



Technical Assistance Bulletin

TO: WV Birth to Three Practitioners and Service Coordinators
WV Birth to Three Regional Administrative Units

FROM: Mel Woodcock, Policy Coordinator
WV Birth to Three

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ISSUE: **Inability to Provide IFSP Services**

The purpose of this Technical Assistance Bulletin is to clarify the process for insuring all families eligible for WV Birth to Three services have been provided every opportunity to choose their level of involvement and participation in early intervention services prior to the IFSP team recommending that services can no longer be provided due to inability to contact the family.

It is the responsibility of all members of a child and family's early intervention team to maintain on-going and frequent communication. Communication strategies should be discussed as part of the IFSP process. Strategies that promote good communication between the family and other team members may include assuring that the family:

- has a method of keeping and sharing activity notes;
- has contact information for each IFSP team member;
- knows the roles and responsibilities of the service coordinator;
- knows who the primary team contact is if they should need to cancel or reschedule services; and
- knows how to call for an IFSP review if family circumstances change.

There may be times when unique family circumstances result in families not being present for scheduled IFSP services. When families unexpectedly experience a medical, housing, employment, or other crisis, they may forget about scheduled visits. The family may have left the area or become dissatisfied with some or all of the services and does not know who to contact. It is important to try to understand why a family may not be present for scheduled visits. Individual enrolled practitioners may not make the determination that a child/family is no longer eligible for an IFSP service solely because they were not present for that practitioner's scheduled visit. Difficulties with missed visits must be addressed through the team process.

The US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has provided policy clarification that "the State cannot assume the parent has revoked consent for services listed on the existing IFSP or the consent provided for those services is time-limited, solely because the family was not present for scheduled visit." The OSEP policy guidance

letter continues, “the State may determine if repeated absences from appointments or home visits are ‘conditions’ that warrant a review of the IFSP.”

WV Birth to Three requires the IFSP team to address repeated family absences through the IFSP review process in order to explore the options that best meet the needs of the child and/or family. The following steps must be completed before the IFSP team can determine if it is no longer possible to provide services to the child and/or family.

- (1) The practitioner must inform the child’s service coordinator if he/she is unable to provide services as called for in the child’s IFSP. This may be due to the inability to contact the family to schedule an appointment or the inability to complete scheduled visits (the family is not home for those scheduled visits) despite the practitioner’s repeated attempts to contact the family via phone calls and letters:
- (2) The service coordinator will then attempt to make contact with the family to determine if there has been a change in the family’s circumstances. The service coordinator must make multiple attempts to contact the family including letters and phone calls. Documentation must reflect attempted calls were initiated on different days and at different times over a period of at least 30 days. The documentation must also reflect the service coordinator contacted appropriate individuals with whom he/she has informed written consent to communicate, including but not limited to the original referral source, family physician, CPS and/or other appropriate contacts, to inquire as to the family’s status. These contacts/attempted contacts must be documented in the WV Birth to Three Correspondence Contact Log:
- (3) If the service coordinator is unable to contact the family within the procedures outlined in this TA Bulletin, the service coordinator must send the family and team a Notice of IFSP Review Meeting. The meeting must be scheduled at a time and location which is convenient for the family to increase the family’s ability to attend:
- (4) If at the IFSP Review Meeting, the team with or without the family, determines that WV Birth to Three services can no longer be provided, the service coordinator will send the Parent Notification Letter to the family and include a WV Birth to Three Procedural Safeguards booklet:
- (5) If after 14 days, there is no contact or response from the family, the service coordinator must complete and send the family the Prior Written Notice form and a copy of the Procedural Safeguards. The Prior Written Notice form will indicate that WV Birth to Three proposes to change the child’s eligibility status. The reason will indicate that the child is no longer receiving WV Birth to Three services based upon IFSP review: and
- (6) The service coordinator will then complete the WV Birth to Three Transfer/Transition form, indicating that ‘attempts to contact the parent/child were unsuccessful’.