoint a hearing officer at their expense.
- An impartial due process hearing will be completed in no more than 30 calendar days.
- The written decision of the hearing officer will be mailed to you and to *Early On*. [PSS 340.1942]

With a due process hearing, you have the right to:

- Be informed of free or low-cost legal services.
- Have an attorney or other knowledgeable people assist you.
- Present evidence and confront, cross-examine, and compel the attendance of witnesses.
- Have evidence disclosed to you at least five working days before the hearing.
- Receive written transcriptions and written findings of facts and decisions. [PSS 340.1942]

What if We Disagree With the Results of the Due Process Hearing?

If you disagree with the results of the due process hearing, you have the right to bring a civil action. A civil action is a lawsuit filed in state or federal court. An attorney can advise you as to how to do this. [PSS 340.1946]

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What Happens if We Think Our Rights Have Been Violated?

If you believe that any of your rights that are described in this guidebook have been violated, you or an organization can file a complaint with the Michigan Department of Education or with any public agency provider of services for *Early On*. A public agency provider is any public agency that provides services through *Early On* (i.e. Family Independence Agency [FIA]; Department of Community Health [DCH], Public and Mental). A complaint is a claim that *Early On* has failed to comply with the state and/or federal regulations that guide *Early On*. [34 CFR 303.511]

If you choose to file a complaint, your complaint must:

- Be in writing, dated, and signed by you.
- Include a statement that *Early On* has violated state or federal law or regulations related to *Early On*.
- Include the facts about the complaint.
- The alleged violation must have occurred no more than one year before the date of the complaint unless there is a reason to have a longer period in which to file the complaint. [34 CRF 303.511(b)]

How Does the Complaint Investigation Work?

Once your complaint has been filed:

- Your complaint will be investigated, usually by the agency against which you have made the complaint. Complaints against *Early On* are investigated at the state level, but complaints against other public agency providers of services are usually investigated locally. In the event that you wish to submit a complaint, it should be put in writing and mailed to the Michigan Department of Education.
- A written decision will be issued within 60 calendar days of receiving the complaint.
- During the investigation, your child will still receive the services on his or her most recent IFSP that are not part of the complaint. [34 CRF 303.512]

If you disagree with the results of the investigation, you may appeal the decision to the Michigan Department of Education.

An appeal is when you ask to have your complaint and the local decision investigated at a higher level. A final decision would then be made at that higher level.
[34 CRF 303.510(a)(1)]



If you disagree with the results of the appeal to the Michigan Department of Education, you have the right to ask the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education to review the Michigan Department of Education's final decision.
[34 CFR 303.512(d)]

If you disagree with the results of the appeal, you have the right to bring a civil action in state or federal court. An attorney can advise you as to how to do this.
[PSS 340.1946]

What Is the Difference Between a Disagreement and a Complaint?

A disagreement is when you don't agree with a decision made by your *Early On* team. This would be a decision that is legal, yet you have a reason to oppose the decision, or you have a different opinion about what should happen for you and your child. For example, you might disagree about:

- A decision about eligibility.
- Types of supports and services.
- Location or frequency of supports and services.
- Method of providing supports or services.
- Other aspects of your supports and services.

A complaint is a written claim that a law or a set of regulations has been violated. Complaints and disagreements are handled through different processes, as described above.

Where Do We Send Requests for Due Process Hearings or Complaints?

You may mail written requests for due process hearings or complaints to the Michigan Department of Education at:

Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services
Michigan Department of Education
608 W. Allegan
P.O. Box 30008
Lansing, MI 48909

What if I Want Further Information About Our Rights?

If you would like to read the Procedural Safeguard Standards document, or the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) so that you have the complete legal language about your rights, your Service Coordinator will give you a copy.

You may also call 1-800-EARLY ON (1-800-327-5966) to find other information or help that relates to your rights.

Be sure to read other available guidebooks to learn more about your time in *Early On*.

- **Part 1: Welcome to *Early On***
- **Part 2: Our Individualized Family Service Plan**
- **Part 3: Transition: Leaving *Early On***

34 CFR 303.000(x): This is a reference to a section of the federal law, the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA), that applies to *Early On*. “34 CFR” refers to the law itself, “303” means the section that applies to *Early On* (i.e. Part C of the law), and the remaining numbers and letters help you find specific sections of the law.

