



## Technical Assistance Bulletin

**TO:** WV Birth to Three Payees, Practitioners, and Service Coordinators  
WV Birth to Three Regional Administrative Units  
WV Early Intervention Interagency Coordinating Council  
West Virginia Parent Training Information  
West Virginia Advocates

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**ISSUE:** Implications of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) for Regional Administrative Units (RAUs), Practitioners and Service Coordinators  
**Guidance Document – Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004), reauthorized by Congress on November 19, 2004 and signed into law on December 3, 2004, includes revisions to IDEA 97 as well as some new provisions. All provisions of the new special education law are effective July 1, 2005. West Virginia must assure that the provision of Part C/WV Birth to Three services is consistent with the new requirements. Current WV Birth to Three policies and procedures, in coordination with IDEA 2004 requirements, will be the authority for the provision of Part C/WV Birth to Three services pending the publication of the final Federal regulations and revised State policies and procedures.

The guidance provided in this document is not intended to address all of the revisions and new provisions in IDEA 2004 but offers direction on the issues that have the most impact on decision making at the local level. WV Birth to Three will provide ongoing procedural guidance and technical assistance throughout the transition to revised policies and procedures. Revisions and/or additions to the law are added in underlined text.

Congress in IDEA 2004 has found that there is an urgent and substantial need to; enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities, to minimize the potential for developmental delay, and to recognize the significant brain development that occurs during a child's first 3 years of life, to maximize the potential for individuals with disabilities and maximize the potential for them to live independently in society and to enhance the capacity of families to meet the special needs of their infants and toddlers with disabilities. The Individualized Family Service Plan is the vehicle that ensures families of Part C eligible children are provided appropriate services and supports to reach the outcomes they have set for their child and family.

Section 636 of the law includes the following changes related to the content of the IFSP:

- 636 (a) (3) a written individualized family service plan developed by a multidisciplinary team, including the parents, as required by subsection (e), including a description of the appropriate transition services for the infant or toddler.
- 636 (d) (1) a statement of the infant's or toddler's present levels of physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, and adaptive development, based on objective criteria;
- 636 (d) (2) a statement of the families resources, priorities and concerns related to enhancing the development of the family's infant or toddler with a disability;
- 636 (d) (3) a statement of measurable results or outcomes expected to be achieved for the infant or toddler and the family, including pre-literacy and language skills, as developmentally appropriate for the child, and the criteria, procedures, and timelines used to determine the degree to which progress toward achieving the results or outcomes is being made and whether modifications or revisions of the results or outcomes or services are necessary;
- 636 (d) (4) a statement of specific early intervention services based on peer-reviewed research, to the extent practicable, necessary to meet the unique needs of the infant or toddler and family, including the intensity, and method of delivering services;
- 636 (d) (5) a statement of the natural environments in which early intervention services, *will* appropriately be provided, including a justification of the extent, if any, to which the services will not be provided in the natural environment;
- 636 (d) (6) the projected dates for initiation of services and the anticipated length, duration and frequency of the services; and
- 636 (d) (7) the identification of the service coordinator for the professions most immediately relevant to the infant's or toddler's or family's needs ( or who is otherwise qualified to carry out all applicable responsibilities under this part) who will be responsible for the implementation of the plan and coordination with other agencies and persons, including transition services; and;
- 636 (d) (8) the steps to be taken to support the transition of the toddler with a disability to preschool and other appropriate services.

The WV Birth to Three Individualized Family Service Plan is designed to address all the Federal requirements pertaining to the content of the IFSP including: the identification of the on going service coordinator for the implementation of the IFSP and transition services, a description of the child's present levels of development, the families concerns, priorities and resources related to enhancing their child's development, and the identification of appropriate services and supports including transition services.

IDEA 2004 strongly mandates within the new law that not only family's rights be protected throughout the IFSP team process but scientifically based practice be utilized in determining appropriate Part C services and supports and in determining how those services will be provided.

**Service decisions will be made by a “team”.** The Federal law reinforces that a team process must be used in all service decisions. The full team, with the family or legal guardian, must participate in and arrive at decisions regarding appropriate services and supports including location, intensity, frequency, and duration. No one individual should influence the IFSP development process.

**Services must “be based on peer reviewed research, to the extent practicable”.** The Federal law requires the IFSP team to utilize peer reviewed research in the development of the IFSP to insure families have the information they need to make informed decisions about possible services and supports that may help their child in making developmental progress. Decisions such as the kinds of services, instructional methods, intensity and frequency would be based on research supporting the efficacy and appropriateness towards meeting that child's unique developmental needs within the context of the family's daily activities and routines. It is a professional responsibility of all practitioners to look into your own practice, develop knowledge and skills in working infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. Peer reviewed research may be found in published professional journals and nationally recognized web sites.

**IFSP must include a statement of “measurable results or outcomes including pre-literacy and language skills, as developmentally appropriate”.**

The Federal law has provided a method for assuring each team is accountable for the services and supports provided to the eligible child and family. Outcome statements must identify the measurable results the family would like to achieve for their child and/or family and how the team will determine when progress has or has not been made and the appropriate modifications to outcomes or services. The IFSP Review Page is designed to assist the IFSP team in rating progress towards identified outcomes and allows for appropriate modifications to occur.

Current research supports the importance the development of pre-literacy and language skills for all young children but especially for children with disabilities and children from families in which there are at risk factors. Even before they speak babies learn many sounds, the rhythm of words and phrases. The development of early language and pre-literacy skills is fundamental to a child's reading and later school success. Pre-literacy skills should be evaluated and intervention provided as appropriate to the child's age and developmental skill level.