



Early On[®]

Michigan Family Guidebook



1-800-EARLY ON (327-5966)
1800EarlyOn.org



Important Information

Our Contact List

TITLE	NAME	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
Our <i>Early On</i> Service Coordinator	_____	_____	_____
Our Service Provider	_____	_____	_____
Other <i>Early On</i> Team Member	_____	_____	_____
Other <i>Early On</i> Team Member	_____	_____	_____
Other Contact	_____	_____	_____

Timelines for Our Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

TITLE	DATE
Date referred to the <i>Early On</i> Provider	_____
Date of our initial IFSP (within 45 days)	_____
Date of IFSP review	_____
Date of our annual IFSP	_____
Other Dates	_____



1-800-EARLY ON (327-5966)
1800EarlyOn.org



/earlyonmichigan



@ChildFindMich

EarlyOnDirectory.org

Early On Michigan on



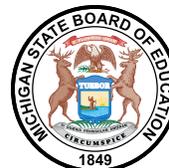
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Welcome to the *Early On* Michigan Family Guidebook. This guide is designed to help you and your family understand the *Early On* process.

At *Early On*, our goal is to help support your child's early learning and development. This guidebook will help you understand our services and how we can work together to boost your child's growth.



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Scan this QR Code to view this guidebook on mobile devices and tablets. Or, type 1800EarlyOn.org/family into any web browser to access all documents and a PDF version of the Family Guidebook.

As a Reference

The information in this guidebook will help you and your family throughout the *Early On* process. This guidebook gives details about:

- Important terms and definitions. **Blue** and **yellow** words are defined in the glossary at the back of this guidebook.
- What to expect while your child and family are involved with *Early On*.
- Information about your Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).
- How your child will effectively transition out of *Early On*.
- Your family's rights and the procedural safeguards to protect those rights.

As a Workbook

This guidebook contains several checklists to help you make decisions for your child and family. We encourage you to review and discuss these checklists with your *Early On* service coordinator.

As a Family Rights Guidebook

Protecting your family rights is very important. *Early On* must make sure your rights are protected by following actions which are known as procedural safeguards that are required by law. This guidebook will help you understand these rights.



You will see this icon each time you need to know about a procedural safeguard and/or one of your family rights. This will help you to know exactly what *Early On* is required to do to make sure your rights are protected.

What Is *Early On* Michigan?



Early On is Michigan's system for helping infants and toddlers who have developmental delays or are at risk for delays due to certain health conditions. This system provides **supports** and **services** to children birth to age 3 and their families through the federal **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** Part C and the **Michigan Department of Education**.

Children are considered **eligible** when they have a **developmental delay** or an **established health condition**.

Developmental Delay

When a child takes longer than expected to learn a basic skill, s/he may have a developmental delay. Common developmental delays occur in the following areas:

- Talking
- Moving
- Responding to others

Established Health Condition

Some health conditions may result in a developmental delay. Examples of these include:

- Down syndrome
- Autism
- Cleft palate
- Cerebral palsy
- Hearing loss
- Vision impairment
- Diagnosed fetal alcohol spectrum disorder

A full list of established health conditions can be found at 1800EarlyOn.org/family.

What Can *Early On* Do for My Child and Family?

Early On works with your child and family in many ways, including:



Early On Guiding Principles

Early On Michigan has adopted the following key principles for providing services to families:

- 1 Infants and toddlers learn best through everyday experiences and interactions with people and settings they know.
- 2 All families can add to their child's learning and development.
- 3 **Individualized Family Service Plan** outcomes must fit into a family's routine and be based on the child's and family's needs.

"Our daughter just wasn't talking and making sounds like other kids her age. After talking with our family and our doctor, we decided to call Early On to see how they could help us."

— Parents of a 16-month-old

Taking the First Steps

If you are worried that your child is missing important milestones in his/her **development**, or that your child “seems behind” compared to other children of the same age, it might be time to contact *Early On*.

Sometimes families start by asking a doctor, nurse, or child care provider for an opinion. If one of these professionals shares your concern, they may recommend that you contact *Early On*, or they might offer to do so for you. Sometimes you as a **parent** see something that does not seem right. Don't worry, but don't wait. Start the *Early On* process with a **referral**.

 Once *Early On* receives a referral, your family will receive a notice that *Early On* has been contacted. This notice includes an **Early On Parental Consent** form asking your permission to evaluate your child for *Early On* services. The notice will also contain a copy of your **family rights** and **procedural safeguards**, including information about how *Early On* protects your confidentiality.

