



Early Steps

Part C of the Individuals With Disabilities
Education Act (IDEA) System in Florida

*An Overview for Part B Hearing Officers:
Module 1*





Purpose and Disclaimer

Purpose:

- Orient hearing officers who are familiar with Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) with the Part C requirements.
- Provide a collection of resources on Part C requirements.

Disclaimer:

- This Module is a technical assistance product intended for discussion purposes only and does not constitute legal advice nor is it intended to interpret law or regulation.



Outcomes of Modules

- Develop familiarity with Part C/Early Steps requirements, processes, and procedures
- Recognize key differences between Parts B & C
- Be knowledgeable about state-specific information relating to Early Steps
- Know where to locate Part C resources



Module 1: Overview

- Part C Purpose
- Federal Statutes
- Regulations
- Early Steps Policies/Guidance
- Lead Agency Designation
- Part C & B Key Differences
- Part C Words/Acronyms to Know



Part C Purpose

- Congress established the early intervention program for infants and toddlers with disabilities in 1986, as Part H of the IDEA. In 1997, Part H changed to Part C, when the IDEA was reauthorized.
- Congressional findings supported the need to:
 - Enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities, to minimize their potential for developmental delay, and to recognize the significant brain development that occurs during a child's first 3 years of life,
 - Reduce the educational costs to society by minimizing the need for special education and related services when infants and toddlers reach school age,



Part C Purpose continued

- Maximize the potential for individuals with disabilities to live independently in society,
- Enhance the capacity of families to meet the special needs of their infants and toddlers with disabilities, and
- Enhance the capacity of state and local agencies and service providers to identify, evaluate, and meet the needs of all children, particularly minority, low-income, inner city, and rural children and infants and toddlers in foster care.



Federal Statutes

Individuals With Disabilities Education Act

- Part B: Special Education and Related Services for Children with Disabilities

<http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cstatute%2C>

- Part C: Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers (under three years of age) with Disabilities

<http://idea.ed.gov/part-c/statutes>



Regulations

- Federal Part B: 34 CFR Part 300



<http://idea.ed.gov/download/finalregulations.html>

- Federal Part C: 34 CFR Part 303

<http://idea.ed.gov/part-c/regulations/1>



Early Steps Policies/Guidance

- Early Steps Policy Handbook
 - Includes state and federal requirements noted by either a federal  or state  symbol
- Early Steps Policy Guidance
 - Refers to related policy number
 - Not guidance for every policy

