

## **RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS REGARDING IDEA 2011 NEW REGULATIONS**

### **Assessment**

#### **What was the process for developing the Child and Family Assessment Guide for Families and the Child and Family Assessment pages of the IFSP?**

In 2011, AzEIP began piloting a Child and Family Checklist with certain early intervention programs in the state. The checklist gathered information about family's priorities, interests, and routines and how, based on this information, families would like support from the early intervention professionals working with them.

In September 2011, the United States Department of Education issued new federal regulations for all states providing early intervention services, and these regulations contained new requirements for the child and family assessment and the development of the IFSP. As a result, AzEIP used the checklist and revised it to meet the new requirements. The checklist was renamed the Child and Family Assessment Guide for Families and IFSP pages were developed to create continuity between the child and family assessment and the development of the IFSP.

AzEIP received input on the guide and its relationship to the IFSP development from the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC), a technical assistance (TA) center funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), which provides TA to all states. In addition, AzEIP presented the draft Guide and IFSP pages to both Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) committees and obtained additional feedback. The result of the new regulations, national TA, AzEIP stakeholder input from the ICC committees, is the Child and Family Assessment Guide for Families and the new Child and Family Assessment pages of the IFSP.

#### **When must a parent's consent for assessment be obtained?**

A parent's consent for the child assessment must be obtained prior to (1) the initial child assessment and (2) annual child assessment. The family assessment is voluntary on the part of the family; families share as little or as much as they are comfortable sharing. There is no requirement to obtain written consent for the family portion of the assessment.

The Child and Family Guide for Families may be used to assist with updating the IFSP between annual meetings, if the team and family agree. This is not the formal child and family assessment that is conducted initially and annually and does not need parental consent.

**What assessments tools can be used to complete the Child and Family Assessment for the initial and annual Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)?**

The Child and Family Assessment pages of the IFSP are the required AzEIP assessment tool for the initial and annual child and family assessments. The service coordinator is required to provide the parent(s) with a copy and an overview of the purpose of the Child and Family Assessment Guide for Families prior to the initial and annual IFSP meetings to assist the family in thinking about the areas of interest and routines in which they would like early intervention support.

If needed, AzEIP approved assessment tools may be used as a reference to ensure the team gathers information about all areas of the child's development within the context of the family's identified routines and activities. You do not need to calculate scores from the assessment; scores are not part of the child and family assessment or the IFSP.

**How many routines and activities must be covered in the assessment?**

The number of routines and activities completed during the child and family assessment is determined on an individual family basis.

**Who is responsible for coordinating the initial child and family assessment when the child is potentially eligible or eligible for the Department of Economic Security/Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) or ASDB?**

During the Initial Planning Process, the DES/AzEIP contracted service coordinator is responsible for coordinating the child and family assessment, which includes inviting the DDD or ASDB service coordinator to the assessment, when appropriate, and ensuring the assessment is completed prior to the Initial IFSP. If available to attend, the DDD/ASDB service coordinator is involved in the assessment process. If agreed upon between the DES/AzEIP contracted service coordinator and the DDD/ASDB service coordinator (and ensuring all requirements are met), the DDD/ASDB service coordinator may facilitate the assessment with only a team member(s) from the DES/AzEIP contractor (i.e., without the DES/AzEIP service coordinator).

\*In those counties where ASDB completes the initial planning process, the ASDB service coordinator is responsible for the initial assessment and involving the DDD service coordinator as appropriate.

**Can the Assessment visit be combined with the evaluation visit or the IFSP meeting?**

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The IDEA 2011 regulations require the initial child and family assessment to be conducted prior to the initial IFSP meeting. Initial guidance required a separate meeting to provide the family and team members the opportunity to gather critical assessment information in preparation for the initial IFSP meeting.

Feedback from early intervention professionals indicated that this required separate visit is difficult for some families, particularly when the child is eligible based on an evaluation. Therefore, if the family's time, energy, and interest permit, the team may conduct the Child and Family Assessment immediately before the initial IFSP meeting. The service coordinator must ensure that the family has received and been explained the Child and Family Assessment Guide for Families prior to this meeting with sufficient time to review and complete, if wanted. It is recommended that, if possible, the evaluation team provide the guide with the explanation to the family after the evaluation visit when the child is determined eligible.

Alternatively, the Child and Family Assessment may be conducted on a separate visit on a different day than the initial IFSP or on the same day.

The decision regarding when the Child and Family Assessment occurs is based on each individual family's situation and must be documented in the child's record.

**How is vision and hearing addressed in the Child and Family Assessment Guide for Families?**

The purpose of the Child and Family Assessment Guide for Families is to help families think about their child's participation, engagement, and independence within routines and activities the family participates in and to explore their own natural resources and other resources they may be interested in learning more about and/or accessing for their family. Therefore, based on the priorities identified by the family, the team members would explore with the family how the child's hearing and vision loss may be impacting their child's participation, engagement, or independence in those routines and activities throughout the day.

**Who is responsible for completing the annual child and family assessment when service coordination is the only service on the IFSP?**

The service coordinator and one other person of another discipline (physical therapy, occupational therapy, developmental special instructionist, speech-language pathology, psychology, social work, or a vision or hearing specialist from the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (ASDB)) coordinate to complete the annual child and family assessment.

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At the 6 month IFSP review, the service coordinator discusses with the family the need to complete an annual Child and Family Assessment for the annual IFSP meeting as follows:

- a. The service coordinator adds “Assessment” to the Service Needed to Make Progress Towards Outcomes page. The intensity, frequency, service setting, method, and duration is completed.
- b. The service coordinator, family, and others that the family has invited to the IFSP discuss and identify the best team member to participate in the Assessment.
- c. The service coordinator completes the Payment Arrangement For Services page of the IFSP.
- d. The service coordinator ensures Consent for Child Assessment is obtained prior to conducting the child assessment.

Two weeks prior to the annual IFSP meeting the service coordinator ensures the family receives a copy of the Child and Family Assessment Guide for Families. The service coordinator and the other team member complete the child and family assessment.

**Can the Child and Family Assessment information be documented in bullet form on the IFSP, or should it be a narrative?**

The information of the child and family assessment can be documented in a narrative or bullet format on the IFSP. The format used to document the Child and Family Assessment information on the corresponding pages of the IFSP is not as important as the content that should be included.

Individual service coordinators and team members document the information in the manner that is the most helpful in capturing the details discussed during the child and family assessment process. Since the information gathered is used as the team moves through the rest of the IFSP process, such as identifying the family’s priorities, developing the outcomes, strategies, services, frequency, duration, and intensity of IFSP services, it is very important that the team captures and documents the discussion with the family in as much detail as possible.

**What tools are required to complete the Child Indicator Summary form at a child’s entry and exit from early intervention?**

The team members are required to use the information documented on the Child and Family Assessment pages of the IFSP to complete the Child Indicator Summary

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form. AzEIP no longer requires the use of a broad-spectrum tool (such as the DAYC) to complete the Child Indicator process.

**Is the Child and Family Assessment Guide for Families available to families?**

The Child and Family Assessment Guide for Families (GCI-1088A) is available in English and Spanish in the forms library on the AzEIP website [www.azdes.gov/azeip](http://www.azdes.gov/azeip).

**Where is information about how to use the Child and Family Assessment Guide for Families?**

The information on the purpose and use of the Child and Family Assessment Guide for Families for both the initial and annual IFSP is included in the Assessment webinar found at <https://www.azeip.nau.edu> and the 2012 IFSP Guidance document.