

FAMILY HANDBOOK

A guide to early intervention in New Mexico



Family Infant Toddler
PROGRAM

NEW MEXICO
DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH



Contact List

Title

Name

Telephone #

Service Coordinator

Developmental Specialist

Other IFSP Team Members:

Primary Doctor

Specialist Doctor

Nurse

Other contacts:

Family Liaison (PRO)

Department of Health

Long Term Services Division
Family Infant Toddler Program
1190 St. Francis Drive
PO Box 26110
Santa Fe, NM 87502-6110
Toll Free 1 (877) 696-1472
www.health.state.nm.us/ltsd/fit

About Your Family Handbook

Why is your Family Handbook important?

Your Family Handbook will be a guide to the Family Infant Toddler Program and the early intervention system. The Family Handbook will help you put the pieces of the early intervention puzzle together. Pieces that can at first seem confusing. You will learn about how services and support can meet your child's and family's needs and about your rights within the Family Infant Toddler Program.

How should you use your Family Handbook?

We understand that people are giving you a lot of new information and it may be hard to take it all in. It also may seem like there is a whole new language to learn.

Your service coordinator will go over your Family Handbook with you but we hope that you and your family will sit down and go through it also - perhaps when things are not so hectic. You will need different information at different times. You will be able to refer to your Family Handbook to get information or clarification, and may want to keep it in a three-ring binder along with other important information and documents that you receive.

The Family Handbook has a number of short worksheets and tips to help you think about questions to ask or to guide you in making decisions for your child and family. Try using them to see if they help with planning for your child and family.

What's in your Family Handbook?

1. The Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program	1
An introduction to the FIT Program and an overview of early intervention	
2. Getting Started	3
What you can expect from the evaluation and eligibility process	
3. Your Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)	6
How you and your team will plan for services and support for your child and family	
4. Next Steps	12
Developing a transition plan for services and support after early intervention	
5. Your Family's Rights	14
How the law protects your family's rights and what to do if you have concerns about your rights or about your services	
6. ABC's of Early Intervention	17
A list of definitions and acronyms that may be helpful	
7. Family Resources	18
A list of New Mexico and national organizations that might help your family	

Welcome to the Family Infant Toddler Program.



With each new birth, families begin to hope and dream for their child's future. You may be receiving new and difficult information concerning your baby that you never expected you would hear. You may have been worrying about your child's development for some time and are just now having your suspicions confirmed. Or maybe your family has been told that your child may be at-risk for developmental delays.

This family handbook has been developed especially for New Mexico families. We hope that it will be helpful to you as you begin learning about how early intervention services can support your role in enhancing your child's learning and development. The New Mexico Family Infant Toddler Program can help your family to explore options and resources available to you in your community and assist you in setting new directions for this unfamiliar and sometimes confusing journey.



The New Mexico Family Infant Toddler Program knows that this is your child. Therefore, you will be making the decisions about what's best for you and your child. Your observations and thoughts are important to share with the caring professionals who will be part of your team.

We know that it can be a difficult time right now. You may be feeling overwhelmed or wonder what the future may hold. The Family Infant Toddler Program can help link you with other families who have "been there" and understand some of the emotions you may be experiencing. They have no magic answers, but are willing to listen and share their own experiences.



We encourage you to find and follow the dreams, hopes and wishes you have for your family. There will be many opportunities for learning and growth on the road ahead. We hope that this handbook will be of help to you and your family on your journey through early intervention.

*The New Mexico Department of Health
Family Infant Toddler Program staff*

The Family Infant Toddler Program

What is the Family Infant Toddler Program?

The Family Infant Toddler Program is located within the Department of Health. In New Mexico, the Department of Health is the lead agency to provide and organize services and support to children who have or who are at risk for developmental delay and their families. The Family Infant Toddler Program is responsible for making sure that the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are carried out in New Mexico. Part 'C' of this act applies to children birth to three.

The Family Infant Toddler Program offers services and supports through over thirty (30) early intervention provider agencies across New Mexico that are funded through a combination of State and Federal funds, including Medicaid and health insurance.

What is early intervention?

Early Intervention supports a child's learning and development during the important time from birth to three years of age. Staff from your local early intervention program will support your family in meeting the developmental and health-related needs of your child. Professionals provide ideas on how to best help promote your child's development and how to use their suggestions for intervention throughout their day. R.A. McMilliam, a researcher and father of a child with a disability, reminds us that "the child's learning occurs between sessions". There are opportunities for your child to learn and develop throughout their day, both when the service providers are with you and when they are not.

You and the early intervention professionals will work as a team to develop a plan called the Individualized Family Service Plan, or IFSP. This plan is unique to your child and family. As a parent, you will work with the members of your team to decide:

- what it is that you would like to see change for your child and family as a result of early intervention (these changes are referred to as "outcomes");
- what will need to happen to help make these changes occur – this will be a description of the people who will interact with your child and family and the activities that will be worked into your routines to help make these changes happen;
- what kinds of early intervention services will be provided to help you and other people in your child's life make the identified changes happen.

Where are early intervention services provided?

