THE EARLY INTERVENTION SYSTEM

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NOTE: All cites in powerpoint are for Early Intervention; for Special Education cites, see other powerpoints

Target Population

Early Intervention
Infants/toddlers ages birth to 3d birthday and their families

Special Education
Students with disabilities ages 3 through 21

Responsible Agency/ies

Early Intervention
N.J. Department of Health and Senior Services
• 4 Regional Early Intervention Collaboratives (REICs)

Special Education
N.J. Department of Education
• 600+ local school districts

Early Intervention - Child Find

Duty to locate, identify and evaluate potentially eligible children

✓ Must coordinate child find efforts with primary referral sources

Early Intervention - Referral

Who may refer a child to the EIS?
• Anyone
• Primary referral sources – doctors, DYFS, parent or foster parent
• Consent of parent is not necessary for referral (i.e. making the call)
• Written consent of parent, or person acting in place of parent, is necessary to conduct multi-disciplinary evaluation

Early Intervention - Mandatory Referral

State must refer ALL children under age 3 if:
➢ involved in substantiated case of child abuse or neglect to early intervention services or
➢ identified as affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms due to prenatal drug exposure
Early Intervention – Referral Defined

Each child referred to the N.J. EIS is entitled to have an evaluation and assessment conducted within 45 days of the date of referral.

> provided that consent of “parent” is obtained

Children may be screened IN to the program but may NOT be screened OUT

34 C.F.R. 303.322

Relevant Timeframes

- Early Intervention
  - Evaluation, eligibility and IFSP developed within 45 days of date of referral
  - Free, multi-disciplinary evaluation
    - Within 45 days of referral
    - In native language or other preferred mode of communication
  - Evaluation includes:
    - Medical history
    - Physical development
    - Cognitive skills
    - Communication skills
    - Social / emotional development
    - Adaptive skills

- Special Education
  - Evaluation, eligibility and IEP developed within 90 days of date written consent of parent obtained

N.J.A.C. 8:17-6.3

Early Intervention - Evaluation

- Free, multi-disciplinary evaluation
  - Within 45 days of referral
  - In native language or other preferred mode of communication
- Evaluation includes:
  - Medical history
  - Physical development
  - Cognitive skills
  - Communication skills
  - Social / emotional development
  - Adaptive skills

N.J.A.C. 8:17-6.1, 6.2, 6.3

Early Intervention - Eligibility

Child under 3 years old and has:

- 33% delay in one developmental area (or two standard deviations below the mean), or
- 25% delay in two or more developmental areas (or 1.5 standard deviations below the mean), or
- Diagnosed by physician or psychologist as having physical or mental condition with high probability of resulting in developmental delay (presumptive eligibility)

Developmental areas include:
- Physical
- Communication
- Cognitive
- Social/emotional
- Adaptive

N.J.A.C. 8:17-7.1

Point of Contact

- Early Intervention Service Coordinator
  - Coordinate / monitor evaluations and service provision
  - Facilitate creation, review and evaluation of IFSPs
  - Identify available service providers
  - Inform family of rights

- Special Education Case Manager
  - Coordinate/monitor evaluations and service provision
  - Facilitate creation, review and evaluation of IEPs
  - Inform family of rights

N.J.A.C. 8:17-3.1

Service Plan

- Early Intervention
  - Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)
    - Written contract for service provision
    - Tailored to meet child and family’s unique needs
    - Needs driven
    - Meaningful developmental benefit standard

- Special Education
  - Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
    - Written contract for service provision
    - Tailored to meet child’s unique needs
    - Needs driven
    - Meaningful educational benefit standard

N.J.A.C. 8:17-8.1 et seq.
Early Intervention – IFSP Components

- Child’s current functioning
- Family’s concerns
- Needs and resources of child and family
- All services child/family need (initiation, method, frequency and duration)
- Identify natural environment
  - “Natural Environment” is home or other setting in which children without disabilities participate
- Expected outcomes
- 6-month reviews and annual re-evaluation
- Transition plan

