

North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program Personnel Certification Procedural Guidance

Reference: Infant, Toddler, and Family Certificate

Introduction

The North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program (NC ITP) Personnel Certification Procedure applies to early intervention service coordination and special instruction services. Early Intervention service coordination may be billed as Targeted Case Management, or other appropriate service billing definition/code. Special instruction may be billed as Community Based Rehabilitative Services, or other appropriate service billing definition/code.

Certificates are granted by the Children’s Developmental Services Agency (CDSA) for the county in which services are provided. The Infant, Toddler, and Family Certificate applies to early intervention service coordination and special instruction services.

All holders of an Infant, Toddler, and Family Certificate, who obtained their certificate prior to January 1, 2014 and who maintain employment with a CDSA or CDSA-enrolled community-based provider, continue to hold their Certificate.

Any applicant for the Certificate must do so under these policy and procedures.

Federal Regulations

Early Intervention Services

§303.13 Early intervention services.

- (a) General. Early intervention services means developmental services that--
- (1) Are provided under public supervision;
 - (2) Are selected in collaboration with the parents;
 - (3) Are provided at no cost, except, subject to §§303.520 and 303.521, where Federal or State law provides for a system of payments by families, including a schedule of sliding fees;
 - (4) Are designed to meet the developmental needs of an infant or toddler with a disability and the needs of the family to assist appropriately in the infant’s or toddler’s development, as identified by the IFSP Team, in any one or more of the following areas, including--
 - (i) Physical development;
 - (ii) Cognitive development;
 - (iii) Communication development;
 - (iv) Social or emotional development; or
 - (v) Adaptive development;
 - (5) Meet the standards of the State in which the early intervention services are provided, including the requirements of Part C of the Act;
 - (6) Include services identified under paragraph (b) of this section;

- (7) Are provided by qualified PERSONNEL (as that term is defined in §303.31), including the types of **PERSONNEL** listed in paragraph (c) of this section;
- (8) To the maximum extent appropriate, are provided in natural environments, as defined in §303.26 and consistent with §§303.126 and 303.344(d); and
- (9) Are provided in conformity with an IFSP adopted in accordance with section 636 of the Act and §303.20.

Qualified Early Intervention Personnel

§303.31 Qualified PERSONNEL.

Qualified PERSONNEL means **PERSONNEL** who have met State approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the areas in which the individuals are conducting evaluations or assessments or providing early intervention services.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1432(4)(F))

Early Intervention Service Coordination

§303.34 Service coordination services

(a) General.

- (1) As used in this part, service coordination services mean services provided by a service coordinator to assist and enable an infant or toddler with a disability and the child's family to receive the services and rights, including procedural safeguards, required under this part.
- (2) Each infant or toddler with a disability and the child's family must be provided with one service coordinator who is responsible for--
 - (i) Coordinating all services required under this part across agency lines; and
 - (ii) Serving as the single point of contact for carrying out the activities described in paragraphs (a)(3) and (b) of this section.
- (3) Service coordination is an active, ongoing process that involves--
 - (i) Assisting parents of infants and toddlers with disabilities in gaining access to, and coordinating the provision of, the early intervention services required under this part; and
 - (ii) Coordinating the other services identified in the IFSP under §303.344(e) that are needed by, or are being provided to, the infant or toddler with a disability and that child's family.

(b) Specific service coordination services. Service coordination services include--

- (1) Assisting parents of infants and toddlers with disabilities in obtaining access to needed early intervention services and other services identified in the IFSP, including making referrals to providers for needed services and scheduling appointments for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families;
- (2) Coordinating the provision of early intervention services and other services (such as educational, social, and medical services that are not provided for diagnostic or evaluative purposes) that the child needs or is being provided;
- (3) Coordinating evaluations and assessments
- (4) Facilitating and participating in the development, review, and evaluation of IFSPs;
- (5) Conducting referral and other activities to assist families in identifying available EIS providers;
- (6) Coordinating, facilitating, and monitoring the delivery of services required under this part to ensure

that the services are provided in a timely manner;

- (7) Conducting follow-up activities to determine that appropriate Part C services are being provided;
 - (8) Informing families of their rights and procedural safeguards, as set forth in subpart E of this part and related resources;
 - (9) Coordinating the funding sources for services required under this part; and
 - (10) Facilitating the development of a transition plan to preschool, school, or, if appropriate, to other services.
- (c) Use of the term service coordination or service coordination services. The lead agency's or an EIS provider's use of the term service coordination or service coordination services does not preclude characterization of the services as case management or any other service that is covered by another payor of last resort (including Title XIX of the Social Security Act--Medicaid), for purposes of claims in compliance with the requirements of §§303.501 through 303.521 (Payor of last resort provisions).