Young children learn from interacting and playing with you and other family members and others such as a babysitter or childcare worker. Toddlers also learn through play with other children. Early intervention is therefore generally provided in the places where your child typically lives, learns and plays. This may include your home, a childcare setting, recreation centers or other community settings. Early intervention staff will help you identify the learning opportunities that can be found in your child's typical daily routines, such as playtime, bathtime and mealtime.

How do I know if my child could benefit from early intervention?

Early intervention can help with the development of children who have delays or assist in preventing delays in children who may be at risk due to medical or environmental concerns. The next section of the handbook, "Getting Started", will look at the evaluation and eligibility determination process in more detail. Based on what is learned from the evaluation, you and other members of the IFSP team will decide if your child is eligible for the Family Infant Toddler Program, but it is up to your family to decide if you want to begin early intervention services. You can accept some services and decline others.

"There are opportunities for your child to learn and develop throughout their day."

Steps Through the New Mexico Family Infant Toddler Program

Developmental Concerns by Parent or Provider (Nurse, Doctor, Child Care Staff, etc.)

Is the child under 3?

Yes

No

Getting Started - 45 Days

Referral to Early Intervention Program

Intake Process with Service Coordinator Begins

Evaluation and Assessment Process Begins

Eligibility Determination

Is the child eligible?

Yes

No

Your IFSP
Individualized Family Service Plan

IFSP Meeting. IFSP Document Developed

Delivery of Services and On-Going Assessment

IFSP Review (6 month, annual)

Changes in Services?

Next Steps

Transition Plan
at least 90 days before the anticipated
date of transition (but no later than 90
days prior to your child's third birthday)

Referral to Appropriate Program

Getting Started

Referral for early intervention

As the parent, or legal guardian, you may have concerns about your child's development or situations that might affect their development and have made contact with a local early intervention program yourself. Alternatively, a referral may have been made, with your permission, by your doctor, a childcare worker, or other professional who knows your child. The person making the referral must do so within two working days of the date you give your permission. Either the local Children's Medical Services (CMS) FIT worker or the local early intervention program will receive the referral. A service coordinator will meet with your family to explain about early intervention, including your rights, and help plan your child's evaluation.



Your service coordinator is available to:

- help you understand information given to you;
- inform you of your rights within the Family Infant Toddler Program;
- help you get the evaluations and assessments that your child needs;
- let you know what services are available and how to get them;
- coordinate and assist in the development and review of the Individualized Family Service Plan;
- make sure that you receive the services that are on your IFSP;
- help you access support services, such as parent groups;
- help you resolve concerns if they arise;
- assist in the development and implementation of a transition plan for after early intervention;
- refer you to other services, such as child care, health or family support services; and help you to become your child's best advocate.

How can my service coordinator assist me?

Your service coordinator will work with you during the intake and evaluation process. At the time of your first Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting you will get to choose an ongoing service coordinator. The following may be options for service coordination in your community:

- a service coordinator who works for a local early intervention program;
- a service coordinator who works for Children's Medical Services (CMS); or
- if your child is medically fragile, your service coordinator will be from the Medically Fragile Case Management program.

Each family will have only one service coordinator. You may choose to change your service coordinator at any time. You may do this by contacting the director of the program currently providing service coordination for your family.

An evaluation for your child

An evaluation involves professionals trained in different areas, such as a developmental specialist and a therapist who use assessment tools to look at your child's abilities and needs. This information can be used to determine eligibility for the Family Infant Toddler Program as well as for recommending services and strategies.



An evaluation must be conducted by at least two professionals from two different fields of expertise and must involve assessment activities in the following areas of development:

- adaptive or self help skills - such as bathing, feeding, dressing, toileting;
- cognitive skills - such as thinking, learning, reasoning and problem solving;
- communication skills - such as understanding and using words or gestures;
- physical development - such as vision, hearing, movement and health; and
- social, emotional development - such as feelings, getting along with others, relationships.

Your service coordinator will ask you to sign your consent for the evaluation to take place. They may also ask for a "release of information" so that they get a copy of your child's medical records and any other relevant documents.

Planning for your child's evaluation

You and your service coordinator will decide who will be on your evaluation team based on the concerns and priorities that you see for your child. The team may include professionals from your local early intervention program and/or from a team such as the Early Childhood Evaluation Program (ECEP) from the University of New Mexico (UNM).

The evaluation may take place where your child spends their day so that your child will feel more comfortable. When scheduling the evaluation with your service coordinator, think of the best time for you and your child. You might think about the times when he or she is most awake. The evaluation may be done on more than one day so that the team can get to know your child and your child can feel more comfortable with them. The evaluation must be completed within 45 days of your referral to the Family Infant Toddler Program. Remember that if needed, your family can choose to delay the evaluation, for example if your child is sick.

You will play an important part in the evaluation. Evaluation team members will talk to you about your child's strengths and needs and will ask for you to get involved in the assessment activities. Much of the evaluation will involve play with your child to see what he or she can do.

"You will play an important part in the evaluation."



The results of the evaluation

Someone from the evaluation team will go over the results of the evaluation with you. You will also get a written copy of the report(s). The report should be written in easy-to-understand terms but if there is anything that is unclear - make sure you ask! Your service coordinator can help get the answers to any questions that you may have.