Appeal: A request to have a situation or decision investigated at a higher level. A final decision is then made at that higher level.

Civil Action: A lawsuit filed in state or federal court.

Complaint: A claim that a law or a set of regulations has been violated. The claim would be about how *Early On* has failed to comply with the state and/or federal regulations that guide *Early On*.

Consent: Obtaining a parent’s permission in writing (i.e. signature) before *Early On* starts or stops any activity that affects a child and family or before *Early On* shares information about a family or child.

Destroyed: Permanent removal of all personally identifiable information from paperwork or files.

Due Process Hearing: A formal process used to try to resolve disagreements. The hearing is conducted with a neutral person, the Hearing Officer, who listens to the evidence and arguments of the parents and the agencies and decides who is right and who must do what.

Early On Coordinator: A person in charge of *Early On* in a local county or counties.

Early On Record: All of the papers and plans gathered during your time in *Early On*. It is also the information you gave and information that was gathered from others.

Early On Team: A team that includes the parents and the service coordinator. It also includes people who provide services. Everyone will work together to support the growth and learning of a child.

Evaluation: A process to learn about a child’s growth and development. Also used to find out if a child is eligible for *Early On*.

Family Assessment: A process to let the family discuss their concerns, resources, and priorities to help them be better able to help their child grow and learn.

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): A federal law protecting personally identifiable information that is held in a child’s education record.

Fully Informed: Having all of the information so that potential benefits, responsibilities, and consequences can be considered before making a decision.

Hearing Officer: A trained, impartial person who helps resolve disagreements.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP): A written plan of action that guides what will happen while a child and family are involved with *Early On*. It lists what activities, supports, and services are needed by the child and family.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act—Part C (IDEA): The federal law that guides the education of children with disabilities. Part C of the IDEA law tells how each state needs to plan and provide their early intervention system. It also explains the rights families have.

Intermediate School District (ISD): An education agency that helps oversee *Early On* and special education in local areas. ISDs are sometimes called RESDs or RESAs.

Mediation: An informal process with a neutral person, the mediator, who meets with the parents and the agencies to see if they can come to an agreement about resolving their dispute.

Mediator: A trained, impartial person who facilitates problem-solving.

Michigan Department of Education: The agency that oversees *Early On* in all intermediate and local school districts around Michigan. *Early On* funding comes through the Michigan Department of Education.

Native Language: The language or mode of communication typically used by a family.

PSS 340.0000(x): This is a reference to another document, the *Early On* Procedural Safeguard Standards. The Procedural Safeguard Standards contain the legal language about a family's rights when they are involved with *Early On*. "PSS" means the document itself, "340" means that this is about *Early On* rights, and the remaining numbers and letters help you find specific sections of the standards.

Personally Identifiable Information: Information that includes, but is not limited to: the child's name, name of the child's parent or other family member, the address of the child or the child's family, a personal identifier such as the parent or child's social security number, a list of personal characteristics, or other information that would make the identity of the child or family reasonably certain.

Procedural Safeguards: Actions or guidelines that are in place to guard your rights.

Public Agency Provider: A public agency that provides *Early On* services.

Referral: A recommendation to have a child evaluated for *Early On*. The referral starts the *Early On* process. It occurs because of a concern about a child's development or health issue.

Rights: Checks and balances that are built into the *Early On* system to assure that the *Early On* process happens as it is supposed to for children and families. Rights are the legal safeguards that a family is entitled to.

Services: When a trained professional works directly with a child or helps a family learn how to support their child.

Service Coordinator: The family's main contact in *Early On*. This person supports and assists the family the entire time they are in *Early On*. He or she knows about and has worked with children with developmental delays.

Supports: Help, resources, or information.

Surrogate Parent: A surrogate parent is a person who is appointed to represent the rights of a child eligible for *Early On* when the child's natural parents cannot be found or when the natural parents have had their rights terminated.

Written Prior Notice: Written information given to the parents to inform them ahead of time about a proposed action or change.

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fighting for a Great Start
for every child in our state.”**

Governor

Jennifer M. Granholm

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Understanding This Guidebook

If you need help reading or understanding the contents of this guidebook,
please contact 1-800-EARLY ON (1-800-327-5966).

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