

# North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program Procedural Guidance

Reference: Individualized Family Service Plan Policy

## *Individualized Family Service Plans*

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### **Introduction**

The Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is the instrument specified by the NC Infant-Toddler Program (ITP) for implementing services for eligible infants and toddlers and their families. It is both a process and a written document. The process involves a collaborative planning effort and partnership between the parent and the professionals offering services and supports to the child and family.

The IFSP is developed jointly by the IFSP team, which includes the parent and service providers. Only the IFSP team can make decisions related to service delivery. The parent must play a role in the development and implementation of the plan, but decides how actively he/she wants to be involved. The Service Coordinator initiates the IFSP process and takes responsibility for the development, implementation, review, and revision of the Plan.

### **Procedures**

#### **1. IFSP Meetings and Reviews**

- A. For a child referred to the ITP and determined to be eligible, a meeting to develop the initial IFSP must be conducted within the initial 45-day time period.
- B. A review of the IFSP for a child and the child's family must be conducted every six months or more frequently if conditions warrant, or if the family requests such a review. The review may be carried out by a meeting or by another means that is acceptable to the parents and other participants.
- C. A meeting must be conducted on at least an annual basis to evaluate and revise, as appropriate, the IFSP for a child and the child's family.
- D. The purpose of the initial IFSP meeting is to:
  - summarize all information gathered during the assessment process regarding the child's strengths and needs and the family's concerns, priorities, and resources;
  - review the family's identified routines, daily activities, and natural environments as potential contexts for learning opportunities for the child;
  - develop and refine outcomes the family has chosen;
  - develop strategies for meeting outcomes;
  - select appropriate services and supports for assisting in meeting outcomes;
  - develop a written document that will guide the family, the Service Coordinator, and the other service providers;

- determine the responsibilities of each team member, and
- discuss how communication between the parent and other team members will be maintained.

E. The purpose of periodic reviews (including semi-annual) and annual meetings is to:

- review and revise the IFSP, as appropriate;
- review progress being made toward the achievement of outcomes;
- discuss the family's satisfaction with progress being made;
- review the results of any new or on-going assessments;
- share any other new and relevant information related to the child and family;
- delete services related to outcomes that have been achieved and are no longer needed;
- add new outcomes and make changes in services, as appropriate, and
- outline plans for the next six months.

## 2. Required IFSP Team Members

Members of the IFSP team are required to participate in initial and annual meetings. These persons include:

- the parent(s) of the child;
- other family member(s), as requested by the parent, if feasible;
- an advocate or person outside the family, if the parent requests participation by that individual;
- the Service Coordinator designated for the child and family;
- the provider(s) of early intervention services;
- a provider of evaluation and assessments services, and
- the surrogate parent, if one is required.

These same persons are required to participate in regularly scheduled semi-annual reviews, as well as any other reviews. A provider of evaluation and assessment services is not required to participate in IFSP reviews unless it has been determined the participation of an evaluator is needed. With parental approval, the child's primary physician, other providers of recommended services such as child care, etc. can be invited to participate on the IFSP team.

If any one of the required participants is unable to attend a review or meeting, arrangements must be made for the person's involvement through other means. This may include participation in a telephone conference call, having a knowledgeable authorized representative attend, making pertinent records available, or engaging in pre-meeting discussions with either the family or the Service Coordinator. Documentation of how persons unable to attend participated in the review or meeting must be included.

## 3. Interim IFSPs

An Infant-Toddler Program service may commence for an eligible child and his family before the completion of the initial Infant-Toddler Program evaluation and the development of the initial IFSP if the following conditions are met:

- the service is needed immediately;
- an Interim IFSP is developed, and

- parental consent is obtained.

An Interim IFSP does not eliminate the requirement that initial Infant-Toddler Program evaluation, eligibility determination, and development of the initial IFSP be completed within forty-five calendar days of the referral to the Infant-Toddler Program. The Interim Plan can be documented on the IFSP form through the completion of relevant sections. When ready to develop the initial IFSP, additional information can be added to the existing Interim Plan without beginning a completely new document.

An Interim IFSP must include:

- A. the name of the Service Coordinator who will be responsible for the implementation of the Interim IFSP and coordination with other service providers;
- B. the early intervention services that have been determined to be needed immediately by the child and the child's family;
- C. outcomes for the child and family, when those are recommended; and
- D. suggested activities that may be carried out by the family.

## Related Requirements

1. The *NC ITP IFSP* form must be used. Instructions accompanying this form outline content requirements and are to be followed. Please refer to the *NC ITP Instructions for Completing the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)*. There must be only one IFSP developed for a child at any given time. The start date of the IFSP is the date the parent signs the initial Plan. There is no charge to families for the development or review of the IFSP.
2. A review of the IFSP must occur every six (6) months following the date of the signing of the initial plan. If a review is delayed, the next review should occur on schedule from the date of the signing of the initial IFSP, even if a full six months has not elapsed. The annual meeting must occur twelve months (no later than 365 days) following the date of the signing of the initial meeting. The annual meeting to evaluate and revise the IFSP incorporates the semi-annual review.
3. Initial and annual IFSP meetings must be conducted in the native language or other means of communication used by the family. If appropriate, the IFSP must be translated into the parent's native language or mode of communication, unless clearly not feasible to do so. In instances where an IFSP is translated to another language or mode of communication, a copy of both the English version and the translated version must be filed in the Children's Developmental Services Agency record on the child.
4. The content of the IFSP must be written in language understandable by all team members, free of jargon and professional terminology.
5. The contents of the IFSP must be fully explained to the parent and informed Written Parental Consent secured prior to the provision of early intervention services listed on the Plan. The parent may determine whether he, his child, or other family members will accept or decline any early intervention service under the Infant Toddler Program without jeopardizing his right to receive other early intervention services. If the parent does not provide consent with respect to a particular service, then only the services to which consent is obtained may be provided.

6. The Service Coordinator must provide the parent with a copy of the initial IFSP and any subsequent changes and reviews. With parental approval, members of the IFSP team must be given a copy of the initial Plan and any subsequent changes and reviews.
7. The initial IFSP must be based on the results of the initial Infant-Toddler Program child and family-directed assessments. New assessment information must be added to the IFSP, as appropriate. The results of any subsequent evaluations conducted and other information available from the on-going assessment of the child and family must be used in determining what services and supports continue to be needed and what additional services and supports are needed.
8. The Service Coordinator must document the occurrence of the initial IFSP meeting, including the participants present, the provisions made for participation by required participants unable to be present, and the date of the meeting. A copy of the documentation (progress note) must be filed in the Children's Developmental Services Agency's record on the child.
9. The occurrence of semi-annual reviews and annual meetings are to be documented on the IFSP form and in a progress note by the Service Coordinator. Documentation must include the participants present, the provisions made for participation by required participants unable to be present, the date of the review, statements regarding progress towards outcomes, reasons for any delay in conducting the review or annual meeting, and any other relevant information.
10. By the time the child is two years six months of age, there must be evidence in the IFSP of steps to support the transition of the child from the Infant-Toddler Program including the addition of outcomes, activities, timelines, etc.