

# Our Individualized Family Service Plan

Making Our Plan of Action



PART **2** OF THE *EARLY ON* GUIDEBOOK

This is Part 2 of the *Early On*<sup>®</sup> Guidebook. It introduces you to *Early On*. It gives details about how you can get help for your child. It explains how your family can be a part of the process. It lets you know what to expect while your child and family work with *Early On*.

As you go through this part of the guidebook, you will find underlined words. These are words commonly used in *Early On*. They are defined within the text the first time you see them, and/or you can find them in the Glossary at the end of the book.

You will also find **bold type** in this section. These are the rights that you have while working with *Early On*. There is also an *Early On Your Family Has Rights* brochure. This is a document for families that explains your rights while your family is in *Early On*. **Your local *Early On* contact will give it to you.**

## PART 2

### YOUR LOCAL EARLY ON CONTACT

For additional copies, contact the above *Early On* Coordinator.

# Our Individualized Family Service Plan

## Making Our Plan of Action



## What Is an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)?

You and your *Early On* team learned a great deal during the evaluation.

- More is now known about your child.
- The needs of your child and family have been identified.
- Other members of your team know what is important to your family.

Now it is time to have an IFSP meeting. At this meeting, you and your team will work together to write the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). An IFSP is your family's plan of action. This plan:

- Spells out what you and your team will do.
- Explains what is needed to support your child's growth and learning.
- Is individualized because each family and child is different. Individualized means it is about you and your child's own life and needs.

Work on the IFSP should begin soon after your evaluation when the information is still fresh in everyone's mind.

What I really liked about my IFSP was that it was so natural. It was a huge relief to find out all the things we can do to help our son. He learns so much from the stuff we do every day in the places we normally go.

—Mom of a two-year-old

Our daughter was in the hospital a long time. She couldn't go home until we could make sure she would have the help she needed. *Early On* came to the hospital and talked with our nurses and doctors to make the plan with all of us, so that we could bring our daughter home.

—Parents of a ten-month-old

## When and Where Does the IFSP Happen?

Your service coordinator will set up the time and place for your IFSP meeting. The place should be easy for you to reach and given to you in writing. You have the right to:

- **Have the IFSP meeting(s) at a time that works for your family. The time should be given to you in writing.**
- **Know about the meeting at least seven days before it happens.**
- **Have your first IFSP done within 45 days from the date of your referral to *Early On*.**

*Early On* wants the IFSP process to move along. The 45-day deadline is set up to help that. This allows your child to get supports and services as soon as possible.

In some cases, you may want to speed up the process. Perhaps your child needs activities, supports, and services to begin quickly. You will work with your service coordinator. A plan called an Interim Individualized Family Service Plan can be developed. This is a temporary plan for your child until the IFSP is written.

There may be times when 45 days is not enough time. You may need more time to make a plan that best meets your child's and family's needs. If this is the case, you need to talk to your service coordinator and ask for the time to be extended. A delay of this kind is okay if it is based on your child's and family's needs.

## Who Can Be at the IFSP Meeting?

Your *Early On* team should have people who will be helpful to you as you plan what will happen for your child and family. Your team will include:

- **Your family.** Your family will be a part of writing the IFSP. You know your child best and which activities, supports, and services will fit into your family's life. You will need to make decisions about what will be written into your IFSP.
- **Your service coordinator.** This may be the same person who was part of your evaluation or a different person. This decision will be based on your child's needs.
- **A person from the *Early On* team.** This will be a member with information about the evaluation.

You may also invite anyone to be a part of your team. Some people ask friends or family. Some ask childcare workers. Others ask families with children in *Early On* who are a part of their lives.

When we were ready to make our plan, our service coordinator asked who we wanted to come to the meeting. We asked my mother-in-law, my friend, and our daycare person. These are the friends and family who help us out every day—with their help, and the help of Early On, we made a great plan.

— Mom of one-year-old



## What Is the First Step for the IFSP?

You and your *Early On* team will develop outcomes. The outcomes are the changes and results you want for your child and family. You will do this by:

- Discussing the results of your child's evaluation.
- Reviewing your family assessment (if one was completed) including:
  - Concerns
  - Resources
  - Priorities
- Sharing anything that has changed since the evaluation.
- Developing outcomes based on your priorities for your child and family.