Under the law (IDEA Part C), consent means more than giving your permission, although permission is a big part of it. Consent also means that you fully understand any activities and actions that are taking place for you and your child. If you are not sure you fully understand all that is happening or is going to happen, you have the right to ask *Early On* to explain before you move on to the next steps.

To support you throughout the *Early On* process, your family will be assigned a **service coordinator**, whose job is to help you enroll in early intervention

and to help you locate and use all the supports your child may need.

 At the time of the **evaluation**, your service coordinator will request information about your child's health. This information is used to see how the health of your child relates to his or her growing and learning. Your service coordinator will ask you to sign an **Authorization to Share Information** form, so health information can be collected and compiled in one place.

Your child's health information is private, and protecting your family's health privacy is very important. *Early On* will not share your information without your written consent unless it is with school personnel, authorized representatives or other participating agencies.

“At first we weren't sure about sharing our personal information. But it was okay – Early On only used the information to help us get things that our son needed.”

— Parents of a 2-year-old

Once a referral is made and your consent is given, *Early On* may:

- Review your child's medical records to see if an existing medical condition could be causing a developmental delay
- Conduct an initial **screening** to determine if a full evaluation is necessary
- Complete a full evaluation of your child's health and development

You will always be asked for your consent to review medical records, conduct a screening, or evaluate your child. You will always be given the opportunity to review and ask questions about the outcome of a medical record review, screening, or evaluation.

What Does My Service Coordinator Do?

Your service coordinator is your main contact and is available to:

- Help you understand information given to you;
- Inform you of your rights within the *Early On* Program;
- Help you get the evaluations and assessments your child needs;
- Let you know what services are available and how to get them;
- Coordinate and assist in the development and review of the IFSP;
- Make sure you receive the services that are on your IFSP;
- Help you access support services, such as parent groups;
- Assist in the development and implementation of a transition plan;
- Refer you to other services, such as child care, health or family support services; and
- Help you become your child's best advocate.

Is Your Child Eligible?

Following your family's referral and consent, the next step is determining your child's eligibility for *Early On* supports and services. Here's how that happens:



Your child's medical records will be reviewed if they are made available. If the records indicate that an established and eligible health condition exists, a full evaluation for eligibility is not necessary. A child with an established condition is automatically eligible for supports and services in *Early On*.



An initial screening may be conducted, taking a quick look at your child's development to determine if a full evaluation is necessary. If the screening does not show a concern, you have the right to request a full evaluation if you think it is necessary.



An evaluation of your child's growth and learning may be carried out in your home, at the local school district, or intermediate school district to determine if your child has a developmental delay.



If your child is found eligible, the **Early On team** will then use the information from the evaluation to help you develop a plan of support and services for your child and family.

During the evaluation process, trained professionals will partner with you to determine your child's abilities in the following areas:

"Self-help" skills

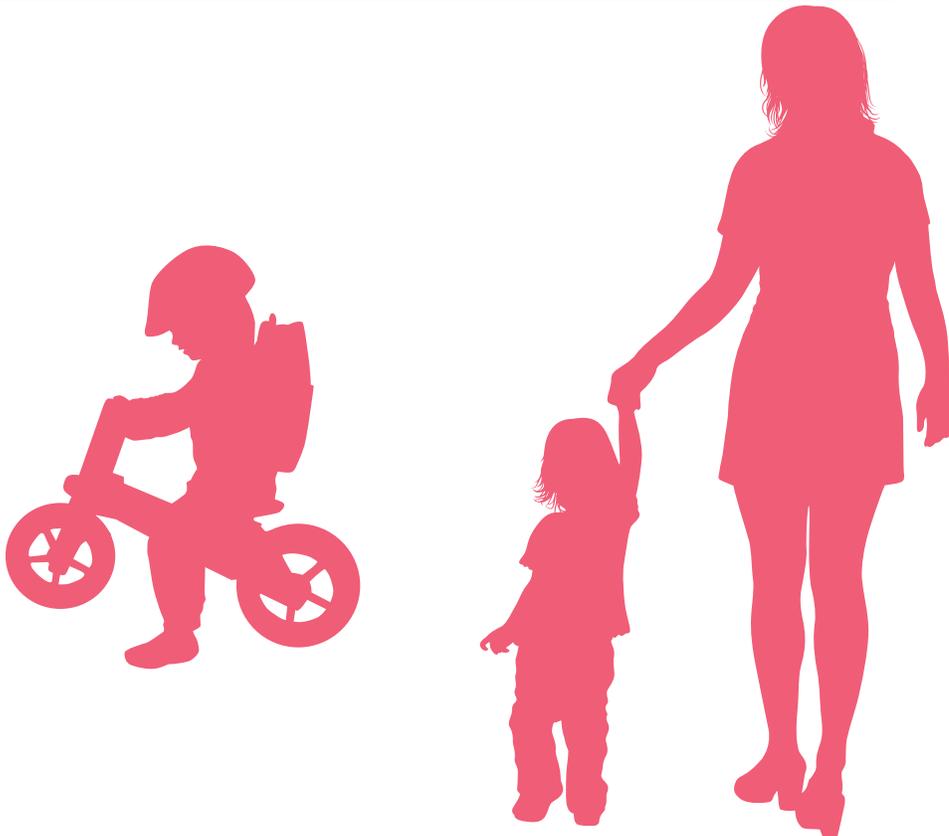
(like feeding and dressing)

