



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

*Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona*



# Referrals and Initial Phone Call

April 23, 2024

# Purpose of Today's Presentation

Review steps to be taken when a service coordinator

- Receives a referral
- Initial Phone Call
- Schedules Initial Visit



# What is discussed During Initial Call





# Referrals to AzEIP

# Initial Planning Process

## **AzEIP Policy**

3.1.1 The initial planning process (IPP) includes the events and activities beginning with referral to AzEIP to development of the initial individualized family service plan (IFSP).

IPP includes the referral, initial call, initial visit, screening, evaluation, eligibility determination, and, if AzEIP eligible, initial child and family assessment to identify family's priorities, resources, and interests, and the development of the initial Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

The IPP begins the collaborative relationship between the family and AzEIP, through giving and gathering information to facilitate appropriate next steps.

3.1.2. The IPP must be completed by the AzEIP service providing agencies within 45 days from the date a referral is received by the AzEIP central referral agency or an AzEIP service providing agency.

# Single Referral Date

## **AzEIP Procedure**

3.2.3 All AzEIP service providing agencies recognize a single referral date. A referral made to AzEIP's central referral agency or directly to an AzEIP service providing agency (e.g., DDD, ASDB, or AzEIP TBEIS contractor) for an infant or toddler birth to three years of age is considered a referral to AzEIP. Therefore, the date a complete referral is received by one of these entities is the date the initial planning process timeline begins to ensure an eligible child receives the appropriate IPP steps and activities within 45 days.

a. If an AzEIP service providing agency receives a direct referral, it is required that they send all information received with the referral to the central referral agency within one (1) business day for appropriate referral assignment.



# Receiving the Referral

# Receiving Referral

## **AzEIP Policy Manual**

3.2.4 A TBEIS service coordinator is assigned upon receipt of the referral by the EIP and begins the IPP.

# Confirming Referral Assigned to the Correct Region

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When a Service Coordinator receives a referral, they should verify that the zip code is in their region.

If the Service Coordinator identifies an error in referral assignment, they should reach out to the Central Referral Agency for assistance.

# Review Documentation and I-TEAMS

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**Documentation** is reviewed:

- To identify information that will help determine eligibility
- To identify information that is missing or needs clarification
- Identify the name of the child and the parents
- All related records have been received
- Contact information is available

**I-TEAMS** is reviewed:

- Confirming that the parent's information is entered into I-TEAMS as documented in the referral
- Verify assignment to correct region and agency
- I-TEAMS information matches what is in the referral email
- Any additional information in demographics comment box section

**I-TEAMS** is updated:

Throughout the Initial Planning Process as new information is gathered

# Review Records

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Review documentation that is attached with referral

- Are completed screening tools included?
- Are medical records included?
  - What medical information is included?
  - What medical information is needed based on review of records?
  - Identification of birth and medical history that will aid in determining eligibility
- Consents to Share with referral source
- Court Records

# Thank you Referral Letter

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## **AzEIP Procedure**

3.2.3 If the referral source is anyone other than the parent, the service coordinator sends a letter acknowledging receipt of the referral to the referral source within seven (7) calendar days.

[GCI-1046A - Referral Letter](#)

# Unable to Process Referral Letter

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## **AzEIP Procedure**

3.2.3.A. If a referral cannot be processed because there is not enough information to contact the family, and reasonable attempts to gather this information from the referral source are unsuccessful, a letter will be sent to the referral source notifying them the referral will be closed and further action will not be taken.

[GCI-1059A - Unable to Process Letter](#)

# Documenting Receipt of Referral

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The Service Coordinator should document within their Contact Log:

- Receipt of Referral
- Sending the Referral Thank You Letter to Referral Source (if referral source was not family)
- Unable to Process Referral Letter (if applicable)



# Identify the Educational Parent

# Identification of Educational Parent(s)

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The educational parent is the person who can:

- Make early intervention service decisions for a child
- Decide whether to participate in AzEIP
- Consent to screening, evaluation, assessment, the provision of services, and share early intervention records.