The outcomes should help your child grow and learn. Developing outcomes should be done by using your resources and the everyday activities of your child and family. The list of outcomes does not have to be long, and you can decide which outcomes are most important to you. The outcomes will be listed on your IFSP. **You and your *Early On* team can change and update the IFSP at any time. You can add more or different outcomes if things change for your child or family.**

## What Activities, Supports, and Services Can We Choose?

There may be many ways to support your child's development. You and your *Early On* team will look at all the ways and choose the ones that work best for your child and family.

- You and your team will choose the places and activities that will help your child grow and learn. Activities are things you do day-to-day or programs where your child can play and learn with others.
- If needed, you and your team will choose supports to go along with the activities chosen by you and your team. These supports (help, resources, and information) can help your family become stronger and healthier and better able to help your child grow and learn. Supports are help, resources, or information.
- Your child may need extra help with his or her growing and learning. You and your team may choose services to go along with the activities and supports. Services are a specialized form of support from a trained professional who works with you to help you learn how to support the development of your child.

The activities, supports, and services should help the outcomes to happen.



# Intervention Services

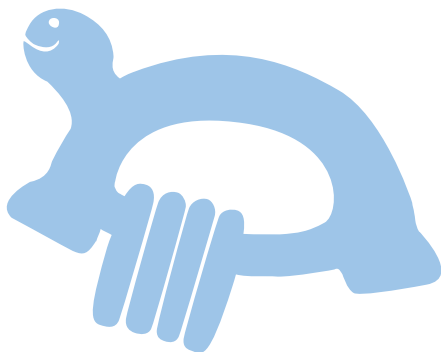
If your child needs extra help, you and your team might choose some of the early intervention services listed below.

- Specialized Instruction (support for the family about daily routines, activities, and helping the child to learn and grow).
- Speech and Language Services (support to help your child learn to communicate).
- Physical Therapy (support for your child's large muscle development).
- Occupational Therapy (support for your child's small muscle development).
- Family Training (support to help you learn new ways to help your child develop).
- Family Counseling (emotional support to help you understand the special needs of your child).
- Assistive Technology (equipment or devices that help your child).
- Audiology Services (supports related to your child's hearing).
- Health Services (services that are medically necessary to help your child participate in *Early On*).
- Diagnostic Medical Services (support and information given by a licensed physician).

## Intervention Services (continued)

- Nutrition Services (support to help with your child's feeding skills and eating habits).
- Psychological Services (support for the emotional well-being of your child and family).
- Social Work Services (support and information regarding community resources).
- Vision and Mobility Services (support for your child with seeing and moving).
- Transportation (support to access activities and services on the IFSP).
- Service Coordination (support and information to help you receive the activities and services on your IFSP).

You and your service coordinator will work together to find any services the team may choose. The services may come from many programs (for example: schools, social services, public health, mental health, or other programs where you live). The services, along with the activities and supports you and your team choose, should fit together. They also should fit in with your family's routines.



## Where Do the Activities, Supports, and Services Happen?

Your child's activities, supports, and services are based on:

- The information from the evaluation.
- The outcomes you and your team choose.

These activities, supports, and services should help your child grow and learn in his or her natural environments.

Learning in natural environments means that:

- Your child is growing and learning with other children his or her age who do and do not have developmental delays or disabilities.
- Your child's activities, supports, or services are where your child and/or family normally do things and spend time.
- Your child's activities, supports, and services are with you, people from your community, and other children.
- Your child's activities, supports, and services can help your child grow and learn.

When this happens, your child is growing and learning in his or her natural environment.

A natural environment might look like:

- A park. The park is a place where all children can go to play. Children do things like swinging, sliding, climbing, running, and talking. Climbing the slide is a great activity to help children grow and learn. While standing in line, children learn about taking turns and being with other people.
- The floor of your home. Your service coordinator may give you suggestions on how to play with your child on the floor. You might rub his or her tummy, clap hands, or sing songs.
- A childcare center. All kinds of children go to childcare. The childcare provider can help your child grow and learn through puzzles, play dough, toys, and reading. Your *Early On* team might help you and your childcare provider learn special ways to use these toys and materials.

