

Guiding Questions to Inform Focus Area Selection

Overview

This guide is intended to support *Early On*® local service areas when making decisions related to selecting a focus area(s) and strategies for the use of State School Aid Act (SSAA) Section 54d funds. Reviewing data and other information from multiple sources is encouraged. Drawing comparisons across multiple data sources and data points is also encouraged. This guide is for local use and does not require reporting results of the review to the state. Although a report of responses to this document is not required, reporting of data is required and addressed in companion documents. The information gleaned from this review should help inform the responses required on the SSAA Section 54d application forms.

From Local System Data:

If you can generate reports on the frequency of services on Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) or the frequency of services being delivered, produce and review those reports. If you are unable to generate such reports, select a random sample of records and compile data about frequency of services on IFSPs and the frequency of services being delivered.

Break the frequency of services data down into subsets by other elements, such as:

- *Early On* only children vs *Early On* with Michigan Mandatory Special Education (MMSE) children
- Type of service
- Eligibility category

Review the full data set and/or subsets, analyzing factors such as:

- Average service frequency.
- Number of services over a set period, such as a year.
- Hours of service provided over a set period, such as a year.
- Gaps in services during any points in the year.

Personnel Data:

List all personnel, including contracted personnel, working with *Early On* children, both *Early On* only and *Early On* children also eligible for MMSE services.

- What are the qualifications and level of education for each person?
- Are all types of providers available to work with both *Early On* only and *Early On* children also eligible for MMSE services?
- Examine caseloads. Do current caseloads allow for appropriate levels of service for all *Early On* children?
- Compare the provider types and qualifications to information regarding *Early On* children's needs such as domain of developmental delay or eligibility category for MMSE. Does this comparison reveal any gaps in types of provider or qualifications of providers available?
- Do qualifications of providers enable them to support the social emotional needs of children and families?

From EarlyOnData.com:

Examine the ISD's data profile. Use the Rankings tab to look at the ISD's data for a specific data point in comparison to other ISDs across the state. Click on the View Trends

checkbox to see how data for a specific data point have changed over up to 20 of the past data collections.

- Birth to 3 child count – Is the target met?
- Birth to 1 child count – Is the target met?
- MMSE served (Special Education Eligible under Snapshot Data) – How does the percent of *Early On* children also eligible for MMSE compare to other ISDs across the state?
- Natural environments – Is the target met? How does the ISD rank compared to other ISDs across the state?
- **Child count is low while MMSE % is near state average.** Is there a need for additional public awareness activities? Do you need to increase work with primary referral sources on when and how to make a referral?
- If **MMSE % is high while child count is low.** Are you not finding and serving children who would be eligible for Part C only services? Do you need to tailor public awareness efforts toward identifying children with less involved developmental delays? Do you need to work with primary referral sources on identifying and referring children with less involved developmental delays? What tools are being used to identify the Part C only population? Are a large number of referred children found ineligible based on current evaluation procedures? Could use of a specific tool, such as the DECA-IT or DECA-SE, help identify additional children? Are two or more qualified personnel conducting the evaluations to ensure multiple perspectives?
- **MMSE % is low regardless of high, low, or average child count.** Could more of the children being served be eligible for MMSE services? Are you using the new guidance documents for determining MMSE eligibility in the areas of Autism, Early Childhood Developmental Delay, Speech, and OHI? If separate personnel conduct the evaluations for Part C from those who conduct evaluations for MMSE, do the Part C evaluators need to build understanding of when to refer a child for an MMSE evaluation? Could evaluation procedures be adapted to include a person qualified in the area of concern during the initial evaluation?

Policy and Procedure Review:

Review local policies and procedures.

- Do evaluation processes include direct involvement of two or more qualified individuals from at least two different disciplines?
- Are services for both *Early On* only children and *Early On* children also eligible for MMSE services provided with methods and in locations that allow for services to be embedded in the natural routines of the child and family?
- Do policies and procedures support appropriate time for teaming between providers?
- Do policies and procedures appropriately support the ongoing professional development of providers?
- Do policies and procedures for referral, intake, evaluation, and assessment support timely completion of eligibility decisions and IFSP development?
- Do policies and procedures enable provision of services to children and families as soon as possible after referral?