

# Rhode Island Early Intervention Certification Standards Policies and Procedures

## VI. Individualized Family Service Plan

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**Certified EI providers are required to develop policies and procedures to assure the development of Individualized Family Service Plans for eligible children by a multidisciplinary team, including the parents. Requirements related to the Individualized Family Service Plan include:**

### **Eligibility/**

### **IFSP Meeting**

### **Procedural Safeguards**

### **IFSP Meeting Requirements**

- Meeting arrangements must be made with prior written notice provided to the family and other participants early enough before the meeting date to ensure they will be able to attend.

- Prior written notice must include the parent's right to dispute the eligibility determination and information regarding the right to appeal.

- The meeting must occur in a time and place convenient for the family.

- The meeting must be in the native language of the family (or any other mode of communication used by the family) unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.

- Participants must include the parent(s), EI service coordinator, a person or persons directly involved in conducting the evaluation of the child and assessment of the child and family or if necessary that person's involvement through other means is acceptable such as making pertinent records available at the meeting, an authorized representative or by conference call; and others as requested by the parent if feasible to do so (parents may include other family members, persons outside the family, etc.)

An Eligibility/IFSP Meeting which meets regulatory requirements (left) must be convened with the family within 45 days of the referral. The child's present levels of development are discussed with the parent using the framework of the three global child outcomes<sup>1</sup> and how the child's functioning compares to peers. The child's eligibility for Early Intervention is determined.

The Eligibility/IFSP Meeting occurs for all children whether they are eligible or not.

When a child is determined not eligible the parent must be:

- Notified in writing that the child is not eligible;
- Provided with a summary of the evaluation results;
- Provided with procedural safeguards;
- Provided with community resources if appropriate.

When a child is determined eligible the following occurs and is documented:

- An initial discussion regarding the concerns, priorities and resources of the parent.
- A Physician's Authorization form is sent and obtained

<sup>1</sup> The three global outcomes for young children are to:

1. Demonstrate positive social emotional skills (including positive social relationships);
2. Acquire and use knowledge and skills including early language/communication and early literacy skills;
3. Use appropriate actions to meet needs

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#### IFSP Development

IFSP development following an IFSP/Eligibility meeting includes the provision of a Routines Based Interview for all children determined eligible prior to 33 months of age. A focused Routines Based Interview is required for children determined eligible after 33 months of age.

At the completion of IFSP development activities (IFSP Outcomes development; IFSP services) an IFSP meeting which meets regulatory requirements is held.

At this meeting the IFSP is completed. EI providers must document the IFSP process by completing the most recent IFSP issued by EOHHS and by data entry of the IFSP in the EI data system. The most recent IFSP can be found at: <http://www.ric.edu/sherlockcenter/eidocs.html>

The IFSP must be in writing and developed in accordance with the Mission and Key Principles of Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments (*See Rhode Island Principles and Practices*) and must include:

- A statement of the infant or toddler's present level of development in all developmental domains (physical, cognitive, communication, social/emotional, and adaptive development) based on objective criteria within the context of the three global child outcomes.
- A statement of the family's resources, priorities and concerns related to enhancing the development of their infant or toddler with a disability;
- A statement of the family owned, functional and measurable outcomes or results expected to be achieved for the infant or toddler and family, (including pre-literacy and language skills, as developmentally appropriate for the child),
- The criteria, procedures, and timelines used to determine the degree to which progress toward achieving the results or outcomes is being made and whether modifications or revisions of the results or outcomes or services are necessary;
- A statement of specific early intervention services based on peer-reviewed research, to the extent practicable, necessary to meet the unique needs of the infant or toddler and family;

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#### IFSP Development

*(continued)*

- A statement including the frequency, intensity, and method of delivering services (These services are further defined in *Services Provided on the IFSP*);
- A statement of the natural environments in which early intervention services will be provided, including a justification of the extent, if any, to which the services will not be provided in a natural environment. The decision to provide a service in a non-natural environment must be:
  - Made by the IFSP Team (including the parent and other team members);
  - Based on the child's outcomes as identified by the IFSP team.
- The projected dates for initiation of services and the anticipated length, duration, and frequency of services;
- The identification of the service coordinator from the profession most immediately relevant to the infant's or toddler's or family's needs (or who is otherwise qualified to carry out all applicable responsibilities) who will be responsible for the implementation of the plan and coordination with other agencies and persons, including transition services and;
- The steps and services to be taken to support the transition of the toddler with a disability to preschool or other appropriate services.
- Medical and other services may be identified that the child or family needs or is receiving through other sources, but that are neither required nor funded under Part C; and If those services are not currently being provided, the EI provider should include an outcome in the IFSP describing the steps the service coordinator or family may take to assist the child or family in securing those other services.
- The contents of the IFSP must be fully explained to the parents and informed written consent must be obtained prior to the provision of early intervention services described in the IFSP.
- The parent must be provided with prior written notice and must be provided with procedural safeguards.
- The parent may determine whether the family will accept

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#### IFSP Development (continued)

or decline any early intervention service written into the IFSP without jeopardizing the right to receive other early intervention services. If the parent does not provide consent for the services, or some part of the services, only the services to which consent has been obtained must be provided.

