

North Carolina Early Intervention
“Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs Online”
Guidance Document

For Implementation by EI Supervisors



Early Intervention Branch
www.bearly.nc.gov

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1. Rationale for “Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs Online”

Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs was originally created as an onsite, multi-day training opportunity. In 2008, the traditional face-to-face **Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs** was redesigned as an online course. Its purpose is to introduce new Infant-Toddler Program Early Intervention staff to the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) as the instrument specified by the North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program (NC ITP) for implementing services for eligible infants and toddlers and their families. The IFSP is **both** a process and a written document that involves a collaborative planning effort and partnership between the parent/family and professionals offering services and supports to the child and family. The written plan provides documentation of desired outcomes, services and strategies to meet outcomes, and the results of intervention efforts.

The North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program has adopted a family-centered approach to organizing and providing assistance and support to families. This approach is based upon principles of respecting every family’s individuality. Family-centered services respect the strengths and resourcefulness of all families. Family-centered services aim to support and encourage families in their efforts to independently meet the needs of their child with special needs. Family-centered services support family members in ways that they define as functional and appropriate for them. This family-centered philosophy is reflected throughout the IFSP development process.

Accessing state sponsored material via the web is only one aspect of introducing new staff to the complexity of a multi-faceted system. Exploring regional resources, connecting with professional colleagues and interacting with diverse families should still be integrated into the learning experience. Supervisors can utilize the ideas within this document to identify and implement supplemental training experiences tailored specifically for their staff.

Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs online is an introductory course. By studying the material in this web course, participants initiate an ongoing process of discovery about their own capabilities and those of the system in addition to the individual and collective families they serve.

Orientation Objectives

The target audience for the **Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs** online course is early interventionists who play a role in developing IFSPs for families with children with special needs. This audience includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Early Intervention Service Coordinators (required);
- Other Children's Developmental Services Agency (CDSA) direct service staff (required);
- Early Intervention network providers;
- Family members;
- Preschool teachers;
- Social Service caseworkers; and
- Specialized therapists.

The individuals exploring **Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs** online will acquire a core of introductory information to build a foundation of competence in IFSP development. With their supervisors' direction and pre-approval, new staff will study online material and complete the accompanying study guide. The completion of this training will result in meeting the following objectives:

- Gain an understanding of the **process** of IFSP development;
- Identify the required elements of the IFSP;
- Develop functional family-centered outcomes;
- Apply family-centered practice in facilitating the IFSP process; and
- Develop service delivery plans using the current IFSP form.

2. Required online course components

As noted, the **Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs** online course is required for all CDSA staff; other audiences are encouraged to participate as well.

Participants can go to the NC EI state website www.bearly.nc.gov and click on the **Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs** online course. They should read all the information posted within that site.

The course contains several major sections addressing: Overview of the IFSP Process, Focus on the Family and the Child, Developing Outcomes, Activities, and Service Plans, and Facilitating Reviews and Transitions. Examples, powerpoints, and case studies may be provided within the material to allow for further understanding and examination of topics addressed. Links direct the learner to the Parent Handbook, bulletins in the Infant-Toddler Program Manual and other guidance essential to the early intervention process.

Learning is enhanced when information has a purpose or the learner has a goal. A study guide provides questions for learners to check their understanding and document the completion of each section. Retention is achieved when

information can be reflected upon or discussed. Participants should be encouraged to note on the study guide their lists of concerns, inquiries or expansions desired for clarification of the material. Completing the study guide is part of the required online component for each learner. However, there is a strong hands-on component to emphasize the process of IFSP development and implementation.

3. Implementation of course

Supervisors can guide new staff to the state EI website www.beeearly.nc.gov and inform them of the expectations involved in completing the “**Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs Online**” materials.

Required online study

Staff must:

- Study online course material
- View built-in presentations
- Explore embedded links
- Read NC Parent Handbook
- Read Notice of Child and Family Rights
- Review the following Infant-Toddler Program manual bulletins
 - Statement of Philosophy
 - Referral Process
 - Service Planning and Delivery
 - Individualized Family Service Plans
 - Evaluations and Assessments
 - Transition out of Infant-Toddler Program
- Develop list of follow-up questions
- Complete the **Required Learning Activities** at the end of each section
- Complete accompanying **Required Study Guide**

“**Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs Online**” is designed to be used by individuals, but it is not limited to that approach. It is possible for participants to work in pairs or small groups. If supervisors prefer they can have a seasoned employee narrate the materials and guide new staff through it. Another option would be for individuals to study one major segment at a time and then come together in small groups to review each portion. This segmented approach may allow time for more focused discussions on topics of concern.

