



Your Child's *Journey* Begins

A Parent's Guide to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C
Early Childhood Services in South Carolina



One Stop for Families

Family Connection of S.C. is South Carolina's Parent Training and Information Center (PTI).

We offer workshops, community events, and peer-to-peer support to connect you to the services your child may need.

The Family Connection staff are trained to help parents navigate each stage of your child's journey and charter a course for success.

Let us help you!

Our work focuses on five key areas:

- Parent Support
- Education
- Healthcare
- Training
- Advocacy

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Call the Family Information Center • Monday through Friday • 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
1-800-578-8750 • Para Español: 1-888-808-7462 • www.FamilyConnectionSC.org



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Journey Begins**



Dear Families,

This guide is intended to help you understand the early intervention services available for infants and toddlers under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a law that makes sure all children throughout the nation have access to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Part C of the law focuses on services for infants and toddlers. BabyNet, at the Department of Health and Human Services, is South Carolina's, Part C, early intervention program.

Sincerely,
Family Connection of South Carolina

Your baby is growing and changing quickly!

Being a parent can be overwhelming at times, especially if you have concerns about your child's growth, development, health or learning. There are many skills that develop in the first three years of your child's life.

Children grow and change at different rates.

We know some infants and toddlers meet developmental milestones slower than expected.

It is important to understand your infant's growth and development. By scheduling routine visits to your child's healthcare provider, screenings can help monitor your child's health and development.

For more information on developmental milestones, go to www.cdc.gov.

What If I am Concerned?

If you are concerned your child is not meeting developmental milestones or you suspect a developmental delay:

- Contact your child's doctor.
- Call BabyNet's Central Referral Team: 1-888-512-8881 or complete an online referral at www.scdhhs.gov/babynet.
- Call Help Me Grow SC: 1-855-476-9211. Learn more at HelpMeGrowSC.org.
- Call Family Connection of SC: 1-800-578-8750
Para Español: 1-888-808-7462
www.FamilyConnectionSC.org.



How do I get my child early intervention services?

Referral

Anyone can make a referral to BabyNet for an evaluation: a parent, doctor, caregiver, teacher, or friend. The earlier a child is helped, the better!

BabyNet's Central Referral Team will contact you to schedule an appointment to meet with an intake coordinator.

At this meeting:

- Make sure all consents and releases are signed and begin gathering information about your child.
- Make sure you understand your rights under IDEA, Part C.

A screening and evaluation are used to determine if your child is eligible for Part C early intervention services.

- Reasonable efforts should be made to conduct the initial evaluation in the native language of the child.
- Make sure the intake coordinator is aware if an interpreter will be needed.

Eligibility

In SC, infants and toddlers are determined eligible for Part C services if the child:

- **is experiencing a developmental delay of 40% in ONE area of development**

or

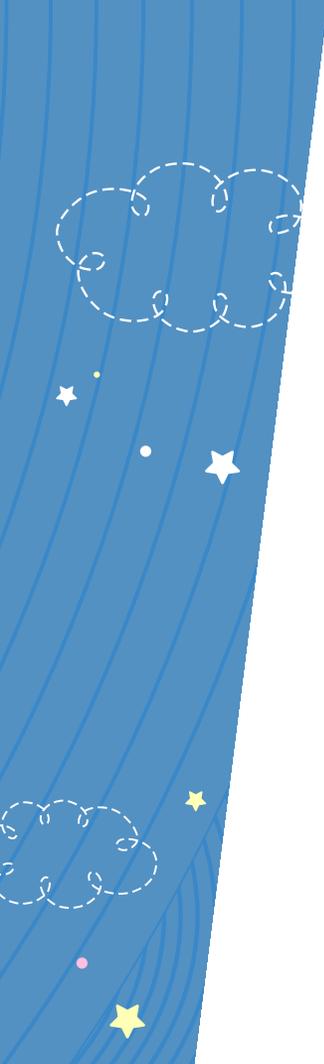
- **is experiencing a developmental delay of 25% in TWO areas of development.**

Areas of development include: cognitive, physical (including vision and hearing), communication, social or emotional, and adaptive development.

or

- **has a diagnosed physical or mental condition (verified by a physician that has a high probability of resulting in a development delay).**

If your child has a medical condition known to cause delays in development, a developmental screening will not be needed. Your intake coordinator is still required to gather information about your child's health, hearing, and vision, and offer a screening for Autism Spectrum Disorder.



If your child qualifies for BabyNet services:

- All children eligible for IDEA, Part C will be assigned a service coordinator.
- **Your service coordinator is responsible for:**
 - Family and child assessments.
 - Assisting in obtaining access to needed Early Intervention Services (EIS).
 - Development of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).
 - Transition plan to preschool, school or other appropriate services.
- Your main contact for services is your service coordinator, sometimes referred to as an Early Interventionist (EI).

