

CHAPTER 800 – SPECIAL INSTRUCTION PROCEDURES

POLICY 34 CFR §303.13 Early Intervention Services

BABIES CAN'T WAIT STANDARD

Through the evaluation and assessment process, the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) will identify children for whom Special Instruction is a service necessary to meet the outcomes identified on the IFSP.

Special Instruction shall:

1. Include the systematic planning and coordinating of people, materials, and places to assist in designing learning environments to create opportunities that help the child learn through a series of activities that encourage thinking, moving, communicating, playing, and living with family and friends;
2. Include the coordination of people, materials, times, and places based on the unique needs of the child and family. Strategies and ideas should be developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant; child and family guided, care giver responsive, play-based, and delivered in natural settings.
3. Be based on goals and objectives determined through the use of functional, developmentally appropriate assessment and curriculum, systematic observation, and data collection that lead to achieving the outcomes and measuring successes as identified in the IFSP;
4. Focus on positive interactions with the child through approaches described above to enhance the child's development.
5. Strengthen and reinforce the family's knowledge and ability to enhance their child's skill development within home and community through a systematic process which is responsive to cultural uniqueness families should be provided with skills, support, resources, and complete and unbiased information related to their child through Special Instruction.

IMPLEMENTATION

Evidence from research indicates that children learn best through everyday experiences and interactions with familiar people in familiar contexts. Special Instruction is designed to support the family in identifying high-interest activities and learning opportunities for the child during the course of the family's typical daily routine, along with enhancing the caregiver's ability to respond in a supportive manner to the child's actions. Program planning should be based on the priorities, needs, and routines identified by the family and should include the suggestions of the Primary Service Provider (PSP) Team.

Each Special Instruction session should include a review of the previous week's Joint Plan that was developed by the family and the PSP, and the activities that the family tried during the time between sessions. Sessions should also include opportunities for feedback, modeling, and coaching as determined by the family's needs. Sessions end with development of a Joint Plan that includes the activities the family will try before the next session and what the focus of the next visit will be.

A formal curriculum is not required nor recommended by the State Lead Agency (State LEA); however, curriculum-based assessment tools can be used to monitor the child's progress toward achieving the IFSP outcomes and overall development. The State LEA advocates the use of natural learning environment practices that include the identification and support of everyday learning opportunities, child interests and activities, and parent responsiveness.

Personnel qualified to provide Special Instruction include (See Personnel Policy **for Qualifications for Special Instructors**).

1. Early Intervention Specialist (EIS)
2. Early Interventionist (EI)
3. Early Intervention Assistant (EIA)

A. Early Intervention Specialist (EIS)

The **Early Intervention Specialist** is responsible for the implementation and/or supervision of the local program's Special Instruction program under the supervision of the EI Coordinator. This is a position(s) that may be utilized to provide Special Instruction via contract, salary, or fee for service depending upon availability of personnel and resources in the local program. **If the EI Specialist is responsible for supervision of staff, this position cannot be contracted.**

The EI Specialist is able to assist local programs with direct service, supervision, quality assurance, training, and program development issues. The EI Specialist is knowledgeable in consultation methods and meets the following competencies:

1. Knowledge and experience participating in family-guided evaluation and assessment using a variety of methods, including multi-domain, standardized developmental instruments, curriculum-based assessments, and systematic observation tools.
2. The EI Specialist should be able to select and administer appropriate instruments, summarize results in writing, and interpret the results to parents, caregivers, and other professionals involved with the child.
3. Knowledge and experience participating in the development of IFSPs, including writing outcomes for Special Instruction and implementation of services within a team model.
4. Experience and skill in functioning as a team member within a multidisciplinary/PSP team responsible for identifying children who need Special Instruction.
5. Experience and skill in consultative methods with team members to facilitate integration of each child's individual program.
6. Experience and skill in participation and identification of appropriate service delivery options within natural environments, including home-based, community-based, consultative, and integrative therapy services.
7. Experience and skill in designing and modifying the physical and social environment, including use of adaptive materials and incorporating family-guided activity-based intervention approaches within natural environments.
8. Experience and skill in developing appropriate instructional sequences linked to programmatic assessment and the identified IFSP outcomes.
9. Experience and skill in the development of procedures for evaluating the impact of Special Instruction intervention, including child outcomes and family satisfaction.
10. Experience in supervision of Special Instructors (Early Interventionists) and Special Instructor Assistants (EI Assistants).
11. Experience collaborating with professionals from a variety of disciplines to deliver family and child-focused services.

