

## **Timely Services Notice to Coordinators**

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### **BACKGROUND**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and *Early On*<sup>®</sup> Michigan require that all infants and toddlers have timely evaluations and services. Evaluations and assessments must be completed within 45 calendar days of referral. All services must be provided within 30 calendar days from when a parent/guardian consents to the provision of early intervention services.

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### **REQUIREMENTS**

Timelines for evaluation, assessments, initiation of services, and review:

- Timeline for evaluation and assessment:
  1. Permission for an evaluation must be requested within 10 calendar days of the referral.
  2. The evaluation and assessment must be completed within 45 calendar days of referral.
  
- Timeline for Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP):
  1. The initial IFSP meeting must be held within 45 calendar days of referral;
  2. The IFSP must be completed within 60 calendar days of referral; and
  3. The provision of all services must be initiated within 30 calendar days from the time a parent/guardian consents to the provision of early intervention services.
  
- Timeline for IFSP review:
  1. IFSPs must be reviewed every six months or more frequently if the family requests or conditions warrant.
  2. A meeting must be conducted on at least an annual basis, from the date of the completed IFSP to assess the progress of the child, the IFSP for a child and the child's family, and, as appropriate, to revise its provisions.

- Timeline for transition planning:  
Transition planning must occur at least 90 calendar days, but no more than nine months prior to the child's third birthday.
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## REFERENCES

The requirements delineated in this bulletin are referenced and supported in the following federal and state statutes, regulations, rules, and policies:

1. Public Law 108-446 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004, Part C
  2. Part C regulations 34 CFR 303.322(a)(1)
  3. Part C regulations 34 CFR 303.342(a)(b)(c)
  4. Michigan State Plan, Section VI
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## DEFINITIONS

**Assessment** refers to the ongoing procedures used by appropriate qualified personnel throughout the period of a child's eligibility to identify the child's unique strengths and needs; the family's resources, priorities and concerns related to the development of the child; and the nature and extent of early intervention services that are needed by the child and the child's family to meet the previously listed needs.

**Evaluation** is a comprehensive procedure used by appropriate qualified personnel to verify the presence of a disability or delay, to describe the nature and extent of the disability or delay, and to determine a child's initial and continuing eligibility in the six domains of development: physical development, including vision and hearing; fine and gross motor development; communication development; cognitive development; social/emotional development; and adaptive/self help.

**Timely evaluations** are defined as evaluations that take place no later than 45 calendar days after referral.  
Michigan State Plan, Section VI

***Timely services** are defined as the provision of services within 30 calendar days from when a parent/guardian consents to the provision of early intervention services.*

***Initial IFSP meeting** is defined as a discussion between the service coordinator; the parent/parents of the child; other family members, as requested; an advocate or person outside of the family, if the parent requests that the person participate; a person or persons directly*

*involved in conducting the evaluations and assessments; and, as appropriate, persons who will be providing services to the child or the family. If a person or persons directly involved in conducting evaluations and assessments and/or persons who will be providing services to the child or family are unable to attend the initial IFSP meeting, arrangements must be made for the person's involvement through other means, including participating in a telephone conference call, having a knowledgeable authorized representative attend the meeting or making pertinent records available at the meeting.*

*The meeting shall address: (1) the child's present level of physical development (including vision, hearing, and health status), cognitive development, communication development, social and emotional development, and adaptive development; (2) the family's resources, priorities and concerns related to their child's development; (3) major outcomes expected to be achieved for the child and family that can be identified at the initial IFSP meeting; (4) early intervention services and supports that can be identified at the initial IFSP meeting necessary to meet the unique needs of the child and family in achieving the identified expected outcomes along with the service dates and duration; (5) other services the child may be receiving, as appropriate; (6) service coordinator's name; and (7) a plan for the child's transition from Part C services to other programs.*

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## **DISCUSSION**

Timely services are a crucial and integral part of the implementation of IDEA Part C and the Michigan State Plan. Both IDEA Part C and the Michigan State Plan have required that infants and toddlers shall receive timely services. In addition to requiring timely services, the system must include the performance of a comprehensive, multidisciplinary evaluation of each child, birth through age two, referred for evaluation, and a family-directed identification of the needs of each child's family to appropriately assist in the development of the child.

The U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has asked the state of Michigan to define what timely services are; therefore, the State has defined timely services as being the provision of services within 30 calendar days from the

time a parent/guardian consents to the provision of early intervention services.

With respect to timely transition services, transition planning must occur at least 90 calendar days, but no more than nine months prior to the child's third birthday. The transition planning conference is convened among the family, the service coordinator, and providers of appropriate services. The local education agency will participate in the case of a child who may be eligible for preschool services under Part B and as appropriate for children who may not be eligible for such preschool services.

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**EXCEPTIONAL  
CIRCUMSTANCES**

If services need to begin between the time eligibility is determined and the actual initial IFSP meeting, an interim IFSP may be developed. This does not relieve the agency from the 45 calendar day timeline.

Exceptional family circumstances documented in the child's record could be a cause for delay in provision of timely services.

An exceptional circumstance refers to the family's need to postpone one of the required components of IDEA 2004 from occurring. Examples of exceptional circumstances are: family illness, hospitalization, or natural disaster. When a family cites an exceptional circumstance, it must be noted in the IFSP. Exceptional family circumstances documented in the child's record could be a cause for delay in provision of evaluation and assessment, timely services, and transition planning.