Determining if your child is eligible

A team that includes you, your service coordinator and professionals who were part of the evaluation, determines your child's eligibility for the Family Infant Toddler Program. The team will consider information from medical and other records, assessment results and professional judgment in determining eligibility under one of the four Family Infant Toddler Program eligibility categories. Your child's eligibility will be documented in your child's record.

How you can help with your child's evaluation:

- sit beside or hold your child;
- join in with the assessment activities;
- tell team members whether what they are seeing is typical for your child;
- help the team to see your child's strengths and needs;
- comfort and support your child; and
- ask questions and offer your opinions about how your child's evaluation is going.

The Family Infant Toddler Program eligibility categories are:

- 1 - developmental delay of 25% or more in one area of development;
- 2 - established condition that has a high probability of causing a developmental delay, such as vision or hearing loss, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, etc.;
- 3 - at risk due to medical or biological factors such as low birth weight, prematurity;
- 4 - at risk for developmental delays due to environmental conditions such as child abuse, substance abuse or mental or psychological disability in the caregiver.



Useful information to share:

- How was your pregnancy and your child's birth?
- How has your child's health been?
- Has your child had any other tests or evaluations?
- What concerns do you have about your child's development?
- What interests your child? What excites him? What frustrates her?
- Who are the most important people in your child's life?
- What is the effect of your child's needs on your family?

What if your child is found to be not eligible?

If the team decides, based upon the evaluation, that your child is not eligible for the Family Infant Toddler Program, your service coordinator will help you explore other support or resources in your community. The service coordinator can also give you copies of a screening tool, which you can use to monitor your child's development. If you have concerns in the future, your child may have another evaluation. If you disagree with the results of the evaluation, you can appeal by calling the Family Infant Toddler Program toll free at 1-877-696-1472.

Your Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

Individualized... the plan will be written specifically for your child and family.

Family... the plan will focus on changes that you want to see for your child and family as a result of your participation in early intervention. These changes are referred to as 'outcomes'.

Service... the plan will include details of the early intervention services your child and family will participate in – including how, when, where and how often services will be delivered.

Plan... the plan is a written document that can be changed as your child's and family needs change.



Your initial IFSP

Your family's initial or first IFSP meeting will be held within 45 days of the referral to the Family Infant Toddler Program, unless you choose to "stop the clock" (for example if your child is sick and the evaluation must be delayed). Your service coordinator will help you plan and prepare for your IFSP meeting. Your service coordinator will coordinate the meeting with you and will invite the people whom you choose to attend. These people will make up your IFSP team.

Your IFSP team includes:

- you (one or both parents, guardians, foster or surrogate parents);
- your service coordinator;
- other professionals (developmental specialists; therapist(s); nurse; doctor); and/or
- other people you'd like to include (family, friends, childcare provider, babysitter).

If certain people cannot attend the meeting, they may give their input in writing or by telephone ahead of time.

Things to think about when planning your IFSP meeting...

- When would be a convenient time for the meeting?
- Where shall we hold the IFSP meeting? – living room, kitchen table, child care center?
- Whom do you want to be there? developmental specialist, therapist, Grandma, older sibling, Doctor, childcare worker, etc.
- Will I need an interpreter? (for example if English is not your primary language)

Preparing for your IFSP meeting

Your service coordinator will help you prepare for your IFSP meeting by helping you think about what's important for your child and family. They may offer you materials to complete on your own time or sit down with you and ask you a number of questions about your concerns, priorities and resources. This "family assessment" can help your family think about what you want as a result of early intervention. This process is optional for families.



Things to consider as you prepare to develop your family's IFSP:

- I would describe my child to others as...
- What's working for us is...
- The biggest challenges we are facing right now are...
- What I worry most about is...
- What I would like to be able to do with my child is...
- We'd like more information about...
- As a family we need help with...
- The current resources and strengths of our family are...

Your IFSP meeting

You are an important member of the IFSP team and your input and questions are extremely valuable. At the meeting a lot of information and ideas will be shared. Along with your fellow IFSP team members, you will:

- review all the information that has been gathered about your child;
- talk about your concerns and priorities as well as your family's strengths and resources (such as medical insurance, family support);
- develop outcomes for your child and family, i.e., the changes you want for your child and family. For example "We want Sam to be able to play with his brother" or "We would like to meet other parents of children like Anna";
- describe activities or strategies that will help you make progress toward the outcomes;
- discuss which people in your child's life will best be able to participate in these activities and what they need to do;
- decide on which services could help you to meet your child's and family's outcomes; and
- discuss the way progress towards meeting the outcomes will be reviewed.

What gets written in your IFSP?

Your IFSP must include the following:

- a summary of your child's present abilities, strengths and needs;
- a section on your family's concerns, priorities and resources (with your agreement);
- outcomes that you choose for your child and your family;
- details of the early intervention services that can help you meet your child's and family's outcomes (including what, where, when and by whom); and
- a plan for transition when your child leaves early intervention (at least 90 days before your child turns three).

Strategies for a successful IFSP:

- Plan to have enough time so that the meeting doesn't feel rushed.
- Be prepared - make a list of questions or issues you want to discuss at the meeting.
- Listen to what other team members have to say.
- Be clear about what you want.
- Ask questions if you don't understand something.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help!
- Make sure you understand who will be following up on what after the meeting.