**It is the responsibility of the SPA to determine who the educational parent is.**

# Who Can be the Educational Parent?

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## **AzEIP Policy**

7.9.1 A parent is defined as:

- A. a biological or adoptive parent of a child
- B. a foster parent, unless Arizona law, regulations, or contractual obligations with an Arizona or local entity prohibit a foster parent from acting as a parent
- C. a guardian generally authorized to act as the child's parent, or authorized to make early intervention, educational, health or developmental decisions for the child (but not the State if the child is a ward of the State)
- D. a person acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent (including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative) with whom the child lives, or an individual who is legally responsible for the child's welfare
- E. a surrogate parent who has been appropriately appointed.

## AzEIP Policy

7.9.5 When more than one individual is qualified to act as the parent of a child, the biological or adoptive parent who attempts to act as the parent is presumed to be the parent for purposes of making early intervention decisions on behalf of the child, unless:

A. that person does not have legal authority to make educational decisions for the child (such as when parental rights have been terminated)

B. there is a judicial order or decree that specifies some other individual to act as the parent for early intervention purposes.

# Is the Parent on the Referral the Biological Parent?

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## Indications the parent listed on the referral might not be the biological parent:

- References to foster parent, aunt/uncle, grandparent, etc in the referral documentation
- Insurance is Mercy Care CHP
- Address of child is a medical group home
- Referral from DCS, Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), agency that works primarily with foster children

# Finding the Biological Parent Contact Information

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If you are unable to locate the biological parent, contact DCS (if involved), the referral source and/or “parent” on referral:

- Explain requirement to identify educational parent
  - Biological parent is considered educational parent unless rights have been severed or there’s a court order
- Ask for contact information of biological parent(s)
- Explain that you will make attempts to contact the biological parent(s) over the course of a few weeks
  - If biological parent responds, will follow their decision to proceed or not with early intervention
  - If no response, will move forward with next in hierarchy for educational decisions (AzEIP Policy 7.9.6)

# DCS Assistance

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**If you are unable to reach the DCS Case Manager or Supervisor, contact:**

## **DCS General Inquiry**

Phone: 602-255-2500

Email: [GeneralInquiries@AZDCS.GOV](mailto:GeneralInquiries@AZDCS.GOV)

## **Billy Henderson, MEd**

Health Program Manager II-DDD Coordinator

Statewide Placement Administration

Office Phone 602 771-6338

Cell Phone 520-610-1866

Email: [Billy.Henderson@azdcs.gov](mailto:Billy.Henderson@azdcs.gov)

# Contacting the Biological Parent

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Contact biological parent > multiple attempts over 3 weeks > different methods

- No response > move forward with next next in hierarchy for educational decisions (AzEIP Policy 7.9.6)
- Biological parent responds > proceed with Initial Phone Call
  - If biological parent does not wish to proceed with early intervention
    - With parent's written consent, notify referral source and the person(s) with whom the child resides (placement)
    - Exit record
  - If biological parent wishes to proceed
    - With parent's written consent, notify placement
    - Coordinate Initial Visit with biological parent and placement

# Order of Educational Parent

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1. a relative or stepparent with whom the child lives

2. a foster parent

3. a guardian appointed for the child, other than the state (i.e., DCS, or its' employees/contractors)

4. a surrogate parent

# Documenting the Educational Parent Decision

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All steps taken to determine the educational parent must be thoroughly documented in the Contact Log including:

- Dates of successful and unsuccessful contact attempts
- Methods of contact attempts (phone, email, text, etc.)
- Requests for assistance from referral source or placement, if needed
- Biological parent's decision to proceed or not
- Next in hierarchy to make educational decisions
- Name of educational parent and their relationship to the child



# Preparing to Call the Family

# Calling Families within Two Business Days

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## **AzEIP Policy**

3.3.1 An initial call to contact the family is completed by the service coordinator as soon as possible, and no later than two (2) business days from the date the referral was received to acknowledge the referral and coordinate the initial visit.

Service Coordinator contacts the family typically by phone within two days of the SPA receiving the referral.