However, there may be a reason your child cannot grow and learn in his or her natural environments. One example would be a child who has immune system problems. This child might not be able to go to a park or childcare like other children. This child might need to be in a germ-free setting. You and your team will make that decision based on your child's evaluation. The IFSP will need to explain the team's decision. In this case, the activities, supports, and services could be done in another place.



## What Information Will Be in Our IFSP?

Your IFSP has a lot of information that lets the team know what is happening. Everyone then has the same information. This makes it easier to work together and to work on the same outcomes.

The IFSP will include the results of the evaluation. It also lists who attended your IFSP meeting and the name of your service coordinator. It describes what will happen to help your child grow and learn.

If you and your team choose an early intervention service to help your child's development, your IFSP also contains:

- Where the services will happen.
- When they will happen.
- How often they will happen.
- Who will carry them out (each service might be provided by a different person from a different program).
- How long each session will be.
- Exactly how they will be provided.
- When the services on the plan will start and end.

You and your *Early On* team will work together to make the plan (IFSP). The final choices of the plan are a team decision, and remember, you are a member of the team. If you don't agree with the choices, see the *Early On* Family Rights guidebook part 4, the *Your Family Has Rights* brochure, or call 1-800-EARLY ON (1-800-327-5966) to learn what you can do.

We thought, “Why on earth do we need all this information—I’ll never keep this straight.” But the IFSP did help us to keep things straight—the right hand knew what the left was doing. We weren’t sure it would work, but it did.

— Parents of a six-month-old

## Who Pays for *Early On*?

- *Early On* is funded through government dollars. This money brings people, programs, and supports together. It funds people to work together with you as a team.
- Most of what you are doing to help your child grow and learn has no cost. It is what you do each day (activities).
- Some services might have a cost.
  - Sometimes your private insurance will pay for services.
  - Some agencies that provide services will have a sliding fee scale. This means that your family might pay for a part of the service. The amount will be based on your income. For example, there might be a cost for family counseling or physical therapy.

How much money your family makes will not stop your child from getting what he or she needs.

## How Does Our IFSP Get Started?

**You sign your IFSP** when you agree with the plan. This puts your plan into action. This shows that you agree with the activities, supports, and services your team has chosen. The service coordinator and other people on your team will also sign the IFSP. The IFSP is an agreement between you and *Early On*. It tells what your team has agreed to make happen. *Early On* will then give you a copy of the signed IFSP.

You also have options if you don't agree with your IFSP. **You have the right to accept or reject your plan or any part of it.**

- You may decide not to accept every activity, support, and service suggested by your team. **The activities, supports, and services you accept will be what you and your child will receive.** Your plan will show the activities, supports, and services you accept. You will then sign your IFSP.
- Sometimes a family decides to reject all of the activities, supports, and services on their plan. However, since you are supposed to be involved in developing your IFSP, it is unlikely this will happen. If you and your team cannot agree on your plan, see the *Early On* Family Rights guidebook part 4, the *Your Family Has Rights* brochure, or call 1-800-EARLY ON (1-800-327-5966) to learn what you can do.

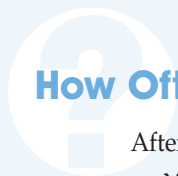


## How Will My Service Coordinator Help After Our IFSP Is Written and Signed?

It is now time for the activities, supports, and services to start. Your service coordinator will help this to happen. Your service coordinator will:

- Make sure the activities, supports, and services happen when and how they are supposed to.
- Help you find people to provide supports and services.
- Look for additional activities, supports, and services that will help your child's growth.
- Find other parents who can help you get what you need for your child and family—often these people are called advocates.
- Take part in any IFSP meetings and review of the IFSP.
- Work with the team to check how your child is reaching the outcomes listed on your IFSP.
- Make sure your plan is changed as your child's needs change.
- Help you and your family leave *Early On* when the time comes.