N.J.A.C. 8:17-8.5

Early Intervention – Services

- Assessment
- Assistive Technology
- Audiology Services
- Family Counseling / Training
- Health Services
- Medical Services
- Nursing Services
- Nutrition Services
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Psychological Services
- Service Coordination
- Social Work Services
- Special Instruction
- Speech/Language Pathology
- Transportation Svc.
- Vision Services

N.J.A.C. 8:17-8.5(g)

Early Intervention - Services

- Special Education
  - Least restrictive environment to maximum extent appropriate
  - Continuum of educational settings

N.J.A.C. 8:17-8.6

Location of Services

Early Intervention
Natural environment (where children without disabilities participate) to maximum extent appropriate

Special Education
Least restrictive environment to maximum extent appropriate

Continuum of educational settings

N.J.A.C. 8:17-8.6

Early Intervention – Transition

- With family approval, transition conference convened no fewer than 90 days and no greater than 9 months before child’s third birthday
- If child not eligible for preschool or other services, create transition plan for exit from program
- Conference attendees include family, lead agency (DHSS) and local school district
  - NOTE: Transition meeting must occur even if local school district refuses to attend

N.J.A.C. 8:17-11.1

Early Intervention - Payment

- Evaluations, assessments, service coordination, IFSP development & review – Free
- If below 300% F.P.L. - Free
- Medicaid
- Sliding fee scale based on family income, size and number of service hours
- EI system as Payor of Last Resort

N.J.A.C. 8:17-9.1 et seq.

Early Intervention – RED FLAGS

- Failure to identify eligible children
- Failure to implement CAPTA and IDEA mandatory referrals
- Failure to obtain appropriate consent
- “Screening” and refusal to evaluate
- Waiting lists
  - Evaluations
  - Services
- IFSP based on service/program availability, NOT child’s needs
- Qualifications of service providers
- Natural environment ≠ home automatically

N.J.A.C. 8:17-9.1 et seq.
Early Intervention - NY Checklist

- What are the medical needs of this child?
- What are the developmental needs of this child?
- What are the attachment and emotional health needs of this child?
- What challenges does the caregiver face that may impact his or her capacity to parent this child?
- What resources are available to enhance this child’s healthy development [and education]?

Courtesy of Zero to Three & NY State Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children

Early Intervention – Add'l Questions

- Must this child be referred for EI due to:
  - substantiated case of abuse or neglect OR
  - affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms (prenatal drug exp.)
- If referral not mandated, should the child be referred to EI due to suspected disability or delay?
- Has the child ever been referred to EI?
- Has the child ever been evaluated for EI?
- Has the child ever been enrolled in the EIS?
- Does the child have an IFSP? Is it appropriate? Is it being implemented?

Early Intervention – Relevant Laws

- Federal Law
  - Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) Part C, 20 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.
  - 34 C.F.R. Part 303
- State Law
  - N.J.A.C. 8:17-1.1 et seq.
  - N.J.A.C. 6A, Chapter 14, subchapter 10
  - N.J.S.A Title 9, Chapter 6b

Early Intervention Resources – N.J.

Statewide Toll-Free Referral Number: 888-653-4463

NJ EIS
- www.njeis.org
- 609-777-7734

NJ EIS Procedural Safeguards Coordinator
- 877-258-6585

NJ State Interagency Coordinating Council for EI
- 877-909-7422

NJ Developmental Disabilities Council
- www.middc.org
- 800-792-8858

Early Intervention Resources – N.J.

Southern N.J. REIC (serving Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem Counties)
- www.snjreic.org
- 856-768-6747

Mid-Jersey CARES for Special Children REIC (serving Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean and Somerset Counties)
- www.cmjmchc.org
- 732-937-5437

Family Link REIC (serving Essex, Morris, Sussex, Union and Warren Counties)
- www.familylinknj.org
- 908-964-5303

Northeast REIC (serving Bergen, Hudson and Passaic Counties)
- www.nreic.org
- 973-356-8484