## **AzEIP Policy**

### 3.5.3 Native language is:

- a. the language normally used by the parents of the child, or
- b. the language normally used by the child, if determined developmentally appropriate for the child by qualified personnel conducting the evaluation or assessment
- c. the mode of communication that is normally used by the individual who is deaf or hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, or for an individual with no written language, (e.g., sign language, braille, or oral communication).

# Arrange for Interpreter

If the referral identifies the family's home language as a language other than a language the Service Coordinator speaks, the SC will arrange for an interpreter to be available for the initial phone call.



# Attempts To Contact Families

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- The SC must make at least three (3) attempts to contact the family:
  - Over the course of three (3) weeks
  - At different times of the day, including evenings, and
  - Document each attempt in a Contact Log.
- The last contact attempt must be made in writing and must include:
  - Loss of Contact Letter/No Contact Letter (GCI-1049A)  
**and**
  - Prior Written Notice (GCI-1050B)



# Initial Phone Call

# Introduction of Self

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- Name
- Title
- Agency Representing
- Contact Information
- Reason why self is now involved or becoming a part of family's life
- Explain the objective of the call
- Express gratitude for the time to speak

# Conversation with families on Initial Phone Call

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## **AzEIP Procedure**

3.3.2 The service coordinator contacts the family as soon as possible, and no later than two (2) business days from the date the referral was received, to complete all the following activities:

- A. confirm receipt of the referral
- B. verify spelling of child and parent's names, child's date of birth, family's physical and mailing addresses or living arrangements

# Conversation with families on Initial Phone Call (2)

## **AzEIP Procedure**

3.3.2.C. if a parent or other individual with whom the child lives informs the service coordinator that s/he is part of Arizona's Address Confidentiality Program (ACP), the service coordinator must ensure compliance with the ACP law, DES policies, and AzEIP policies and procedures.

A family is a part of the ACP if they provide their home address as:

1901 West Madison Street  
Phoenix  
Arizona 85009

For expanded guidance refer to:

[Address Confidentiality Program \(ACP\) Technical Assistance Bulletin](#)

# Conversation with families on Initial Phone Call (3)

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## **AzEIP Procedure**

3.3.2.D. if referral information indicates the child is or may be involved with DCS, the service coordinator obtains contact information for the DCS case manager and determines who is able to act as the parent for AzEIP purposes

3.3.2.E. if the referral information indicates the child may have a vision loss or hearing difference, the Service Coordinator will send the record to ASDB for simultaneous eligibility determination.

3.3.2.F. briefly describe the purpose of early intervention and the early intervention process, including expectations for the initial visit and eligibility determination,

# Conversation with families on Initial Phone Call (4)

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## **AzEIP Procedure**

3.3.2.G. share information about the following early intervention key principles:

- 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.

# Conversation with families on Initial Phone Call (5)

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## **AzEIP Procedure**

3.3.2.H. Verify the family's interest in proceeding with early intervention and discuss how parents can prepare for the initial visit, including having the following available:

- 1) contact information for the child's doctor(s)
- 2) insurance information, including insurance card
- 3) medical/developmental records
- 4) Other program information the parent is involved with such as a home visiting program or Head Start
- 5) questions with which the family would like support.

# Family Share about Child

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- Strengths
- Main Concerns
- Diagnosis
- What are you looking for/types of supports/services/how can we help you

# Family Does Not Wish to Proceed

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If the family chooses not to proceed with the referral:

- Identify if the parent is willing to consent to share the results of the referral with the referral source
- Identify if the family would like any community resources
- Thank the family for their time
- Ensure the family has the information to make a re-referral if at any time they change their mind
- Update and Exit in I-TEAMS

# Documents and Links to Share with Family before Initial Visit

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## Documents:

- Consent for Screening
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) (if a developmental screening is needed)
  - The ASQ must be completed with the family at the Initial Visit

## Family Videos:

- [AzEIP Overview Family Video](#)
- [AzEIP Screening Review](#)
- [AzEIP Consent to Bill](#)

# Scheduling the Initial Visit

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- AzEIP expects the Initial Visit to be scheduled in person with the parent(s) unless the family specifically requests that it be completed virtually
- Identify if family has any scheduling limitations
- Offer family a couple of different times and dates
- Confirm address/directions/gate codes etc/parking instructions
- If special instructions are required for the healthy and safety of the child (masks, allergies to pet dander or perfumes/colognes, etc, etc)
- Confirm family has the Service Coordinator's contact information in case they need to reschedule