Cognitive skills (thinking, learning, and reasoning abilities)

Communication skills (like talking, listening, understanding)

Physical development (like vision, hearing, movement, health)

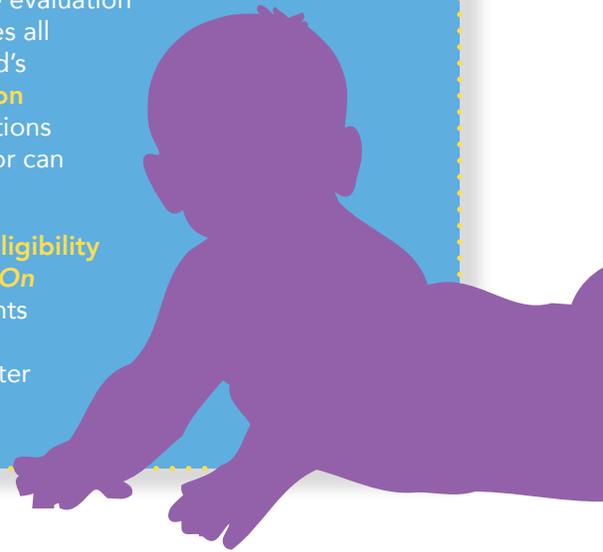
Social-emotional development (like feelings, getting along with others, relationships)



What Happens When Eligibility Determination Is Finished?

Once eligibility determination is complete, someone from the evaluation team will review the results with you. The evaluation team uses all of the information they have gathered to determine your child's eligibility for *Early On*. You will receive a copy of the **evaluation report(s)**, which you should carefully review. If you have questions about the information in the report(s), your service coordinator can help you find the answers you need.

 Your family will receive a **prior written notice**, called an **eligibility determination**, which becomes part of your child's **Early On record**. You should understand all information about your rights and activities that affect your child and family. If you prefer another language or way of communicating to be able to better understand, *Early On* will meet your needs, if possible.



If Your Child IS Eligible for *Early On*.

The service coordinator and *Early On* team will complete a **child assessment** to identify your child's unique strengths and needs. This assessment consists of:

- The results of the evaluation report(s)
- Personal observations of your child
- Identification of your child's strengths and needs in each developmental area

At this time, you will also be offered the opportunity to complete a **family assessment**. This is an optional activity that gives you the chance to talk with your service coordinator about:

- Concerns** – what you worry about with your child's growth and learning and how you would like *Early On* to work with you to help your child and family
- Resources** – the people, places, relationships, supports, and services your family already has in place to help your child grow
- Priorities** – what you think is most important for your child and family

If Your Child IS NOT Eligible for *Early On*.

In some cases, a child is not eligible for *Early On*. If that is the case, *Early On* can still help by giving ideas and information about the next steps you may wish to take.

You may provide your service coordinator with as much information as you are comfortable sharing during the family assessment. Your family and child can still get help from *Early On* even if you do not take part in the family assessment, but the information helps *Early On* support you.

With the help of your service coordinator, your family will develop an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). This is your written plan for your child and family while you are involved with *Early On*.

Evaluation Worksheet

You may find this worksheet helpful in preparing for your child's evaluation.

How was your pregnancy and your child's birth?

How has your child's health been?