The IFSP is a document that will change as your child's and family's needs change. It should always reflect the current services and supports that you are receiving.

Early Intervention Services

Early intervention services include the following:

- **Assistive Technology** – equipment, devices and/or products, including those acquired commercially, modified or customized, that increase the functional abilities of children with developmental delays (such as a communication device or seating chair).
- **Audiology** – testing a child's hearing and other auditory services (including hearing aids or specific training regarding amplification needs).
- **Developmental Consultation (Special Instruction)** – the design of and consultation on developmentally appropriate activities that families and caregivers can include in the child's typical day and may include activities within all developmental areas.
- **Family Training, Counseling and Home Visiting** - by social workers, counselors and other qualified personnel to assist a family in understanding their child's behavior and improve child and family interaction and other parenting skills.
- **Health Services** – helping a child benefit from other services, including clean and intermittent catheterization, tracheostomy care, tube feeding, changing dressings or ostomy collection bags, and consultation with service providers concerning special health care needs.
- **Medical Services** – diagnostic or evaluation services by a licensed physician used to determine a child's medical status and how it may affect development.

- **Nursing Services** – health assessments, nursing education to prevent health problems or improve functioning and administration of treatments.
- **Nutrition Services** – provided by a dietitian/nutritionist who evaluates the child’s nutritional needs.
- **Occupational Therapy** – helping children gain skills needed for play and daily living activities, designing and providing adaptive and assistive devices, as well as addressing the sensory motor and fine motor needs of the child.
- **Physical Therapy** – helping families and caregivers to enhance the child’s movement abilities (including crawling, standing, walking and balance) through therapeutic activities, appropriate positioning and with adaptive and assistive devices that can be incorporated into the child’s typical day.
- **Psychological Services** – counseling, psychological and developmental testing and analysis and interpretation of a child’s behavior.
- **Respite** - a family support service that can give parents a break from the day-to-day caregiving of the child. It is a “babysitting” service that is provided by specially trained individuals.
- **Service Coordination** – assisting families through the intake, evaluation and eligibility determination process and facilitating the IFSP process. Service coordinators also provide information about and make referrals to other community resources, and coordinate and ensure the delivery of all services.
- **Social Work Services** – assessing a child within the family setting, counseling and developing social skill building activities for a child.
- **Speech–Language Therapy** – helping families and caregivers to enhance the child’s understanding of language and develop communication skills, which may include speech, sign and gestures.
- **Transportation** – transportation arrangements to enable families to get to any early intervention services that are provided at a location other than the family’s home.
- **Vision Services** – evaluation and assessment of vision, visual and mobility training, as well as referral to medical and other professional services necessary.

Reviewing your IFSP

Your IFSP must be reviewed at least every 6 months, however you can meet whenever you think it would be helpful for your team to get together and review the plan. At your annual IFSP review, a new document will be developed. Some of the information may be carried forward from the previous plan. As with your initial IFSP, you can choose who will attend the IFSP review meeting and assist in the planning of where and when the meeting will take place.



Where will services take place?

Services can be provided in settings where your child typically spends his or her day. This can include your home, other family members' homes, at childcare or other community settings. It is important for people who spend time with your child to be familiar with activities and opportunities to enhance your child's development. The early intervention staff will give you ideas of how to incorporate learning activities into your child's typical daily routines, such as playtimes, meals and bathtime. You will decide which routines you can adjust to accommodate the intervention ideas.

Places We Go – Things We Do

You may want to let your IFSP team know about places where you and your child spend time, such as childcare? library? Grandma's? parks? babysitters? toddler group? so that your child's learning and development can be supported in these settings. You may also want to list places you would like to go and activities you would like to do with your child.

Activity/Place:

Who:

When:

How can I meet other parents?

There may be opportunities for you to meet other parents with children who have or who are at risk for developmental delays through your local early intervention program. Sometimes programs offer play groups, parent groups or other functions. Parents Reaching Out (PRO) is a parent-run organization that offers many ways for you to network with parents across New Mexico. PRO can connect you with another family experiencing similar issues with their child. You can reach Parents Reaching Out at 1-800-524-5176

How to get the most from early intervention services

- Make sure you are home and/or make sure that your child's caregiver knows when the early intervention services have been scheduled.
- Arrange for services at times that are good for you and your family.
- Write down appointment dates and times.
- Participate when early intervention services are provided.
- Ask questions!
- Try out the activities and ideas that your early intervention professional shows or describes to you.
- Take a break from early intervention activities – sometimes play can just be play!
- Involve other family members (grandparents, brothers and sisters) in early intervention activities.
- Make learning activities fun!
- Find teachable moments in everyday routines such as shopping, mealtime, playtime etc.
- Take time for yourself!



Being an effective parent advocate

- Remember that you are an important member of the IFSP team.
- You are the person who knows your child the best.
- Know your family's rights and responsibilities.
- Let team members know about your child's and family's strengths and needs.
- Take part in every step of the early intervention process.
- Ask questions!
- Speak out if you have a suggestion or disagree.
- Keep copies of reports, your IFSP, medical information you receive, as well as any letters or notes that you make.
- If you have concerns about your services, talk to your service coordinator as soon as possible.
- Ask about parent groups in your community or nearby town.
- Find out information by attending trainings, conferences and by using the internet or using the library.