# Documenting the Initial Phone Call

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The Service Coordinator should document within their contact log:

- Information shared by the family about their child
  - Concerns/Strengths/Diagnosis
  - Preferred Language
  - Availability
- Identify the parent that was contacted
- The specific AzEIP required steps that were completed with the family (AzEIP Policy 3.3.2 A-H )
- Date/Times offered to family for initial visit and date it was scheduled
- Family **requests** for activities to be conducted virtually



# Atypical situations

# Re-Referral or Re-Open

Re-referral: A referral received by the central referral agency for a child who has had a previous referral entered into the AzEIP Data system (I-TEAMS) and that referral has been exited for longer than 30 calendar days.

Re-open: A referral received by the central referral agency for a child who has a previous referral that has been exited less than 30 calendar days from receipt of the referral.

[AzEIP Central Referral Agency Guidelines](#) “Re-open/Re-referral Appendix”

# Initial Phone Call/Child in hospital

- Approach with sensitivity and genuine compassion for the circumstances
- Identify family's immediate needs or concerns
- Confirm the diagnosis
- Is there is a need for additional support

Refer to the [Supporting Families with Infants in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit AzEIP Programmatic Meeting - January 2024](#)



# Reminders

# Initial Phone Call Reminders

- The Initial Phone Call is more than scheduling the Initial Visit.
- The parent's informed written consent must be obtained prior to completing the screening at the initial visit.
- The SC's contact log must document
  - The identification of the educational parent if it is not the biological parent
  - Steps completed in the identification of the educational parent.
- AzEIP expects that Initial Visits occur in person unless the family specifically requests otherwise (conversations must be documented).
- Prior to exiting a child due to loss of contact, the family is sent the No Contact Letter and a Prior Written Notice.

# General Reminders

- All Transfers including single region transfers go to Raising Special Kids. The transfer in I-TEAMS should not occur until the assignment email has been received.
- Transfer Request Forms should include the family's complete address.
- The meeting date/time for Transition Conference needs to be agreed upon by all parties including the family, school district, active IFSP providers and any additional party the family wishes to invite.
- If a child is over 2 years 10 1/2 months, the Child Find form is used to notify the school district and ADE, not the PEA notification.
- Family's request for visits to be conducted virtually must be documented
- Service Coordinators are to confirm I-TEAMS has pushed to FOCUS when submitting a DDD Eligibility Application.



# Resources

# IDEA Part C Regulations

- [IDEA Part C 303](#) - Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities
- [IDEA Part C 303.310](#) Post-Referral Timeline
- [IDEA Part C 303.320](#) Screening Procedures
- [IDEA Part C 303.420](#) Parental Consent and Ability to Decline Services
- [IDEA Part C 303.422](#) Surrogate Parents

# AzEIP Policies and Procedures

\*IDEA Regulations and AzEIP Policy/Procedure references specific to the slide show will be available in the PDF copy of the presentation for attendees to reference.

[AzEIP Policy Manual](#)

[AzEIP Procedure Manual](#)

[AzEIP Billing Manual](#)

[AzEIP I-TEAMS User Manual](#)

[AzEIP Central Referral Agency Guidelines](#)

# AzEIP Programmatic Presentations

- [Explaining Family Rights and Dispute Resolution Options AzEIP Programmatic Meeting-March 2024](#)
- [Family Delay AzEIP Programmatic Meeting - August 2023](#)
- [Service Coordination Services AzEIP Programmatic Meeting - June 2023](#)
- [Interim IFSPs AzEIP Programmatic Meeting - May 2023](#)
- [Contact Logs AzEIP Programmatic Meeting - March 2023](#)