The service coordinator will help make the most of your child's time in *Early On*. You may call your service coordinator anytime. His or her phone number is written inside the front cover of this guidebook.



## How Often Do We Have an IFSP?

After your first IFSP is written:

- You and your *Early On* team will review your IFSP **at least every six months**.
- You or anyone on your team can request to have a review of your IFSP at any time.

The review looks at whether changes should be made to the IFSP. It looks at your child's progress. It is up to you and your team to decide if any changes need to be made.

A change may need to be made if:

- Your child is ready for new activities, supports, and services.
- The activities, supports, and services are not helping your child to meet the outcomes on the IFSP.
- Your child's and family's concerns and priorities have changed.

**The activities, supports, and services on your IFSP can be changed only with your written consent.**

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If your *Early On* team feels that a change is needed:

- **They must let you know of any changes in writing seven days before changes will happen. They cannot change your IFSP without written notice.**
- **The written notice must tell you the change being made and the reason for the change. It must also tell you of your rights in case you don't agree.**

Your whole IFSP must be looked at once a year. This goes beyond the review. More than the outcomes, activities, supports, and services need to be looked at. If there is any new information about your child's development or health or progress, you will use it to help make the changes to your IFSP.

**Be sure to read other available guidebooks to learn more about your time in *Early On*.**

- **Part 1: Welcome to *Early On***
- **Part 3: Transition: Leaving *Early On***
- **Part 4: *Early On* Family Rights**

## Whom Can I Call With Questions?

There are many people and places you can call that can give you help and information.

- ☎ You can call your service coordinator. His or her name and phone number are on your IFSP. You can also find them in the front of this guidebook. Your service coordinator will try to answer your questions and help you find answers. He or she can also help you work out problems.
- ☎ In each area, *Early On* has a person in charge called the Early On Coordinator. You can get your local *Early On* Coordinator's name and phone number from your service coordinator, or you can call 1-800-EARLY ON (1-800-327-5966).
- ☎ *Early On* has Local Interagency Coordinating Councils (LICCs). These are found in each county or counties. Each LICC is made up of people who provide services and parents from your area. The parents have children who are or have been in *Early On*. LICCs work on *Early On* issues in their areas and suggest how *Early On* dollars should be used. They make sure *Early On* is meeting the needs of children and families. Your service coordinator or *Early On* Coordinator can share more about your LICC.
- ☎ Parents on the LICC get a lot of information that they can share. You may want to talk to one of them. You could also join the LICC if you wish. It is another way to learn, and you can help make choices about *Early On* for your area. Your service coordinator or *Early On* Coordinator can help you contact the parents on your LICC.
- ☎ You can talk to families who are in *Early On*. They may have good information to share and can be a support to you. Ask your service coordinator to share your name with other families.
- ☎ You can contact support groups and advocacy organizations. Ask your service coordinator for information on support groups and advocacy organizations.

- ☎ If you have any questions, look at the *Early On* Family Rights guidebook part 4 or the *Your Family Has Rights* brochure. If you didn't receive copies, ask your service coordinator.
- ☎ You can call 1-800-EARLY ON (1-800-327-5966). This is a free phone call in Michigan. This phone is answered by people who can help with answers and help you figure out other places to call.
- ☎ You can receive information about being in *Early On* by calling the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Early Childhood Education and Family Services. If you have questions or a complaint, call (517) 373-8483.

We really liked what was happening for our son, and we wanted to be more involved with *Early On*. I started going to meetings to learn more and meet other parents. Then, I joined the LICC to help make decisions about how our local *Early On* should work. It feels really good to know that my opinion counts. We all work together to learn how to make things even better for children and families.

—Mom of a two-year-old

# Process Check

This Process Check is to help you follow the steps in the *Early On* process. Use this Process Check to be sure each step is completed.

