



## Key Guidance to Providing Services for Infants and Toddlers with Special Needs

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### **Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007**

The Head Start Program was reauthorized on December 12, 2007, becoming Public Law 110-134: Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007. The purpose was to promote school readiness by supporting children's cognitive, social and emotional development, and the family's needs around health, education, and nutrition as indicated by the family needs assessment.

Click on the following link for further information about the Head Start Act:

**The Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center**

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/law>

### **Selected Head Start Program Performance Standards**

#### **45 CFR 1304.20 Child health and developmental services.**

(f) Individualization of the program.

Grantee and delegate agencies must use the information from the screening for developmental, sensory, and behavioral concerns, the ongoing observations, medical and dental evaluations and treatments, and insights from the child's parents to help staff and parents determine how the program can best respond to each child's individual characteristics, strengths and needs.

- (2) To support individualization for children with disabilities in their programs, grantee and delegate agencies must assure that:
  - (i) Services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families support the attainment of the expected outcomes contained in the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) for children identified under the infants and toddlers with disabilities program (Part H) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as implemented by their State or Tribal government;
  - (ii) Enrolled families with infants and toddlers suspected of having a disability are promptly referred to the local early intervention agency designated by the State Part H plan to coordinate any needed evaluations, determine eligibility for Part H services, and coordinate the development of an IFSP for children determined to be eligible



- under the guidelines of that State's program. Grantee and delegate agencies must support parent participation in the evaluation and IFSP development process for infants and toddlers enrolled in their program;
- (iii) They participate in and support efforts for a smooth and effective transition for children who, at age three, will need to be considered for services for preschool age children with disabilities; and
  - (iv) They participate in the development and implementation of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for preschool age children with disabilities, consistent with the requirements of 45 CFR 1308.19.

#### **45 CFR 1304.21 Education and early childhood development.**

- (a) Child development and education approach for all children.
  - (1) In order to help children gain the skills and confidence necessary to be prepared to succeed in their present environment and with later responsibilities in school and life, grantee and delegate agencies' approach to child development and education must:
    - (ii) Be inclusive of children with disabilities, consistent with their Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP) (see 45 CFR 1308.19);
  - (5) In center-based settings, grantee and delegate agencies must promote each child's physical development by:
    - (iii) Providing an appropriate environment and adult guidance for the participation of children with special needs.



## **The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

IDEA was enacted by Congress in 1975, and was created to ensure that children with special needs receive a free appropriate public education, just like other children. IDEA has been revised over the years, most recently in December 2004, with final regulations published in August 2006 (Part B for school-aged children) and in September 2011 (Part C, for infants and toddlers).

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) assists states with implementation of IDEA by creating federal policy on early intervention services to infants and toddlers with special needs and on the provision of special education and related services for children with special needs.

Click on the following link for more information about IDEA:

**U.S. Department of Education**

<http://idea.ed.gov/>



## National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC)

The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center was the Office of Special Education Programs' national resource for implementing IDEA provisions. NECTAC offered training and technical assistance through consultation, webinars, and materials to strengthen services to children with special needs. In March of 2008 the Workgroup on Principles and Practices in Natural Environments developed the following key principles for providing early intervention services:

1. Infants and toddlers learn best through everyday experiences and interactions with familiar people in familiar contexts.
2. All families, with the necessary supports and resources, can enhance their children's learning and development.
3. The primary role of a service provider in early intervention is to work with and Support family members and caregivers in children's lives.
4. The early intervention process, from initial contacts through transition, must be dynamic and individualized to reflect the child's and family members' preferences, learning styles and cultural beliefs.
5. IFSP outcomes must be functional and based on children's and families' needs and family-identified priorities.
6. The family's priorities, needs and interests are addressed most appropriately by a primary provider who represents and receives team and community support.
7. Interventions with young children and family members must be based on explicit principles, validated practices, best available research, and relevant laws and regulations.

Click on the following link for more information

### **Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTACenter)**

[http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/topics/families/Finalmissionandprinciples3\\_11\\_08.pdf](http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/topics/families/Finalmissionandprinciples3_11_08.pdf)