



Early Steps

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

*An Overview for Part B Hearing Officers:
Module 2*





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 2: Overview

- Identify the process in Florida's Early Steps system that include:
 - Referral
 - Evaluation/Assessment/Eligibility
 - Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP)
 - Review of IFSP
 - Early Intervention Services
 - Qualified Personnel
 - Transition Planning
 - Exit



Referral

- **Referral:** Provision of information regarding a child who is potentially eligible for early intervention services through Early Steps due to possible developmental delay or established condition.

34 CFR §303.303



Referral

- Early Steps must:
 - Provide for an effective method for primary referral sources to make referrals for evaluation and assessment, and initial or interim IFSP as appropriate;
 - Inform referral sources of the requirement to make referrals as soon as possible but in no case more than seven calendar days after identifying a child who may have a developmental delay or an established; and
 - Provide procedures for primary referral sources, especially hospitals and physicians, to disseminate public awareness materials.



Evaluation/ Assessment

- **Evaluation:** The multidisciplinary procedures used by appropriate qualified personnel to determine a child's initial and continuing eligibility for Early Steps, including determining the status of the child in each of the developmental areas. [34 CFR §303.21](#)
- **Assessment:** The ongoing multidisciplinary procedures used by appropriate qualified personnel throughout the period of a child's eligibility to identify the child's unique strengths and needs and the services appropriate to meet those needs. [34 CFR §303.321](#)



Eligibility

- **Eligibility:**
 - Established conditions: A diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in disability or developmental delay that fall into one of the following categories:
 - 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 [34 CFR §303.21\(a\)\(2\)](#)

OR



Eligibility

- **Eligibility:**

- Developmental Delay: 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 and procedures and informed clinical opinion:

- Cognitive
- Physical (including vision and hearing)
- Communication
- Social or Emotional
- Adaptive [34 CFR §303.21\(a\)](#)



Service Coordination

- Each eligible child and family must be provided with one service coordinator who:
 - Is responsible for coordinating the timely implementation of the IFSP and
 - Promotes and supports the IFSP team's capacities and competencies to identify, obtain, coordinate, refer, monitor, and evaluate resources and services to meet the family's needs.

[34 CFR 303.34\(a\)\(2\)](#)



Individualized Family Support Plan

- **Individualized Family Support Planning Process:** A family-centered planning process based on evaluation and assessment involving the family, evaluators, the service coordinator, service providers and others, which results in a written plan of early intervention services to meet the identified outcomes for an individual child and family. IFSP services are implemented as soon as possible once parental consent is obtained.

[34 CFR§303.20](#)



Individualized Family Support Plan Meeting

- **Individualized Family Support Planning Meeting:**
 - Arranged by the service coordinator
 - Held in settings and times convenient to the family
 - Held in the native language of the family or other mode of communication used by the family, unless it is not feasible to do so

[34 CFR §303.342\(d\)\(1\)](#)



Individualized Family Support Plan Team

- **Individualized Family Support Plan Team:**
 - group consisting of the family, the service coordinator, and at least two (2) professionals from two different disciplines who have been or are currently involved in the assessment or provision of services to the child.
 - has specialists available, as appropriate, to address the individualized needs of infants and toddlers served.



Individualized Family Support Plan Team continued

- **Individualized Family Support Plan Team:**
 - works with the family to assess:
 - the functional status of the child;
 - the priorities, concerns and resources of the child and family;
 - develop the initial Individualized Family Support Plan;
 - assist in the implementation and review of progress toward achievement of identified outcomes;
 - makes modifications to the IFSP when appropriate; and
 - assists in developing transition plans when appropriate.



