
To: Service Providing Agencies and their Service Coordinators

Date: December 1, 2023

Subject: Informed Written Consent on the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

This bulletin is meant to:

- Emphasize and remind the IFSP Team that a parent's informed written consent on the IFSP is required before the IFSP can be carried out and services can be provided
- Issue guidance for Service Providing Agencies (SPAs) when they encounter challenges obtaining a parent's informed written consent on an IFSP

The contents of the IFSP must be fully explained to the family and informed written consent from the parent must be obtained prior to the provision of early intervention services described in the plan. If the parents do not provide consent with respect to a particular early intervention service or withdraw consent after first providing it, that service may not be provided. The early intervention services determined by the IFSP team, written on the IFSP and to which parental consent is obtained must be provided. (*AzEIP Policy Manual 3.8.13*)

The early intervention services are based on peer-reviewed research (to the extent practicable) and resources necessary to meet the unique needs of the child and family to achieve those outcomes or results. For each early intervention service, the IFSP must include: Signature of the parent, which provides consent for the early intervention services. (*AzEIP Policy Manual 3.8.4.h*)

The Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) team is the authorizing body for determining the type, frequency, intensity, method, duration, and start and end dates for early intervention services identified as necessary to support the family and child to achieve the identified outcomes. Direct services provided to children and families but not documented in the child record and in the AzEIP data system in adherence with AzEIP Policies and Procedures, are not considered authorized and will not be reimbursed. (*AzEIP Billing Manual 1.1*)

The Service Coordinator (SC) at the time of the IFSP is responsible for obtaining the parent's informed written consent which should occur the day the IFSP is completed. The SC enters the service(s) into I-TEAMS as soon as possible but no later than 10 calendar days after the parent has provided their informed written consent. The date of the IFSP entered into I-TEAMS is the

date the meeting was held. The IFSP team must not provide IFSP services until the parent's written consent has been obtained.

When an SC is unable to obtain the parent's written consent on the day of the IFSP:

- The SC documents in their Contact Log:
 - The reason why informed written consent could not be obtained
 - The SC's repeated timely attempts to obtain informed written consent
 - Communication with the active IFSP team members notifying them of the status of obtaining written consent
- If the SC is unable to contact the parent the SC must follow steps regarding loss of contact identified in the *AzEIP Procedure Manual 3.15.3.D*.
- If the planned start date is approaching and informed written consent has not been obtained, AzEIP recommends the SC attend the first scheduled visit with the provider to obtain consent.
- If the SC:
 - Is unable to obtain the parent's informed written consent prior to the Planned Start Date for services,
 - Has documented timely repeated attempts to obtain the consent, and
 - Is unable to attend the first scheduled visit, the SC:
 - Identifies the delay as "family delay" in their Contact Log
 - Communicates to the Team Lead and any Joint Visitor(s) that a family delay has been identified and they will be notified once parental consent has been obtained
 - Continues with attempts to obtain the parent's consent until either consent is obtained or the child's record has been exited

As identified in the Team Based Early Intervention Contract, the SPA must establish and implement programmatic and fiscal controls to ensure that AzEIP Policy and Procedure Manuals are implemented and followed as outlined in IDEA, Part C.

IFSP services provided prior to obtaining informed written consent are subject to review and reversal of payment.