

Rhode Island Early Intervention Policies and Procedures Multidisciplinary Evaluation/Assessment

Certified EI providers are required to develop policies and procedures to effectively conduct a timely, comprehensive multidisciplinary evaluation and assessment of the functioning of each infant and toddler suspected of having a developmental delay or disability and a family directed assessment of the concerns, priorities and resources to enhance the family's capacity to meet the developmental needs of the infant or toddler. Requirements related to a multidisciplinary evaluation/assessment include:

Multidisciplinary Evaluation and Assessment

A multidisciplinary evaluation is an evaluation to determine eligibility when eligibility is not known. It is required once initially and whenever there is a question regarding eligibility.

Procedural Safeguards Required

A multidisciplinary assessment of the child is conducted to gather information regarding child functioning and to identify the child's current levels of development, the child's unique strengths and needs, and services appropriate to meet those needs. An initial multidisciplinary assessment is required for every child prior to the IFSP.

Parental Consent

Parental consent to evaluate must be obtained prior to evaluation.

Timeline

Initial evaluation and assessments must occur within 45 days from the date of referral unless the child or family is unavailable due to exceptional family circumstances or the parent has not provided consent. In this case evaluation and assessments must occur as soon as possible once consent is given. Exceptional family circumstances and provider attempts to obtain consent must be documented in the child's record.

Multidisciplinary Evaluation and Multidisciplinary Assessment procedures must include:

- Evaluations and assessments of the child and family must be conducted by qualified professionals, in a nondiscriminatory manner, and selected and administered so as not to be racially or culturally discriminatory.
- Unless clearly not feasible to do so, evaluations and assessments of the child must be conducted in the native language of the child (See definition).
- Unless clearly not feasible to do so, assessments of the family must be conducted in the native language of the family (See definition)
- Evaluation and assessment instruments and methods must be individualized and selected based on the presenting concerns in order to best determine the how the child's developmental status is impacting functioning.
 - A variety of evaluation tools and assessment methods must be available.
 - Qualified professionals must be trained in the administration of evaluation/assessment tools.
 - The Lead Agency reserves the right to determine specific evaluation/assessment instruments

Prior Written Notice

Prior written notice must be provided to parents within a reasonable time frame before an EI provider proposes an evaluation

Native Language

The language normally used by that individual, or, in the case of a child the language normally used by the parents of the child. For evaluations and assessments, the language normally used by the child if

Multidisciplinary team requirements include:

- Multidisciplinary team members are chosen based on the areas of developmental concern and the family's questions

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determined developmentally appropriate by qualified personnel conducting the evaluation or assessment. Native language when used with respect to an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, or for an individual with no written language, means the mode of communication normally used by the individual (such as sign language, braille, or oral communication)

- Each multidisciplinary evaluation/assessment includes at least two members of a multidisciplinary team and a family member that actively participate in the process.
- The two multidisciplinary team members must be from two different disciplines (professions). The evaluation may be conducted by one individual who is qualified in more than one discipline or profession. The team must include the service coordinator if not already part of the evaluation team.

Multidisciplinary Evaluation

Multidisciplinary Evaluation procedures include:

- Identification of the child's level of functioning in five developmental areas:
 1. Cognitive
 2. Physical (motor, vision and hearing)
 3. Communication (expressive and receptive language)
 4. Social/Emotional
 5. Adaptive development
- Administering a norm referenced standardized tool to conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation of all areas of development to determine eligibility when eligibility is not known.
- Obtaining the child's history (including a parent interview).
- Gathering information from other sources such as family members, other caregivers, medical providers, social workers and educators if necessary to understand the full scope of the child's strengths and needs.
- Reviewing medical, educational and other records
 - Outside evaluations/medical records can be used to determine eligibility (without conducting an evaluation) if those records indicate that the child's level of functioning in one or more areas of development constitutes a significant developmental delay (2 standard deviations below the mean in at least one area of development or 1.5 standard deviations from the mean in two or more areas of development) or the child has a diagnosed Single Established Condition. A multidisciplinary assessment of the child and family directed assessment is still required.