Parents Reaching Out (PRO) can help you with the following:

- let you know about parents groups;
- help connect you (by phone or in person) with other parents;
- inform you of parent training opportunities;
- provide you with information on state and national resources;
- send you a parent newsletter;
- connect you with a family liaison who is knowledgeable about early intervention;
- let you know of opportunities for giving input to improve early intervention services in New Mexico; and
- help you prepare for transitioning from the Family Infant Toddler Program to other services.

Next Steps

What is transition?

As your child approaches three years old, your service coordinator will discuss with you options for your child after they leave the Family Infant Toddler Program. A transition plan will describe what needs to happen to make the transition successful and smooth. Transition plans may also be used if you are moving to another community; if your child is starting or leaving childcare; or if your child has been in the hospital for a significant length of time and is returning home.

What are my options for transition?

The options for transition may include:

- Head Start;
- special education services (through your local public school district);
- private childcare or preschool setting; and/or
- other community supports.

You may want to visit potential transition sites to get to know your options. Your service coordinator will help you to think about which environment and program would be best for your child. Your service coordinator will also help you understand the eligibility requirements for the various programs.

Your transition meeting:

Your family should:

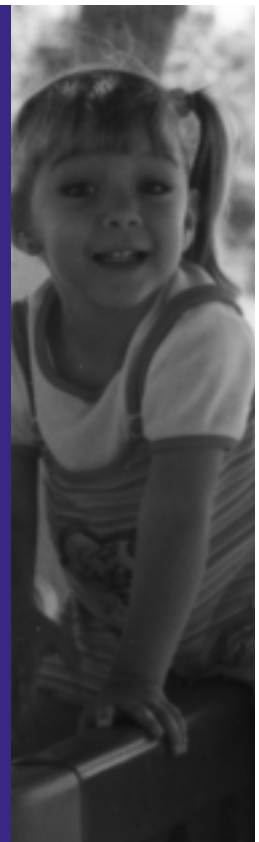
- share your hopes and concerns for your child;
- ask about supports for your family beyond early intervention;
- ask questions about anything that is unclear.

Early intervention staff will:

- share information about your child's progress in the Family Infant Toddler Program;
- help write a transition plan that details the steps for transition to take place;
- with your permission, make sure that the new program has all the information they will need on your child (evaluation and assessment information; a copy of the IFSP); and
- help you identify additional community resources and supports.

School district/ Head Start/ preschool staff will:

- explain the eligibility requirements and your rights;
- explain the process for applying/registering;
- discuss options for the delivery of services needed by your child; and
- help determine whether any additional evaluations will be needed prior to transition.



When will my child transition?

Early intervention through the Family Infant Toddler Program is available until your child turns three (3) years old. However, if your child is eligible for public school special education services and they turn three during the school year, you have the option to receive early intervention until the beginning of the next school year or to transition them to public school special education services from the beginning of that school year. For example, if your child turns three in January, they can transition to the school the following August, the prior August or at any date during that school year. Transition to other settings such as Head Start or private preschool/childcare can occur at a convenient time close to the time your child turns three.

Your service coordinator will help your IFSP team begin transition planning at least 6 months before your child is eligible to transition. You and your team will develop a detailed transition plan at least 90 days before the anticipated date of transition (but no later than 90 days prior to your child's third birthday). You may want to attend training on the transition process from Parents Reaching Out or your local early intervention program.

What will your transition plan include?

Your transition plan will detail the steps that your family, your IFSP team and the school district, Head Start and/or childcare staff will take to ensure the smooth transition to a new program. The plan should include:

- what is to be done, for example “a psychological evaluation will be conducted”;
- who is to do it, for example “a psychologist contracted by the school district”; and
- timelines for completion.

The steps in the plan may include things like visits to the new setting by you and your child as well as other supports for your family beyond early intervention.

What is an Individualized Education Plan?

If your child will be transitioning to special education services through your local public school district your child will have an Individualized Education Plan or IEP. You may request to have or keep an Individualized Family Service Plan until your child is nine. An IEP is a written document similar to an IFSP that describes how the school district will meet your child's educational needs. The IEP will describe the services that your child will receive and the activities and strategies for meeting your child's goals. At the IEP the location where services will be delivered will be decided. Written justification must be included in the IEP, if your child will not be educated in settings with typically developing children. Typically, special education services are provided during the regular school year. In order for services to be provided during the summer, the IEP must identify the need for an Extended School Year (ESY). Your service coordinator and other early intervention staff can attend your child's IEP meeting to ensure that the school staff is up to date with your child's progress and specific needs.

What if I'm concerned about my child's transition?

Transitions from one program to another can be scary. You may wonder how it will work out for your child and family in a new program with new staff. Many parents of young children have been through this experience. You may like to talk to a parent of an older child who has been through the transition process. Ask your service coordinator or call Parents Reaching Out (PRO) to speak with another parent.

Can I receive service coordination after my child transitions?