Follow-up Discussion

It is strongly recommended that whatever format is followed that at least one formal follow-up discussion be held. The follow-up discussion meeting can be scheduled for participants to raise any questions or concerns with a designated

person. It could be done individually or in small groups as long as it allows participants to view the material within the context of the community.

Specific times can be set aside for these question and answer sessions where IFSP development guidance can be supplied. If participants have no questions or concerns, then the supervisor might want to consider addressing some of the following topics:

- Identification of potential IFSP team members
- Appropriate practices and unacceptable behaviors
- Availability of community supports and resources
- Respect for family priorities and cultural values
- Family perspectives

Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs has always highlighted the expertise of families, and the online format continues to recommend that approach. The integration of a family perspective may take many forms, and supervisors can determine how to recognize families as experts and respect their experiences. Possibilities include, but are not limited to sharing a family perspective by:

- Listening to a presentation from a family member
- Attending a family support group meeting
- Meeting with a family representative on an advisory board
- Interviewing a family who has an older child
- Shadowing a family through an appointment
- Responding to specially arranged parent panels
- Mentoring provided by parents through phone/email
- Engaging in parent question and answer sessions
 - Set up in conjunction with other agencies on a regular basis
- Interacting with families via videoconferencing
- Viewing a video alongside invited parent representatives
 - Arranged for families to emphasize their reactions

4. Earning Credit

Infant-Toddler Program (ITP) credit for “**Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs Online**” will be **20 contact hours** (2.0 credits) in the competency area of **Interdisciplinary Family Service Planning**. ITP credit is for CDSA staff and contract network providers. Course completion should be documented on the credit form (page 13 of this document) and placed in each individual employee’s file for personnel certification.

Reading material is one step in understanding the IFSP development process. An individual’s online learning experience without extensive research and lengthy assignments will be much shorter in duration than a workshop or a professional

development event where application and interaction activities are woven into the structure of the training. To place information in context and to recognize community implications and family perspectives, participants need opportunities to engage with the material and with others.

Supervisors have the discretion to assign and approve what they deem as appropriate extended learning activities to enhance the online study. While these experiences could become lengthy and might also be arranged as part of an independent study credit for personnel certification, for purposes of “**Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs Online**” they would merely serve as an introduction.

Supplemental activities that may enhance the **Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs Online** experience:

Observation (watching a skilled professional during the IFSP process)

- Providing support to families
- Interviewing a parent
- Evaluating a child
- Conducting a therapy/intervention session
- Participating in a team meeting

Acquire information

- Read a current article about parent experiences
- Review files for examples of documentation
- Interact with a Family Support Network representative at the CDSA

Recognize collaboration

- Observe an assessment and the subsequent team interactions
- Attend a transition meeting to determine support strategies
- Follow a family through appointments

Identify resources

- View a recommended video and share reactions
- Gather brochures from other community resources
- Investigate regional library materials available for families
- Create a resource file to share with parents
- Bookmark ten links to use later with parents

Participate in outreach

- Visit a child care or a preschool (private or public school)
- Observe an interventionist trained in vision, hearing or autism specialty areas
- Attend a multi-cultural event involving an interpreter
- Attend a community family support activity

5. FAQs

- *When is “Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs Online” offered?*
The online course material is available whenever an agency wishes their employees to study it. The documentation for completing the “Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs Online” should be done when the participant completes the required activities.
- *Who can use “Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs Online” and its activities?*
As an online document the course is accessible to everyone including families, although for Children’s Developmental Services Agency staff, the training is required. It is suggested that participants read the material and do activities when they begin their responsibilities in early intervention because it is designed to be an introductory level course.
- *Are the web course and activities limited to being done individually?*
The required online course can be studied by persons reading material individually or by small groups being guided through it. The recommended follow-up discussions can occur in groups of varying sizes and the activities could be done in pairs or small groups. Documentation must be provided for individual participants.

6. Study Guide

The Study Guide directs the reader to essential material posted within the online course. Completion of the Study Guide is a required piece of the **Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs** Online training. By completing the questions, learners identify and apply core information. The Study Guide can also be used in the follow up discussion/supervision to understand with which areas the participant may need more guidance and assistance. The actual study guide questions will be available online and revised as the material is updated.