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Multidisciplinary Evaluation (Continued)

- No single procedure may be used as the sole criterion to determine eligibility

Multidisciplinary Assessment

Multidisciplinary assessment procedures to identify the child's unique strengths and needs and the early intervention services appropriate to meet those needs must include:

- An assessment of the child's functioning in all 5 areas of development in the context of daily routines and activities; and an assessment of the child's functioning in the three integrated global outcomes¹ utilizing:
 - A review of the results of the multidisciplinary evaluation
 - Parent report and personal observations of the child
 - The identification of the child's needs in all developmental areas
 - Gathering information regarding the child's functioning in the three integrated global outcomes.
- A family directed assessment must be conducted to identify the family's concerns, priorities and resources and the supports and services necessary to enhance the family's capacity to meet the developmental needs of their child. This assessment must:
 - be voluntary on the part of each family member participating
 - be based on information obtained through an assessment tool and also through an interview with those family members who elect to participate in the assessment
 - be conducted in the language or mode of communication normally used by the family member being assessed unless not feasible to do so
 - include the family's description of its resources, priorities and concerns related to enhancing their child's development.
 - be summarized in the IFSP and utilized in the development of the IFSP if the child is eligible.
- Assessments of the child and family may occur simultaneously with the multidisciplinary evaluation if the requirements for each are met.

¹ The three global outcomes are:

1. Demonstrate positive social emotional skills (including positive social relationships);
2. Acquire and use knowledge and skills including early language/communication and early literacy skills;
3. Use of appropriate actions to meet needs.

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Informed Clinical Opinion

Informed Clinical Opinion is the way in which a team utilizes their cumulative knowledge and experience to evaluate and assess a child and to interpret the results of evaluation and assessment instruments.

- Evaluation/assessment team members must use informed clinical opinion to interpret all evaluation data and test results.
- Informed Clinical Opinion can be used on an independent basis to determine eligibility when other instruments do not definitively establish eligibility (See Eligibility).
- Informed clinical opinion is never to be used to negate the results of evaluation instruments used to establish eligibility.

Documentation of Multidisciplinary Evaluation/Assessment

The results of the evaluation/assessment must be :

- Summarized in the IFSP in descriptive, jargon free language understood by the family and include all sources of information. Summaries must address the following in each domain:
 - Present levels of development
 - Strengths
 - Needs
 - Impact on the child's functioning in everyday routines and typical activities
- The assessment must be summarized **on the Rhode Island Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education Child Outcomes Summary Form** utilizing all sources of information to address:
 - The child's positive social relationships, use of knowledge and skills and the ability to take action to get his or her needs met in everyday routines and activities across settings and situations
 - The child's skills and abilities compared to age expectations.

Eligibility/IFSP Meeting

An Eligibility/IFSP Meeting must be convened with the family in order to discuss the child's present levels of development and determine the child's eligibility for Early Intervention.

- Meeting arrangements must be made with, and written notice provided to the family and other participants early enough before the meeting date to ensure they will be able to attend. Prior written notice is required which includes the parent's right to dispute the eligibility determination and information regarding the right to appeal.

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Eligibility/ IFSP Meeting (Continued)

Procedural Safeguards Required

Prior Written Notice

Prior written notice must be provided to parents within a reasonable time frame before an EI provider proposes an IFSP Meeting

- The meeting must occur in a setting and time convenient for the family
- In the native language of family or other mode of communication used by the family unless it is clearly not feasible to do so
- Participants must include the parent(s), EI service coordinator, and others as requested by the parent if feasible to do so. (Parents may include other family members, persons outside the family, advocates, etc.)
- A person or persons directly involved in conducting the evaluation of the child and assessment of the child and family or if necessary that person's involvement through other means is acceptable such as making pertinent records available at the meeting, or an authorized representative, or by conference call.
- **The child's present levels of development is discussed.**
- **Information documented on the Rhode Island Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education Child Outcome Summary Form regarding the three integrated global outcomes is discussed and summarized.**

Timeline Required

An Eligibility/IFSP meeting must occur within 45 days from the date of referral

If the child is not eligible the following occurs :

- **Information documented on the Child Outcome Summary Form is provided to the parent.**
- Notification is provided in writing that the child is not eligible.
- A written summary of the evaluation results is provided to the parent.
- The parent is provided with Procedural Safeguards.
- The parent is provided with information regarding community resources as appropriate.

If the child is eligible the following occurs :

- A discussion of present levels of development.
- An initial discussion regarding concerns, priorities and resources of the parent.
- A Physician's Authorization is sent and obtained.

On Going Assessment

Ongoing assessment means the procedures used by qualified professionals to identify the child's unique strength and needs and the early intervention

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services appropriate to meet those needs throughout the child's eligibility. These procedures include:

- For each eligible child an ongoing assessment of functional, developmental skills in all areas of development is required.
- A criterion based assessment tool that utilizes parent report and observation must be used to document and monitor each child's development in all domains.
- The assessment tool must be used to:
 - Consistently track development across all domains
 - Serve as a source of input to the development of the Individual Family Service Plan
 - Provide functional, developmental information to the Local Educational Agency during the Transition process
 - Serve as a source of input regarding the three global outcomes
- The assessment tool must be included in the child's record and must be updated at least at each Periodic Progress Review and Annual IFSP Review.