

North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program Procedural Guidance

Reference: Individualized Family Service Plan Policy

Individualized Family Service Plans

Introduction

The Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is both the process and written document specified by the NC Infant-Toddler Program (NC ITP) for implementing services for eligible infants and toddlers and their families. The process involves collaborative planning and partnership between the parent and the professionals offering supports and services to the child and family.

The IFSP is developed jointly by the IFSP team, which includes the parent, service coordinator, and other participants as outlined below. Only the IFSP team can make decisions related to service delivery. The parent must play an active role in the development and implementation of the plan. The Service Coordinator initiates the IFSP process and takes responsibility for the development, implementation, review, and revision of the plan.

Procedures

1. IFSP Meetings and Reviews

A. For a child referred to the NC ITP and determined to be eligible, a meeting to develop the initial IFSP must be conducted within the initial 45-day time period.

i. The purpose of the initial IFSP meeting is to:

- summarize all information gathered during the assessment process regarding the child's strengths and needs and the family's concerns, priorities, and resources;
- review the family's identified routines, daily activities, and natural environments as potential contexts for learning opportunities for the child;
- develop and refine outcomes the family has chosen;
- develop strategies for meeting outcomes;
- select appropriate supports and services for assisting in meeting outcomes;
- develop a written document that will guide the family, the Service Coordinator, and the other service providers;
- determine the responsibilities of each team member, and
- discuss how communication between the parent and other team members will be maintained.

B. A periodic review of the IFSP for a child and the child's family must be conducted every six months or more frequently if conditions warrant, or if the family requests such a review. The review may be
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carried out through an in-person or virtual meeting, or a telephone call, as necessary, if acceptable and agreed upon by the parents and other participants.

- i. A meeting must be conducted on at least an annual basis to evaluate and revise, as appropriate, the IFSP for a child and the child's family.
- ii. The purpose of both a periodic review (including semi-annual) and annual meeting is to:
 - review and revise the IFSP, as appropriate;
 - review progress being made toward the achievement of outcomes;
 - discuss the family's satisfaction with progress being made;
 - review the results of any new or on-going assessments;
 - share any other new and relevant information related to the child and family;
 - delete services related to outcomes that have been achieved and are no longer needed;
 - add new outcomes and make changes in services, as appropriate, and
 - outline plans for the next six months.

C. Required IFSP Team Members

Members of the IFSP team are required to participate in initial, periodic (including semi-annual), and annual meetings. These persons include:

- i. the NC ITP identified parent(s) of the child (surrogate parent, if required);
- ii. other family member(s), as requested by the parent, and if feasible;
- iii. the Service Coordinator designated for the child and family;
- iv. the provider(s) of early intervention services;
- v. an advocate or person outside the family, if the parent requests participation by that individual;
- vi. and a provider of evaluation and assessments services*.

*A provider of evaluation and assessment services is required to be invited to the initial IFSP meeting. They are not required to participate in periodic or annual IFSP reviews unless it has been determined the participation of an evaluator is needed.

If any one of the required participants is unable to attend a meeting or review, arrangements must be made for the person's involvement through other means. This may include participation in a telephone conference call, having a knowledgeable authorized representative attend, making pertinent records available, or engaging in pre-meeting discussions with either the family or the Service Coordinator.

Documentation in a service note of how persons unable to attend participated in the review or meeting must be included.

2. Interim IFSPs

- A. An Infant-Toddler Program service may commence for an eligible child and his family before the completion of the initial Infant-Toddler Program evaluation and the development of the initial IFSP if the following conditions are met:
 - i. the service is needed immediately;
 - ii. an Interim IFSP is developed, and
 - iii. parental consent is obtained.
- B. An Interim IFSP does not eliminate the requirement that initial Infant-Toddler Program evaluation, eligibility determination, and development of the initial IFSP be completed within forty-five calendar days of the referral to the Infant-Toddler Program. The Interim Plan can be documented on the IFSP form through the completion of relevant sections. When ready to develop the initial IFSP, additional information can be added to the existing Interim Plan without beginning a completely new document.
- C. An Interim IFSP must include:
 - i. the name of the Service Coordinator who will be responsible for the implementation of the Interim IFSP and coordination with other service providers;
 - ii. the early intervention services that have been determined to be needed immediately by the child and the child's family.

3. Related Requirements

- A. The NC ITP IFSP form must be used. Instructions accompanying this form outline content requirements and are to be followed. Please refer to the *NC ITP Instructions for Completing the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)*. There must be only one IFSP developed for a child at any given time. The start date of the IFSP is the date the parent signs the initial Plan. There is no charge to families for the development or review of the IFSP.
- B. A review of the IFSP must occur every six (6) months following the date of the signing of the initial plan. If a review is delayed, the next review should occur on schedule from the date of the signing of the initial IFSP, even if a full six months has not elapsed. The annual meeting must occur twelve months (no later than 365 days) following the date of the signing of the initial meeting. The annual meeting to evaluate and revise the IFSP incorporates the semi-annual review.
 - i. The delivery of services listed on the IFSP cannot exceed the anticipated duration date without a review to re-authorize those services.
 - ii. The family cost-share may be increased to 100% of the sliding fee scale if the family fails or refuses to provide requested financial information prior to signing IFSP or at review deadline.
 - iii. Refer to *NC ITP Procedural Guidance for Service Planning and Delivery* for specific steps when appointments are missed, parent participation is limited, and when the family is lost to follow-up.
- C. Initial and annual IFSP meetings must be conducted in the native language or other means of communication used by the family. If appropriate, the IFSP must be translated into the parent's native language or mode of communication, unless clearly not feasible to do so. In instances where an IFSP

is translated to another language or mode of communication, a copy of both the English version and the translated version must be filed in the Children's Developmental Services Agency record on the child. Refer to the *NC ITP Procedural Guidance for Native Language/Mode of Communication* for additional clarification.

- D. The content of the IFSP must be written in language understandable by all team members, free of jargon and professional terminology.
- E. The contents of the IFSP must be fully explained to the parent and informed written parental consent secured prior to the provision of early intervention services listed on the plan. The parent may determine whether they, their child, or other family members will accept or decline any early intervention service under the Infant Toddler Program without jeopardizing their right to receive other early intervention services. If the parent does not provide written consent with respect to a particular service, then only the services to which written consent is obtained may be provided.
- F. The Service Coordinator must provide the parent with a paper or electronic copy of the initial IFSP and any subsequent changes and reviews. With parental approval, members of the IFSP team must be provided with a paper or electronic copy of the initial plan and any subsequent changes and reviews.
- G. The initial IFSP must be based on the results of the initial Infant-Toddler Program child and family-directed assessments. New or subsequent assessment information must be added to the IFSP, as appropriate. The results of any subsequent evaluations conducted and other information available from the on-going assessment of the child and family must be used in determining what services and supports continue to be needed and what additional services and supports are needed.
- H. The Service Coordinator must document, in a service note, the occurrence of the initial IFSP meeting. Documentation must include the participants present, the provisions made for participation by required participants unable to be present, and the date of the meeting.
- I. The occurrence of semi-annual reviews and annual meetings are to be documented on the IFSP form and in a service note by the Service Coordinator. Documentation must include the participants present, the provisions made for participation by required participants unable to be present, the date of the review, statements regarding progress towards outcomes, reasons for any delay in conducting the review or annual meeting, and any other relevant information.
- J. By the time the child is two years six months of age, there must be evidence in the IFSP of steps to support the transition of the child from the Infant-Toddler Program including the addition of outcomes, activities, timelines, etc.