

# North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program Procedural Guidance

Reference: Screening, Evaluation and Assessment Policy

## *Family-Directed Assessment*

### **Introduction**

If the child is determined eligible as an infant or toddler with a disability for the North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program (NC ITP), the Children's Developmental Services Agency (CDSA) must ensure that the child receives a **Family-Directed Assessment** of the resources, priorities, and concerns of the family and the identification of the supports and services necessary to enhance the family's capacity to meet the developmental needs of that infant or toddler.

### **Definitions**

**Assessment** means the ongoing procedures used by qualified personnel to identify the child's unique strengths and needs and the early intervention services and supports appropriate to meet those needs throughout the period of the child's eligibility and includes the *assessment of the child* and the assessment of the child's family. (*For additional information, please refer to the Procedural Guidance on Child Assessment.*)

**Initial Assessment** refers to the *child assessment* and the family-directed assessment conducted *prior to the child's first Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP) meeting*. This is different than the process to determine eligibility.

### **Requirements**

1. If the child's Part C eligibility is established, the CDSA must conduct assessments of the child and family.
2. The assessments of the child and family may occur simultaneously with the eligibility determination evaluation. Note: Evaluation is not required to determine eligibility for all children.
3. Unless clearly not feasible to do so, all family-directed assessments must be conducted in the native language of the family members being assessed, in accordance with the definition of native language.
4. The **family-directed assessment** must:
  - A. Be voluntary on the part of each family member participating in the assessment;
  - B. Be based on information obtained through an assessment tool and through an interview with those family members who elect to participate in the assessment; and
  - C. Include the family's description of their resources, priorities, and concerns **related to enhancing the child's development**.

## Procedures

1. The Initial and Ongoing Family-Directed Assessment Process:
  - A. Is conducted through personal and individualized interviews with family members with the assistance of a recommended tool and should not be a 'form' completed by the family;
  - B. Allows the family the opportunity to choose to share successes and to share the challenges for which they want help and support; and
  - C. Creates an environment in which parents are made to feel comfortable about contributing as important team members initially and through their enrollment in the NC ITP.
2. During initial contacts with families, and during the evaluation and eligibility determination process, it is important to establish rapport and discuss concerns when interviewing the family. For children who are determined eligible for the NC ITP, this family-directed assessment process will continue in more detail using one of the NC ITP recommended family assessment tools.
3. While the family-directed assessment is voluntary on the part of any family member who participates, there are no written consent requirements for conducting the family-directed assessment.
4. A family often extends beyond the parents, and the family-directed assessment may include other caregivers, siblings, grandparents and other extended family members.
5. A summary of the information gathered from the family-directed assessment is documented in Section II of the *NC ITP IFSP* form, and updated as needed during IFSP review meetings. Documentation should include the name of the assessment tool used.
6. Family-directed assessment is an ongoing process. The information a family chooses to share, along with other pertinent information such as child assessment findings, provides the foundation for developing outcomes for the family and child, and for identifying appropriate services, resources, supports, and strategies to achieve those outcomes.
7. An Early Intervention (EI) provider is responsible for participating in the multidisciplinary IFSP Team's **ongoing assessment** of an infant or toddler with a disability and a family-directed assessment of the resources, priorities, and concerns of the child's family, as related to the needs of the child, in the development of integrated goals and outcomes for the IFSP.
8. Good communication skills are essential in helping families make decisions about sharing their concerns, priorities, and resources, and in facilitating the sharing process. Active listening, self-awareness, selective self-disclosure, reflection, paraphrasing, sharing perceptions, using family-friendly language, and using open-ended questions are all important during these discussions and throughout the IFSP process.

## Recommended Family-Directed Assessment Tools

A routines-based parent interview tool helps to identify family priorities, resources and concerns related to supporting the child's development in the context of the child's and family's' everyday routines and activities.

- **Eco-mapping**

Eco-mapping can address the 'Resources' portion of the family-directed assessment, but is not a complete family-directed assessment. An eco-map would need to be completed in addition to some of the recommended tools below to complete the family-directed assessment process. An eco-map is a picture of the family's perceived informal, formal, and intermediate supports. Resources:

- ♦ [www.siskin.org/downloads/EINE - A Five-Component Model.pdf](http://www.siskin.org/downloads/EINE_-_A_Five-Component_Model.pdf) (page 4)
- ♦ [www.siskin.org/downloads/Understanding the Family Ecology.pdf](http://www.siskin.org/downloads/Understanding_the_Family_Ecology.pdf)
- ♦ <http://firstyears.org/c1/u1/eco.htm>
- ♦ Eco-map Development Checklist, R. A. McWilliam  
[www.siskin.org/downloads/Ecomap Development Checklist.pdf](http://www.siskin.org/downloads/Ecomap_Development_Checklist.pdf)
- ♦ Eco-Map Project INTEGRATE, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill [http://cehs.unl.edu/ECSE/960/Eco\\_Map.pdf](http://cehs.unl.edu/ECSE/960/Eco_Map.pdf)

- **TaCTICS / FACETS materials**

- ♦ Identifying Family Activities and Routines Conversation Starters  
<http://tactics.fsu.edu/pdf/HandoutPDFs/TaCTICSHandouts/Module1/ConversationStarters.pdf>

- **Routines-Based Interview (RBI)** (McWilliam & Clingenpeel, 2003)

- ♦ The RBI is a conversational process that helps parents and care providers focus on their priorities for their child. The interview process involves six steps that begin with talking about the day-to-day life of the child and family.
- ♦ Available at: [www.siskin.org/www/docs/112.190](http://www.siskin.org/www/docs/112.190)
- ♦ Training PowerPoint: [www.siskin.org/downloads/RBI Nebraska for dissem.pdf](http://www.siskin.org/downloads/RBI_Nebraska_for_dissem.pdf)

- **Asset-Based Context (ABC) Matrix;** (Wilson & Mott, 2006)

- ♦ The ABC Matrix is primarily a child assessment process. However, the Asset-Based Context Matrix Assessment Questions, included as part of the child assessment can be used as an interview guide for a portion of the family-directed assessment process (*see child assessment suggested tools for more information*).
- ♦ Available at: [http://fipp.org/static/media/uploads/casetools/casetools\\_vol2\\_no4.pdf](http://fipp.org/static/media/uploads/casetools/casetools_vol2_no4.pdf)

- **General Resource**

- ♦ Gathering and Giving Information With Families  
[http://depts.washington.edu/isei/iyc/21.4\\_woods.pdf](http://depts.washington.edu/isei/iyc/21.4_woods.pdf)