



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES NEW JERSEY EARLY INTERVENTION SYSTEM

No: NJEIS-09	Subject: Early Intervention Provider Assignment
Effective Date: March 11, 2016	Responsible Party: Part C Coordinator

I. Purpose

To ensure timely provision of comprehensive Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) services for children and their families.

II. Policy

- A. Evaluation/assessment for children and their families shall be conducted timely, in compliance with the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part C at 34 CFR 303.321 and the New Jersey Early Intervention Rules at N.J.A.C. 8:17-6.3;
- B. The Service Coordinator should use every effort to, as soon as possible, identify a provider agency that can meet the identified needs of a child/family requiring IFSP services;
- C. The Service Coordinator and Early Intervention Program (EIP) are responsible to locate practitioners and initiate services to meet the needs of children/families served by the New Jersey Early Intervention System (NJEIS) within a timely fashion, in compliance with the policies and procedures described herein; and
- D. The Service Coordinator should simultaneously ensure that regional arrangements between agencies and the REIC are honored.

III. Procedure

- A. A child/family's eligibility and related IFSP services shall be delivered in accordance with the following procedures:
 - 1. NJEIS and/or Regional Early Intervention Collaboratives (REICs) must develop a rotational listing identifying the agencies providing services for each county by:
 - (a) Status as an evaluation team, comprehensive agency and/or service vendor agency.
 - (b) Status as a comprehensive or vendor agency for a specified county.
 - (c) REIC regional service areas (primary, secondary, etc) agreed to by agencies.

B. Projected start dates for services on the IFSP must be as soon as feasible after the parent consents to the service, but no later than thirty (30) calendar days unless there are documented family exceptional reasons. However, the REIC may authorize services to start prior to the projected start date if a practitioner is available. A service start date shall not precede the effective date of the IFSP. Service Coordinators shall explain to families that the projected start date is just that, a projected date, not an actual start date. Actual start dates shall be determined once an EIP agency has been assigned and the assigned practitioner contacts the family and initiates the service.

C. **“NOTICE OF CHILDREN IN NEED OF SERVICES” (Broadcast)**

1. The Service Coordination Unit must maintain a continuously updated **“NOTICE OF CHILDREN IN NEED OF SERVICES” (Broadcast)** that is:
 - (a) Consistent with the field definitions for the “Notice of Children in Need of Services” (Broadcast) Addendum;
 - (b) Children must be listed on the notice by date of consent for the IFSP service from oldest to newest;
 - (c) Electronically disseminated at least two (2) times each week to all potential (comprehensive and vendor) EIPs as follows:
 - i. At a minimum, the notice will be issued on Tuesday and Friday of each week by 1:00 pm.
 - ii. EIP responses for the Tuesday notice must be received by the SCU by the end of the day Thursday and responses for the Friday notice must be received by the SCU by the end of the day the following Monday.
 - iii. IFSP services must be assigned prior to the issuance of the next notice. For example, responses received by Thursday for the Tuesday notice will be assigned on the Friday notice.
 - (d) Service Coordinators will review the EIP responses and assign the child prior to the next scheduled Notice of Children in Need of Services, based on the following criteria:
 - i. Ability to meet the total service needs of the child and family (act as the comprehensive EI home program).
 - ii. Rotational or priority order of assignment agreed to by agencies for the county, if relevant.
2. The EIP agencies must respond to the notice as follows:
 - (a) Timely responses for the Tuesday notice must be received by the SCU by 5:00 pm Thursday and responses for the Friday notice must be received by the SCU by 5:00 pm the following Monday.
 - (b) Each EIP must request or decline assignment of each child in need of services
 - (c) EIPs must respond to the notice in the means in which it is disseminated by the SCU. For example, if the notice is disseminated via an excel spreadsheet, the EIP must respond within that spreadsheet in the designated column.

D. EIP Assignment

1. The Service Coordinator shall assign the child to the first comprehensive EIP that can provide the total service needs.
2. If a comprehensive EIP agency is unable to provide the total service needs, the Service Coordinator must move down the priority listing of both comprehensive and service vendor agencies until an EIP is identified to provide comprehensive services. The Service coordinator is responsible to ensure that the best interest of the child and family is paramount in assigning the service.
3. If none of the EIPs responding to the notice can meet the total needs of the child and family, the Service Coordinator shall assign the child to the first EIP that can provide the most comprehensive services. The Service Coordinator must then identify a service vendor for the remaining service needs. The service vendor will remain as the provider of the specific service until the practitioner assigned by the service vendor agency is no longer available to provide the service. The Service coordinator is responsible to ensure that the best interest of the child and family is paramount in reassigning the service.
4. If a service vendor is assigned to provide the total comprehensive services for a child and family, the agency has the right to remain as the assigned EIP for the duration of the child's enrollment or until the service vendor can no longer meet the service needs, whichever occurs earlier.
5. When necessary, Service Coordinators assign additional assessments to the Targeted Evaluation Team. If the Targeted Evaluation Team cannot complete the assessment in a timely manner, the service coordinator assigns the assessment to the back-up Targeted Evaluation Team. If the Targeted Evaluation Team or the back-up Targeted Evaluation Team cannot complete the assessment in a timely manner, the service coordinator will then assign the assessment to the comprehensive EIP agency providing the most service needs of the child and family. The practitioner assigned to conduct an additional assessment must be from the discipline licensed and qualified to conduct the assessment using a discipline specific instrument that is most relevant to the identified need and justify clinical opinion.
6. For children who have not been assigned a practitioner for a service beyond 30 days (NPA) of the original consent for the IFSP service which has not been provided:
 - (a) Assignments will be made by the Service Coordination Unit in order beginning with the child who has the earliest consent for the IFSP service unless an exception is granted by the Procedural Safeguards Office;
 - (b) If multiple EIP agencies request assignment of services, the EIP agency that can provide the earliest start date shall have preference in assignment of the service.
 - (c) If an existing IFSP service is increased at an IFSP meeting, that additional frequency and duration for the existing IFSP service may be assigned to the ongoing practitioner who is already providing that service to the child. This addition does not get included on the Notice above.