Your service coordinator, under the Family Infant Toddler Program, can continue to work with you and the new program for 3 months (within six months of leaving early intervention), to ensure that the transition process is smooth and uninterrupted.

Ongoing service coordination (case management) for families of children three years and older may be available from:

- Children's Medical Services (CMS)
- Step*HI (for children with hearing loss)
- Medically Fragile Waiver (for children with severe medical involvement)
- Developmental Disabilities Waiver (for children with a developmental disability).

Each of these programs has their own eligibility requirements. Waiver programs may have a waiting list. Your service coordinator can help you decide if any of these programs would be appropriate for your family.

Your Family's Rights

Your family has a variety of rights throughout your time in the Family Infant Toddler Program...

Your family has the right to:

- participate,
- have your child evaluated,
- give consent for evaluation, services and the exchange of information,
- have a plan for services within 45 days of referral,
- receive prior notice of IFSP meetings and evaluations,
- understand fully what is happening,
- maintain confidentiality about your child and family,
- review records,
- help to resolve disagreements, and
- submit a complaint.

Your service coordinator will review these rights with you when you begin in the Family Infant Toddler Program and will review certain rights with you when they apply to the services that you and your family are receiving. If you have any questions about your rights, talk to your service coordinator. You may also call the Family Infant Toddler Program toll free at 1-877-696-1472.

The right to participate

Your participation in the Family Infant Toddler Program is voluntary. It is up to you to decide to participate in the program. If you do become involved, it is up to you how to participate.

You are an important part of planning services for your child. No one knows your child better than you and your family! You are encouraged to speak up about your family's and child's needs. You can also review the evaluation and assessment of your child and get information about how to help your child develop. You must agree to services for your child and sign the plan before these services begin.

The right to have your child evaluated

When your child is referred to the Family Infant Toddler Program, you have the right to an evaluation to determine eligibility. If you disagree with the results of the evaluation, you can request a due process hearing.

The right to give your consent

Your early intervention provider must have your consent in writing before any evaluations, assessments, or services take place. You can consent to one service and refuse to accept another. Your provider must also have your written consent before sharing information about you or your child with others. You can withdraw your consent at any time.

The right to a plan for services within 45 days of referral

Within 45 days of referral, and if eligible for services, your family has the right to a written plan for services. This plan is called your Individualized Family Service Plan, or IFSP, and includes early intervention services based on your family's needs. A team, including you, your service coordinator and early intervention staff, will meet to develop this plan. This IFSP team can also include family members, friends or advocates that you choose to help you decide what is best for your family and child. This plan is reviewed every 6 months or more frequently, according to your family's needs.

The right to prior notice of IFSP meetings and evaluations

You will meet as a team for different meetings during your time in the Family Infant Toddler Program. Meetings must be held at a time and place that is best for you. Each time you meet you must be told about it in writing or orally in a language you understand. You must receive notification of the meetings or evaluations in advance so that you can arrange to have family members or others at the meeting. Each notice should

include the following information about the meeting:

- where and when it will be;
- who will be there;
- the purpose of the meeting;
- what records, reports, or tests will be used; and
- information about your rights to confidentiality.

The right to understand

You have the right to receive answers to questions from your early intervention provider. Ask for help from the staff if you don't understand. If needed, you have the right to receive a translation orally in your native language, in sign language, or in Braille.

The right to confidentiality

All information on your child and family is confidential. Sometimes, your early intervention provider may need to get or share information about your child to determine eligibility or to get services. Your early intervention provider must get your permission to request information or share information with other agencies or service providers. It is up to you if you want to share this information. Only early intervention staff who are involved with you and your child can look in your files. All other people can only look at your files with your permission. Your early intervention provider must keep a record of who looks at your files. You can ask for a written explanation about how private information is protected by your early intervention provider.

The right to review records

Your child's records are kept by your early intervention provider. You can see your child's records by asking the provider. You may also request a copy of your child's records. If you think your child's records are wrong, you can ask your early intervention provider to correct the information. If they disagree, you can request a Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) hearing. Your early intervention provider will provide the hearing. The hearing must be conducted within 30 days and any individual, including an attorney, may represent you at the hearing. Your child's records will be kept at least five years after your family has left the early intervention system.

The right to help with resolving disagreements

Sometimes, parents and early intervention program staff disagree regarding an evaluation, assessment or early intervention services. If there is disagreement, try talking with the person you disagree with. Your service coordinator may be able to help resolve the disagreement informally. Each local early intervention program has a complaint procedure that can be used if you have a disagreement.

If you are not able to reach agreement with your early intervention provider you can call the Family Infant Toddler Program (toll free 1-877-696-1472) and ask for the staff person assigned to your early intervention provider. This person will try to help you to resolve the disagreement. You can also request mediation or a hearing to resolve a disagreement.

Mediation is a process in which trained mediators assist people who disagree to communicate and make informed choices in order to find a resolution to their dispute. The mediator is impartial, neutral and unbiased. To request mediation, please send a letter to the program manager of the Family Infant Toddler Program at the following address:

Department of Health, Long Term Services Division
1190 St. Francis Drive, PO Box 26110
Santa Fe, NM 87502-6110

The mediation meeting will be held within 30 days of your request. Choosing mediation as a way to resolve your disagreement does not deny your right to request a due process hearing.