Periodic Review of the IFSP

- Periodic Review of the IFSP:
 - Must be reviewed at least every six months from the date of the initial or last annual review, or more frequently if conditions warrant, or if the family requests a review [34 CFR §303.342\(b\)\(1\)](#)
 - Reviewed to determine:
 - The degree to which progress toward achieving the results or outcomes identified on the IFSP is being made;
 - Whether modification or revision of the results or outcomes or early intervention services identified on the IFSP is necessary; and
 - Whether additional needs have been identified based on ongoing assessment/observation. [34 CFR §303.342\(b\)\(1\)](#)



Annual Review of the IFSP

- Annual Review of the IFSP: Face-to-face annual review of a child's development in all domains, including:
 - existing evaluations and assessments from community providers;
 - a determination of continuing eligibility; and
 - the success and appropriateness of the services authorized on the IFSP.
- The annual IFSP review considers revision(s) of the Individualized Family Support Plan as needed and agreed upon by the Individualized Family Support Plan Team.
- At a minimum, the family, service coordinator and at least one other professional member of the team must attend.

[34 CFR §303.342\(c\)](#)



Early Intervention Services

- **Early Intervention Services:**
 - Must be based on scientifically based research, to the extent practicable, are available to all infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. [34 CFR §303.112](#)
 - Must be provided in the natural environment and within the context of everyday routines, activities, and places, to the maximum extent appropriate. [34 CFR §303.13\(a\)\(8\)](#)



Early Intervention Services

- **Early Intervention Services:** Services that are designed to meet the developmental needs of an eligible child and their family as stated in the Individualized Family Support Plan and provided under public supervision by qualified personnel through private and public resources.

[34 CFR 303.13](#)



Early Intervention Services

- Early Steps must ensure the availability of the following:
 - Assistive Technology Devices and Services
 - Audiology
 - Family Training, Counseling, and Home Visits
 - Health Services
 - Medical Services
 - Nursing Services
 - Nutrition Services
 - Occupational Therapy
 - Physical Therapy
 - Psychological Services (including mental health and behavioral services)
 - Respite
 - Service Coordination
 - Sign Language and Cued Language
 - Social Work Services
 - Special Instruction
 - Speech Language Pathology
 - Translation/Interpretation
 - Transportation and related costs
 - Vision Services

**** The above is not an exhaustive list of the types of early intervention services.***



Qualified Personnel

- **Qualified Personnel:** IDEA, Part C regulations define qualified as personnel who have met State approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration or other comparable requirements that apply to the area in which the person is providing early intervention services.”

[34 CFR §303.13\(c\)](#)



Qualified Providers

- Services and supports must be provided by qualified personnel, including:
 - Special educators, including teachers of children with hearing impairments and teachers of children with visual impairments
 - Speech pathologists
 - Audiologists
 - Occupational therapists
 - Physical therapists
 - Psychologists
 - Social workers
 - Nurses
 - Registered dietitians
 - Family therapists
 - Vision specialists, including ophthalmologists and optometrists
 - Orientation and mobility specialists
 - Pediatricians and other physicians for diagnostic and evaluation purposes
 - Infant and Toddler Developmental Specialists (ITDS)



Transition Planning

- **Transition Planning:**
 - Must occur when a child transitions out of Early Steps for any reason, including at age three
 - An individualized transition plan must be developed that must:
 - Be completed for all children not fewer than 90 days and, at the discretion of all parties, not more than 9 months before the child's third birthday to assist with exiting Early Steps at age three;
 - Include steps for the toddler with a disability and family to exit Early Steps;
 - Include the family; and
 - Include any needed transition services that the IFSP team has identified as needed by the toddler and family.

[34 CFR §303.209\(d\)\(2\)](#)

[34 CFR §303.209\(d\)\(3\)](#)



Exit

- **Exit:**
 - Early Steps serves infants and toddlers from birth *to age three* who are eligible through Chapter 393, F.S.
 - 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. [IDEA §632\(5\)\(A\)](#)



Exit

- **Exit:**
 - Compensatory services may be provided after a child turns three because it has been determined that services have been delayed or interrupted due to failure on the part of Early Steps via one of the following:
 - Hearing decision
 - State Complaint decision
 - Mediation agreement
 - Finding through other general supervision activities



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>



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