



BabyNet

South Carolina's Early Intervention System

The Family Guide to the BabyNet System

Welcome to BabyNet

BabyNet is a family-centered system that offers coordinated services to young children with special needs and their families. The goal of BabyNet is to provide appropriate services as conveniently as possible for South Carolina families. Your child has been referred to your local BabyNet office because of a concern about his/her developmental progress.

In 1986, the United States Congress passed a law to make sure young children with special needs and their families can get the services that they need. This law is your guarantee that early intervention services are brought to you voluntarily, without regard to race, income level, or nationality, respecting your ideas about the services your child and family receives. You will be given the information you need to take part in the early intervention process. In South Carolina, this system is BabyNet.

This handbook provides basic information as your family moves through the intake process at the System Point of Entry all the way through your child's transition out of the BabyNet system.

We hope you will find it helpful to you and your family.

Referral

Once your child is referred to BabyNet, an Intake Service Coordinator from your local Department of Health and Environmental Control office will contact you. The Intake Service Coordinator will explain the purpose of BabyNet and discuss any concerns that you have about your child's development. The job of the Intake Service Coordinator is to collect the information needed that will assist in determining if your child is eligible for BabyNet. This might be a doctor's report or hospital reports. If your child is eligible, the Intake Service Coordinator will help you through all of the steps toward your first Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), a written plan for services your child and family will receive. You may be contacted to complete a survey regarding your child's progress while receiving BabyNet services.

Intake

The Intake Service Coordinator will arrange an intake meeting with you to explain the BabyNet system. The meeting must take place at a time and place that is good for you and your family. This meeting also informs you of your rights as a parent/guardian and requires paperwork to be completed. DO NOT sign any forms until your questions have been answered and you are clear about what you are signing.

1. During the intake meeting you will be given an overview of the BabyNet system to include:
 - BabyNet philosophy and commitment.
 - Review *Notice of Child and Family Rights in the BabyNet System*.
 - Information about how a child is made eligible and the assessment process.
 - Information about the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) process.
2. Give your Consent for Screening, Evaluation and Assessment, if you choose.
3. Complete the Insurance Resources/ Consent to Bill form.
4. Give information in order for the Intake Service Coordinator to complete the Birth and Early Health History.
5. Give consent to obtain/release information.
6. Participate in a developmental screening process to determine your child's eligibility for services. If based on the screening process, your child is found to show no delays, referrals are made to other community

resources as appropriate. If there are concerns with your child's hearing or vision, and your child does not have a qualifying diagnosis, a developmental assessment may be completed during the intake meeting to assist with eligibility determination.

7. Participate in the Vision and Hearing Questionnaire.
8. Complete certain sections of the IFSP, which would include;
 - An assessment of your Family's Resources, Priorities, and Concerns (with consent)
 - Your view of your child's present level of functioning
9. Discuss other needs or concerns that you may have and assist in the application or referral process to programs that may be able to help.
10. Discuss what to expect after eligibility.

Family Assessment

As a parent, you bring your resources, priorities and concerns to the early intervention process. **FAMILY RESOURCES** are the strengths, abilities and supports that families can use to help their child. **FAMILY PRIORITIES** are the outcomes that you want most from the early intervention services. **FAMILY CONCERNS** are the issues or needs you want to work on with your child and family.

If you consent to participate in the family assessment it can help you:

- Think about what you need most from early intervention services.
- Think about other services and supports you might need (like another parent to talk to through Family Connection or information on a diagnosis).
- Get referrals or information on other programs that your family may want or need; and
- Prepare for your IFSP team meeting.

Your family assessment will be:

- Completed with you by the Intake Service Coordinator, at a time and place that is convenient for you.
- Based on information provided by you and your family in a personal interview.
- Your description of your family's resources, priorities and concerns.

Curriculum Based Assessment

If it is determined that your child should proceed to eligibility, the Intake Service Coordinator will arrange for completion of a Curriculum Based Assessment (CBA) of your child's development in the following areas:

- Communication
- Fine Motor
- Cognitive
- Self-help
- Gross Motor
- Social/Emotional

An important component of a CBA is that it is completed with the input of the family and others involved in your child's life on a regular basis. This assessment is not designed to provide specific diagnostic information about your child, but to provide an overview of your child's development. A written report will be forwarded to you. If your child has a diagnosed condition that meets BabyNet eligibility criteria, the assessment will be completed by the Service Coordinator after eligibility is determined but before the completion of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

BabyNet Eligibility

If you decide that the BabyNet system can help your child and family, the next step is to see if your child is eligible for the program.

