

Glossary

Advocate

A person who argues for or supports an individual, a cause or a policy. Family advocates support parents and other family members in seeking and understanding services and options for early intervention.

Assessments/Evaluations

May be formal or informal. A formal initial assessment determines eligibility for services and is usually conducted in five developmental domains (see below) by a multidisciplinary team. Periodic formal assessments also take place while the child is in the Illinois Early Intervention Program. Ongoing informal assessments are used to identify the strengths and needs of the eligible child and the family's concerns, priorities, and resources related to the child.

Child and Family Connections (CFC) Offices

Twenty-five offices funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services that serve as regional points of entry to the Illinois Early Intervention Program. CFC offices responsibilities include Child Find activities, intake of families, coordination of evaluation and eligibility determinations for children, oversight of the development of individualized family service plans, and ongoing service coordination, including transition to services after the child turns 3 years of age.

Cognitive

The area of development that involves thinking skills, including learning and problem-solving skills.

Developmental Age

Determined by measuring the age at which your child demonstrates various skills against

the age at which those skills are considered typical. Developmental age is established through a formal assessment.

Developmental Delay

The condition of a child who is not gaining new skills at the typical age and/or is showing inappropriate behaviors for his or her age.

Disability

A physical or mental impairment that significantly limits major life activities such as hearing, seeing, speaking, walking, caring for oneself, moving, learning, or working.

Domains

The five main areas of development that address cognitive, language, social-emotional, adaptive skills, and physical skills, including hearing and vision.

Early Intervention

Specialized services provided to infants and toddlers who show signs of or are at risk for *developmental delay* (see above). Services are planned and implemented with the family and often a multidisciplinary team of professionals. (See also *Illinois Early Intervention Program*.)

Early Intervention Credential

A credential issued according to Illinois Department of Human Services rules that helps to ensure that professionals working in the Illinois EI system possess appropriate qualifications, continuously participate in professional development related to their fields, and strengthen their understanding of children ages birth to 3 with special needs.

EI Providers

Please see *service providers*.

Federal Poverty Level (FPL)

A measure based on family income used to determine if a person or family is eligible for assistance through various federal programs. The FPL usually changes annually.

IDEA

Please see *Individuals With Disabilities Education Act of 1990* or *Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (Part C)*.

IDHS

Please see *Illinois Department of Human Services*.

IEP

Please see *Individualized Education Program*.

Illinois Department of Human Services

The state agency that has been designated as the lead agency for the Illinois Early Intervention Program.

Illinois Early Intervention Program

A statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, interagency program that aids families who have infants and toddlers, birth to age 3, with or at risk for developmental delays in receiving resources and supports that assist them in maximizing their child's development.

Illinois State Board of Education

The state agency that oversees educational services for children ages 3 to 21 in Illinois.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

An annually reviewed document required by the Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 for children in special education, ages 3 years and older. The IEP is created by parents, teachers, service providers, and school staff who design a plan of

instruction, including annual goals, methods of evaluation, and the delivery of special education support and services.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

A written early intervention plan developed and implemented by the child's parents and a multidisciplinary early intervention team. The IFSP takes into account the family's priorities, concerns, resources, and goals for their child. This information, along with input from additional evaluation and assessment, is formalized into a plan of services and support for the child and family in their natural environment.

Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

A federal law amended in 1997 and reauthorized in 2004 that amends the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. IDEA ensures services to children with disabilities throughout the nation and governs how states and public agencies provide these services. Part B focuses on services to preschoolers and school-age children with developmental disabilities. (See also *Individuals With Disabilities Education Act [Part C]*.)

Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Part C)

The portion of the federal law that focuses on services to infants and toddlers who are at risk for or have developmental delays. (See also *Individuals With Disabilities Education Act*.)

Informed Consent

The process by which families acknowledge in writing that (1) they have been fully informed of all information related to an early intervention activity, (2) they agree to carry out the activity for which consent is sought, and (3) they understand that the granting of consent is voluntary.

Intake Meeting

Following a *referral*, the process of service coordinators contacting the family and scheduling an appointment to discuss the Early Intervention Program, including services and fees, family rights, and initial screening. The intake appointment gives families an opportunity to ask their service coordinator questions and share information about their child and family.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

The educational setting that allows a child with disabilities to gain the most educational benefit while still participating in a regular educational environment to the greatest extent appropriate. LRE is a requirement of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 and usually applies to children 3 years of age and older.

Mediation

One option within the Illinois Early Intervention Program that parents can request when they have an individual child complaint regarding services and want to reach a consensus with another party. Mediation is voluntary and agreed to by the parties in dispute and is conducted by a qualified impartial mediator.

Natural Environments

Home and community settings in which children and families without disabilities would participate. The Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 Part C mandates that infants and toddlers with special needs be served in natural environments.

Outcomes

Statements of what family members want to see happen for their child and their family as a result of their participation in early intervention. Family and child outcomes can focus on any area of child development or family life that a family feels is related to its ability to enhance

the child's development. Outcomes often include a real-life context.

Parent Liaison

An individual who is the parent or guardian of a child with special needs and who has obtained a parent liaison credential may provide direct support services to families. These individuals also may provide consultation to team members and other service providers regarding family perspectives.

Priorities

Important components of a child's early intervention services identified by families and given specific attention by the early intervention team. Priorities are established by order of importance in a child's *Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)* (see above).

Referral

Any action that guides children and families to the local Child and Family Connections Office, which assists them in accessing available resources and/or information. Anyone who suspects that a young child has a developmental delay or is at risk for delay can make a referral by calling his or her local Child and Family Connections Office.

Resources

Persons, agencies, materials, or other supports available to families that can be used to support their ability to care for their child or benefit their child's early intervention services.

Service Coordination

The activities carried out by the service coordinator to enable an eligible child and the child's family to receive authorized services within the Illinois Early Intervention Program. These activities may include receiving referrals, ensuring procedural safeguards, protecting rights, documenting services, providing information about services and assisting in identifying goals.

Service Coordinator

A Child and Family Connections employee responsible for *service coordination* activities, including coordinating EI and non-EI services for families enrolled in the Illinois Early Intervention Program.

Service Provider

A professional contracted by the Illinois Early Intervention Program to provide services for children with or at risk for a *developmental delay*. Service providers are credentialed by the Illinois Department of Human Services. They can include but are not limited to occupational therapists, developmental therapists, physical therapists, and speech-language pathologists.

Transition

The organized process of helping children who have or are at risk for a developmental delay move between programs, including the Early Intervention Program. Examples of transitions include moving from the hospital to home or from Early Intervention Program services into a preschool program. The child's family and interdisciplinary team are responsible for developing a written transition plan that details the necessary steps for a smooth transition out of the Early Intervention Program.