



DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING AND REFERRAL

Early Head Start and the Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities (Part C of IDEA)

Early Head Start and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C early intervention programs can best collaborate by identifying, screening, referring, and serving infants and toddlers suspected of having a delay or disability and their families.

WHAT IS DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING?

Developmental screening is a first line check of a child's development using a developmental screening tool. A developmental screening tool is a formal instrument that asks questions about a child's development, including language, motor, cognitive, social and emotional development. A screening does not provide a diagnosis, rather, it indicates if a child is on track developmentally and if a closer look by a specialist is needed. The results of a screening can help families and providers, including Early Head Start (EHS) providers, to plan how to best support the development of children.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD CHILDREN BE SCREENED?

Children's development can be observed on an ongoing basis in the EHS program setting, at home, or anywhere else children spend their time. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends developmental screening with a standardized developmental screening tool when a child is 9, 18, and 24 or 30 months of age. Although there are specific ages that screening is recommended, screening can be done at any age if a family member together with a provider are concerned about a child's development.

HOW CAN EARLY HEAD START MAKE A REFERRAL TO PART C EARLY INTERVENTION?

If a child has an "at risk" screening result, connect the family to the Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities (Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)). A Part C program is available in every **state and territory** of the United States and offers child evaluations if the child is suspected of having a disability. A nationwide directory of early intervention coordinators, often called "Part C Coordinators" can be found [here](#).

HOW CAN EARLY HEAD START COLLABORATE WITH PART C EARLY INTERVENTION?

The strongest partnership can begin by adhering to legal provisions of supports and services in inclusive settings by implementing the **Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)** where appropriate. The IFSP is a written document that outlines the early intervention services that a child **and** family will receive if the child is determined to be eligible. In most states the IFSP is used for children from infancy through age 2. IDEA states that services are to be provided to the greatest extent possible in the child's "natural environment." This could include EHS or any other community setting in which young children without disabilities would typically be found.

A "**service coordinator**" is assigned by the local early intervention program to assist the family with the IFSP process. The service coordinator will partner with the family to convene IFSP planning meetings with early intervention professionals who should be involved in the child's plan and other individuals the family would like to invite to the meeting, such as EHS providers.

SCREENING AND REFERRAL RESOURCES

FEDERAL RESOURCES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/reg/idea/part-c/>

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/>

U.S. DEPARTMENTS OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AND EDUCATION

BIRTH TO 5: WATCH ME THRIVE!

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/list/watch-me-thrive/>

U.S. DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION AND HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, POLICY STATEMENT ON INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/earlylearning/joint-statement-full-text.pdf>

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, NATIONAL CENTER ON BIRTH DEFECTS AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (NCBDDD), DEVELOPMENTAL MONITORING AND SCREENING

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/screening.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/>

LOCAL RESOURCES

<https://ectacenter.org/contact/ptccoord.asp>

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/list/watch-me-thrive/resources.html>

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTERS

CENTER FOR PARENT INFORMATION AND RESOURCES (CPIR)

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/resourcelibrary/>

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/ei-overview/>

EARLY CHILDHOOD TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (ECTA) CENTER

<https://ectacenter.org/topics/earlyid/partcelig.asp>

<https://ectacenter.org/topics/earlyid/partbelig.asp>