

Policy Title: Infant-Toddler Early Intervention for Children Less than Three Years of Age in Out-of-Home Placement

Applies To: DHS Investigations Staff, CUA Case Management (CUA CM) Team Staff, OCF – Performance Management and Technology Staff, Placement Provider Staff

Replaces: Infant Toddler Early Intervention for Children in Out-of-Home Placement, issued January 2021

OVERVIEW:

The purpose of this guide is to share with staff the revised procedures for making a referral to Infant Toddler Early Intervention for an Early Intervention evaluation and services and Regular Developmental Screenings so that children in DHS custody will have the opportunity to reach developmental milestones and have better outcomes.

Children known to public child welfare systems have disproportionately high rates of developmental challenges. Risk factors include poverty, exposure to violence, housing issues, chronic parental stress, parental substance abuse, premature delivery, and low birth weight. Children with developmental challenges are at greater risk of abuse and neglect, behavioral health, and academic difficulties.

To address the needs of these children, it is essential that DHS ensure that children are referred to Infant Toddler Early Intervention to determine their eligibility for individualized services to address developmental concerns, and if not eligible, for enrollment in Regular Developmental Screening.

Early Intervention is a collection of services and supports to coach caregivers of young children that build upon the natural learning occurring in a child's first few years and can include early childhood education, information on how a child develops, and information to help a family enhance their child's growth and learning.

Developmental screening systematically looks for and monitors signs that a young child may be delayed in one or more areas of development. Screenings are required to be administered at set intervals to target developmental milestones and to increase the opportunity to identify a delay and provide needed EI services.

This policy only applies to children under three years of age, committed to DHS, and placed in Philadelphia County. Policy and procedures regarding all other children who are required to have screenings for developmental delays and referral to Early Intervention services, if needed, are to be found in "Early Childhood Screenings and Early Intervention Services", issued January 2012.

DEFINITIONS *(for terms that are new to staff)*

Term	Meaning
ITEI	Infant Toddler Early Intervention, a division of the Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health & Intellectual disability Services for children under 3 years old. When ITEI

Infant Toddler Early Intervention for Children Less Than Three (1)

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	receives a referral, their intake staff assign the child to a Service Coordination Entity based on the child's address.
SCE	Service Coordination Entity, an agency contracted by ITEI to connect the family to agencies that implement the individualized plan. The Service Coordination Entity conducts the t Regular Developmental Screening of children in Philadelphia ITEI.
EI	Early Intervention, a free service to address developmental delays in children 5 and under. EI is divided into two divisions: Infant Toddler Early Intervention for children under 3, and Preschool Early Intervention for children 3-5.
RDS	Regular Developmental Screening (At Risk Tracking) is a free service for children under 3 in one of six categories that are at elevated risk of developmental delays. RDS screens at-risk children every 3 months in their home or community to ensure they continue developing on target. If a delay is identified, the child immediately enters Early Intervention; if the child remains developmentally on target, the child is discharged at their 3 rd birthday.
ChildLink	SCE contracted by ITEI to provide Early Intervention and RDS.
TBD	An additional SCE contracted by ITEI to provide Early Intervention and RDS.
IMDE	Initial Multidisciplinary Evaluation, an evaluation scheduled and facilitated by the SCE within 45 days of an ITEI referral to determine whether a child has a developmental delay. The IMDE occurs in the child's home or community with the involvement of the caregiver.
IFSP	Individual Family Service Plan, a plan developed by the SCE when a child is identified as having a developmental delay. The IFSP is updated at least every 6 months and outlines the interventions and strategies that the caregiver will be coached on as well as the developmental goals of the interventions.
ASQ	Ages & Stages Questionnaire, a developmental screening tool for children ages 2 months to 5.5 years.
Qualifying Score	Any score that lands in the shaded area of scoring grid for each of the age specific questionnaires of the ASQ® and ASQ®:SE assessment tools.
Teleintervention Sessions	Sessions that take place virtually, with the caregiver/family in one place and the Early Interventionist in another.