# AzEIP Technical Assistance Bulletins

- [Family Out of State for Extended Period of Time Technical Assistance Bulletin - 01/29/2024](#)
- [AzEIP Eligibility Criteria for Established Conditions Technical Assistance Bulletin - 11/29/2023](#)
- [Informed Written Consent on the Individualized Family Service Plan \(IFSP\) Technical Assistance Bulletin - 12/01/2023](#)
- [Updated AzEIP Early Intervention Contact Log \(GCI-1094A\) and Policy Reminders Technical Assistance Bulletin - 11/30/2023](#)
- [Address Confidentiality Program \(ACP\) Technical Assistance Bulletin - 3/28/2023](#)
- [AzEIP Supplemental Technical Assistance IFSP Meetings and Obtaining Family Signatures - 12/22/2022](#)

# AzEIP Forms

- [GCI-1046A - Referral Letter](#)
- [GCI-1059A - Unable to Process Letter](#)
- [GCI-1050B - Prior Written Notice](#)
- [GCI-1049A - No Contact Letter](#)
- [GCI-1094A - Early Intervention Contact Log](#)
- [GCI-1040A - Consent to Share Early Intervention Records and Information](#)

# Questions



# Question 1

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What about biological families who decline services but the foster family and child need the services?

- The biological parent is the educational parent who is responsible for making the decision on whether to move forward with AzEIP eligibility.
- The foster family can receive support for the child through utilizing their medical insurance.

# Question 2

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If it was determined that the bio family is not available initially but then becomes available once the child is in services, do all new consents need to be re-signed by the bio parent?

- The team which includes the parent would identify if a periodic review of the IFSP is needed.
- The biological parent who is the educational parent would provide their informed written consent to the IFSP and any active consents.
- If the team identifies a periodic IFSP review is not needed, the team would update any active consents.

# Question 3

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Can you explain the current process for azeip assignment of surrogate parents?

- If the team exhausted the hierarchical list of educational parents, they would contact the AzEIP office for assistance. The AzEIP office would collaborate with DCS to identify the surrogate parent.

# Question 4

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Can all of this be done via text or does it have to be a phone call?

- The Initial Phone Call should be completed by phone.
- In the rare circumstance the family is only able to text on their phone and not speak due to a lack of minutes, the call may be completed by text.
- Required documentation:
  - Identification of reason why phone call could not occur.
  - The conversation should be fully documented within the Service Coordinator's Contact Log
  - Copy of the text message should be stored in the child's record which would include the family identifying they are unable to speak directly with the Service Coordinator.

# Question 5

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You mentioned the Unable to Process Letter and then also mentioned the No Contact Letter and PWN. Can you explain the expected no contact process in terms of paperwork?

- If a family is unable to be contacted after the loss of contact process has been completed (see slide 13 and slide 29) the:
  - Family is sent a No Contact Letter and a Prior Written Notice
  - Referral source is sent the Unable to Process letter
- The Service Coordinator must document in their Contact Log:
  - All attempts to contact the family including time, date and method of contact
  - Attempts to obtain alternate contact information by contacting the referral source
  - Dates each document was sent
    - No Contact Letter
    - Prior Written Notice
    - Unable to Process Letter

# Referral and Initial Phone Call Acronym List

ACP	Address Confidentiality Program
AKA	Also Known As
ASDB	Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind
ASQ	Ages and Stages Questionnaire
AzEIP	Arizona Early Intervention Program
CASA	Court Appointed Special Advocate
DCS	Department of Child Safety
DDD	Division of Developmental Disabilities
DES	Department of Economic Security
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IFSP	Individualized Family Service Plan
IPP	Initial Planning Process
PEA	Public Education Agency
PWN	Prior Written Notice
QR	Quick Reference
RSK	Raising Special Kids
SC	Service Coordinator
SPA	Service Providing Agency
TBEIS	Team Based Early Intervention

# Thank you for attending!

## AzEIP Quality Improvement Team

- **Erica Melies**, AzEIP Quality Improvement Manager
- **Tanya Goitia**, AzEIP Continuous Quality Improvement Coordinator
- **Lidia Gonzales**, AzEIP Continuous Quality Improvement Coordinator
- **Pamela Meurer**, AzEIP Continuous Quality Improvement Coordinator
- **Anissa Albert**, AzEIP Technical Assistance Specialist
- **Amanda Tipotsch**, AzEIP Technical Assistance Specialist
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