Due Process Hearings involve a State-appointed Hearing Officer who will review all of the information from all people involved. The hearing shall be carried out at a time and place that is convenient to you and other people involved. You may be advised and accompanied to the hearing by a lawyer or by someone with

knowledge of the early intervention system. You may present evidence, confront and cross-examine, and require the attendance of witnesses. A written decision will be mailed to each person involved within thirty days from the day a request for a hearing is filed. To request a due process hearing you should send a letter to the program manager of the Family Infant Toddler Program (see address above). While the hearing is in process, your early intervention services will continue. Mediation will be offered to all individuals who submit a request for a due process hearing.

The right to submit a complaint

If you feel your early intervention provider or a state agency has ignored or violated a federal or state regulation regarding services to your child and family, you can write a letter of complaint to the program manager of the Family Infant Toddler Program (see address above). After receiving your written complaint, a staff person will be assigned to investigate and gather information from you and others concerned. The Family Infant Toddler Program office will review all of the information and reach a decision about your complaint within 60 days.

Ways to Handle Your Concerns

The following chart illustrates the variety of options that you have within the Family Infant Toddler Program to have your concerns addressed.

<p>I have a concern about my child’s records or right to confidentiality...</p>	<p>Local Level – FERPA Hearing Call the coordinator of your early intervention provider about your concerns and request a FERPA hearing.</p>
<p>I want someone locally to help me resolve my concern informally...</p>	<p>Local Level – Informal Process Call your service coordinator or the manager of your local early intervention program to help you resolve your concern.</p>
<p>I want someone locally to help me resolve my concern formally...</p>	<p>Local Level – Provider Complaint Process Contact the manager of your local intervention program and request assistance with filing a complaint with their organization.</p>
<p>I want someone at the state to help me resolve my concern informally...</p>	<p>State Level – Informal Complaint Process Call the Family Infant Toddler Program (1-877-696-1472) and ask for the staff person assigned to your early intervention program.</p>
<p>I have a disagreement with my early intervention provider and would like to enter into mediation...</p>	<p>State Level – Mediation Process Send your request for mediation in writing to the program manager of the Family Infant Toddler Program.</p>
<p>I have a disagreement with my early intervention provider and would like to request a hearing...</p>	<p>State Level – Due Process Hearing Send your request for a hearing in writing to the program manager of the Family Infant Toddler Program.</p>
<p>I believe a Federal or State Regulation has been ignored or violated...</p>	<p>State Level – Complaint Process Send your complaint in writing to the program manager of the Family Infant Toddler Program.</p>

ABC's of Early Intervention

Assessment – an ongoing process including the use of tests and tools to identify your child's or family's needs and strengths.

BABYNET - the statewide information and referral line (1-800-552-8195).

Child's Record – is the file that includes evaluations, reports, progress notes and the child's IFSP, which is maintained by the service coordinator.

Consent – the written permission or authorization that a family provides to proceed with an evaluation, services or to exchange personally identifiable information.

Development - the process of learning and mastering new skills over time; includes ability to move, communicate, think, see, hear and play with toys or other people.

Due Process Hearing – a hearing involving a hearing officer who rules on evidence related to a disagreement between a parent and an early intervention provider.

Early Intervention - a collection of services provided by public and private agencies and mandated under law to support eligible children and their families in enhancing a child's potential growth and development from birth to age three.

Eligibility - requirements your child must meet in order to receive early intervention services from the New Mexico Family Infant Toddler Program.

Evaluation - determining your child's eligibility by gathering information about your child from records, assessments and using professional judgment.

Family Infant Toddler Program (FIT) - the program at the Department of Health that oversees the delivery of early intervention in New Mexico through a network of public and private providers.

IFSP Team - the team includes you, your service coordinator and other professionals involved in providing ongoing services to your family and any one else whom you'd like to be included (example: other family members, childcare staff, pediatrician).

Individualized Education Program (IEP) - the plan for services in public school special education programs for children with disabilities that may begin when a child reaches age 3.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) - a written plan for your child's and family's desired outcomes and services to meet those outcomes during your time in the Family Infant Toddler Program.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C - the federal legislation that determines the implementation of early intervention by states.

Intake - when your service coordinator meets with you and explains about the Family Infant Toddler Program, goes over your rights and helps to plan your child's evaluation.

Mediation - a way to settle a conflict so that both sides win. Parents and other professionals discuss their differences and, with the help of a trained and independent mediator, reach a settlement that both sides accept.

Natural Environments – settings that are natural or normal for the child's age peers, who have no disabilities and include the home, childcare and other community settings.

Outcomes - statements of changes you want for your child and family that are documented in your IFSP.

Parent - includes the biological parent(s), guardian, acting parent (including foster parents) or surrogate parent (assigned by the state in situations where there is no other person to act as parent at the IFSP).

Referral - when a parent or professional (with the parent's permission) thinks that a child may benefit from early intervention services and makes contact with CMS (Children's Medical Services) or a local early intervention provider agency.