If your child does not qualify for services, you will be provided with the following:

- Information about other resources based on your child's needs.
- Prior Written Notice (PWN) of IDEA, Part C's eligibility decision and guidance on your right to appeal the decision at any time before your child turns 3 years of age.
- The option to re-refer your child for evaluation 90 days from the evaluation.
- **If your child is 2 years and 10 months (34.5 months),** you will be referred to your **local school district** to determine eligibility for IDEA, Part B services.

These services are provided where your child naturally spends the day, such as in a daycare or your home. Your early intervention service providers should work with each other, using the IFSP to stay focused on your priorities and concerns.

Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments

- It is the responsibility of the service coordinator to ensure the family and child receive services in natural environments.
- Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires that eligible infants and toddlers with disabilities receive needed early intervention services in the natural environment to the maximum extent appropriate.
- Natural environments mean settings that are typical for a same-aged infant or toddler without a disability.

Examples of Natural Environment Settings

Community Day Care Center

Day Care Home

Early Childhood Center

Your Home





Who pays for services?

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), Part C, is a federal law that provides financial assistance to states for the purpose of providing Early Intervention Services (EIS) to infants and toddlers (age birth up to age 3) with disabilities.
- By federal law, IDEA, Part C must explore all funding sources 'before' using state or federal early intervention funds.
- Babynet, Part C service funds are state and federal dollars that are used only when there is no other payment source.
- The purpose of these services is to enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities and developmental delays.
- Babynet, Part C will only pay for services listed on your child's Individualized Family Service Plan, or IFSP.
- Always keep an up-to-date copy of your child's IFSP.
- Early Intervention Services (EIS) authorized on the IFSP will not be delayed or denied because of disputes between agencies regarding financial or other responsibilities.

Services at no cost to the family:

- procedural safeguards
- service coordination
- child find
- eligibility evaluations
- assessments
- family support services
- transition services
- development and administration of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) will be provided at no cost to the family.



Private Insurance:

- You must consent to the use of your private insurance benefits.
- Not all private insurance plans cover early intervention services, if early intervention services (on the IFSP) are not covered by your insurance plan, BabyNet funds can be used to cover the cost.
- If the parent provides consent, IDEA, Part C will pay all deductibles, co-payments, and/or co-insurance for services on the child's IFSP.
- It is the responsibility of the service coordinator to document consent so that deductibles, co-payments, and/or co-insurance are not paid by the family.
- The parent is responsible for all private insurance premiums.
 - IDEA, Part C funds cannot be used for premium assistance.
 - All services on the IFSP are available to the child and family regardless of whether the family provides or denies permission to use private insurance to pay.

Family Rights in The System of Payments: All family rights and safeguards under IDEA, Part C apply to the system of payments. You have the right to contest a fee via dispute resolution options, including filing a formal written complaint, requesting mediation, and/or requesting a due process hearing.

Medicaid:

- Parent consent is not required to access Medicaid for payment of EIS; however, as lead agency under IDEA, Part C, the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) must notify families if their Medicaid benefits are used in accordance with 34 CFR §303.520.
- Medicaid will not reimburse for care received from an out of network provider. In situations where a provider is not in network, the parent may need to change to a provider who is in network or request to change the child's managed care organization.
- A change can be made to the health plan within the first 90 days of when a child is enrolled. If the change is not made within the first 90 days of enrollment, then the child must stay in the health plan for a year, unless a good reason is given for the change.



What is an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)?

- An IFSP is a process and a written document developed by YOU and your child's team to record your outcomes for your family and child.
- The IFSP will be your 'map' to guide you and the professionals working with you and your child.
- To develop your IFSP, a meeting will be held to discuss your family's strengths and resources.
- IDEA, Part C is required to hold your initial IFSP team meeting within 45 days of when you were referred. This timeline can only be postponed by you. If something unexpected comes up and you need to reschedule the meeting, please let your service coordinator know as soon as possible.
- Service coordination is the only service each family must receive. All other Early Intervention Services (EIS) are determined by your concerns, resources, the changes you want to see for your child and family, and what you need to help support your child's development and learning.

You should receive a copy of the IFSP.

It should include:

- information about your child's present level of development.
- family information with family consent.
- outcomes for your child and family to achieve.
- how progress will be measured.
- projected start date of services.
- length of sessions and frequency.
- location: where in the natural environment services will be provided.
- anticipated duration of the service.
- service coordinator's name.
- transition planning activities.
- required signatures: parents, authorized persons for agencies providing services.