The Early Interventionist provides Special Instruction according to the IFSP, with The EI Specialist performs and/or monitors ongoing child evaluation/assessment activities which include participation in the evaluation/assessment process and development of the IFSP, as well as periodic reviews.

Activities for the EI Specialist to meet this job responsibility include participation in pre-assessment planning, i.e., the identification of developmental areas to assess, appropriate measures to use, and other disciplines to include in the evaluation for eligibility and/or programmatic assessments for IFSP development with the Service Coordinator and the MDT. The EI Specialist should also perform and interpret the programmatic assessments for IFSP development with the MDT. The EI Specialist should be fully aware of appropriate assessments and curriculum which meet the needs of the child and family. The EI Specialist should participate in identifying children appropriate for Special Instruction based on MDT evaluation/assessment results and in writing the IFSPs (identification of outcomes, strategies, and services) for children receiving Special Instruction. The team (always remembering the family is an active participant of the team) should review the assessments and IFSP outcomes to determine the most appropriate service delivery options.

Once the child begins to receive Special Instruction, the EI Specialist should establish a system of on-going progress monitoring of each child's outcomes related to Special Instruction and review the progress to ensure consistency of service delivery across all team members. The EI Specialist should also participate in annual re-evaluations of the child's IFSP, as appropriate.

The EI Specialist collaborates with and provides consultation to direct providers in the child's environments to insure functional, integrative intervention plans. (Direct providers include Early Interventionists, EI Assistants, OT, PT, SLP, Audiologists, Child Care Providers and other personnel designated within federally mandated EI services.)

Providing consultation as necessary regarding Special Instruction outcomes to other members of the MDT may also be appropriate for the EI Specialist. Activities to support other direct service providers might include identifying and monitoring plans and activities including the identification of locations, activity settings, and learning opportunities within the child's daily routine. EI Specialists should be capable of coaching other team members, including the family, in the use of instructional and behavioral strategies. The identification of adaptations and modifications needed for successful implementation of the IFSP, including environmental arrangements and need for assistive technology, is an important role for the EI Specialist in collaboration with the PSP team.

The EI Specialist may also observe parent/ provider interaction and provide feedback when appropriate to the accomplishment of the Special Instruction outcomes. Collaboration with the Service Coordinator to ensure child and family needs are met in the areas of family training and linkages to other resources may also be appropriate.

The EI Specialist provides supervision of EI Assistants and consults with Early Interventionists. If EI Specialist is responsible for supervision, they must be hired as public health staff.

The level of supervision provided by the EI Specialist to the EI Assistant will be dependent on the level of training, experience and competence of the EI Assistant. Until the EI Assistant completes the SCEIs training modules and demonstrates the training competencies, close supervision must be maintained.

The EI Assistant will be supervised in two ways. First, the EI Assistant will be supervised at a minimal level of one face-to-face meeting per month. This requirement may be met in many different ways: joint observation of child participating in a therapy session, IFSP development meeting, PSP Team meeting, or staff training. The second requirement is for a quarterly

observation of the EI Assistant interacting with the child and teacher/caregiver if served in a community-based program, or child and family if served in a home-based program. A review of Special Instruction outcomes occurs quarterly. The frequency and type of supervisory contacts should be based on the direct observations of the EI Assistant's performance with the child and the outcome review. For some children and families, supervision may need to occur more than one time a month in order to ensure that child progress occurs according to the child's outcomes.

The monthly face-to-face meeting is in addition to other forms of supervision, such as telephone conversations, written correspondence, and review of meeting and/or service notes. Training for the EI Assistant is provided as needed. Monthly supervision might also occur in group settings (e.g., PSP Team meetings, staff meetings, consultations with therapists).

Supervision is an ongoing process and is dependent on the level of independence and competency demonstrated by the EI Assistant. Special Instruction includes many activities, such as program development, progress monitoring, coaching family and team members, and implementing recommendations from team members. Each of these activities may require a different type and frequency of supervision, depending on the competency of the EI Assistant. As these personnel develop within the discipline and field, supervision may be less frequent.