POLICY

All children under three years old in out-of-home placement within Philadelphia County must be referred to Infant Toddler Early Intervention for an evaluation to determine their eligibility for individualized services and for enrollment in RDS to receive developmental screenings if they are not currently eligible for individualized services.

Initial Screening

- All children who are referred to ITEI will receive an Initial Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation (IMDE).

Infant Toddler Early Intervention for Children Less Than Three (1)

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- Resource parents are required to cooperate with scheduling the IMDE and participate in the IMDE.
- CUA CMs are required to attend the IMDE.

Periodic Follow-up Screening

Children who are not found eligible for individualized services will be enrolled in Regular Developmental Screening. They will continue to be screened at appropriate frequencies based on their age.

Referrals to Early Intervention

- DHS, CUA, and placement provider staff may **refer** a child for Early Intervention evaluation or services but **cannot consent** to either evaluation or services. Only a parent, caregiver acting as a parent, guardian/legal custodian, resource parent, or surrogate parent appointed by the Court can consent to Early Intervention evaluation and services.
- CUA CMs are required to attend Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) meetings.

Results of Regular Developmental Screenings, Early Intervention services, and challenges to providing them must be discussed during Family Team Conferences. Objectives and action steps around identified issues must be included in the Single Case Plan or Family Service Plan/Child Permanency Plan.

Infant Toddler Early Intervention for Children Less Than Three (1)

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Policy and Procedure Guide

PROCEDURE

Effective Date:

Procedure Title:	Infant Toddler Early Intervention for Children Less than Three Years of Age in Out-of-Home Placement
Applies To:	DHS Investigations Staff, CUA Case Management (CUA CM) Team Staff, OCF – Performance Management and Technology Staff, Placement Provider Staff
Related Policy:	Infant Toddler Early Intervention for Children Less than Three Years of Age in Out-of-Home Placement

PROCEDURE OVERVIEW

- All children under three years of age in the custody of DHS and in out of home placement in Philadelphia will automatically be referred to Infant - Toddler Early Intervention for an initial evaluation for Early Intervention services and Regular Developmental Screenings and enrollment in Early Intervention services when a delay is identified.
 - Notification that a child under three years of age has entered placement will be generated and sent to Infant - Toddler Early Intervention and the assigned Community Umbrella Agency (CUA).
 - The CUA team must verify and forward children's referral information to ITEI within 10 days of receipt of the monthly tickler from DHS.
 - ITEI forwards the referral to a Service Coordination Entity to facilitate the completion of the Initial Multidisciplinary Evaluation and the development of an Individualized Family Service Plan, if eligible.
 - ITEI is responsible for emailing the Certificate of Choice form to DHS-EIWaiver@phila.gov. The certificate of choice helps families understand that they can choose how their child's services are delivered, and any choice will ensure their child will get the support they need.
 - The Certificate of Choice form will be reviewed and signed by the Chief of Staff of Child Welfare Operations. The completed form will be sent back to ITEI by the Chief of Staff.
- If the child is eligible, the team meeting to develop the Early Intervention Individualized Family Service Plan, including the Resource Parent and CUA CM, will determine and document whether services will occur as in-person only sessions or as hybrid sessions – a combination of in-person sessions and teleintervention sessions.

PROCEDURE and PRACTICE CONSIDERATIONS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (*what happens, who does it, what are the time frames, how is it documented*)

DHS Investigations Responsibilities:

- Complete CUA Service Referral no later than the next business day for placement services.

DHS Prevention Services and Performance Management and Technology (PMT) Responsibilities:

- DHS PMT will create a monthly tickler of children under age three, in the custody of DHS, referred in that month to each CUA for out-of-home placement services and forward the report to DHS Prevention Services.

Infant Toddler Early Intervention for Children Less Than Three (1)

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Policy and Procedure Guide

- DHS Prevention Services will provide the monthly tickler to Infant - Toddler Early Intervention (ITEI) and to the Intervention/Prevention Services contact at each CUA.

