

## *The Infant–Toddler Program of the*

# **INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT**

*Prepared by the*

## **National Network of Resource Access Projects**

*for Parent Child Centers,*

*Migrant, and other Head Start programs*

---

### **What is IDEA?**

IDEA stands for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act which incorporates Public Law 94-142 and its subsequent amendments including PL 99-457. The law requires the states to provide a free, appropriate education for all children with disabilities from the age of three.

### **What is Part C?**

The Infant-toddler portion of the law (Part C) encourages the states to establish early intervention programs for children with disabilities from birth through age two. States receive Part C funds to plan statewide systems of early intervention services for eligible infants and toddlers and for their families.

Infants and toddlers who are enrolled in Parent and Child Centers (PCC's) or migrant programs may be eligible for services under Part C of IDEA. Eligibility criteria will be different in each state.

### **Why is Part C Important?**

Part C encourages the development of community-based, family-centered early intervention systems that are interagency, coordinated, collaborative, and comprehensive. PCC's and Head Start migrant programs are an important part of that interagency system. Home-based or center-based PCC's and Head Start programs offer a natural inclusive environment for children with disabilities.

### **Who Can Receive Part C Services?**

Part C services are for infants and toddlers (birth through age 2) with disabilities, or delays in development, and for their families. In some states, infants and toddlers who are at risk for developmental delay, and their families, are also eligible. Each state has its own definition of eligibility. Call your RAP coordinator or your state's Part C office to find out who is eligible for early intervention services in your state.

### **Who is Responsible for Early Intervention?**

The governor of each state has chosen a lead agency to be responsible for Part C. To find the lead agency and the Part C coordinator in your state contact your RAP.

Your governor has also appointed a state interagency coordinating council (ICC) to advise and assist the lead agency in planning early intervention services. Public agencies, public and private service providers, parents, and health care providers are represented. Some communities also have local interagency coordinating councils (LICC's). LICC's welcome the participation of PCC's and Head Start programs. Your Part C coordinator can give you more information about the interagency coordinating councils and about the Part C program.

**Part C of IDEA —  
What You Need to Know**

## What Early Intervention Services Can be Provided Under Part C?

Part C services include

- special instruction
- counseling services
- communication therapy
- service coordination
- audiological assessment and intervention
- transportation
- occupational therapy (OT)
- nutrition services
- physical therapy (PT)
- vision services
- psychological services
- social services
- parent and family training
- diagnostic medical services and health services related to the IFSP

The services provided are individually determined as part of the IFSP process for each eligible child and family. Infants and toddlers who are eligible for Part C, and enrolled in PCC's, may receive any or all of these services.

### What is an IFSP?

The Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is a written plan designed for each family of an infant or toddler who is eligible for Part C services. The IFSP is developed by a multidisciplinary team on which the family plays a major role. PCC or Head Start staff can help families by offering to be part of their IFSP teams.

The IFSP includes a statement of each family's resources, priorities, and concerns related to their child with special needs. The IFSP also puts in writing the outcomes they desire and the early intervention services to be provided.

### What is a Multidisciplinary Team Assessment?

The purpose of the multidisciplinary team assessment is to determine whether a child is eligible for Part C services and to answer any questions that the family and other team mem-

bers have about each child's development. Within 45 days of referral, each child should receive a multidisciplinary team assessment.

Each family has valuable information to share and is an important part of their child's assessment team. Other team members are chosen, with parent permission, based on child and family needs.

The assessments will help the team determine the child's development in all areas including vision and hearing. If parents wish, they can also share information that will help the team learn about their family's concerns, resources, and priorities, and about the outcomes they desire. Assessment information will help the team plan an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or, if the child is not eligible for Part C, other services that might be available. The assessment must be conducted in the child's native language and in a nondiscriminatory way. Each state has procedures to protect a family's rights in the early intervention system.

### What is a Service Coordinator?

A service coordinator is chosen to be the link between the family of each eligible child and the intervention system. The service coordinator is responsible for seeing that the IFSP is carried out, and that health care and all early intervention services are provided in a coordinated way. The service coordinator also

- helps to plan the multidisciplinary team assessment
- helps to develop the IFSP
- helps families know about advocacy resources
- helps to plan the transition to PCC, Head Start and other early childhood programs.

PCC staff can help families decide who would be the best person to be their service coordinator.

**Part C of IDEA —  
What You Need to Know**