Has your child had any other tests or evaluations?

What concerns do you have about your child's development (ability to talk or communicate needs, ability to walk or move about, eating or feeding problems, health issues, hearing or vision problems)?

What interests your child? What excites him? What frustrates her?

Who are the most important people in your child's life?

What is the effect of your child's needs on your family?

In what ways does your child perform everyday activities – like communicating with you and with others (pointing, using special words or sounds, using eyes) or moving about (walking, crawling, rolling, using specialized equipment)?

What types of things does your child do well (communicating needs, playing with others, walking, running)?

What other information can you provide that will give a more complete picture of your child? (Are there brothers or sisters in the home? What are the best ways of interacting with your child?)



Early On Checkpoint

This checklist can help you follow the steps in *Early On*. Use this to be sure each step is completed.

- My child was referred to *Early On*.
- I was contacted by *Early On* after the referral was made.
- I learned about our family rights.
- I understood what was going to happen before I signed any forms.
- Early On* asked for my permission to evaluate my child, using the *Early On* parental consent form.
- I was given prior written notice about the evaluation.
- I chose whether to sign an Authorization to Share Information form.
- Early On* asked for my permission to contact medical providers for health information using the Authorization to Share Information form.
- Early On* asked if I wanted a family assessment. If I said yes, I was asked about my concerns, resources, and priorities.
- If an evaluation was completed, I was a partner with the team and *Early On* shared the results with me.
- I asked questions. I made sure I understood the eligibility determination process and what was going to happen for my child and family.

If you have questions about any of these steps, you may talk to your service coordinator.



Your Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

After your child’s evaluation and assessment are complete, you will participate in an IFSP meeting. At this meeting, you and your *Early On* team will write your IFSP using all of the information that has been gathered so far about your child and your family. Each part of this plan’s name has meaning:



Individualized

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



Family

The plan will focus on changes you want to see for your child and family as a result of your participation in *Early On*. These changes are referred to as **outcomes**.



Service

The plan will include details of the early intervention supports and services your child and family will receive—including what, where, when, how often, how long, and by whom 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 I really liked about my IFSP was that it was so natural. It was a huge relief to find out all the things we can do to help our son. He learns so much from the activities we do every day in the places we normally go.”

— Mom of a 2-year-old



This Plan Is Unique to Your Child and Family.

As a parent, you will work with the team members to discuss:

- What are your daily routines?
- What does your child do during these routines?
- How does your child communicate and get along with others?
- How does your child participate in daily activities?
- What are your child’s interests?
- What makes your child happy, laugh, or smile?
- What can your child do on his or her own?
- Who are important family members or other caregivers who spend time with your child?
- Do your routines work for your family?
- What does your child do well that you would like to build upon and strengthen?
- What is the most difficult part of your day?
- What knowledge and skills would you like to see your child acquire as a result of participating in *Early On*?
- What outcomes do you want for your child?

Things to Consider As You Prepare to Develop Your Family's IFSP

I would describe my child to others as...

What's working for us is...

The biggest challenges we are facing right now are...

What I worry most about is...

What I would like to be able to do with my child is...

We'd like more information about...

As a family, we need help with...

The current resources and strengths of our family are...

When and Where Does the IFSP Meeting Happen?

Your first IFSP meeting will be held within 45 days of your referral to *Early On*, unless you need to delay the process (for instance, if your child is sick and the evaluation must be postponed). Your service coordinator will arrange the meeting with you and will invite other professionals who need to attend. These people will make up your *Early On* team. Your service coordinator will set up the meeting at a time and place that works for you. You may want to invite a spouse, partner, grandparent or other person familiar with your child to support you at this meeting.

“When we were ready to make our plan, our service coordinator asked who we wanted to come to the meeting. We asked my mother-in-law, my friend, and our child care provider. These are the friends and family who help us out every day – with their help, and the help of Early On, we made a great plan.”

— Mom of a 1-year-old

Who Can Be at the IFSP Meeting?

Your *Early On* team should have people who will be helpful to you as you plan what will happen for your child and family. Your team will include:



- You, the parent – You are a critical member of the *Early On* team. You will be a part of writing the IFSP. You know your child best and know which supports and services will fit into your family's life. You will need to make decisions about what will be written into your IFSP.
- Your service coordinator
- Other *Early On* professionals who may be working with your family (such as an occupational therapist, physical therapist, or speech therapist)
- Other people you'd like to include (family, friends, or child care provider)

What Is the First Step in Building the IFSP?

