

## Screening (Post-Referral Screening)

### Introduction and Intent

Screening is an optional procedure to help decide if an evaluation is needed. It may be integrated into the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) process. Screening, as covered in this section of the manual, is a post-referral procedure.

This section includes information regarding:

- Pre-referral screening versus post-referral screening;
- Purpose of screening;
- Procedures;
- Timelines for completing a screening;
- Prior Written Notice before screening;
- Written Parental Consent;
- After screening;
- Personnel to administer a screening;
- Administration of a screening tool; and
- Recommended screening tools.

### Pre-referral vs. Post-referral Screening

Screening conducted before a referral is made to *Early On* is called a pre-referral screening. Pre-referral screenings may be conducted as a function of Child Find.

**Examples** of pre-referral screening may include, but are not limited to, a screening completed by a doctor's office or a child care center.

Pre-referral screenings are addressed under the "Pre-referral Screening" section of the **Public Awareness, Child Find and Referral** chapter of this Manual.

Screening may also be conducted after the referral to *Early On* is made, but before an evaluation is conducted. This is called a post-referral screening. Post-referral screening is part of the IFSP process and does not extend the 45 calendar day timeline for completion of an IFSP. The purpose and requirements for post-referral screening are addressed in the remainder of this section.

The results of a screening tool may also be used to inform the evaluation and/or assessment process. The results may guide a service area's decision about evaluation team members and tools.

#### **Examples include:**

- A screening tool indicates a concern in the area of physical development so a decision may be made

to include a physical therapist on the evaluation team.

- A screening tool indicates a concern in the area of social-emotional development so a decision may be made to include the use of a tool specific to social-emotional development in addition to a multi-domain evaluation.

### **Purpose of Screening**

Local lead agencies (typically ISDs) may choose to implement a screening process. Inclusion of a screening process does not extend the 45 calendar day timeline from referral to the meeting for developing the initial Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

The purpose of screening is to determine whether there is a suspicion of a developmental delay and, therefore, a need to conduct an evaluation to determine eligibility for *Early On*.

Screening is not appropriate for:

- Children with a diagnosed established condition. These children are eligible for *Early On* and do not require an evaluation.
- Children that have a clear suspicion of having a developmental delay. Service areas would proceed directly to evaluation.

### **Procedures**

When screening is utilized within a service area, the local lead agency must have screening procedures in place.

The following considerations may help inform a local lead agency when deciding whether to conduct screenings:

- Be mindful of not over-evaluating infants/toddlers.
- Review the number of infants/toddlers evaluated and found ineligible.
- Use screening to inform the evaluation process.
- Use resources effectively.
- Ensure time for both the screening process and evaluation, if needed, within the 45 calendar day timeline.

**One example** of when screening may be used is when a referral is received without an identified concern.

It is not permissible to designate a specific population for screening.

**Examples** of practices that are not permissible include:

- Screening all children referred under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA).
- Screening all 2-year-old males with communication concerns.

Screening records need to be maintained for a minimum of seven (7) years. A parent must be provided the opportunity to examine screening records upon request. Additional details regarding these requirements are outlined in the “Confidentiality and Records” section of the **Procedural Safeguards** chapter in this Manual.

### **Timelines**

The federal regulations require that the screening, the initial evaluation, the initial assessment, and the initial IFSP meeting must be conducted within 45 calendar days of the receipt of a referral.

Circumstances when the 45 calendar day timeline may not apply include:

1. The child or parent is unavailable to complete the screening due to exceptional family circumstances that are documented.
2. The parent has not provided consent for the screening despite documented, repeated attempts by *Early On* to obtain parental consent.

*Early On* must complete the screening as soon as possible after the documented exceptional family circumstance no longer exists or parental consent is obtained.

In the event *Early On* is unable to contact the parent, it is required that there is a minimum of three (3) documented attempts with the final attempt being a written letter.

### **Prior Written Notice before Screening**

A parent must be provided Prior Written Notice (PWN) indicating the intention to conduct a screening of their child. The notice must include that the reason screening is being done is to identify whether the child is suspected of having a developmental delay and whether an evaluation to determine eligibility for *Early On* is necessary. This notice must include a description of the parent’s right to request an evaluation at any time during the screening process. This notice must also meet all of the PWN requirements as outlined in the “Prior Written Notice” section of the **Procedural Safeguards** chapter in this Manual. A Prior Written

Notice prototype form meeting the PWN content has been developed. Local service areas may elect to use the prototype or develop a form of their own that includes all required content.

### **Written Parental Consent**

After the PWN has been provided, service areas must request written parental consent to conduct the screening. A Consent for a Developmental Screening prototype has been developed. Local service areas may elect to use the prototype or develop a form of their own.

### **After Screening**

If the screening and/or other available information indicates a suspicion of a developmental delay, PWN is provided proposing an evaluation.

If the screening and/or other available information indicates there is not a suspicion of a developmental delay, the PWN will indicate that a delay is not suspected and for that reason a decision has been made that a developmental evaluation is not proposed. This notice must also include a description of the parent's right to request a developmental evaluation.

A Prior Written Notice prototype, meeting the PWN content requirements has been developed. Local service areas may elect to use the prototype or develop a form of their own that includes all required content. These requirements are outlined in the "Prior Written Notice" section of the **Procedural Safeguards** chapter in this Manual.

### **Personnel**

Screening must be conducted by personnel who meet any qualifications required by the selected screening tool. Personnel must also be trained to administer, score and interpret the results of the specific screening tool. Some screening tools are intended to be completed by a parent, and scored and interpreted by trained personnel.