CUA Responsibilities:

- Each CUA must have a central contact to receive the monthly tickler from DHS regarding new out-of-home placement referrals of children under age three years. The central contact must be the Intervention/Prevention Director and an alternate, Leadership level staff person.
- Within 10 calendar days of receiving the monthly tickler from DHS, **but no later than 30 days from the receipt of the CUA Service Referral**, the CUA is required to add or verify the following information on the monthly tickler spreadsheet and forward the spreadsheet to ITEI at Birthto3EI@phila.gov:
 - Resource parent's name, address, and phone number.
 - Concerns about the child's health and development including experiencing homelessness; prenatal exposure to substances, including alcohol; NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) stay; low birth weight; elevated blood lead level and adverse experiences that affect development.
 - Medical diagnoses with a high probability of developmental delay.
 - The contact information from medical providers who are seeing the child.
- If the CUA does not receive a "Referral Acknowledgement Letter" within one week of forwarding children's referral information to ITEI, the CUA should contact ITEI to ensure the referral has been processed.
 - The Referral Acknowledgement Letter will also tell the CUA which the Service Coordination Entity the child is assigned to base on their address and will provide the contact information for the Service Coordination Entity.
- If the assigned CUA CM is contacted by the SCE due to challenges in completing the IMDE or providing services, the CUA CM will communicate with the resource parent concerning the importance of ITEI, and provide whatever assistance is needed to ensure the IMDE is completed in a timely manner.
- The CUA CM is encouraged to schedule a joint visit with the SCE and to engage the resource parent's provider agency as needed to ensure the resource parent participates in the IMDE within the required timeframe.
- The SCE will invite the CUA CM team to all required meetings via email within 10 days of the meeting.
- CUA staff are required to attend the IMDE, IFSP and Multidisciplinary re-evaluation meetings.
- The assigned CUA CM will provide a letter to the parent/legal guardian that informs them of the referral and their right to participate in services. The referral process and purpose should also be explained to the parent by the case manager.
 - This letter can be found on DHSConnect.
- Case management staff should encourage partnership between the resource parent and the parent or other reunification resource to meet the child's developmental needs, as this is critical to safe and timely reunification.
- On an ongoing basis, if the child is tracked into Regular Developmental Screening (RDS), the assigned CUA team is required to obtain screening results at the same interval that they would otherwise administer the ASQ (although RDS exceeds DHS requirements):
 - Ages 2-24 months: ASQ®-3 three times per year/ ASQ®:SE-2 one time per year, required.

Infant Toddler Early Intervention for Children Less Than Three (1)

Policy and Procedure Guide

- Ages 24-36 months: ASQ®-3 two times a year/ ASQ®:SE-2 one time per year, required.
- If the child is tracked to Early Intervention services, the CUA is required to obtain copies of Multidisciplinary Evaluations and IFSPs at least annually.
- When first requesting screening results, Multidisciplinary Evaluations, and IFSPs, the assigned CUA team must include a completed Release of Information with the request.
 - The Release of Information is good for one year from the date of completion. A new release will need to be completed each year.
- The CUA does not need to administer the Ages & Stages Questionnaire if they are monitoring and documenting the child's participation in Infant - Toddler Early Intervention (ITEI), whether the child is tracked into Regular Developmental Screening (RDS) or Early Intervention (E.I.).
- If the toddler will transition from early intervention to preschool services, CUA staff must attend transition meetings that are convened, discuss at the next ongoing Permanency Family Team Conference, and ensure that relevant objectives and actions are included in the SCP.