You and your *Early On* team will develop a list of outcomes (or goals). These outcomes are the changes you would like for your child and family. You will write these outcomes with your team by:

- Discussing your child's abilities, strengths, and needs;
- Reviewing how your child participates in your family's daily life and community outings;
- Discussing the results of your child's evaluation and assessment as well as the family assessment; and
- Reviewing your family's concerns, resources, and priorities and sharing information about what has changed since the evaluation.

The outcomes will be based on your priorities and concerns and fit into the everyday activities of your child and family. You can decide which outcomes are most important to you. You and your team will also decide how all of you will know when the outcome has been met and include that as part of the outcome.



What Information Will Be in Our IFSP?

Your IFSP will have information that lets the *Early On* team know what is happening. This way, everyone has the same information and can work together toward the same outcomes.

Your IFSP Will Include the Following:

Child information

Information about your child's skills and behaviors based on information from the evaluation, child assessment and family assessment; information about your child's health including their vision and hearing.

Other services

Extra supports your child or family need and the steps to help obtain them.

Family assessment

With your permission, a family assessment including information about the concerns, resources, and priorities you have for your child.

Transition planning

The steps and services to support your child as s/he gets ready to leave *Early On* after your child no longer needs *Early On* or at the age of 3, whichever is first.

Outcomes

The outcomes your child and family will achieve as a result of completing the plan.

Signature page

This page contains a list of who attended the IFSP meeting and the name of your service coordinator. You will sign this page to give your permission to implement services. Services will start within 30 days of your agreement.

Early On services

Details of the early intervention services that can help meet your child's and family's outcomes including what, where, when, how often, how long, and by whom. The start date and end date will be included. Services are provided free of charge to parents (some services may be subject to billing if you have given permission for your public insurance to be billed). The program responsible for the payment of services is indicated in this section.

You and your *Early On* team will work together to make the IFSP. The final plan is a team decision, and remember, you are a member of the team. The IFSP is a document that will change as your child's and family's needs change. It should always reflect the services and supports you are currently receiving to meet the needs of your child and family.

ABC's of Early Intervention Services

You and your team will work together to decide which services your family needs to assist your child in accomplishing his or her outcomes and fulfilling his or her potential. Services may include:

Assistive Technology Services

Specialized equipment or devices to help your child function better (such as hearing aids, computer software and wheelchairs)

Audiology Services

Support to help your child hear better

Family Training, Counseling and Home Visits

Education, coaching and support to help you understand the special needs of your child, cope with your child's behavior or improve your child's development

Health Services

Medical services to help your child participate in other early intervention services

Nutrition Services

Support to help with your child's feeding skills and eating habits

Occupational Therapy

Activities to support your child's small muscle development and daily living skills (such as picking up a block, feeding and sitting up)

Physical Therapy

Support to enhance your child's movement (such as crawling, standing, walking and balance)

You and your *Early On* team will work together to determine which services your child needs. Services will begin within 30 days of your agreement on your child's IFSP.

Psychological Services

Counseling to help you and caregivers understand and interpret your child's behavior

Social Work Services

Support in your family setting to develop social skill-building activities for your child

Specialized Instruction

Support for your family to manage daily routines and activities, and to help your child learn and grow

Speech and Language Services

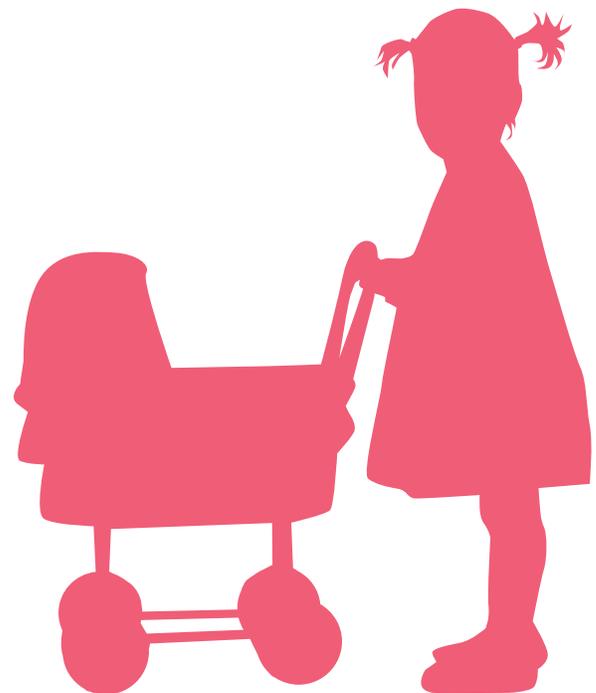
Support for you and your child in developing communication skills, which may include speech, signs and gestures

Transportation

Support to get your family to early intervention services

Vision Services

Sight-related support to help with vision and vision-related mobility issues



When Does Our IFSP Change?

