



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
GUAM EARLY INTERVENTION SYSTEM
FAMILY GUIDEBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Getting Started.....	2
About My Family Guidebook.....	3
Early Intervention Services	4
Referral and Eligibility.....	7
Your Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)	10
Transition.....	12
Procedural Safeguards Under The Idea (Parent's Rights)	13
What Do These Words Mean? (Glossary).....	16

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Guam Early Intervention System is committed to
Enabling families to access
Integrated and quality services for your children through
Supports and shared dreams.

GETTING STARTED

Introduction

The first three years of life are very critical to a child's growth and development. Some children need extra help from their parents, siblings, and other service providers to help them grow to be healthy and happy children. The Guam Early Intervention System (GEIS), under the Department of Education, Division of Special Education provides services and support to young children birth to three years who have or are at risk for developmental delays and disabilities. Early Intervention services are provided in the child's home or community settings, such as child care centers, playground, beach, etc.



ABOUT MY FAMILY GUIDEBOOK

Why is my Guidebook important?

Your Family Guidebook provides you information about the Guam Early Intervention System (GEIS). You will also learn about the services that are offered to meet your child's needs and family's needs, as well as your rights as a family. All this information will guide you through your time receiving services from the Guam Early Intervention System.

How should I use my Guidebook?

You should use your Family Guidebook to help you learn about the program – things that may be new and unexpected for you. Receiving services may seem hard at first, but the Guidebook is here to help guide you through the different processes and stages of the program. You will be learning new words and meeting new people and you will have many decisions to make about how to help your child grow and develop as a happy and healthy child.

You will need different information at different times. You are encouraged to keep your Guide book in a place that is easy to find, so that you can refer to it if you are unsure about a process or what to do. If you review your Guidebook and still have questions, you can always ask GEIS staff for help!

Program Name _____

Telephone _____

GEIS Service Coordinator _____

Always talk to your program first if you need more information or have a concern about your services. If you still have concerns or need more information, call the Division of Special Education Office at 300-1322.



EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

What are Early Intervention Services?

Early intervention services are family-centered services and supports that help and assist families in meeting the overall developmental needs of their child. Early intervention services help meet the developmental needs of the infant or toddler and the family. Services are identified during the evaluation and assessment and agreed upon at the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting. The Service Coordinator helps the family coordinate the services from all providers of services and assists the family through transition.

The Guam Early Intervention System provides the following Diagnostic, Family Support, and Intervention services and support to infants, toddlers, and their families:

- Newborn Developmental Screening
- Developmental Evaluation
- Hearing Evaluation
- Speech/Language Evaluation and Services
- Physical/Occupational Therapy
- Social Work Services
- Nursing Services
- Transition Services
- Assistive technology
- Family training, counseling, and home visits
- Medical services (only for diagnostic or evaluation purposes)
- Health services
- Special Instruction
- Vision services
- Transportation and related costs that are necessary to enable a child eligible under Part C and the child's family to receive early intervention services.

Key Elements of Family-Centered Service

- Recognition that the family is the center of the child's life.
- Recognition of the importance for parents and professionals to work together.
- Encouragement of family-to-family support and networking.
- Understanding and incorporation of the needs of the child and family.
- Recognition of the differences in families' needs and cultures.
- Recognition of families' strengths and individuality and respect of different methods of coping.
- Recognition of the need for constant communication between families and professionals.

Do I have to pay for early intervention services?

Early intervention services are available at NO COST to the child and family. However, if your primary insurance (public or private) is able to pay for services, then they will be billed for any services your child and family receive. If your insurance does not cover services, then the Guam Early Intervention System will cover any costs for services, as identified in your IFSP. Your Service Coordinator should assist you with coordinating payment for services. No services, as stated in your child's IFSP will be denied due to lack of payment.

How do I know if my child is eligible for early intervention services?