ITEI and Service Coordination Entity (SCE) Responsibilities:

- When ITEI receives the verified child and resource parent information from a CUA, ITEI will flag the children for special coordination between the CUA and the SCE.
- ITEI should forward a "Referral Acknowledgement Letter" to the CUA in their central mailbox within one week of receiving the referral from the CUA.
- The SCE must complete an IMDE and hold an IFSP meeting within 45 days of the referral to ITEI. The IMDE will determine whether the child is eligible for Early Intervention or will be enrolled in Regular Developmental Screening. After the evaluation, the SCE is responsible for sending a Referral Feedback Letter to the CUA central mailbox, indicating that the child is either eligible for ITEI and an IFSP has been developed or the child has been enrolled in Regular Developmental Screening.
- The SCE has a "Good Faith Effort" (GFE) policy that outlines steps they must take if they encounter difficulty completing the IMDE or providing services. The GFE policy requires the SCE to contact the CUA and the Resource Parent Support Worker (RPSW) and to contact team leadership, if necessary, for assistance in working with the resource parent.
- If the IMDE indicates that Early Intervention is needed, the SCE immediately facilitates the completion of the IFSP.
- Services on the IFSP are required to start within 14 days of the IFSP's development.
- If the IMDE indicates that the child is *not* eligible for Early Intervention, the child will be enrolled in Regular Developmental Screening program until their 3rd birthday. If a developmental delay is identified during that time, the SC will facilitate the development of an IFSP.
- SCEs will forward copies of screening results, IMDE, and IFSPs upon request by CUA. In the request, CUA must include the initial request a completed Release of Information To ensure continuity of services and consistent with 55 Pa. Code § 4226.77, prior to a toddler's third birthday, ITEI and the SCE will take all necessary steps to ensure that the toddler transitions smoothly from early intervention services to preschool services.
- Service Coordinators must ensure that children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, if eligible, are registered with the Division of Intellectual disability Services (IDS) which includes submission of psychological testing and adaptive assessments, a copy of the birth certificate, social security card and

Infant Toddler Early Intervention for Children Less Than Three (1)

Policy and Procedure Guide

PROCEDURE

Effective Date:

guardian information. This will ensure that the child is registered and a PUNS (Priority for the Urgency of Need for Service) is completed and registered with the State Office of Developmental Programs (ODP).

Placement Provider and Resource Parent Support Worker Responsibilities:

- Work with resource parents, the CUA team, and the SCE to ensure that screenings are completed, referrals are made, and identified services provided.

Resource Parent Responsibilities:

- The resource parent is expected to work with the SCE to schedule and participate in quarterly screenings and for eligible children, to cooperate with the Early Interventionist's coaching them on interventions, strategies, and adaptations to use with the child as part of their everyday routines.

DHS Family Team Conference Staff Responsibilities:

- Developmental screening and Early Intervention Services must be part of the discussion during each Family Team Conference.
- Service Coordinators (EI Team) must be invited to participate in Family Team Conferences if there are outstanding issues or complex challenges to providing Early Intervention services that are impacting the progress of the SCP.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

- CUA staff, and Placement Provider staff must maintain documentation of outreach efforts, screenings and referrals including:
 - The date of screenings, the person administering it, and the completed screenings.
 - Early intervention evaluation, results, recommendations, and follow-up.
 - Efforts to locate and engage parents and caregivers in the screening and referral process and refusal to participate.
- CUA staff must document that the parents or caregivers were provided with both verbal and written recommendations based on the screenings, and what the recommendations included.
- The CUA is required to upload copies of the Initial Multidisciplinary Evaluation to the electronic case record.
- If the child is receiving Early Intervention, the CUA is required to upload copies of IFSPs to the electronic case record at least annually.
- If the child is enrolled in Regular Developmental Screening (RDS), the CUA is required to upload RDS results to the electronic case record at the same interval that they would otherwise administer the ASQ (see intervals above).
- The CUA is required to upload copies of all consents to the electronic case record.
- Goals and objectives concerning EI or RDS must be documented on the Single Case Plan.

Infant Toddler Early Intervention for Children Less Than Three (1)

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**RELATED DOCUMENTS AND
RESOURCES:**

Attachments:

Forms: Early Intervention Letter to Parents

Related Policies or

Procedures: Early Childhood Screenings and Early Intervention Services, issued January 2012.

Other Resources: ASQ Age Calculator: <https://agesandstages.com/free-resources/asq-calculator/>

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Infant Toddler Early Intervention for Children Less Than Three (1)

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