Service Coordinator - a person who works with your family to help coordinate the evaluation, the IFSP and early intervention services as well as other community support and resources for your child and family.

Special Education - specially designed instruction and services to meet the education needs of children over the age of three. Provided by the local school district for children who are eligible in preschool or other settings.

Strategies - the methods and activities developed to achieve outcomes. Strategies are written into the IFSP.

Transition - the process of planning for support and services for when your child will leave the Family Infant Toddler Program or if you move to a new community.

Family Resources

New Mexico:

Arc

3655 Carlisle NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110
(505) 883-4630
(800) 358-6493
arcnm@arcnm.com
www.arcnm.com

The Arc advocates for the reduction in the number of families struggling to support their family members and to guarantee that all persons with developmental disabilities and their families are served appropriately.

Center for Development and Disability

2300 Menaul Blvd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87107
(505) 272-3000
(800) 827-6380
nmuap@unm.edu.
www.cdd.unm.edu/default.html

The CDD operates a number of programs including the following: Native American Network; Medically Fragile Case Management Program; School Services Program; Southwest Autism Network; Assistive Technology Program; Community Support Alliance; Early Childhood Services Unit; and the Resource Center, which has a wide variety of books, journals and videos.

New Mexico Kids – Early Care, Education and Family Support

(800) 691-9067
www.newmexikokids.org

Here you can find information that supports childcare professionals, parents and health educators in New Mexico. The web site goal is to support parents and early care and educational professionals to network and access information, technical assistance and resources.

Parents for Behaviorally Different Children

5905 Marble NE, Suite 8
Albuquerque, NM 87110
(800) 273-7232
pbdc2000@aol.com
www.members.aol.com/pbdc2000

PBDC aims to support and strengthen families with children and youth with neurobiological, emotional and behavioral differences by advocating for systems change.

Parents Reaching Out (PRO)

1000 A Main St. NW
Los Lunas, NM 87031
(505) 865-3700 or (800) 524-5176 (in NM)
nmproth@aol.com
www.parentsreachingout.org

PRO provides support, information and training to parents, educators and others on creating successful partnerships that will encourage and promote children's learning. PRO has a network of parents who have "been there". These parents are available to provide support and expertise through PRO's Parent-to-Parent Program.

Protection and Advocacy

1720 Louisiana Blvd NE Suite 204
Albuquerque, NM 87110
(505)-256-3100
(800) 432-4682
nmpanda@nmprotection-advocacy.com
www.nmprotection-advocacy.com

Advocates working together with people who have disabilities and their families in promoting and protecting their legal and service rights.



National:

The Arc

1010 Wayne Ave, Suite 650
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
(301) 565-3842
info@thearc.org
www.thearc.org

A national organization of and for people with mental retardation and related developmental disabilities, and their families.

Birth Defect Research for Children, Inc. (BDRC)

930 Woodcock Road, Suite 225
Orlando, Florida 32803
(800) 313-2232
(407) 895-0802
abdc@birthdefects.org
www.birthdefects.org

This association maintains the National Birth Defect Registry, which is used to match families of children who have the same or similar birth defects.

Family Village

Waisman Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison
1500 Highland Avenue
Madison, WI 53705-2280
www.familyvillage.wisc.edu

A global community that integrates information, resources, and communication opportunities on the Internet for persons with cognitive and other disabilities, for their families, and for those that provide them services and support.

Family Voices National Office

3411 Candelaria NE, Suite M
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107
(888) 835-5669
(505) 872-4774
kidshealth@familyvoices.org
www.familyvoices.org

Family Voices is a national, grassroots clearinghouse for information and education concerning the health care of children with special health needs. Working in partnership with health professionals and policymakers, they bring the family perspective to policy discussions and decisions.

MUMS National Parent-to-Parent Support Network

150 Custer Court
Green Bay, Wisconsin 54301-1243
(877) 336-5333 (parents only)
(920) 336-5333
mums@netnet.net
www.netnet.net/mums

This organization has a database of over 14,000 families from 45 countries covering over 2500 rare disorders. Families whose children have the same or similar disorder can find support and information by exchanging valuable information about their children.

National Information Clearinghouse for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)

PO Box 1492
Washington D.C. 20013-1492
(800) 695-0285
(202) 884-8200
hichcy@aed.org
www.nichcy.org

NICHCY is the national information and referral center that provides information on disabilities and disability-related issues for families, educators, and other professionals. Their special focus is children and youth (birth to age 22).

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)

Mary E. Switzer Building
330 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20202
(202) 205-5507
www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/index.html

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has primary responsibility for administering programs and projects relating to the free appropriate public education of all children, youth and adults with disabilities, from birth through age 21.

TASH

29 W. Susquehanna Ave. Suite 210
Baltimore, Maryland 21204
(410) 828-8274
www.tash.org

TASH is an international association of people with disabilities, their family members, other advocates, and professionals fighting for a society in which inclusion of all people in all aspects of society is the norm.

ZERO TO THREE

National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families
2000 M Street NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 638-1144
www.zerotothree.org

An organization dedicated to advancing current knowledge; promoting beneficial policies and practices; communicating research and best practices to a wide variety of audiences; and providing training, technical assistance and leadership development.

Notes



Notas