Your child may be eligible for early intervention services if he/she is under three years of age and meets one of the following criteria and is in need of early intervention services:

- 1. *Developmental Delay:*** Your child goes through a transdisciplinary evaluation and is found to have significant delays in his/her developmental areas.
- 2. *Established Risk:*** Your child is diagnosed with a physical or mental condition which has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay (such as Down Syndrome or cerebral palsy);
- 3. *Biological At-Risk:*** History of significant biological or medical condition in which a child may have a greater chance of developing a delay or a disability than children in the general population. Examples: low birth weight, failure to thrive, prematurity, etc.
- 4. *Environmentally At-Risk:*** Those whose caregiving circumstances and current family situation place them at greater risk for delay than the general population.

There are five developmental areas, which include:

1. Physical Development (the ability to move, see, and hear)
2. Cognitive (the ability to think and learn)
3. Communication/Language Development (the ability to talk and express needs)
4. Social and Emotional Development (the ability to relate to others)
5. Adaptive or Self-Help Development (the ability to eat, dress, and take care of self)



Meets ONE of the following factors:

- Known parental mental illness to include postpartum depression
- Documented parental cognitive impairment
- Known parental chemical dependency
- Documented family history of physical or sexual abuse and/or neglect
- Parental age of 14 or less

Meets FIVE of the following factors:

- Single parent
- Maternal age of 16 or less
- Inadequate prenatal care
- Tenth grade education or less in primary care giver
- Dysfunctional home environment
- Family lacking parenting skills
- Family lacking social supports
- Family lacking adequate shelter
- Child has no well child care by 6 months of age
- Child is a ward of the state
- Temporarily placed child or adopted child with no known family history or a maternal history which includes the maternal risk factors
- Parental chronic illness limiting parenting skills
- Inadequate or inappropriate parent/child relations



Your child may have already been referred by his/her doctor, a child care provider, friend, or family member. You have already made a good start at helping your child grow to be happy and healthy by taking the step to receiving services. The information GEIS received about your child is confidential. If your child was referred because of concerns with his/her communication or language development, it is very important to have your child's hearing tested. Speech and language delays are often the result of hearing loss or impairments. A hearing test will most likely be a part of the transdisciplinary evaluation; however, you should ask about it to ensure your child receives the test. If you have any other concerns about your child's development and think he/she may be eligible for early intervention services, you can make a referral to the Guam Early Intervention System (GEIS) by calling 300-5776/5816.

REFERRAL AND ELIGIBILITY

Who can refer my child for early intervention services?

Anyone who has a concern about the development of an infant or toddler can make a referral to the Guam Early Intervention System. Primary referral sources include parents, family members, doctors, child care providers, or any person who has concerns with a child's development.

What happens after my child is referred for early intervention services?

A Service Coordinator from the Guam Early Intervention System will contact you to complete an Intake Form which is part of the referral process. The Intake is a process where the Service Coordinator can gather more information about the concerns you may have about your child. If information from the intake process shows concerns with your child's development, the Service Coordinator will schedule an appointment for your child to receive a transdisciplinary evaluation to determine if your child is eligible for early intervention services.

Helpful information to share with the team during the evaluation:

- Your child's prenatal history, birth, and health & development history
- Share your child's daily routine
- Share your child's likes and dislikes
- When you were first concerned about your child's development
- Families resources & priorities
- What you may have done to learn more about your concerns
- Any/all concerns you have now

