

Responses to Local System Manager Questions: Follow-Up to September 25th Statewide Meeting

Annual Eligibility Determination and Assessment for Service Planning

Reminder: Generally, there will be enough information from ongoing assessment to make a statement concerning the child's present level of development and unique strengths and needed in each of the developmental areas when the annual IFSP is developed. Re-assessment at the time of the annual IFSP would only be necessary in a few circumstances, like if the child is receiving service coordination only, if there had not been an opportunity for ongoing assessment for an extended period of time, or maybe if there had been a major event (like surgery) that had recently had a significant impact on the child's development. When a re-assessment is needed, the assessment must be conducted by a multidisciplinary team.

1. Service coordination is the only service listed on the IFSP. The service coordinator also is qualified as an EI Certified Professional. When it's time for the annual IFSP, who needs to be involved in Eligibility Determination and who needs to be involved in assessment? Can the Service Coordinator/EI Certified Professional be considered to have done ongoing assessment?

Response – Even though this service coordinator is also qualified as an EI Professional, the only service listed on the IFSP for this child is service coordination, so the provider is only wearing her service coordinator hat in providing services to this child. Ongoing assessment is outside the scope of responsibilities for a service coordinator. Therefore, in order for this provider to put on her EI Professional hat and complete assessment activities with this child, that assessment must be listed as a service on the IFSP (it can be added at an IFSP Review).*

Because this child has only been receiving service coordination, there is a need for assessment prior to development of the annual IFSP in order to identify this child's strengths and needs in all developmental areas, identify outcomes and plan appropriate services. The federal regulations at 303.321(a) require a multidisciplinary assessment.

The following scenarios are intended to further illustrate how the eligibility determination and assessment requirements can be met at the annual IFSP for a child who has been receiving service coordination only.

Scenario 1: Child has a diagnosed condition that meets Virginia's eligibility criteria. *Eligibility Determination* – The service coordinator can establish eligibility based on the records that document the diagnosed condition and no "formal" eligibility determination is needed.

Assessment for Service Planning – There will need to be two disciplines (other than service coordination) involved in the assessment for service planning. It makes sense that the individual who has been providing service coordination and is also qualified

as an EI Professional will be one of the disciplines. Remember that developmental information provided by a physician or a provider who is from a discipline listed in Table A at the end of Chapter 12 of the Practice Manual but who practices outside the local Part C system can be used to meet the requirement for the other discipline if the physician or outside provider supplies information that can be used for service planning. This information may include, but is not limited to, results from an assessment tool, observations of child development, and information about current or projected impact of the child's health on his/her development. The local system determines whether the information provided by the physician or outside provider can be used for service planning (e.g., whether it is helpful in identifying outcomes, short-term goals, necessary supports and services, and/or treatment modalities).

Scenario 2: Child does not have a diagnosed condition that meets Virginia's eligibility criteria.

Eligibility Determination - There will need to be two disciplines (other than service coordination) involved in determining eligibility, just like with the determination of initial eligibility. Since the service coordinator is also qualified as an EI Professional, she can use a screening tool to gather developmental information in all domains to be used in determining eligibility. The same procedures used in determining initial eligibility would be used in this scenario (see Chapter 5 of the Practice Manual).

Assessment for Service Planning – The assessment for service planning information from Scenario 1 applies here as well. Also, note that information gathered by a qualified provider as part of the eligibility determination (such as completion of a screening tool and observation performed by the service coordinator who is also qualified as an EI Professional) can be used to meet the requirement for one of the disciplines for the assessment for service planning.

***Additional Information 10/23/12:** If you need to add assessments by 2 disciplines to the IFSP and both of those disciplines provide developmental services (e.g., a early childhood special educator and a nurse or an educator and a therapeutic recreation specialist), then you have the option to list these assessments in any of the following ways on page 6 of the IFSP:

- List Developmental Services Assessment twice;
- List Assessment (Educator) on one line and Assessment (Nurse) on another line; or
- List Developmental Services (Educator) on one line, since you'll be indicating "assessment" as the method, and Developmental Services (Nurse) on another line, again indicating "assessment" as the method.

You will then list the actual providers on the Addendum page. DMAS will reimburse for these assessments if they are listed in any of the ways described above.

2. In the situation described in Question 1, would either the use of a screening tool for eligibility determination or doing an assessment be considered an IFSP "service?" Would there be a difference, when considering an IFSP "service," in scoring one tool (ASQ) versus another (HELP Strands)?

Response - The determination about whether or not this activity needs to be listed on the IFSP will be based on the purpose of the activity. Using a tool (whether it's a screening tool or an assessment tool) to gather information for eligibility determination does not need to be listed as an IFSP service. The *Parental Prior Notice* form lets the family know that confirming eligibility is part of the annual IFSP process, and the *Notice and Consent to Determine Eligibility Form* that families sign after referral specifies that eligibility will be confirmed annually and describes the procedures used for determining eligibility.

An assessment for service planning that is done in preparation for an annual IFSP must be listed on the current IFSP as a service regardless of whether the tool you use to determine eligibility is also used for the assessment for service planning.

Initial Eligibility Determination and Assessment for Service Planning

3. If I (as a developmental specialist) do a full screening at intake and I do a write up, can I use that write up as one of the disciplines for the assessment for service planning? Let's say the child is found eligible through desk eligibility for a speech delay but gross and fine motor are fine. Let's say that I do a write up on one of the indicator areas and do some discussion on indicators out of the home..... Can I count that as part of the assessment for service planning and then only have a service coordinator and one other provider (speech) go to the home to complete the rest of the assessment for service planning?

Response – Yes, as indicated in Chapter 6 of the Practice Manual, information gathered by a qualified provider as part of eligibility determination (such as completion of a screening tool and observation performed by a certified EI Professional) can be used to meet the requirement for one of the disciplines for the assessment for service planning.

Transition

4. It was my understanding previously that whenever we did a transition activity like the transition plan or the transition pages on the IFSP, we had to do it in conjunction with an IFSP review. But at the statewide meeting, it seemed that we needed to do an IFSP review even for a Transition Planning Conference meeting? For example, I did two transition planning conferences in the home a couple of weeks ago. I did the Parental Prior Notice. We had a great conference but I didn't do an IFSP review...page 9. Do we have to do an IFSP review for the actual transition planning conference?

Response – Yes, as a result of the new federal Part C regulations, the transition conference must now meet the requirements of an IFSP meeting. If the transition conference is not held in conjunction with an initial or annual IFSP, then it must be treated as an IFSP Review and page 9 must be completed.