The EI Specialist provides consultation to Early Interventionists to ensure both administrative and programmatic quality assurance. Quarterly meetings are scheduled and held to

- Provide updates on State and local Special Instruction requirements and procedures;
- Share content;
- Discuss developmentally appropriate strategies and approaches for children receiving Special Instruction.

The following two standards relate to the provision of Special Instruction by Early Interventionists and Early Intervention Assistants.

B. Early Interventionist

The Early Interventionist:

1. Provides Special Instruction according to the IFSP, with consultation from the EI Specialist. This is a position(s) that may be utilized to provide Special Instruction via contract, salary, or fee for service, depending upon availability of personnel and resources in the local program.
2. Provides Special Instruction to children and families, in collaboration with the Service Coordinator, and with consultation from the EI Specialist, family, and other MDT members.
3. Shall not supervise EI Assistants.
4. Is knowledgeable in consultation methods.
5. The role of this early childhood professional includes three of the four job responsibilities of the EI Specialist (see above standards):
 - performs and/or monitors ongoing child assessment activities which include participation in the assessment process and development of the IFSP, as well as periodic reviews;
 - provides consultation and coaching to the family/caregiver and other team members (team members include OT, PT, SLP, Audiologists, Child Care Providers

- and other personnel designated within the 16 federally mandated services);
 - synthesizes recommendations from the PSP team.
6. The Early Interventionist is responsible for attending quarterly meetings with the EI Specialist to ensure administrative and programmatic quality assurance.

C. EI Assistant

The EI Assistant:

1. Provides Special Instruction services to children and families under the supervision of an EI Specialist and in collaboration with the Service Coordinator. The EI Assistant must complete the Level I SCEIS training modules within six months from date of hire or contracting. The following activities clarify the role of this provider.
2. Provides Special Instruction to children and families in the child's environments, accomplished via fee for service or contract arrangements. Activities for the EI Assistant should include implementation of the child's individualized program based on the family's goals for their child, implementation of learning opportunities and activities which have been identified by the family, monitoring progress on each visit to share with the family, PSP team, and EI Specialist; and maintaining appropriate documentation for child's EI record.
3. Should be knowledgeable of how instructional activities enhance individual child outcomes. This knowledge can be gained by meeting with the EI Specialist for the purpose of understanding desired outcomes and their relationship to the program plan; by participating in writing IFSPs (identification of outcomes, strategies, and services for Special Instruction); by providing on-going monitoring of child progress related to Special Instruction, and by being a liaison between family members and other team members or community program staff.
4. Will receive face-to-face supervision from the EI Specialist.
5. Are responsible for attending quarterly meetings with EI Specialists to ensure administrative and programmatic quality assurance.

D. Special Instruction

Special Instruction shall be provided to the maximum extent possible within natural environments. Natural environments are defined to include the child's home and community programs where children without disabilities participate. Examples of natural environments would include child care, early education programs, and community programs such as Early Head Start.

Special Instruction shall be provided that links assessment information to program development. Ongoing assessment procedures should be used to determine the unique strengths and needs of the child and family in order to help the family meet those needs. Instruments such as the Asset-Based Context Matrix, the Routines-Based Interview, and Interest-Based Checklists can be used to help identify activity settings and learning opportunities.

E. Assessment Tools

In order to track the child's ongoing developmental progress in the context of everyday routines and activities and obtain federally required information about child outcomes, one of the following assessment tools may be utilized:

1. The Carolina Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers with Special Needs
2. Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP)
3. Assessment, Evaluation and Programming System (AEPS)
4. The Trans-Disciplinary Play-based Assessment
5. Battelle Developmental Inventory

F. Special Instruction, Family Training and Counseling

An Early Interventionist/ Early Intervention Specialist must have specialized training, such as Applied Behavior Analysis, DIR/ Floortime, etc. in order to provide Family Training and Counseling. If the provider has specialized training, the area of specialty must be approved by the State BCW office in order to enroll the Early Interventionist/ Early Intervention Specialist as a Family Trainer.

An Early Interventionist or Early Intervention Specialist under Family Training must complete the SCEIS Modules and adhere to the 20 hours of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) every two years.