7. Documentation Form

You will find the form to document participation on page 13 of this document. Supervisors will need to complete and sign this document once the participant has completed all the required components for the **Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs** Online training. The participant will need to save this form to submit to a Certification Reviewer to document credit in the **Interdisciplinary Family Service Planning** competency area.

8. Training Continuum

Early interventionists are encouraged to be life-long learners. There are multiple ways to foster continued professional development beyond the “**Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs** Online.” Training can range from brief to prolonged opportunities.

Supervisors and certification reviewers can be involved in assisting staff in identifying, reviewing and approving activities for credit. Please refer to the NC Infant-Toddler Program Guidance for Personnel Certification for details and forms to submit other types of training experiences for credit.

Examples of formal training can include:

Audiotapes	Multi-day conferences
Authorship	Online classes
College courses	Practicums
Demonstrations	Pod-casts
Educational pilots	Research projects
Formal consultations	Tutorials
Independent studies	Videoconferences
Inservice	Videotapes
Lectures	Web-casts
Medical symposia	Workshops
Mentoring	

Developing and Implementing IFSPs

olms.cte.jhu.edu/olms/output/page.php?id=755

Early Intervention Training Center for Infants and Toddlers: www.fpg.unc.edu

Birth to Three and Beyond: www.birthto3.org/

Center for Early Education and Development: www.education.umn.edu/CEED/default.html

Circle of Inclusion: www.circleofinclusion.org

Closing the Gap, Inc.: www.closingthegap.com

Early Childhood Curricula and Resources: www.tsbvi.edu/school Early Childhood Educators and Family Web Corner: www.users.sgi.net/~cokids/

Family Village: www.familyvillage.wisc.edu

Nebraska Department of Education – IFSP Tutorial: www.ifspweb.org/

The Training and Technical Assistance Center: www.ttac.odu.edu

V.I. Guide: www.viguide.com

Chapter 6: Individualized Family Service Plan Development:
www.dhh.louisiana.gov/offices/page.asp?ID=334&Detail=7814

Assessment and transition modules

olms.cte.jhu.edu/olms/output/page.php?id=1214

Early childhood practices

www.researchtopractice.info/productBridges.php

Effective staff development

www.nichcy.org/pages/staffdevelopment.aspx

Emotional foundations/early learning modules

http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/training_modules.html

Family-centered services

<http://www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis/providers/providertraining.shtml>
www.nectac.org/~pdfs/pubs/assuring.pdf

Family-guided intervention modules

kskits.org/ta/Packets/WritingFamily_GuidedIFSP.shtml
kskits.org/ta/Packets/EnhancingFamilyPart.shtml

Parent/professional teams

<http://kihd.gmu.edu/mect/>

Resources for staff development

www.fpg.unc.edu/~scpp/crosswalks/toolbox/index.cfm

Responsive early intervention modules

<http://firstconnections.education.ne.gov/project.htm>

Service coordination modules

www.waisman.wisc.edu/birthto3/onlinelearning.php

Suggestions for working with infants and toddlers with visual impairments

www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=4182

Video and audio modules on birth to 3 issues

<http://www.uwex.edu/ics/stream/event.cfm?eid=11107>

Culturally and linguistically appropriate services in early childhood

clas.uiuc.edu/techreports.html

Topical resources from NECTAC

www.nectac.org/topics/topics.asp

Journal articles on early childhood research and practice

ecrp.uiuc.edu/

Infant mental health journal articles

www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/jhome/33748?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0

Providing services and supports to families in early intervention

www.doh.state.fl.us/alternatesites/cms-kids/providers/early_steps/training/es_training.html

Training modules for early intervention

<http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/FirstSteps/moduletraining.html>
www.waisman.wisc.edu/birthto3/onlinelearning.php www.fpg.unc.edu/~edin/resources.cfm

Administering the PEDS

www.azpedialearning.org/test1.asp

**Award of Credit
for the
Personnel Certificate
North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program**

*2.0 credits toward development of competence in
Interdisciplinary Family Service
Planning
awarded to:*

(name of participant)

*for participation in the activity
entitled*

Online Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs

presented by

NC Early Intervention Branch

Date of Completion

Supervisor Signature