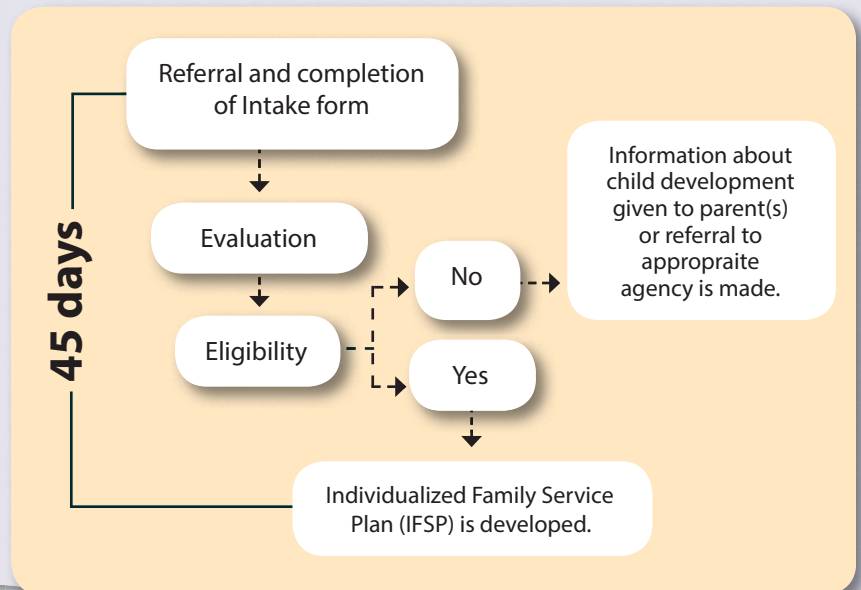


What happens during the evaluation?

Before the evaluation is conducted, your Service Coordinator will ask you to sign several forms which include your consent to:

- Evaluate your child; and
- Get information from your child's doctor or other people you identify (family member or child care provider).

Your Service Coordinator will also provide you a copy of your "Procedural Safeguards" to help you understand about your rights regarding the evaluation and early intervention services. The evaluation is usually conducted at your home or where your child feels most comfortable, such as grandma's house or a child care center. During the evaluation, "you", the parent, is a critical part of the team and have a lot of information to share about your child. Other team members may include a developmental specialist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, speech/language therapists, or other professionals who evaluate the overall development of your child and looks at your child's medical history. As a member of the team you will share information about the things you and your child do and what things you may have observed are difficult for your child to do. The team will watch your child playing with toys and see how he/she interacts with others. The team may also ask you to play with your child and watch him/her interact with you and the toys. A family assessment will also be conducted with your consent.



Tips to participating in your Child's evaluation:

1. Help your child feel comfortable during the evaluation.
2. Help the team with the activities they are using to evaluate your child's development.
3. Communicate with the team about whether or not something your child does is typical or not.
4. Help the team see your child's strengths and needs.
5. Ask questions and provide information about the evaluation process and other concerns you may have while observing the team with your child.

*All the information collected during the evaluation is confidential.

What if my child is eligible for early intervention services?

The team, including the parent, will review all the information and results from the evaluation. If the team determines that your child is eligible for early intervention services, your Service Coordinator will help you schedule the initial meeting with you and a team to develop your Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). (See section on the IFSP.)

How long does it take for my child to start receiving early intervention services?

By law, (Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA), the Guam Early Intervention System has 45 days from the date a referral is made to conduct the Initial IFSP meeting.

What if my child is NOT eligible for early intervention services?

If your child is not eligible for services at this time, the Service Coordinator will give you information and resources to help you continue to learn about child development. They may also give you information and strategies that you can do to help your child. If your child is at-risk for a developmental delay, he or she may be put in the monitor program and a Service Coordinator will contact you at a later time to see how your child is doing and if you have any concerns about his/her development.

If you continue to have concerns as your child gets older, you can call GEIS again to see if your child may be eligible. If your child is over three years old, you can call the Division of Special Education at 300-1322.

YOUR INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SERVICE PLAN

What is the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)?

INDIVIDUALIZED.... The plan will be written specifically for your child and family.

FAMILY.... The plan is culturally sensitive and focuses on changes that you want to see for your child and family as a result of the services your child and family receives. These changes are referred to as 'outcomes'.

SERVICE.... The plan will include details of the early intervention services your child and family will participate in – including how, when, where, and how many times services will be delivered.

PLAN.... The plan is a written document that can be changed as your child's and family's needs change.

What is included in the IFSP?

The IFSP includes a list of the types of intervention services your child and family will receive including who will deliver the services, how often and how long the services will be delivered, and where the services will be delivered. In addition, the plan will include the name of your Service Coordinator, a statement of your child's strengths and needs, outcomes you want for your child and family, the strategies to reach the outcomes, an explanation of how your child's progress will be measured, and a statement of your family's resources, priorities and concerns.

What are IFSP Outcomes?

