

Eligibility Determination and Assessment for Service Planning: Questions and Answers

Initial Eligibility Determination

1. Does the requirement to determine the child's level of functioning in all areas of development during Eligibility Determination mean that the service coordinator needs to use a screening or assessment tool during this step even if eligibility is established by records?

No. If you can establish eligibility by records then you can skip the rest of the requirements associated with eligibility determination. As indicated in the Practice Manual, the eligibility determination procedures in Chapter 5 apply only if eligibility cannot be established by records. When eligibility is established by records, you will gather the information about the child's level of functioning in all areas of development during the assessment for service planning step.

Initial Assessment for Service Planning

2. If you have a written report from an outside assessment completed by one discipline and that report covers some but not all areas of development, does an anchor tool need to be completed in all areas in order to address the child indicators? Is there a limit to how old the outside assessment report can be?

Yes, an anchor tool must be completed in all areas in order to address the child indicators. That does not mean you have to re-assess in the areas covered by the outside assessment report. Depending on the information you have available from the outside assessment, you may be able to complete some sections of the anchor tool without additional assessment. In order to use an outside assessment report for the assessment for service planning, the assessment information must be less than 6 months old and also must reflect the child's current level of functioning. See Chapter 6 of the Practice Manual (page 8, #2).

3. There is "developmental information" available from a physician or provider listed in Table A, Chapter 12 of the Practice Manual. Can you define "developmental information?" Could this be scores in developmental areas, or just the statement "Speech Delay?"

A statement that the child has a speech delay is not developmental information that can be used for service planning. See Chapter 6 of the Practice Manual (page 6) for more information and examples of what might be considered developmental information that can be used in service planning.

4. If you have a written report of outside assessment activities completed by two disciplines and all area of development are addressed, can you skip the assessment for service planning?

If the outside assessments by two disciplines include information can be used for service planning and that is less than 6 months old, then the local system may not need to complete any additional assessment. That does not mean that you are skipping the assessment for service planning step. An early intervention professional from the local system will need to review the outside assessment

information to determine that it is appropriate for use in service planning and will want to check with the family and individuals involved in eligibility determination to ensure that the assessment information reflects the child's current developmental status, the child's functional skills across settings, etc.

5. If you have documentation of a 25% delay, which allows you to establish eligibility based on records, what would be the requirements for the assessment for service planning? What if the documentation just says 25% delay in gross motor? What if it says, 25% delay in gross motor and gives the test used and the professional, but the testing is 1 year old?

Please refer to Chapter 6 of the Practice Manual (page 6 and page 8, #2) for more information about the types and age of assessment information that can be used for the assessment for service planning. Documentation that just says the child has a 25% delay in gross motor development is helpful in determining eligibility but not in identifying outcomes and planning services. However, you may be able to follow-up on such documentation by contacting the individual who completed the assessment and getting additional information that can be used in service planning.

Annual Eligibility Determination:

6. If the ongoing provider is unsure about whether or not the child is continuing to be eligible at the annual, what needs to happen?

This is one of the scenarios that local system managers discussed during the July regional meetings. Those scenarios (with answers) are attached. You may find it helpful to review these. See scenario #5 for information about this specific question.

Annual Assessment for Service Planning:

Please note – The providers who are serving the child are expected to be able to make a statement concerning the child's present level of development in each of the developmental areas at the time of the annual IFSP since ongoing assessment is a routine part of intervention. As long as the current service provider can make a statement about the child's current developmental status based on ongoing assessment, there is no need for a multidisciplinary assessment for service planning at the time of the annual IFSP. An annual assessment for service planning, as a separate step or activity, should only be needed in a few circumstances, such as when the child is receiving service coordination only or the other provider(s) has not had an opportunity for ongoing assessment in a long time.

7. If a child is receiving service coordination and ongoing services from one discipline, will we need to bring in another discipline for the annual assessment for service planning?

As long as there is ongoing assessment information available in all areas of development from the discipline that has been serving the child, there is no need for an annual assessment for service planning and no need to bring in another discipline. As indicated in the Note above, we have always expected providers to

be able to make a statement about the child's present level of development in all areas based on ongoing assessment, and this expectation and practice have not changed as a result of the new Part C regulations.

8. If a child is receiving service coordination from an individual who is also a Family and Consumer Sciences Professional (FCSP) and ongoing services from another discipline, does the service coordinator who is a FCSP need to be added to the IFSP as an assessment? Can the service coordinator who is a FCSP just review the ongoing assessment notes of the treating discipline?

As indicated in the response to question #6, a second discipline generally would not be needed in this scenario because we would expect the ongoing service provider to be able to make a statement about the child's present level of development in all areas based on ongoing assessment. If, due to an unusual circumstance, this provider is unable to use ongoing assessment information and a second discipline is needed, then, yes, that assessment would have to be listed on the IFSP. In the scenario described, if the SC/FCSP is not currently providing developmental services, then that would need to be added to the IFSP as a one time service (method = assessment). If you find that a provider(s) is often or usually unable to make a statement about the child's present level of development in all areas based on ongoing assessment, you need to consider training to expand the skills of that provider(s) to support his/her/their ability to assess across all developmental areas.

Please see the response to question #8 regarding one discipline reviewing the information from another discipline in order to meet the requirement for a multidisciplinary assessment.

9. A child is receiving service coordination only so we need two disciplines for the annual assessment for service planning. Can one discipline go out and do the formal testing, write the narrative, sign and then later have another discipline review all written material and sign page 3 of the IFSP?

No. Both individuals would need to see the child. Each can assess separately, but both must see the child.

10. Is an anchor tool required at the annual assessment?

No. An anchor tool is not required at the time of the annual IFSP, unless you're completing the exit child indicators (and, in that case, the tool can be completed based on ongoing assessment and completion of the tool should not be a separate assessment activity).