

CHILD ASSESSMENT

Introduction

Child assessment, as part of the evaluation, refers to the series of tests or procedures used to determine initial or continuing eligibility for the Kansas Infant-Toddler Services/tiny-k services. Additionally, child assessment is the ongoing process used to determine the evolving and changing unique strengths and needs of a child and the services appropriate to meet those needs. Child assessment combines information across settings among all service providers in order to obtain a more complete picture of the abilities and needs of the child and family. It is the responsibility of the professional team working with the child to share information that contributes to the assessment process since the assessment information links directly to preparing the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). As part of the evaluation, child assessment occurs at no cost to the family.

The goals of the child assessment are to (1) gain a picture of the child's present abilities, strengths, and needs; (2) identify intervention outcomes linked to needed developmental skills; and (3) identify services and supports necessary to reach those identified outcomes, all of which must be appropriate for the constantly developing child. The assessment causes the IFSP to be a dynamic document that is frequently modified for the child age birth through 2 and his or her family.

I. Procedures for Assessment of the Child [34 C.F.R. 303.300 Note; 303.322(b)(c)]

A. Assessment of the child means reviewing available pertinent records that relate to the child's current health status and medical history and conducting personal observation and assessment in order to identify the child's unique strengths and needs and the services appropriate to meet those needs, including an identification of the child's level of functioning based on objective criteria. This must include informed clinical opinion in each of the following developmental areas:

- cognitive development;
- physical development, including health/nutrition status, motor, vision and hearing;
- communication development;
- social or emotional development; and
- self-help/adaptive development

B. Qualified personnel must use their informed clinical opinion to assess a child's present level of functioning in each of the developmental areas to establish the child's eligibility under this part even when other instruments do not establish eligibility, but informed clinical opinion may not negate the results of assessment instruments used to establish eligibility.

II. Timelines [34 C.F.R. 303.321(e)]

A. **The initial evaluation and assessment of the child (including any assessments of the family) and assessment of service needs, as well as the initial IFSP meeting.**

must be completed within 45 calendar days from the date the Infant-Toddler Services/tiny-k network receives the referral to conduct an evaluation of the child.

III. Ongoing Child Assessment

Child assessment must continue throughout the provision of early intervention services in order to identify the child's unique and changing strengths and needs, including the child's level of functioning in the developmental areas. The IFSP team will make decisions based on the results of assessments provided by the evaluation team, including the early intervention services providers.

Ongoing assessment of a child is characterized by the following:

1. ongoing procedures used by appropriate qualified personnel throughout the period of a child's eligibility;
2. is problem-solving in nature;
3. requires frequent involvement and updates with parents;
4. results in the determination of the nature and extent of the needed early intervention services;
5. takes place in many settings, including those that are most natural to the child and family (e.g., home, child care).

Federal Regulations 1997

34 C.F.R. 303.321 Comprehensive child find system.

(e) Timelines for public agencies to act on referrals. (1) Once the public agency receives a referral, it shall appoint a service coordinator as soon as possible.

(2) Within 45 days after it receives a referral, the public agency shall—

- (i) Complete the evaluation and assessment activities in Sec. 303.322; and
- (ii) Hold an IFSP meeting, in accordance with Sec. 303.342.

34 C.F.R. 303.322 Evaluation and assessment.

(a) General. (1) Each system must include the performance of a timely, comprehensive, multidisciplinary evaluation of each child, birth through age two, referred for evaluation, and a family-directed identification of the needs of each child's family to appropriately assist in the development of the child.

(2) The lead agency shall be responsible for ensuring that the requirements of this section are implemented by all affected public agencies and service providers in the State.

(b) Definitions of evaluation and assessment. As used in this part—

(1) Evaluation means the procedures used by appropriate qualified personnel to determine a child's initial and continuing eligibility under this part, consistent with the definition of "infants and toddlers with disabilities" in Sec. 303.16, including determining the status of the child in each of the developmental areas in paragraph

(c)(3)(ii) of this section.

(2) Assessment means the ongoing procedures used by appropriate qualified personnel throughout the period of a child's eligibility under this part to identify—

(i) The child's unique strengths and needs and the services appropriate to meet those needs; and

(ii) The resources, priorities, and concerns of the family and the supports and services necessary to enhance the family's capacity to meet the developmental needs of their infant or toddler with a disability.

(c) Evaluation and assessment of the child. The evaluation and assessment of each child must—

(1) Be conducted by personnel trained to utilize appropriate methods and procedures;

(2) Be based on informed clinical opinion; and

(3) Include the following:

(i) A review of pertinent records related to the child's current health status and medical history.

(ii) An evaluation of the child's level of functioning in each of the following developmental areas:

(A) Cognitive development.

(B) Physical development, including vision and hearing.

(C) Communication development.

(D) Social or emotional development.

(E) Adaptive development.

(iii) An assessment of the unique needs of the child in terms of each of the developmental areas in paragraph (c)(3)(ii) of this section, including the identification of services appropriate to meet those needs.

(d) Family assessment. (1) Family assessments under this part must be family-directed and designed to determine the resources, priorities, and concerns of the family and the identification of the supports and services necessary to enhance the family's capacity to meet the developmental needs of the child.

(2) Any assessment that is conducted must be voluntary on the part of the family.

(3) If an assessment of the family is carried out, the assessment must—

(i) Be conducted by personnel trained to utilize appropriate methods and procedures;

(ii) Be based on information provided by the family through a personal interview; and

(iii) Incorporate the family's description of its resources, priorities, and concerns related to enhancing the child's development.

(e) Timelines. (1) Except as provided in paragraph (e)(2) of this section, the evaluation and initial assessment of each child (including the family assessment) must be completed within the 45-day time period required in Sec. 303.321(e).

(2) The lead agency shall develop procedures to ensure that in the event of exceptional circumstances that make it impossible to complete the evaluation and assessment within 45 days (e.g., if a child is ill), public agencies will—

(i) Document those circumstances; and

(ii) Develop and implement an interim IFSP, to the extent appropriate and consistent with Sec. 303.345 (b)(1) and

(b)(2). (Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1820-0550) (Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1435(a)(3); 1436

(a)(1), (a)(2), (d)(1), and (d)(2))

34 C.F.R. 303.300 State eligibility criteria and procedures.

Note: Under this section and Sec. 303.322(c)(2), States are required to ensure that informed clinical opinion is used in determining a child's eligibility under this part. Informed clinical opinion is especially important if there are no standardized measures, or if the standardized procedures are not appropriate for a given age or developmental area. If a given standardized procedure is considered to be appropriate, a State's criteria could include percentiles or percentages of levels of functioning on standardized measures.