



Arc Guide to Special Education for Infants and Toddlers (Birth Through Age 2)

Special Education Early Intervention Services (EIS) are provided to eligible infants and toddlers. The goal of EIS is to lessen the effects of a disability or developmental delay.

Minnesota is a birth mandate state. This means that special education and related services are available to eligible infants beginning at birth. The lead agency is the Minnesota Department of Education in coordination with the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health. These services are described in United States Statute and Rule entitled Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), Part C (Section 619), IDEIA regulations (34 CR 303), Minnesota Statute 125A.259 - 125A.48 and Minnesota Rule 3525.

Help Me Grow (1-800-693-GROW (4769), helpmegrowmn.org) is a resource for parents who have concerns about their child's development. Trained staff will listen to the parent's story, ask relevant questions and make suggestions for next steps. A referral may be made to arrange or schedule a developmental screening or schedule a comprehensive assessment to determine if the child is eligible for early childhood intervention services.

Early intervention services are for children birth through age 2 who meet certain eligibility criteria which includes:

- Eligibility criteria as defined in Minnesota Rule 3525.1325 - 3525.1348. These rules specify definition and criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorders, Deaf-Blind, Emotional or Behavioral Disorders, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Developmental Cognitive Disability, Other Health Disabilities, Severely Multiply Impaired, Speech or Language Impairments, Visually Impaired and Traumatic Brain Injury OR
- Developmental delay which includes a child who has a diagnosed physical or mental condition that often results in a developmental delay and the child has demonstrated significant delays in one or more of the following: cognitive development; physical development; communication development; social or emotional development; adaptive (everyday tasks) development OR
- Eligibility established through informed clinical opinion which reflects a meaningful assessment of the child and family including concerns, suggestions, priorities that may need further evaluation

If it determined that an evaluation is necessary, a team meeting will be scheduled to determine what evaluations will be completed. The team will include professionals with

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expertise in the areas in which the infant/toddler is demonstrating a delay and the infant/toddler's parent(s). During the meeting, the team will discuss what tests will be completed and by whom, and a form documenting this information will be given to the parents. The form must be signed by the parent(s) before testing can begin.

Possible areas to be evaluated include:

- Adaptive domain: includes self-care and personal responsibility
- Personal-Social domain: includes adult interaction, peer interaction, self-concept and social role
- Communication domain: includes receptive and expressive communication
- Motor domain: includes gross motor, fine motor and perceptual motor
- Cognitive domain: includes attention and memory, reason and academic skills, perception and concepts

The evaluation must be completed within 45 days of the initial referral. After the evaluation is completed, a meeting will be held to determine if the infant/toddler is eligible for early intervention services.

If it is determined that the infant/toddler is eligible for services, a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) must be provided in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). This is documented within an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) that will be developed. The IFSP is an annual document created with the input of the parents and the early intervention service team. Members of the team may include:

- The parent(s) of the child
- Other family members as requested by the parent (if feasible to do so)
- An advocate outside of the family if requested by the parent
- The service coordinator designated by the public agency (usually the school)
- Individuals who may be involved with the assessment
- Individuals who may be providing early intervention services

The IFSP documents:

- Present level of performance in each of the five areas described above
- Identification of needs of the infant/toddler and family as determined through the evaluation

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- Priorities and concerns of the infant/toddler's family
- A statement of measurable outcomes or results expected to be achieved
- Services needed to achieve the outcomes or results
- Location where services will be provided (which is usually home, day care or school setting)
- Start date and duration of services including length, frequency, intensity and method
- Payment method (if any)
- Criteria, procedures and timelines to determine
 - The degree to which progress is occurring
 - If modifications or revisions are necessary
- Steps and services that must be taken to assure a smooth transition to services at age 3 (if eligible)

The specific services provided will depend on the needs of the infant/toddler as identified through the evaluation. The range and types of Early Intervention Services:

- Assistive Technology device and services - equipment
- Audiology services - related to hearing loss
- Family training, counseling and home visits - to assist the family in understanding the special needs of the infant/toddler
- Health services (see 303.16)
- Medical services - provided by a licensed physician to determine an infant/toddler's developmental status
- Nursing services - assessment of health status, nursing care
- Nutrition services - to address the nutritional needs
- Occupational therapy - related to adaptive development, adaptive behavior, play and sensory, motor or postural development
- Physical therapy - to address sensorimotor function including musculoskeletal status, neurobehavioral organization, perceptual and motor development, cardiopulmonary status and effective environmental adaptation
- Psychological services - includes interpreting assessment results, getting information about the infant/toddler's behavior, consultation and training
- Service coordination (see 303.34)
- Social work - home visits, focusing on social and emotional development of infant/toddler and family

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- Special instruction - see other sheets
- Speech-language services - for the habilitation, rehabilitation or prevention of communication delays
- Transportation - travel to receive services
- Vision services - related to visual functioning, skills training related to vision issues

An IFSP team meeting will be held to discuss the results of the evaluation and to draft an IFSP. The IFSP will be presented to the parents. This is done along with a Prior Written Notice (PWN) form. The PWN:

- Describes the action(s) proposed by the district
- Explains why that action is being proposed
- Options considered
- Other relevant factors related to the decision
- Adaptations that may be needed
- District contact information
- Information on procedural safeguards
- Parental consent statement/notice with place for a signature and date. If you do not agree with the proposal or have questions, please contact The Arc Greater Twin Cities and speak with an advocate.

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