



ARC GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS (BIRTH THROUGH AGE 2)

Early Intervention Services (EIS) are available for some infants and toddlers with disabilities. EIS provide assistance to help an infant or toddler learn skills and increase abilities.

Help Me Grow (<http://helpmegrowmn.org/HMG/index.htm>) is a resource for parents who have concerns about their child's development. Parents can learn what children typically do at each age. This website provides information such as:

- Cognitive - learning, thinking, solving problems, play skills
- Communication and language - talking to others and understanding what others say (using words or other communication system)
- Social and Emotional - feelings, actions, and being with others
- Motor - moving the body, legs and arms
- Adaptive - taking care of one's self and being responsible
- Physical development - including vision and hearing

If the parent has concerns, there is a referral form on the website that the parent can fill out. A public school staff person will then contact the parent to discuss next steps. One possible recommendation would be for a special education evaluation.

Before a special education evaluation is done, there will be a planning meeting. This is a meeting between parents and school staff to discuss and plan for the evaluation. At this meeting, parents will discuss their concerns about their child. School staff and the parents will decide to do a special education evaluation or not.

If the team decides to do an evaluation, they will decide what documents/records will be gathered, what tests may be done and who will do the tests. The parent must give written permission for the school to do the evaluation. Areas to be evaluated are intellectual; communication and language; social and emotional; motor and adaptive.

The evaluation will determine if the child is eligible for Special Education EIS. To be eligible for EIS, the child must:

- Meet MN special education criteria as having a specific special education label such as autism, deaf-blind, deaf/hard of hearing, developmental cognitive disability, speech/language difficulties, visually impaired, brain injury, significant health issues OR
- Have significant delays in intellectual, communication, social and emotional, physical difficulties and/or everyday living skills OR
- Have a need for further evaluation based on professional opinion



After the evaluation is complete, school staff will meet with the parents to discuss the results. They make a decision stating the child is eligible for special education or not. If the child is not eligible, the school staff will offer suggestions about what to do next. If the child is eligible, school staff and the parents will develop an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

In regards to cognitive; communication and learning; social and emotional; motor, physical development and adaptive skills, the IFSP describes:

- How the child is doing
- What the child needs to be doing and learning (outcomes)
- How and when you will know if the child is learning what is being taught (progress reporting)
- When the child will be working on/learning - with a focus on the child learning in the family's everyday routines, activities and places
- Specific services provided including:
 - Type of service
 - Time spent each day
 - How often
 - If the child will receive by himself or with others
 - How the services will be given
 - Where the services will be given
- Needed medical and other services
- Planning for when the child turns 3
- Signatures of parents and school representative and date signed

After the meeting to discuss the IFSP, the parents will receive a copy of the IFSP document along with a Prior Written Notice (PWN) form. Special education services will begin after the school receives written permission from the parents agreeing with the IFSP. It is important parents understand and agree with the IFSP before they sign it.

The evaluation must be completed and an IFSP meeting must be held within 45 days from the time the referral to special education was made.

Shortly before a child turns 3, a transition meeting must be held to discuss and determine special education services after age 3.

Additional resources:



Arc Guide to Special Education Evaluations

https://arcminnesota.org/content/uploads/sites/3/2018/08/Arc-Guide-Special-Education-Evaluation_August-2018.pdf

Arc Guide to Prior Written Notice

<https://arcminnesota.org/content/uploads/sites/3/2018/11/Arc-Guide-to-PWN-November-2018.pdf>

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