The IFSP Outcomes address your family and child's unique needs with timelines and strategies to assist with the outcomes that you, your family, and the Service Providers will work towards. An example of an outcome may be: "I want my child to walk independently." Therefore, the Service Provider will model and recommend strategies and activities that can be incorporated in your family's daily routine activities, for you to follow through with or implement to work towards the outcomes.

Things to consider when planning your IFSP meeting...

1. When would be a convenient time for the meeting?
2. Where should the meeting be held? At home, at the GEIS offices?
3. Who should I invite to the meeting? (Grandma, doctor, child care provider, etc.)
4. Will I need an interpreter? (for example if English is not your primary language)

Who develops or writes my child's IFSP?

A team develops your child's IFSP. As a parent, YOU are the primary caregiver for your child. You and your family make up 50% of your child's IFSP team. The other members of the team include your Service Coordinator, other professionals such as the developmental specialists, therapists, nurse, doctor, and any other people you would like to include such as friends or a child care provider.

Your Service Coordinator will help you plan and prepare for your first IFSP meeting. She/He will coordinate the meeting with you and will invite the people you want on your IFSP team.

How often can I change my IFSP?

The IFSP is usually reviewed every 6 months after the initial meeting, annually, and before your child transitions out of early intervention. However, you can change your IFSP at any time of receiving services if you feel you need to change your child's outcomes as written in your plan.



Tips for Participating in an IFSP Review Meeting

- Share about your child's daily routine and likes and dislikes.
- Share what your child is able and unable to do.
- Share what things you feel are necessary to help your child's progress.
- Share any concerns you have about your child's development.
- Share about your family's strengths.
- Inquire about other resources and services that will help meet the needs of your child and family, such as assistive technology or connections with other agencies such as public health, child care, etc.

TRANSITION

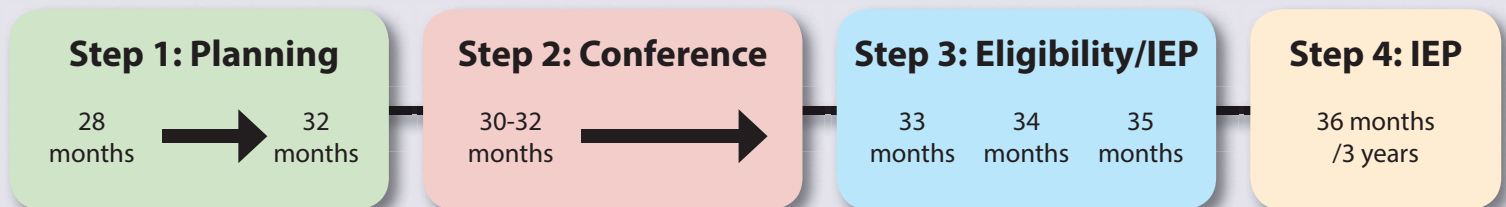
What happens when my child turns three years old?

Before your child turns three years old, you and your child's transition team begins to plan for his/her transition out of the Guam Early Intervention System. Your child will be transitioned to home or other community setting which may include a child care setting, the Division of Special Education – Preschool Program or Head Start Program.

Your Service Coordinator should start preparing you for this transition as required under IDEA. The transition must take place **AT LEAST NINE MONTHS BUT NO LATER THAN 90 DAYS PRIOR TO YOUR CHILD'S THIRD BIRTHDAY**. The transition conference will identify special education or community-based services your child may need. Your Service Coordinator will assist in developing the transition plan and coordinating the transition conference meeting.

If needed, your child will receive another evaluation to determine if he/she is eligible for preschool, head start, or other services. This evaluation will be conducted by professionals with the Part B Special Education Program. At three (3) years of age, if eligible, your child should be accessing special education and related services as stated in his/her Individualized Education Program. An Individualized Education Program is similar to the IFSP, however it addresses the EDUCATIONAL NEEDS of your child.

TRANSITION TIMELINE AT-A-GLANCE



Will my child get the same services he/she received in the early intervention program?

Services in a new program can change where and how services are provided. The goals of services provided by the Guam Early Intervention System are to focus on helping the family meet the developmental needs of the child with a developmental delay or disability, through the implementation of the IFSP. However, the goal of services provided by the special education Preschool Program is to focus on the child with a delay or disability and his/her educational needs, through the implementation of the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Tips for the Transition Meeting...