Special Instruction

(14) Special instruction includes--

- (i) The design of learning environments and activities that promote the infant's or toddler's acquisition of skills in a variety of developmental areas, including cognitive processes and social interaction;
- (ii) Curriculum planning, including the planned interaction of **PERSONNEL**, materials, and time and space, that leads to achieving the outcomes in the IFSP for the infant or toddler with a disability;
- (iii) Providing families with information, skills, and support related to enhancing the skill development of the child; and
- (iv) Working with the infant or toddler with a disability to enhance the child's development.

Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

§303.118 Comprehensive system of **PERSONNEL** development (CSPD).

Each system must include a comprehensive system of **PERSONNEL** development, including the training of paraprofessionals and the training of primary referral sources with respect to the basic components of early intervention services available in the State. A comprehensive system of **PERSONNEL** development--

(a) Must include--

- (1) Training **PERSONNEL** to implement innovative strategies and activities for the recruitment and retention of EIS providers;
- (2) Promoting the preparation of EIS providers who are fully and appropriately qualified to provide early intervention services under this part; and
- (3) Training **PERSONNEL** to coordinate transition services for infants and toddlers with disabilities who are transitioning from an early intervention service program under Part C of the Act to a preschool program under section 619 of the Act, Head Start, Early Head Start, an elementary school program under Part B of the Act, or another appropriate program.

(b) May include--

- (1) Training **PERSONNEL** to work in rural and inner-city areas;
- (2) Training **PERSONNEL** in the emotional and social development of young children; and

- (3) Training **PERSONNEL** to support families in participating fully in the development and implementation of the child's IFSP; and
- (4) Training **PERSONNEL** who provide services under this part using standards that are consistent with early learning **PERSONNEL** development standards funded under the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care established under the Head Start Act, if applicable.

Personnel Standards

§303.119 PERSONNEL standards.

- (a) **General.** Each system must include policies and procedures relating to the establishment and maintenance of qualification standards to ensure that **PERSONNEL** necessary to carry out the purposes of this part are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained.
- (b) **Qualification standards.** The policies and procedures required in paragraph (a) of this section must provide for the establishment and maintenance of qualification standards that are consistent with any State-approved or State-recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession, discipline, or area in which **PERSONNEL** are providing early intervention services.

Continuing Professional Development

Continuing professional development is required for all Certificate holders. The annual continuing professional development requirement is 10 contact hours (1.0 CEU) per year, to be obtained between January 1 and December 31 of the year. Contact hours/CEU credits must focus on infants and toddlers with or without disabilities, and their families, and must be obtained from one or more of the following: American Speech Language Hearing Association, American Psychological Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, North Carolina Speech Language Hearing Association, NC Psychological Association, NC Pediatric Society, NC AHECs, NC Department of Public Instruction, or NC Infant Toddler Program (NCITP, links listed at <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/itp-beearly>). Certificate holders must obtain contact hour/CEU credit documentation. Audits requesting documentation from Certificate holders may be required at any time from the CDSA or the Early Intervention State Office, for the previous two calendar years from the date of the audit request.

Obtaining the Certificate

The Certificate is obtained at employment with a CDSA or CDSA-enrolled community-based provider and maintained throughout employment.

To apply, the applicant must complete the [Application for Infant, Toddler, and Family \(ITF\) Certificate](#), and submit it to the CDSA for the county in which services are to be provided (please see county listings at <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/itp-beearly>). The CDSA must either award the Certificate or deny it on the basis of degree attainment (see below) within 30 days of receipt of the application. Ongoing supervision is required by the CDSA for service coordination, and by the CDSA-enrolled provider for special instruction.

The applicant must have received a bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited college or university, in one of the following fields. Each field listed below includes competencies associated with Child Development, Family Development, Screening and Assessment, Interdisciplinary Family Service Planning, Intervention Strategies, Interagency and Community Process, and Professionalism and Ethics. These are critical competencies to the Early Intervention services for which the certificate is obtained; see federal regulation references in this document.

Accepted degree fields:

- Birth-Kindergarten Education/Early Childhood Special Education/Special Education/Education/Elementary Education
- Child Development/ Human Development/Family Relations/ Family Studies/Family and Consumer Sciences/Child and Family Studies
- Communication Disorders
- Counseling
- Nursing
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Psychology
- Social Work
- Another human services field

Failure to Comply with Requirements

A certificate holder who does not continue employment or obtain the required continuing professional development shown above must notify the CDSA.

An individual who relinquishes his/her Certificate through discontinuation of employment or lack of required continuing professional development and who wishes to provide Early Intervention Service Coordination or Special Instruction service must reapply, meeting the requirements shown above.

Early Intervention Service Coordination or Special Instruction services cannot be provided by that individual. An individual who does not comply with state or federal law, ITP policy, and/or billing requirements will be required to relinquish his/her Certificate.