- We were able to invite other people (like friends, relatives, or childcare providers) to be a part of our planning team. They came to the IFSP.
- A time and place was set up for the IFSP meeting. It was at a time and place that worked for our family.
- We worked with our *Early On* team to choose our outcomes. Outcomes are changes that we want to make. These are based on the evaluation.
- Our *Early On* team worked together. We went through steps to choose the right activities, supports, and services for our child and family. Those choices were based on the outcomes we chose.
- Our *Early On* team considered the needs of our child. It considered what our family does and likes to do. This helped us choose where the supports and services would happen (i.e., natural environments).
- There may have been a reason our child's needs could not be met in his or her natural environments. Our *Early On* team wrote the reason why in our IFSP. The reason was based on our child's needs.
- We signed and received a copy of our IFSP.
- Our service coordinator continues to work with us. He or she will help to make our IFSP happen. Our service coordinator will help us find and get supports and services. He or she will help us with any problems we are having with the IFSP.
- We review our IFSP with our *Early On* team at least every six months. It may happen more often if needed. Any team member (including us) can ask for a review.
- We look at the whole IFSP once a year with our *Early On* team. This goes beyond the review. We look at the information on our child's development and health. We must also look at any new information from evaluations and assessments. This information will help us decide if any changes need to be made to the IFSP.
- We asked questions. We made sure we understood what was said. We made sure we knew what was going to happen for our child and family.

If any of these steps did not happen, talk to your service coordinator. You can also check the *Early On* Family Rights guidebook part 4 or the *Your Family Has Rights* brochure.

**Activities:** The things a family does day-to-day or programs where children can play and learn with others.

**Advocacy Organizations:** Groups that can help families understand their rights. They can also speak or act on a family's behalf.

**Advocate:** A person who speaks or acts on behalf of an issue or person.

**Assistive Technology:** Equipment or devices that help your child. They help your child increase, maintain, or improve what they can do.

**Audiology Services:** Services and ideas for a family so they can support their child's hearing.

**Concerns:** What a family worries about with their child's growth and learning. It is what they would like *Early On* to work on to help their child and family.

**Development:** The process of growing and learning.

**Diagnostic Medical Services:** Support and information given by a licensed physician. They help you decide if a child needs early intervention services.

**Early Childhood Education and Family Services:** A division in the Michigan Department of Education. It specifically oversees programs for early childhood from birth to six years of age and *Early On* Michigan.

**Early On:** Michigan's system of early intervention. It is not one single "program." It's a collection of activities, supports, services, and resources provided by many programs.

**Early On Coordinator:** A person in charge of *Early On* in a local county or counties.

**Early On Your Family Has Rights Brochure:** A document for families that explains their rights while working with *Early On*.

**Early On Team:** A team that includes the parents and the service coordinator. It also includes people who provide services. Everyone will work together to support the growth and learning of a child.

**Evaluation:** A process to learn about a child's growth and development. It is also used to find out if a child is eligible for *Early On*.

**Family:** A group of people close to you and your child. It could include parents, husband or wife, grandparents, in-laws, aunts and uncles, brothers or sisters, legal guardians, or friends.

**Family Counseling:** Emotional support for a family to help them understand the special needs of their child. It is usually provided by a social worker or psychologist.

**Family Training:** Support to help a family learn new ways to help their child develop.

**Health Services:** Services that are medically necessary to help a child participate in *Early On*.

**Individualized:** It is about you and your child's own life and needs. Every child and family is different.

**Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP):** A written plan of action that guides everything a child and family will do while involved with *Early On*. It lists what activities, supports, and services are needed by the child and family.

**Interim Individualized Family Service Plan (Interim IFSP):** A temporary plan that is made when a child has immediate needs to be supported.

**Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC):** A group of professionals and parents from an area who suggest how *Early On* should be run. An LICC can be found in each county or counties.

**Michigan Department of Education:** The unit that oversees *Early On* in all intermediate and local school districts around Michigan. *Early On* funding comes through the Michigan Department of Education.

**Natural Environments:** Places a child can grow and learn with other children his or her age who do and do not have developmental delays or disabilities. The activities, supports, or services are in typical places that a family would normally do things and spend time. The activities are with the family, people from their community, and other children.

**Nutrition Services:** Supports to help a family with their child's feeding skills and eating habits. Nutrition services help a family learn what is good for their child to eat and ways to solve feeding problems.