This process will involve, the Intake Service Coordinator:

- Gathering current and past medical information to provide a health assessment.
- Gathering information from past screenings or assessments that have been completed.
- Talking about your concerns and what activities you see your child doing.
- Reviewing results of the Curriculum Based Assessment if available
- Involvement of at least two providers from different areas or disciplines to review information regarding your child's development.

After the Intake Service Coordinator has gathered the needed information, it will be shared with the multidisciplinary eligibility determination team and a decision will be made concerning your child's eligibility for BabyNet services.

The eligibility criteria for BabyNet is:

- **The child must have a qualifying diagnosis that results in a high probability of developmental delay.**
- **The child must score at or below the cut-off in one or more developmental domains of the Assessment, Evaluation and Programming System (AEPS), a curriculum based assessment that provides developmental information about your child.**

In some instances, developmental delay may be determined using the informed clinical opinion process. The multidisciplinary team will consider evaluation and assessment scores, parent concerns, child observation, current health status, medical history and/or physician concerns.

After the multidisciplinary team reviews all of the assessment, and other information, there are two possible results:

1. Your child is eligible.
2. Your child is not eligible.

If your child is eligible:

The Intake Service Coordinator will contact you and with your input, identify your Service Coordinator (BNSC). For some children Special Instruction may be discussed. In some situations, the person who completed your child's CBA may be an option as your BNSC. Your BNSC will contact you to schedule the initial IFSP team meeting. On an annual basis, the team that is working with your child and family will re-evaluate eligibility and the need for services, unless you decline services or the child reaches their developmental goals.

If your child is NOT eligible:

Some children who are referred to BabyNet do not meet the eligibility guidelines. For some families there will continue to be concerns and they may not agree with the decision of the team. If this happens, the family should review their concerns with the Intake Service Coordinator and share why they feel their child is eligible. They could also request that the child's eligibility be re-reviewed and that additional information and/or tests be completed. This gives the team the

opportunity to review documentation to ensure that the right decision was made. If the parent continues to disagree with the team, the family may follow the appeals process as stated in *The Child and Family Rights to the BabyNet System*. If you agree your child is not eligible, and still feel you need help, ask your Intake Service Coordinator for information about other supports and services within your community, as they may be able to connect you to these programs.

Developing your Initial Individualized Family Service Plan

If your child is eligible for BabyNet, the next step is to prepare for the initial Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). Your initial IFSP must be completed within 45 days of referral to BabyNet, unless YOU "stop the clock" (for example, if your child is sick and the assessment process must be delayed). The IFSP is a written plan for early intervention services your child and family will receive. You will work on this plan at an IFSP meeting. The Intake Service Coordinator will discuss with you what happens at the IFSP meeting and help you prepare. Some facts you need to know are:

- The IFSP meeting must be held at a time and place that is convenient for you and your family.
- You, your BNSC and the CBA provider (or qualified designee) must be involved in the IFSP planning.
- You may invite others to be at the IFSP meeting- such as family, friends or your child-care provider.
- Your BNSC may invite others to the IFSP meeting with your permission.
- You may ask an advocate to take part in the meeting.
- The meeting will be held in your primary language.

Before the meeting the BNSC will communicate with you to ensure you understand the process thus far and will explain the next steps.

Here are some suggestions to think about in planning for your child's IFSP meeting and what you may want to talk about with your IFSP team:

- How would you describe your child to others?
- What is working well for you at home?
- What do you need help with?
- What help do you want for your child?

- What type of information do you need? (Information on diagnosis, child development, etc.)
- What activities do you want your child to take part in?
- What does your current schedule look like? How could services be integrated into your everyday routines, activities, and places (RAP's)?

The IFSP contains the services that are identified by the team that will address your child's developmental needs and assist your family to meet the special needs of your child. There may be other services that your child and/or family needs that are beyond the scope of the BabyNet system. Your IFSP Team will help to identify community resources to assist you to meet these needs.

Early intervention services are individually identified and planned to meet the specific needs of your child and family. No two IFSP's should look alike. Service needs should change over time and the IFSP should be revised to include these changes.

At the IFSP meeting

Working on the IFSP is a **TEAM** effort. You, your BNSC, the CBA provider or designee and other participants will:

- Review the information that has been gathered about your child.
- Talk about your family's resources, priorities, and concerns.
- Identify the outcomes or progress expected for your child and family from early intervention services; and
- Identify strategies, activities, and services that will lead to the outcomes you hope to reach.

You have the right to say no (refuse) to any of the services talked about at your IFSP meeting. To include a service in your IFSP, you and the IFSP team must agree to the service.

You will be asked to sign your IFSP when the plan is finished. Participating in the BabytNet system is voluntary. When you sign the IFSP, you show that you were at the IFSP meeting and that you agree to the services in the plan. You are also giving your permission to start early intervention services.

