

## Comprehensive Evaluations Notice to Coordinators

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### BACKGROUND

*Early On*<sup>®</sup> Michigan requires the performance of a timely, comprehensive, multidisciplinary evaluation of each child, birth through age two, referred for evaluation, including assessment activities related to the child and the child's family. The Department of Education assures that all public agencies responsible for evaluations and assessments use nondiscriminatory procedures. Tests and evaluation materials are administered in the child's and parent's native language or mode of communication, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so. All evaluation and assessment procedures and materials are selected and administered so as not to be racially or culturally discriminatory.

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### REQUIREMENTS

Evaluation and assessment shall include:

- written consent from the child's parent or guardian to conduct an initial evaluation to determine the child's eligibility for early intervention services;
  - performance of a timely, comprehensive, multidisciplinary evaluation of each child, birth through age two, referred for evaluation, and a family-directed identification of the needs of each child's family to appropriately assist in the development of the child, (each assessment and evaluation shall be nondiscriminatory); and
  - complete evaluation and assessment activities and hold an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting within 45 calendar days of referral.
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### REFERENCES

The requirements delineated in this bulletin are referenced and supported in the following federal and state statutes, regulations, rules, and policies:

1. Public Law 108-446 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004, Part C
  - 34 CFR 303 Early Intervention Services
2. 34 CFR 303 Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities

- 34 CFR 303.322(a)-(e) Evaluation and Assessment
  - 3. 34 CFR 303 Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities
    - 34 CFR 303.166 Evaluation, Assessment, and Nondiscriminatory Procedures
  - 4. 34 CFR 303 Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities
    - 34 CFR 303.321(a)-(e) Comprehensive Child Find System
  - 5. Michigan State Plan
    - Comprehensive Child Find System, Section V
    - Evaluation, Assessment, and Nondiscriminatory Procedures, Section VI
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## DEFINITIONS

**Assessment** refers to the ongoing procedures used by appropriate qualified personnel throughout the period of a child's eligibility to identify the child's unique strengths and needs; the family's resources, priorities and concerns related to the development of the child; and the nature and extent of early intervention services that are needed by the child and the child's family to meet the previously listed needs.

**Evaluation** is a comprehensive procedure used by appropriate qualified personnel to verify the presence of a disability or delay, to describe the nature and extent of the disability or delay, and to determine a child's initial and continuing eligibility in the 6 domains of development: physical development including vision and hearing, fine and gross motor development, communication development, cognitive development, social/emotional development and adaptive/self help.

**An Evaluation Tool** is a criterion-referenced or norm-referenced instrument that assists in the identification of the unique needs of the child in terms of the developmental areas. The tool must provide a more comprehensive view of the child's functioning than does a screening tool. The evaluation tool must be utilized by qualified personnel trained in its use. There must be fixed procedures of administration, scoring, standard materials and instructions.

**Screening** is the process of identifying those children who have a high probability of exhibiting delayed development. Screening is intended to identify problems at an early stage and to use this information to flag

individuals for further, in-depth evaluation. Screening does not specify the nature of the problem, or the reasons for its existence. Screening procedures are quick and easily administered and may be used by persons with limited training. Most screening instruments have scores based on a two standard deviations from the mean, meaning that many children who have a delay of less than 50 percent would not be identified.

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## **DISCUSSION**

A child's eligibility for early intervention services may be based upon the informed clinical opinion of a multidisciplinary team of parents and professionals. Children may be classified as having a developmental delay or an established condition. Four sources of information are used to arrive at informed clinical opinions:

1. A developmental history, including medical history;
2. An observation of the parent(s)/primary caregiver(s) and child together;
3. A recent health status report (within three months if the child is under 18 months, within six months if the child is 18 months or older); and
4. An appropriate formal evaluation measure. This formal measure shall not be used as the sole criterion to determine the absence of delay.

The purpose of a developmental history is to obtain information directly from the parents regarding the prenatal, perinatal, and family life experiences which may have influenced the child's current developmental functioning.

The purpose of the observational evaluation and assessment is to understand the development of the child within the context of his/her caregiving environment and across multiple developmental domains of functioning. The evaluation information must be included on the initial IFSP.

The purpose of the health appraisal is to obtain information regarding the child's past and current physical development and health status.

The purpose of the formal evaluation measure is to enable professionals and parents to systematically

observe the specific behaviors and capabilities of the child under standard test conditions.

The information obtained from all of these procedures is essential for understanding the developmental abilities of the child and the child's growth within the cultural context of his/her own family.

#### Developmental Delay

Children who are developmentally delayed are those from birth through age two years whose development is delayed in one or more of the following areas:

1. Cognitive;
2. Communication;
3. Social/emotional;
4. Adaptive/Self-Help; and
5. Physical, including vision and hearing.

#### Established Conditions

Children with established conditions are those from birth through age two who have a diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay.

The categories of established conditions are (but are not limited to):

1. Chromosomal anomaly/genetic disorder;
2. Neurological disorder;
3. Congenital malformation;
4. Inborn error of metabolism;
5. Sensory disorder;
6. Atypical developmental disorder;
7. Severe toxic exposure;
8. Chronic illness; and
9. Severe infectious disease.