1. Gather as much information and ask about all the possible options or choices for your child.
2. Ask what training and supports the new program may offer to families.
3. Visit the program/setting options to help you decide the best option for your child.
4. Ask for written materials and learn the procedures for entering and participating in the new program.
5. Provide as much information about your child as possible to the new program/setting.

PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS UNDER THE IDEA (PARENT'S RIGHTS)

What rights do I have as a parent of a child receiving services by the Guam Early Intervention System?

As a parent YOU have certain rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA). These rights are explicitly explained in a document called the Procedural Safeguards. Each family has a right to:

An Evaluation

Each infant and toddler that is suspected of being Part C –eligible is entitled to have an evaluation conducted within 45 days of the referral to help determine if they are eligible and which services will be needed.

Receive Written Notice of Changes in Services

Each time a service is being planned, changed, or refused by the agency to the family the agency must give written notice to the family before the change occurs.

Understand

Each parent must be given information in their native language if English is not the family's language of understanding. Also, if the family uses sign language or other means of communication, the family has the right to be given information in the manner they can best understand.

Confidentiality

The parent has the right to give their permission before any information is released that identifies the child or the family to other agencies or individuals not otherwise entitled by law to see it.

Give Permission

Before a family and child participates in the services of the program, the parent has the right to approve or disapprove the recommended activity. This approval must be given in writing.

Examine their Child's Records

Each parent may ask to examine their child's early intervention record as needed. The family may also ask for a copy of the record at any time.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

Within 45 days of receiving a request for a Part C evaluation, the family is entitled to receive an evaluation and schedule a meeting to develop an IFSP for early intervention services. This plan is jointly developed with the family and must be reviewed every six months. If the parent wants the plan reviewed sooner, they may request an earlier review.

Receive Support

When the plan is being developed, parents have the right to request whomever they would like to attend the meeting. They can ask other family members, a friend or an advocate.

Have Services Coordinated

When a family is referred for service, the family has the right to choose a service coordinator. The service coordinator helps the family understand how the service system works and how to get the services they need as quickly as possible.

What if I don't agree with a decision that is made about my child's services or What if I feel the Guam Early Intervention System is not doing what the IDEA requires?

If you are not happy with the services being provided to your child and family, talk with your Service Coordinator. He/she may be able to assist you with your concerns. If that doesn't work or you are not comfortable speaking with your Service Coordinator, you may choose to speak with the Program Coordinator. If that does not work or you are not comfortable speaking with the Program Coordinator you may file a written complaint. If you are not sure how to file a complaint, you may get assistance from the Division of Special Education's Family Resource Center Coordinator at 300-1322. Additionally, anyone can file a complaint if he/she feels GEIS has violated the IDEA. The complaint must be written, signed, and include the facts about the complaint.

Who do I give my complaint to?

The written and signed complaint should be sent to: **Associate Superintendent of Special Education, Department of Education, P.O. Box DE Hagatna, GU 96932**

Complaints may also be dropped off at the Division of Special Education offices, located at **Chief Brodie Elementary School. Offices are open Monday thru Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

A complaint must include:

- A statement that DOE violated a requirement of the IDEA and/or Guam Special Education law or regulation;
- The facts on which the statement is based; and
- The signature and contact information for the complainant; and If alleging violations regarding A specific child: (a) The name of the child and address of the residence of the child; (b) The name of the school the child is attending; (c) In the case of a homeless child or youth, available contact information for the child, and the name of the school the child is attending; (d) A description of the nature of the problem of the child, including facts relating to the problem; and (e) A proposed resolution of the problem to the extent known and available to the party filing the complaint at the time the complaint is filed. The believed violation must have taken place not more than one year before the date the complaint is received.

For more detailed information about Parent's Rights, ask your Service Coordinator for a complete copy of the Procedural Safeguards.

WHAT DO THESE WORDS MEAN? (GLOSSARY)

Assessment – an ongoing process including the use of tests and tools to identify your child’s and family’s needs and strengths.