**Occupational Therapy:** Support for a child's small muscle development (fine motor movement). Small muscles include the muscles that control the mouth, hands, and eyes. This therapy also helps children process input through their five senses. An Occupational Therapist will help the family understand and work with their child.

**Outcomes:** The changes and results that a family wants for their child and family.

**Parent:** Any person responsible for the care and well-being of a child. It could include birth parents, adoptive parents, single parents, guardians, grandparents, or foster parents.

**Physical Therapy:** Support for your child's large muscle development (gross motor movement). This development includes how your child rolls, crawls, stands, walks, runs, climbs stairs, throws balls, etc. A Physical Therapist will help the family understand and work with their child.

**Priorities:** The concerns a family wants to focus on first.

**Psychological Services:** Support to help a family understand their child's development. It could include testing, assessment, counseling, or education. It is meant to support the emotional well-being of a child and family.

**Referral:** A recommendation to have a child evaluated for *Early On*. The referral starts the *Early On* process. It occurs because of a concern about a child's development or health issue.

**Resources:** The people, places, relationships, supports, and services a family already has that could help their child.

**Review:** A meeting held at least every six months. The team looks at whether changes need to be made on the IFSP.

**Service Coordinator:** The family's main contact in *Early On*. This person supports and assists the family the entire time they are in *Early On*. He or she knows about and has worked with children with developmental delays.

**Services:** A specialized form of support from a trained professional who works with you to help you learn how to support the development of your child.

**Sliding Fee Scale:** The family pays for a part of the service. The amount will be based on their income. The lower their income, the less they pay. The higher their income, the more they pay.

**Social Work Services:** Support such as home visits, counseling, and information about resources in a family's community.

**Specialized Instruction:** Help from a teacher to promote a child's learning and development. Includes special planning and activities. Helps to work toward IFSP outcomes.

**Speech and Language Services:** Support to help a child learn to communicate. This includes how a child coos, babbles, says words, puts together words and sentences, and listens to and does what is said. Also includes how a child breathes, swallows, and moves his or her tongue. This can affect how he or she makes sounds and eats. A Speech Therapist will help the family understand and work with their child.

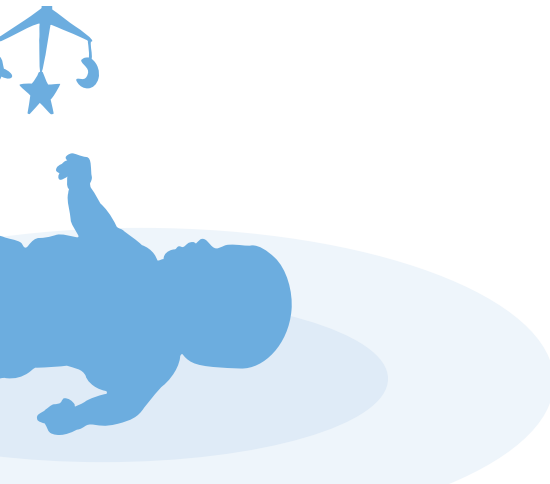
**Strategies:** Ways for working on outcomes. Strategies may be: an activity being done with a child, training for a parent to help them learn how to help their child, or a service provided directly to a child by a person trained in a certain area.

**Support Groups:** Groups who meet to support each other.

**Supports:** Help, resources, or information.

**Transportation:** The way a family travels to get to activities or services on the IFSP. If this is a need found in their evaluation, it will be listed on the IFSP.

**Vision and Mobility Services:** Support to help a child with seeing and moving. Also support for him or her to be able to do things. This includes special activities or equipment. Vision and Mobility Specialists will help the family understand and work with their child.



**“As Governor, I will be  
fighting for a Great Start  
for every child in our state.”**

*Governor*

Jennifer M. Granholm

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**Understanding This Guidebook**

If you need help reading or understanding the contents of this guidebook,  
please contact 1-800-EARLY ON (1-800-327-5966).

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**STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL LAW**

The Michigan Department of Education complies with all  
Federal laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination,  
and with all requirements of the U.S. Department of Education.