### **Administration of the Screening**

Screening may be conducted in a variety of ways which may include in person, over the phone, electronically or via postal mail. Choosing to conduct the screening via phone or postal mail does not negate the requirements for PWN, written parental consent and adherence to the 45 calendar day timeline. Scoring and interpretation of all screening, regardless of method of administration, must be conducted by trained personnel. Specific requirements and/or recommendations related to the administration of a particular screening tool should be

**Recommended Screening Tools**

followed. A service area may choose to assist a parent with a parent-completed screening tool as needed.

Post-referral screening must consider all developmental domains. This may be accomplished by using:

- a multi-domain instrument which covers all domains;
- a combination of domain-specific instruments to address all domains; or
- a multi-domain screening instrument along with domain-specific instruments in order to further examine a specific area of development.

Multi-domain screening instruments that are recommended for infants and toddlers are:

- Ages and Stages Questionnaire
- Battelle Developmental Inventory Screening Test (BDIST)
- Bayley Infant Neurodevelopment Screener (BINS)
- Birth to Three Assessment and Intervention System, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (BTAIS-2)
- Brigance Screens
- Child Development Inventories
- Denver Developmental Screening Test II (DDST-II)
- Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (DIAL-3)
- Developmental Profile 3 (DP-3)
- Early Childhood Inventory – 4 (ECI-4)
- Early Screening Inventory – Revised (ESI-R)
- ESP: Early Screening Profiles
- Infant-Toddler and Family Instrument (ITFI)
- PEDS: Developmental Milestones (PEDS: DM)
- The Ounce Scale

Domain-Specific Instruments include, but are not limited to:

- Devereaux Early Childhood Assessment Program – Infant/Toddler (DECA – I/T)
- Modified-Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT)

**Federal Statute**

[§ 632\(1\)\(4\)\(E\)\(ix\) Early intervention services.](#)

[§ 639\(a\)\(4\) Procedural Safeguards.](#)

**Federal Regulations**

[§ 303.300 General.](#)

§ 303.302 Comprehensive child find system.

§ 303.310 Post-referral timeline (45 days).

§ 303.320 Screening procedures (optional).

§ 303.420 Parental consent and the ability to decline services.

### **State Level Expectation/Guidance**

#### **Early On Michigan Part C of IDEA State Plan**

##### **Section D**

##### **Screening procedures (optional) (§ 303.320)**

Local lead agencies may adopt screening procedures for those children who have been referred to Part C to determine whether they are suspected of having a developmental delay. If the local lead agency proposes to conduct post-referral screening of a child, it must do the following:

- A. Provide the parent prior written notice of its intent to screen the child.
- B. Include in the prior written notice that consent is required to conduct such screening; that the parent has a right to request an evaluation at any time during the screening process; and that the parent has a right to receive notice of the screening results.
- C. Obtain parental consent before conducting the screening procedures.

If the parent consents to the screening and the screening or other information indicates that the child is suspected of meeting the *Early On* eligibility definition, after prior written notice is provided and once the parental consent is obtained, an evaluation of the child must be conducted. If the child is not suspected of meeting the *Early On* eligibility definition, the local lead agency must ensure that prior written notice of that determination is provided to the parent and describes the parent's right to request an evaluation. If the parent requests and consents to an evaluation at any time during the screening process, evaluation of the child must be conducted. The screening process does not extend the 45-day timeline from referral to initial IFSP meeting.

The contents of the IFSP are fully explained to the parents, prior written notice is given, and informed written consent from the parents is obtained prior to the provision of early intervention services. If the parents do not consent to a particular early intervention service or withdraw consent after first providing it, that service is not provided. The early intervention services to which parental consent is obtained are provided in a timely manner. Michigan's definition of Timely Service is "the provision of each service as soon as possible, but no later than 30 calendar days from when a parent/guardian provides written consent to the provision of that early intervention service."

##### **Section E Procedural Safeguards**

##### **Parental consent and ability to decline services (§ 303.420)**

Written and dated parental consent in accordance with § 303.420 must be obtained:

- A. Before conducting the optional post-referral screening (§ 303.320) used to determine whether a child is suspected of having a disability, as well as before conducting the initial evaluation and assessment of a child and any subsequent reevaluation or ongoing assessment;
- B. Before implementing the provision of Early On services for the first time (i.e., at the time that the initial IFSP is developed) and for any subsequent IFSP; and
- C. Before release of personally identifiable information pursuant to § 303.414.

The regulations also require parental written consent prior to accessing certain funds in those states where public benefits or insurance (i.e., Medicaid, MiChild) or private insurance is part of the system of payments under § 303.520.

If consent is not given for items (A) and (B) in the above list, the local lead agency shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that the parent:

- A. Is fully aware of the nature of the evaluation and assessment or the services that would be available; and
- B. Understands that the child will not be able to receive the evaluation and assessment or services unless consent is given.

The local lead agency may not use the due process hearing procedures under Part C or Part B of IDEA to challenge a parent's refusal to provide any consent that is required above.

The parents of an infant or toddler with a disability:

- A. Determine whether they, their infant or toddler with a disability, or other family members will accept or decline any early intervention service under Part C at any time, in accordance with Michigan law; and
- B. May decline a service after first accepting it, without jeopardizing other early intervention services under Part C of IDEA.

### **Related Forms and Documents**

Early On Consent for Developmental Screening  
Prior Written Notice: Birth to Three Years