

A Guide to the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) for Minnesota Families

If your child has been identified as needing early intervention services, you may have questions about what that means for your child and for your family. This guide will help you understand the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) and how it will help your child's development.

The IFSP is a document that is used when providing early intervention services to an eligible infant or toddler, ages birth to three, and their family. Early intervention services are defined in Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), along with information regarding how and where those services are provided.

Your IFSP contains information about your child in all five areas of development: cognitive, physical, communication, social and emotional, and adaptive skills. The child and family outcomes summarize your concerns, priorities, and resources. It also identifies how, when, and where services will be provided to help you and your child make progress on those outcomes. If your child is receiving private resources, those can also be listed in the IFSP along with the payment source for those services.

This handout will help you understand the various sections of the IFSP and the important information that must be included.

Identifying information

The first page of your IFSP will contain information related to your child and family, including names, your child's birthdate, your child's native language, your contact information, contact information for your child's doctor (if you wish to share that information), the referral date for early intervention, and the initial IFSP meeting date.

IFSP team members

This is a chart listing the names and contact information for you and the other members of your IFSP team. Team members include those who were involved in the initial evaluation, the name of the person who will be acting as your service coordinator, and your IFSP service providers. In Minnesota, it is likely that your primary service provider, or "primary coach," will also serve as your service coordinator. There is also a place to indicate how the members of the evaluation and assessment team participated in the initial IFSP team meeting.

Progress reporting

Part C regulations require that your IFSP be reviewed at least every six months as well as annually. The date for the six-month review and the annual review will be written in this section. As the parent, you are involved in both the periodic review and the annual evaluation.

Evaluation and assessment summary

This is the section of your IFSP that will include all the information gathered during the evaluation and assessment process. With your input, the person doing the evaluation will look at your child's strengths and how well they are able to participate in your family's daily routines and activities. They will look at what your child can do and what your child needs to learn.

These are the areas of development that must be included in both the summary and the annual review:

- Physical development, such as:
 - o Health (medical, dental, nutrition)
 - o Vision/hearing (screening, glasses, hearing aids, history of ear infections)
 - o Fine motor (use of hands and upper body)
 - o Gross motor (how does your child move around your home and what does that movement look like, or, if your child is using any mobility devices, is the device working for your child)
 - o Other sensory issues, if appropriate (how does your child react to loud sounds, bright lights, touch, etc.)
- Communication (how your child communicates with you and how well your child understands your communication)
- Cognition (thinking, play skills, problem solving)
- Social-emotional (engagement, response to caregivers, coping)
- Adaptive (feeding, dressing, toileting, sleeping)

Eligibility determination

The evaluation team will look at the results of the evaluation and assessment to decide if your child meets the eligibility requirements for early intervention services. This section will indicate if and how your child qualifies for services.

Family-directed assessment (voluntary on the part of the family)

If you agree to participate in the family assessment, the summary of the information you provide will be written in this section, including your concerns, priorities, and resources, as well as what services or supports you might need to meet the developmental needs of your child.

Child and family outcomes

This section of your IFSP lists the outcomes that you have determined are important for your child and family. Typically, outcomes are written for a year, but the time span could be shorter based on the needs of your child and family. Your child's outcomes should be tied to everyday routines and activities and to natural learning opportunities within those daily routines. The outcomes should include information about how progress will be measured.

Part C early intervention services

This is a grid detailing the services that will be provided to your child, and includes the following information:

- Projected start date (when you can expect services to begin)

- Length (how many minutes per session)
- Frequency (number of days or sessions)
- Intensity (individual or group setting; when services are delivered in your home, they will usually be individual)
- Method (will the primary provider be coming with another member of your IFSP team to provide multidisciplinary services, or will your primary provider consult with other members of your team and use that information to provide transdisciplinary services to you and your child)
 - o Multidisciplinary services means that more than one member of the team will be making visits to the home. In a transdisciplinary approach, team members will work together to provide services, but the family will only interact with the primary provider on a regular basis. The primary provider may consult with other members of the team when needed.
- Actual location (your home, a childcare center, or another program in which you and your child participate)
- Anticipated duration (length of time services will be delivered, usually for a year)
- Funding source, if other than school (service your child receives that your insurance or another source is paying for, such as private speech services)

Justification for each service provided in locations other than the natural environment

Part C regulations require that early intervention services be provided in a child's natural environment, which is defined as settings that are natural or typical for a same-aged infant or toddler without a disability and may include the home or community settings.

If services are being provided in a place other than the natural environment, the IFSP must contain a statement explaining why those services cannot be provided in the natural environment.

Needed medical and other services

This is a section that is voluntary for families. If there is a medical or other service, such as childcare, that you would like you or your child to receive, and you would like help locating that service, it could be included here. This section would include the service you are looking for, the steps that should be taken to locate that service, the person who will help you do this (usually your service coordinator who is also likely to be your primary service provider or "primary coach"), and the funding source for the service (your insurance or a county or statewide resource, not the school district).

Planning for transition from Part C early intervention services

Part C regulations specify that Part C early intervention services must end on your child's third birthday. This section includes steps to transition your child out of early intervention services before their third birthday.

Signature page

Minnesota Statute 125A.32 requires that the agency providing early intervention services must sign the signature page. This would usually be the school district.

When the district sends you the proposed IFSP, they will include a Prior Written Notice (PWN) and a Parental Consent/Objection form. The PWN will detail what the district is proposing to do and how they made their decision to do it (in this case, they are proposing an IFSP). If you agree with the proposed IFSP, you will indicate that by checking the box on the Parental Consent/Objection form. If you disagree, you will indicate that. You also have the right to consent to some but not all services. Early intervention services are designed to be family-driven, so you decide what services work best for your family. In any case, you need to sign the form and send it back to your service coordinator. Do not send back the IFSP; you need to keep it for your records.

If you have any questions about your IFSP, you can contact PACER at (952) 838-9000 or and ask to speak with an Early Childhood advocate.

Additional resources:

Families are Important! An Early Childhood Guidebook for Families of Young Children

This booklet helps families of children with disabilities or who have a developmental delay understand Minnesota's early intervention system and how to access services for their child. (One copy free for Minnesota families; call PACER at (952) 838-9000 or email pacer@pacer.org to request your copy)

Handouts

The following resources are available on PACER's website:

- ["Supporting Parent Participation in the Individual Family Service Plan or Individualized Education Program Process"](#)
- ["What is Service Coordination?"](#)