Tips for being a great team member

- Attend all meetings about your child.
- Increase your knowledge about your child 's disability.
- Be an active listener and ask questions.
- Share your child's strengths and challenges. **You are the expert on your child!** Share with the team what your child likes or does not like, the ways they learn best, and what they do well.
- When you don't agree, discuss your concerns and look for compromise.
- Know your rights as a parent.
- Put all requests in writing and keep copies.



What you need to know about Early Intervention Services



Lead Agency: South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Ages Served: Infants and toddlers, birth up to age three, with developmental delay or disabilities.

Timeline: 45 days to complete evaluation once parental consent and completed referral is received.

Eligibility: Infant or toddler has a delay in one or more of the five designated areas of development; or has a condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP): is a written plan of services that your child and family will receive.

Where: Services occur in a natural setting, such as your home or childcare center.

Provided at no cost to your family:

- identification and screening.
- service coordination.
- developmental assessments and evaluations.
- development of the IFSP.
- activities related to making sure you know your rights are protected.

What Happens When My Child Turns 3?

Transition Planning

- Around your child's second birthday, you and your service coordinator will begin working on next steps for your child. This is called **transition planning**.
- The transition plan will be included as part of the IFSP and will contain important time frames for helping map out the transition process. You must give parental consent to send information about your child to the school district or any other agencies. Without consent, there could be a break in services.
- Your service coordinator will send a formal transition referral to your local school district. This starts the school district's process for scheduling its eligibility determination process.
- Through the transition planning process, you and your service coordinator will develop ways to make sure that your child's needs are being met and that the transition will be successful.
- In the transition meeting, preschool services your child may be eligible to participate in will be discussed.



Timeline of Early Intervention Services



Referral

Contact
Family

Eligibility
Evaluation

ELIGIBLE
Develop
IFSP

Establishing
Services

IFSP must be developed within 45 days of referral

Initiate service within



Services Begin

6 month review

IFSP must be reviewed every 6 months.

Annually update

IFSP must be updated at least once a year.

Transition Meeting

between the ages of 2 years 3 months and 2 years 9 months old

Transition

by age 3 to IDEA/Part B Preschool Education

Rights and Responsibilities

As a federal education program, you and your child have rights under IDEA, Part C that begin at referral and continue until your child's third birthday or when they exit IDEA, Part C. A full listing of your rights is below (you will receive a summary of these rights at each step of the way). If at any time you think your or your child's rights have been violated, **you have the right to file a written state complaint about services received or denied.** You may also request mediation and/or a due process hearing to resolve disagreements.

You have the right to:

- service coordination.
- file informal/formal complaints.
- request mediation to resolve a dispute.
- request a due process hearing to resolve a dispute.
- evaluation, assessment, Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) development, service coordination, and procedural safeguards at no cost.
- receive IDEA, Part C information and services in your native language or mode of communication and in a format that is understandable to you.
- complete confidentiality of personally identifiable information.
- written consent before each screening, evaluation, assessment, beginning of a service, change in a service, and request for or release of information.
- participate in all meetings where decisions are made about your child's services.
- timely written notification of when such meetings are scheduled, and what changes are proposed to your IFSP (prior written notice).
- refuse participation in IDEA, Part C.
- examine your child's record.
- get a copy of your child's record.
- request correction to your child's record.

During the referral and eligibility process, you have the right to:

- refuse referral to IDEA, Part C.
- re-refer to IDEA, Part C before 3rd birthday.
- prompt evaluation, assessment, eligibility determination and development of an IFSP if eligible for IDEA, Part C services. These must be completed within 45 days after all referral information is received.
- request an eligibility evaluation if screening is offered.
- request review of eligibility evaluation results.

If your child is eligible for IDEA, Part C, each time an IFSP is developed, reviewed, or changed you have the right to:

- guaranteed receipt of IDEA, Part C Early Intervention Services (EIS) regardless of insurance coverage or insurance consent.
- IFSP team meetings at your convenience.
- bring guests to IFSP team meetings.
- change the IFSP.

- refuse any service discussed at your IFSP meeting, without changing whether you get other services on the IFSP.
- have services added, removed, or changed at any time, or change your mind about using private insurance.
- refuse to sign the IFSP.
- receive a copy of each IFSP.
- receive state Early Interventions Services (EIS) at no cost, using providers and approved settings.

When your child is preparing to exit IDEA, Part C services, you have the right to:

- a transition plan.
- referral to your school district and/or other community programs.
- a transition conference with your school district or with an early childhood/preschool program of your choosing.



A special thank you to all those involved in the collaboration and development of this guide:

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#RaisingAwareness #PromotingInclusion #MakingConnections
for families of children with disabilities or special needs