http://www.cms-kids/home/resources/es_policy/es_policy.html



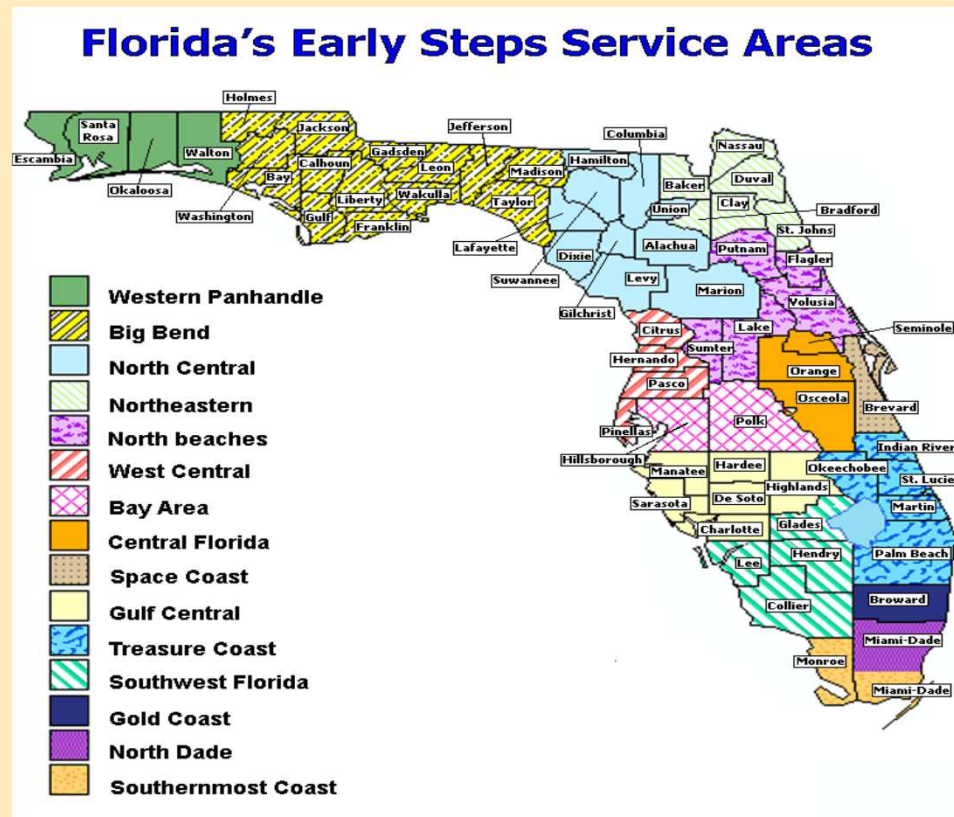
Lead Agency Designation

- Each state's EI program has a Lead Agency (LA) designated or established by its governor responsible for:
 - general administration,
 - supervision,
 - monitoring,
 - funding, and
 - interagency coordination of programs and activities in the State.
- In Florida, the lead agency is the Department of Health, Children's Medical Services, Early Steps State Office.



Structure

- The Early Steps State Office contracts with 15 programs throughout Florida (Local Early Steps) who provide services and supports to children and their families.





Philosophy

- Brings services into the child and family's life rather than fitting the child into services.
- Maximizes each child and family's everyday natural learning opportunities.
- Enhances each child's development and participation in community life.
- Provides each child and family with a consistent team for evaluation and services.



Eligibility

- A child under the age of three is eligible for services if he/she has a diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay or has developmental delay.
- There are no financial eligibility requirements.



Established Conditions

- Genetic and metabolic disorders
- Neurological disorder
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Severe attachment disorder
- Sensory impairment (vision/hearing)
- Infants who weigh less than 1,200 grams at birth



Developmental Delay

- Developmental delay meets or exceeds 1.5 standard deviations below the mean in two or more developmental domains or 2.0 standard deviations below the mean in one or more of the following developmental domains, as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments, procedures, and informed clinical opinion in the following:
 - Cognitive
 - Physical (including vision and hearing)
 - Communication
 - Social or Emotional
 - Adaptive



Services and Supports

- Early intervention services and supports must be provided in a way that enhances family/caregiver competence, confidence and capacity to meet their child's developmental needs and desired outcomes.
- To the maximum extent appropriate to meet the needs of the child, early intervention services and supports must be provided in natural environment and within the context of everyday routines, activities, and places.



IFSP Process

- Services and supports are determined by the Individualized Family Support Plan Team which includes:
 - The parent(s) of the child,
 - Other family members, advocate(s), or person(s) outside the family, as requested by the parent(s),
 - The service coordinator responsible for implementing the IFSP,
 - A person(s) directly involved in conducting the evaluation and/or assessment,
 - Person(s) who are or will be providing early intervention services to the child or family, as appropriate.



Procedural Safeguards

- *Families have rights in Early Steps that include:*
 - *RECORDS/ CONFIDENTIALITY AND RELEASE OF INFORMATION*
 - *PRIOR WRITTEN NOTICE and NATIVE LANGUAGE*
 - *PARENTAL CONSENT*
 - *SURROGATE PARENTS*
 - *MEDIATION*
 - *COMPLAINT PROCEDURES*
 - *DUE PROCESS HEARING*



Transition

- An individualized transition plan must be completed for all enrolled children between 2 years 3 months and 2 years 9 months.
- Includes steps for the toddlers and family to exit.
- Includes services that the IFSP team identifies necessary for the child and family.



Parts C & B Key Differences

Part C (Birth through Age 2)	Part B (Ages 3-21)
Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)	Individualized Education Program (IEP)
EI Services Provided in Natural Environments	Special Education & Related Services Provided in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
Developmental/Learning Focus	Educational Focus
Child & Family-focused	Student-focused
Service Coordinator for Each Child & Family	No Requirement for Service Coordination
Fees Permissible	No Fees Permitted
No FAPE Requirement	FAPE Required
Lead Agency (LA)	State Education Agency (SEA)



Part C Words and Acronyms to Know

- The National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY) and the US Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) developed training curriculum (*The Basics of Early Intervention*) that include key acronyms and words for Part C that can be found at <http://nichcy.org/laws/idea/legacy/partc/module1#section2>



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Contact Information

Kelly Rogers, State Parent Consultant

Early Steps State Office

Kelly.Rogers@flhealth.gov

(850) 245-4200 ext. 3019

Renee Jenkins, Policy Unit Director

Early Steps State Office

Renee.Jenkins@flhealth.gov

(850) 245-4200 ext. 2233