If your child's/family's circumstances change you may ask for an IFSP meeting at any time.

Putting your IFSP into action

Putting your IFSP into action is a **TEAM** effort. You and your family are important members of your team. Be a part of your child's services. You can do this by:

- Keeping scheduled appointments with your child's providers and notify providers in advance if it is necessary to cancel.
- Asking providers working with your child to teach you the skills you need to help your child on a daily basis.
- Keeping notes, a diary or a journal about how services are working and how well your child is doing. Think about what is and what is not working. Ask for a change in a service or a provider if you think a change is needed.

Your IFSP is written once per year. During the year there are many times when the plan should be reviewed and possibly changed.

Reviewing, evaluating, and changing the IFSP

As your child grows and changes, so will the early intervention needs of your family. To be sure your IFSP keeps pace with your family and stays useful, the BabyNet system requires:

- Six-month review of the IFSP.
- Annual meeting to evaluate the IFSP.
- A process to update/revise the IFSP as needed, i.e. change review.

The six-month review and the annual meeting to evaluate the IFSP are designed to make sure that the IFSP still makes sense for your child and family. Prior to the annual IFSP meeting your BN Service Coordinator (BNSC) will complete a new Vision and Hearing Questionnaire, Curriculum Based Assessment and family assessment of resources, priorities and concerns. You and the other participants will look at how well early intervention services have helped your child and family meet the outcomes in your IFSP. You will also talk about what should be changed in the IFSP. This may include:

- Adding new outcomes and dropping old ones that have been reached, or that are no longer important.
- Changing strategies and activities to help meet new outcomes or outcomes have not yet been reached.
- Changing the services needed by your child and family.

You can request an IFSP review at any time.

Early Intervention Services

What services can I receive for my child and family?

The services that your child receives is determined by the IFSP team and may include any of the following:

1. Assistive technology devices and services
2. Audiology
3. Family Training, Counseling and home visits
4. Health Services
5. Medical services (for evaluation purposes only)
6. Nursing services
7. Nutrition services
8. Occupational therapy
9. Physical therapy
10. Psychological services
11. Service Coordination
12. Social Work
13. Special Instruction
14. Speech and Language services
15. Transportation
16. Vision Services

Where can my services be provided?

- Services occur in your home when possible.
- Services occur at the site where your child spends much of his/her time, such as a childcare center.
- Specific services may occur at any community site, such as story time at the library.

Services should be provided, to the extent possible, in settings that are typical for children of the same age without developmental delays.

Who pays for services?

BabyNet is an interagency system responsible for the delivery of early intervention services to children and their families. Early Intervention services provided through BabyNet are provided at no cost to eligible children and can be provided in several ways:

- Private insurance
- Medicaid
- Federal-Part C of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Federal law allows these funds to pay for early intervention services if there is no other payment source.

Who will provide the services to my child and family?

At the time that services are found necessary to assist your child's development based on the outcomes developed by the IFSP Team, your BN Service Coordinator will discuss options with you. You will be asked to choose a provider based on your family's priorities. Your Service Coordinator is not to choose or encourage you to choose one provider over another. If at any time you wish to change providers you may discuss this with your Service Coordinator. Always contact your child's Service Coordinator to assist with arranging any services for your child. This will ensure that proper referral procedures and payment arrangements have been completed.

Your Child's Records

You are an important source of information for the individuals who work with your family. In addition to you, others who may provide information about your child may include your child's pediatrician, early interventionist, childcare provider, or physical or occupational therapist.

Information gathered about your family becomes part of your child's records. To make sure that your family's privacy is respected, there are federal and state rules to protect the confidentiality of records and guarantee you access to this information.

The Notice of Child and Family Rights summarizes your child's rights regarding records and will be provided to you at your first meeting with your assigned BabyNet Coordinator.

Transition

Moving from program to program or within a program is called transition. In Early Intervention, transition could be moving:

- From hospital to home
- From center-based to home-based services

- From Early Intervention to a program for 3-to 5-year-old children, like a regular preschool, Head Start program or Early Childhood program offered by your school district

Planning a smooth transition is very important for your child and your family. You are your child's best advocate!

Transition Steps Required by Law Include:

- Formal notification will be sent to the local school district when your child reaches two years old.
- Formal transition referral will be sent to the local school district by the time your child reaches two years six months old.
- Giving your family an opportunity to receive information and to talk about future placements and other transition issues;
- Helping to prepare your child for change in service delivery;
- Obtaining your permission to send information about your child to other agencies to ensure continuity of services.

If you have further questions about the BabyNet System, please discuss them with your child's Service Coordinator or visit our website at

<http://www.scfirststeps.org/BabyNet.html>

or email us at babynet@scfirststeps.org