Assistive Technology (AT) – any item or piece of equipment that is used to increase, maintain or improve your child’s ability to do things (i.e. eat, communicate, move).

Child Find – the early identification, screening, referral, and initial service coordination for a child with or at-risk for a disability or developmental delay.

Consent – the written permission or authorization that a family provides to proceed with an evaluation, services or to exchange personal information.

Development – the process of learning and mastering new skills over time; includes ability to move, communicate, think, see, hear, and play with toys or interact with other people.

Due Process Hearing – a hearing involving a hearing officer who rules on evidence related to a disagreement or dispute between a parent and an early intervention provider or service coordinator.

Early Intervention – a collection of services provided by public and private agencies and mandated under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement of 2004 Act (IDEA) to support eligible children and their family in enhancing the overall potential growth and development of the child from birth to age three.

Eligibility – requirements your child must meet in order to receive early intervention services from the Department of Education, Division of Special Education, Guam Early Intervention System.

Evaluation – process of determining your child’s eligibility by gathering information about your child from records, assessments and using professional judgment.

Family Centered Services – the principle that promotes parents as the decision-makers for the services and supports their child and family receives and builds parent-professional relationships.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) – a written plan for your child’s and family’s desired outcomes and services to meet those outcomes during your time receiving services from the Guam Early Intervention System.

Mediation – a way to settle a dispute or complaint so that both sides win. Parents and other professionals discuss their differences and, with the help of a trained mediator, reach a resolution that both or all parties agree to.

Natural Environment – a setting that is natural or normal for the child's age peers, who have no disabilities, including the home, child care center, and other family or community setting.

Outcomes – statements of changes you want for your child and family that are documented in your child's IFSP.

Parent – the biological parent(s), guardian(s), or acting parent(s) (foster or surrogate) who has the authority to make decisions on behalf of the child.

Referral – when a parent, relative, or other professional has a concern about the development of a child and makes contact with the Guam Early Intervention System. During this process, Intake Form is completed - a Service Coordinator meets or contacts you to get more information about the developmental concerns you have about your child; explains what early intervention services are; and schedules an evaluation to determine if your child is eligible for services.

Service Coordinator – a person employed by the Guam Early Intervention System who works with your family to help coordinate the intake, evaluation and assessment, eligibility determination, IFSP, and services your child and family receives.

Service Provider – identified professional that works with the family/primary caregivers on a regular basis and with other members of the team providing service through consultation and/or joint visits.

Strategies – the methods and activities, developed to achieve outcomes, written in the IFSP.

Transdisciplinary – the involvement of two or more disciplines or professions in the provision of integrated and coordinated services including evaluation and assessment activities and the development of the IFSP.

Transition – the process of planning for support and services for when your child will leave the Guam Early Intervention System to another program or setting.

Transition Plan – the plan developed for your child when leaving early intervention services at age three.

As a Parent, YOU have the right to:

CONSENT: Before an initial evaluation, assessment, beginning or change of services in the IFSP.

NOTICE: You will be notified before your child is evaluated, offered service, changed or end service.

REFUSE SERVICE: Any unwanted services that have been recommended.

ASSISTANCE: You may have any other members of your family, friend, advocate or attorney present during your IFSP meeting.

DISAGREE: With any of the service recommendations or results of the evaluation or assessment. You have the right to voice your disagreement and have it resolved.

TIMELY SERVICES: Your child and family has a right to receive early intervention services in a timely manner.

PARTICIPATION: You have the right to participate in the development of your child and family's IFSP.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your records are confidential and accessible to you. Your permission will be requested before your record is reviewed or shared with other agencies.

Notes

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GUAM EARLY INTERVENTION SYSTEM FAMILY GUIDEBOOK

Guam Early Intervention System

Department of Education,
Division of Special Education

P.O. Box DE, Hagatna, Guam 96932

Tel: (671)300-5776/5816

Email: geis@gdoe.net

Website: www.gdoe.net/geis

Division of Special Education

Tel: (671) 300-1322

Email: sped@gdoe.net

100% federally funded by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part C Grant for Infants and Toddlers,
Department of Education, Division of Special Education, Guam Early Intervention System

Revised July 2013