After Your First IFSP Is Written:

- You and your *Early On* team will conduct a **periodic review** of your IFSP – at least once every six months.
- An IFSP meeting must be held once a year to update and revise your child's plan.
- You or anyone on your team can request to have a review of your IFSP or an IFSP meeting at any time.



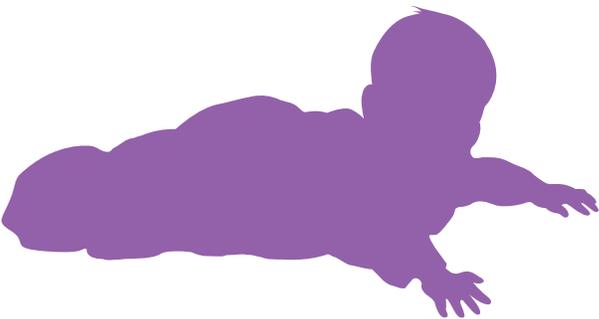
Your service coordinator will ensure you are aware of what will happen at the meeting, and that you are a full partner in the process.

At the periodic review, you and your team will talk about the progress your child has made in relation to his or her outcomes, and decide if changes should be made to the IFSP. You may decide a change is needed if:

- New information about your child indicates the need for different services or outcomes;
- Your child has met the stated outcomes and is ready for new outcomes and/or services;
- The services are not helping your child to meet the outcomes identified in the IFSP; or
- Your concerns and priorities for your child have changed.

Once a year, your whole **IFSP must be thoroughly reviewed and updated**. This meeting is more thorough than the periodic review. The annual IFSP meeting is an opportunity to update and revise your child's IFSP based on:

- All new information about your child's development and health;
- The results of any recent assessments and evaluations; and
- Progress your child has made in relation to the plan's stated outcomes.



At any time you or anyone on the team feels that a change to the IFSP is necessary, an IFSP meeting can be requested. An IFSP meeting cannot be held without giving you a written meeting notice, and it can't be held without you.



Your service coordinator will provide you prior written notice for any evaluations that need to take place, as well as changes in services or eligibility, in time for you to understand what will be taking place and to make sure you are a full partner in the process.

Where Do the Services Happen?

Your child's services can be provided in settings where your child typically spends his or her day. This can include your home, child care, or other community settings. These places are considered

natural environments. The *Early*

 On team will give you or your child's caregivers ideas on how to incorporate learning activities into your child's typical daily routines, such as play times, meals and bath time. As part of the IFSP, you and your team will decide where the best setting is for your child to receive services.



"The IFSP helped us to keep things straight – the right hand knew what the left was doing – and Early On helped us identify services and resources we would never have found otherwise."

— Parents of a 6-month-old

What If I Don't Agree with My IFSP?



You have options if you don't agree with your IFSP:

You may decide to decline some services suggested by your team. Your child will only receive services that you approve.

If there is a service that you feel your child needs and *Early On* disagrees, *Early On* must provide you prior written notice of the refusal to provide that service. This notice must include the reason for refusing the service and a statement of your rights and options available if you disagree.

You may try to work the problem out informally by meeting with your service coordinator and/or your *Early On* team to learn more about why they feel the service is not necessary.

For forms and further information about **mediation** and due process, visit msemp.cenmi.org or call 1-800-873-7658.

You have the right to file a **written complaint** with the Michigan Department of Education and have your complaint investigated if you think a state or federal regulation has been violated. Filing a complaint is free, and your service coordinator can assist you.

If you disagree about the identification, evaluation, eligibility, or services related to your child, you have a right to request a **due process hearing**. You may choose to have your service coordinator help you with this request. If your request goes to a hearing, you may want legal representation. If you choose to hire an attorney, you are responsible for legal fees. For a list of free or low-cost legal services, ask your service coordinator or the Michigan Department of Education.