- Each early intervention service must be provided as soon as possible after the parent provides consent for that service and no longer than 30 days from the date of consent.
- A Physician's Authorization documenting the medical necessity of Early Intervention is sent for all eligible infants and toddlers within 45 days of referral. A Physicians Authorization signed by the child's pediatrician is required for all eligible infants and toddlers.

#### Interim IFSP

In Rhode Island an interim IFSP should be used in rare instances when eligibility is presumed and there is an immediate need for services. Early intervention services for an eligible child and the child's family may commence before the completion of the multidisciplinary evaluation /assessment if an interim IFSP is developed that includes:

- Parental consent;
- The name of the service coordinator who will be responsible for implementing the interim IFSP;
- Documentation of the immediate need for Early Intervention services;
- The services that have been determined to be needed immediately by the child and the child's family;
  - Services must be based on an outcome developed by the IFSP team.
- Evaluations and assessments must be completed within 45 days.

#### Periodic Review

A review of the IFSP for a child and the child's family must meet regulatory requirements of an IFSP meeting and must be conducted every 6 months or more frequently if conditions warrant, or if the family requests such a review.

- The purpose of the periodic review is to determine: the degree to which progress toward achieving the results or outcomes identified in the IFSP is being made; and whether modifications or revisions of the results, outcomes, or early intervention services identified in the IFSP is necessary.
- The review may be carried out by a meeting or by another means that is acceptable to the parents and other participants.

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#### Annual Meeting to Review and Evaluate the IFSP

An Eligibility/IFSP Meeting to annually review the IFSP must meet regulatory requirements of an IFSP meeting. The meeting must be convened with the family annually to review of the IFSP. At this meeting the following occurs and is documented:

- Discussion of the child's present levels of development based on a review of any current evaluations and ongoing assessment occurs and is documented;
- An initial discussion of new concerns, priorities and resources of the family;
- The child's continued eligibility status for Early Intervention is communicated to the family.

Whenever there is a question of eligibility a multidisciplinary evaluation/assessment is completed and, if the child is eligible, a new IFSP meeting regulatory requirements is completed in its entirety.

#### IFSP Development to Annually Review and Evaluate the IFSP

IFSP development following an IFSP/Eligibility meeting to annually review the IFSP must meet the regulatory requirements of an IFSP meeting. At this meeting:

- Any new concerns, priorities and resources of the family are summarized;
- A review of IFSP outcomes and services is conducted;
- Revised/new outcomes, strategies and services are developed as needed;
- Written parental consent for new or changed services is obtained.

#### Ending the IFSP

Once a child has been determined eligible the IFSP cannot be ended prior to age 3 unless the child is no longer eligible for early intervention under Rhode Island Early Intervention policies and regulations or the parents have withdrawn from the EI program.

When a child no longer meets eligibility criteria for EI as determined by multidisciplinary evaluation; or if the parent declines a multidisciplinary evaluation and the IFSP team, including the parent, has determined all identified goals have been reached, an IFSP/Eligibility meeting is convened which meets all regulatory requirements. At this meeting, the parent must be:

- Provided with a summary of the evaluation results
- Provided with procedural safeguards
- Provided with community resources if appropriate

The discharge status is documented as "Program Completion".

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#### Ending the IFSP

*(continued)*

When the family withdraws from services voluntarily:

- Documentation of the withdrawal is indicated on an SRF;
- The parent is provided procedural safeguards; and information regarding available community resources if appropriate.

The discharge status is documented as “Withdrawal by parent/guardian while child is still eligible”.

When a child/family is unavailable:

If the family is not home for three consecutive scheduled visits without any advance cancellation (or appropriate explanation):

- Prior written notice of an IFSP meeting to review the IFSP is sent to family.
- If the family responds:
  - The service coordinator schedules an IFSP meeting with the family to determine what, if any, services the family wants to receive and how those services can best be delivered to meet the family’s needs.
  - If the family indicates they no longer want to receive services, the procedures used when a family withdraws from services voluntarily are followed.
- If the family does not respond:
  - Attempts to contact the family must occur and are documented on a Services Rendered Form (SRF) or phone log. These could include contact with the referral source such as the pediatrician or DCYF if there is a release on file, family members or other collaborators.
  - If the family does not respond to the first notice, the program should send a second notice to the address on file giving the family 10 days written notice of an IFSP meeting to review the IFSP and informing them that if they do not respond by 10 days services will discontinue.
  - If the family does not contact the program within 10 days, the child is discharged as “Attempts to Contact Unsuccessful.”

#### Special Circumstances

Additional guidance can be found in the RI Early Intervention IFSP Guidebook at <http://www.ric.edu/sherlockcenter/ei.html> regarding special circumstances for IFSP development (i.e. the instate transfer of Early Intervention services, second episodes of Early Intervention services.)