

VI. Entry Into Program

A. Referral

1. EI programs accept referrals from all sources. If the family is not the referral source, they should be informed prior to referral. If the family has not been informed, the EI program will encourage the referral source to inform the family. A face-to-face or telephone response to the family from the EI program is made within 10 working days following the initial referral. Attempts to contact families are documented in the child's record.

2. The EI program schedules a visit with the family preceded by written notification of what the visit will involve.

3. Once the visit has been scheduled, the EI program shall assign a contact person to be available to the family during the eligibility determination and IFSP process.

Within 45 days after receiving a referral, the Early Intervention program will complete the evaluation and assessment activities and, if the child is found eligible for Early Intervention services, convene an IFSP meeting.

B. Intake

1. The initial face-to-face contact with the family provides an opportunity for discussion with family members regarding potential participation in Early Intervention. The visit is scheduled in response to family need with regard to time and location. Written parental consent is obtained in order for the visit to proceed. Often the child's medical and developmental histories are discussed and an overview of Early Intervention is given to the family. The family is informed of their right to a full assessment. Plans are made for the eligibility evaluation and assessment process.

2. The parent is given the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Notice of Family Rights. The program will make an effort to ensure that the parent understands the notice and that the parent has been given the opportunity to discuss the contents of the notice and to have questions answered. There is written evidence, including parent signature, that these requirements have been met.

C. Eligibility Evaluation

1. Eligibility evaluations are performed by certified Early Intervention programs.
2. Prior written notice and written parental consent is obtained prior to an eligibility evaluation.
3. A review of available records related to the child's current health status and medical history is to be completed as part of the assessment.
4. As a part of this process, an evaluation of the child's development is to be made by a multidisciplinary team using a DPH-approved developmental evaluation tool.

Functioning in each of the following areas is evaluated to determine eligibility:

- a. Cognitive development
 - b. Physical development (gross and fine motor), including vision, hearing, and health status
 - c. Communication development, including expressive and receptive language development
 - d. Social and emotional and personal development
 - e. Adaptive development/self help
5. Eligibility evaluation further consists of a determination of family and child risk factors to document eligibility as described in Section III B.2. of these standards. An assessment of family resources, priorities, and concerns is family-directed and designed to determine ways to enhance the development of the child. Any assessment of a family's need for support or services is voluntary in nature, and based on information provided by the family through personal interviews conducted by personnel trained in appropriate methods and procedures. If the family chooses not to share this information they must be informed that their decision may impact eligibility.
 6. The eligibility evaluation process is culturally and linguistically appropriate for the child and family.
 7. The disciplines represented on the multidisciplinary evaluation team are determined, to the extent possible, by the developmental areas of concern for the child.

8. With written family consent, the primary referral source is notified in writing of the outcome of the eligibility evaluation.

D. Assessment

1. Assessment consists of those on-going procedures used by appropriately qualified personnel throughout the period of a child's eligibility for services to identify (1) the child's unique strengths and needs and the services appropriate to meet those needs; and (2) the resources, priorities and concerns of the family and the supports and services necessary to enhance the family's capacity to meet the developmental needs of their child.

2. The assessment emphasizes the collaborative process among Early Intervention personnel, the family, and other agencies and providers. Logistics should be primarily responsive to family and child needs and preferences regarding time, place and other such factors. Families will be given prior written notice of assessments which includes the voluntary nature of consent. Written informed parental consent is obtained prior to assessment.