- (d) If the assigned practitioner cannot provide the additional frequency and duration for the existing IFSP service, the increased IFSP service time must be added to the Notice. To the extent feasible, the original IFSP service shall continue until the new IFSP service is assigned through the Notice above.

E. EIP Responsibility

- 1. The EIP must:
 - (a) Participate in ongoing IFSP meetings.
 - (b) Respond timely to requests for assignment of children.
 - (c) Provide reasons why the EIP is unable to provide services for specific children at the request of the Department or the REIC and/or SCU, on behalf of the Department.
 - (d) Assign a practitioner timely and notify Service Coordination Unit and the REIC of the practitioner's assignment(s).
 - (e) Provide timely notice including reasons for the disruption/change to the service coordinator and parent of any:
 - i. Potential or actual disruption in services;
 - ii. Short-term, long-term, or permanent change in practitioner.
 - iii. Practitioner substitutions consistent with NJEIS-03.

F. SCU Responsibility Completing the **NOTICE OF CHILDREN IN NEED OF SERVICES**

- 1. Prior to disseminating the “**NOTICE OF CHILDREN IN NEED OF SERVICES**” consistent with NJEIS-09, the Service Coordination Unit (SCU) shall ensure the following categories of services are reflected as designated through the “Notice of Children in Need of Services” (Broadcast) Form.
 - (a) “**Children in need of Service >30 Days**”
 - i. Children/Services shall be listed in this section when an early intervention service is not assigned to an EIP Agency within 30 days of a child's IFSP.
 - ii. Early Intervention services that did not begin prior to an EIP agency returning the early intervention service, shall be placed in the section “**Children in need of Service >30 Days**” as appropriate, based on the IFSP date for the service.
 - (b) “**Children in need of Service <30 Days**”
 - i. Children/Services shall be listed in this section when an early intervention service is not assigned to an EIP agency and the **NOTICE OF CHILDREN IN NEED OF SERVICES** is issued less than 30 days from the child's IFSP.
 - ii. Children/Services listed shall include new services, change in services, additional assessments, and/or any other service that would not be

included in another section of the **NOTICE OF CHILDREN IN NEED OF SERVICES**.

- iii. Early Intervention services that did not begin prior to an EIP agency returning the early intervention service, shall be placed in the section **“Children in need of Service <30 Days”** as appropriate, based on the IFSP date for the service.

(c) “Children in need of Service - Services Returned or Disrupted”

- i. Children/Services shall be listed in this section when an early intervention service is returned from an EIP agency and must be placed on the **NOTICE OF CHILDREN IN NEED OF SERVICES**. Services shall be listed in this section based on the last date of service.
- ii. Early Intervention services that did not begin prior to an EIP agency returning the early intervention service, shall be placed in the section **“Children in need of Service >30 Days”** or **“Children in need of Service <30 Days”** as appropriate, based on the IFSP date for the service.
- iii. All services within this section shall be assigned as soon as possible, consistent with all applicable NJEIS procedures.
- iv. In the event a service in this section is not assigned within 30 days of the last date of service, the child/service shall be moved into the **“Children in need of Service >30 Days”** section.

(d) “Assigned Services – Waiting Start Date”

- i. Children/Services shall be listed in this section once an EIP agency is assigned the child/service.
- ii. The EIP agency shall provide an actual start date to the SCU within 15 days of assignment or provide a documented reason for the delay.
- iii. Consistent with NJEIS policy, an EIP agency can be withheld future assignment for not timely providing start dates to the SCU.
- iv. Children shall remain on the **NOTICE OF CHILDREN IN NEED OF SERVICES** for one (1) additional notice dissemination, then shall be removed from the **NOTICE OF CHILDREN IN NEED OF SERVICES**.

Related Policies

NJEIS-03: Practitioner Substitution

NJEIS-08: No Provider/Practitioner Available

NJEIS-16: Provision of Timely IFSP Services

Notice of Children in Need of Services Format (Broadcast) and Field Definitions Addendum