



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES NEW JERSEY EARLY INTERVENTION SYSTEM

No: NJEIS-16	Subject: Provision of Timely IFSP Services
Effective Date: May 1, 2014	Responsible Party: Part C Coordinator

I. Purpose

To ensure provision of timely early intervention services in accordance with the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

II. Policy

- A. An early intervention service must be initiated as soon as possible but no later than 30 calendar days of the parent's written consent for the provision of the service on the IFSP, unless the initiation date for a specific service is specified in the IFSP. This is in accordance with the federal Part C regulations at 34 CFR 303.344(f)(1).
- B. Both the Service Coordination Unit (SCU) and the Early Intervention Program Provider Agency (EIP) have responsibilities to ensure the provision of timely services in accordance with these policies and procedures;
- C. EIP provider agencies must ensure that all services are initiated in accordance with each child's IFSP within the required timeline including ensuring all related policies and procedures are followed;
- D. The EIP is required to initiate a service, and notify the SCU of an actual start date of the service, as soon as possible, but no later than fifteen (15) calendar days from the provider agency assignment; and
- E. Future assignment of new services may be withheld from an EIP agency by the SCU with outstanding start dates in accordance with these policies and procedures.

III. Procedures

- A. Timely provision of early intervention services in accordance with the IFSP is ensured through the following procedures:
 - 1. The SCU must develop and implement oversight procedures to ensure that services are initiated in accordance with each child's IFSP and these policies and procedures. Documentation of the implementation of these procedures and

the results of such monitoring must be kept by the SCU and made available to DOH or the Procedural Safeguards Office at their request.

2. The SCU must ensure that all new services needing assignment are placed on the next broadcast to be distributed.
3. The SCU must implement procedures to distribute the broadcast list at least twice weekly and as necessary, more frequently to ensure timely services.
4. The service coordinator must document all steps taken, including dates, to assign an EIP and ensure that children pending provider agency assignment (close to or longer than 30 days) in a specific county are not by-passed to respond to agency/practitioner preference or another child in the EIP catchment area recently added to the broadcast.
5. In accepting an assignment from the broadcast list, an EIP must ensure a practitioner will start the service within twelve (12) calendar days of the EIP assignment date.
6. An EIP may not accept assignment unless the practitioner who will be providing the service is already fully enrolled as a practitioner (Central Management Office (CMO) within the NJEIS and by the EIP accepting the assignment.
7. The SCU must send the signed IFSP to the EIP no later than one (1) business day from the EIP assignment date.
8. EIP agencies and EIP practitioners have access to authorizations (view & print) through the Central Management Office (CMO) provider module.
9. An EIP agency and/or EIP practitioner must maintain written documentation regarding all communication with a family to schedule the service including reasons for delays in starting services. The EIP must notify the service coordinator in writing when having difficulty making contact with a family.
10. The EIP must ensure initiation of the service within twelve (12) calendar days of the EIP assignment date. If there are family reasons that necessitate a delay in starting the service, these must be documented and the service coordinator informed in writing.
11. If an EIP accepts an assignment from a broadcast list and then finds they are unable to assign a practitioner, the EIP must return the child to the broadcast list immediately. A pattern of holding children for excessive periods (longer than twelve (12) calendar days) without initiating services may result in an NJEIS inquiry about the agency's procedures and performance.
12. The EIP must report to the service coordinator the actual start date when the service was provided by the practitioner. This must be reported in writing, as soon as possible, but no later than fifteen (15) calendar days from the EIP assignment date.
13. If the actual service start date has not been initiated within twelve (12) calendar days of the EIP assignment date, the EIP must inform the service coordinator

in writing the reason for the delay, including any extenuating circumstances. If the reason for the delay is other than a family reason, the SCU must return the child to the broadcast, unless the reported extenuating circumstances would still allow for a more timely service initiation than returning the assignment to the broadcast. The EIP is responsible for maintaining written documentation of the reasons for any delays.

14. If the EIP provides notice that the service initiation will be delayed for family reasons, including difficulty in reaching the family, the service coordinator must follow-up with the family and document in writing all attempts at communication and the results of those attempted communications.
15. If the service coordinator does not receive an actual start date from the EIP within fifteen (15) calendar days of the provider agency assignment date, the service coordinator must contact the EIP to determine the status of the initiation of the service.
16. The SCU is authorized to withhold assignment of any new services to an EIP agency until reports of all outstanding actual start dates are received from that EIP.
17. The SCU must notify the EIP agency in writing of a decision to withhold assignment of new services to the EIP.
18. When the EIP becomes current with required actual start date submissions, the SCU Coordinator will release the hold on new service assignments to the EIP.
19. The SCU and the EIP must document all events and actions included in this policy and procedure and provide these upon request to the NJEIS State office.
20. SCU Coordinators and EIP administrators should periodically review notes of service coordinators and EIP practitioners to ensure adequate documentation is part of the child's early intervention record. Documentation must include all communication attempts and the results of those communications with parents or caregivers. Communications include, but are not limited to, phone conversations, letter, email correspondence, and text message.

IV. NJEIS Timely Services Terminology

A. Projected Start Date

1. At the IFSP meeting, the IFSP team identifies and records a reasonable date to start services on the IFSP service page. NJEIS -09, Procedure #3 states that "Projected start dates for services on the IFSP should allow up to fifteen (15) days for assignment and processing of authorizations; however, the REIC may authorize services to start prior to the projected start date if a practitioner is available.
2. A service start date shall not precede the effective date of the IFSP. (e.g., IFSP is dated for March 15, projected start date is March 30; if a practitioner is available on March 18 the REIC can authorize services to begin on that date)".

B. Agency Assigned Date

1. The date recorded by the service coordinator used to document when an EIP agency is assigned to an IFSP service. The designated area on the bottom of the IFSP service page must be used to record the EIP agency assignment date.
2. This date will be used by the Department when conducting an inquiry on timely services and/or on any corrective action plan (CAP).

C. EIP Agency Received Date

1. The date an EIP agency receives the signed IFSP from the SCU. This date must be documented by the EIP agency (e.g. fax transmission date, date/time stamp at EIP agency).
2. The SCU must send the signed IFSP including service pages to the EIP agency no later than one business day of the provider agency assignment date.

D. Practitioner Assigned Date

1. The date the practitioner is assigned by an EIP agency and recorded by the EIP agency on the service page.
2. The EIP agency is responsible for transmitting the IFSP service page to the SCU and REIC as soon as possible after the practitioner is assigned.

E. First Claim Date/Start Date

1. The first date the practitioner provided service as documented by a service encounter verification log and billed for payment.
2. This must not be confused with the projected start date. It is the actual date of the first service delivered to the child and/or family.

V. Related Policies

NJEIS-08: No Provider Available

NJEIS-09: Early Intervention Provider Assignment