For further information or to request a State Complaint Investigation or a Due Process Complaint Form, go to **1800EarlyOn.org/family**.



Early On Checkpoint

This checklist can help you follow the steps in *Early On*. Use this to be sure each step is completed.

- I was able to invite other people (like friends, relatives, or child care providers) to be a part of my child's *Early On* team.
- The IFSP meeting was at a time and place that worked for my family.
- I worked with my *Early On* team to identify priorities and develop outcomes for my child and family.
- I was able to choose the services that would work for my family.
- My *Early On* team considered the needs of my child, as well as what my family does on a daily basis. This helped me determine where the services would happen.
- There may have been a reason my child's needs could not be met in his or her natural environments. My *Early On* team wrote the reason why in my child's IFSP. The reason was based on my child's needs.
- I was given and understand my child's rights, including what to do if I disagree with *Early On*.
- My service coordinator continues to work with us. S/he is helping to make my child's IFSP happen and has addressed any problems I have had.
- I asked questions. I made sure I understood what was said. I made sure I knew what was going to happen for my child and family.
- I should talk with my service coordinator if I want to continue services if/when I move.

At least six months after initial IFSP:

- I reviewed my child's IFSP with my *Early On* team as needed, but at least once.
- I understand that any team member (including me) can ask for a review at any time.
- I reviewed my child's progress related to the outcomes.
- This information helped me and my team to decide if any changes need to be made to the IFSP.

Once a year (annually):

- I looked at the whole IFSP with my *Early On* team.
- I looked at the information about my child's development and health.
- I looked at all new information from any evaluations and assessments.
- I understand my rights and I received prior written notice that the annual meeting was going to take place.
- Changes were made based on my child's progress toward meeting his or her outcomes and my concerns, resources, and priorities.

If you have questions about any of these steps, you may talk to your service coordinator.



Transition: Leaving *Early On*

Children leave *Early On* at different times. Many children stay eligible for *Early On* until their 3rd birthday. At this age, *Early On* ends for every child. After age 3, your child's needs may be met through other people and/or resources.

Some children leave *Early On* before they turn 3. This happens when:

- Children catch up to other children their age.
- Families move (talk with your service coordinator if you want to continue services when you move).
- Families feel they don't need *Early On* anymore.
- A child is eligible for a preschool special education program or services.

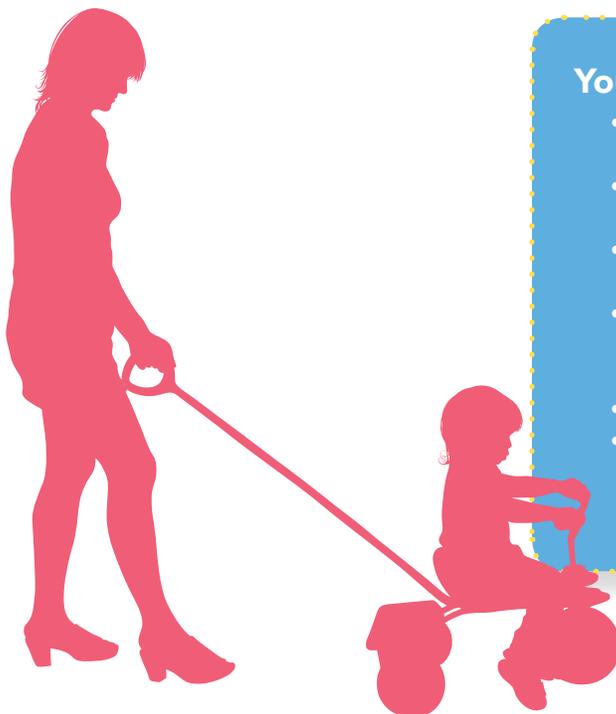


If you are leaving *Early On* because your child is turning 3, you and your service coordinator will look at what should happen next for your child. Plans will be made for your **transition** from *Early On* when you and your team decide the time is right to start developing this plan. By law, this planning must occur at least 90 days (but no more than nine months) before your child's 3rd birthday.

What Happens When *Early On* Ends and My Child Still Needs Services?

If your child turns 3 and still needs support services, he or she will leave *Early On* and may go to a new program, activity, or location. Before you leave *Early On*, you and your service coordinator will develop steps called a **transition plan** within your Individualized Family Service Plan.

Early On will discuss future placement options with you when *Early On* ends for your child. These placement options are included in your child's transition plan.

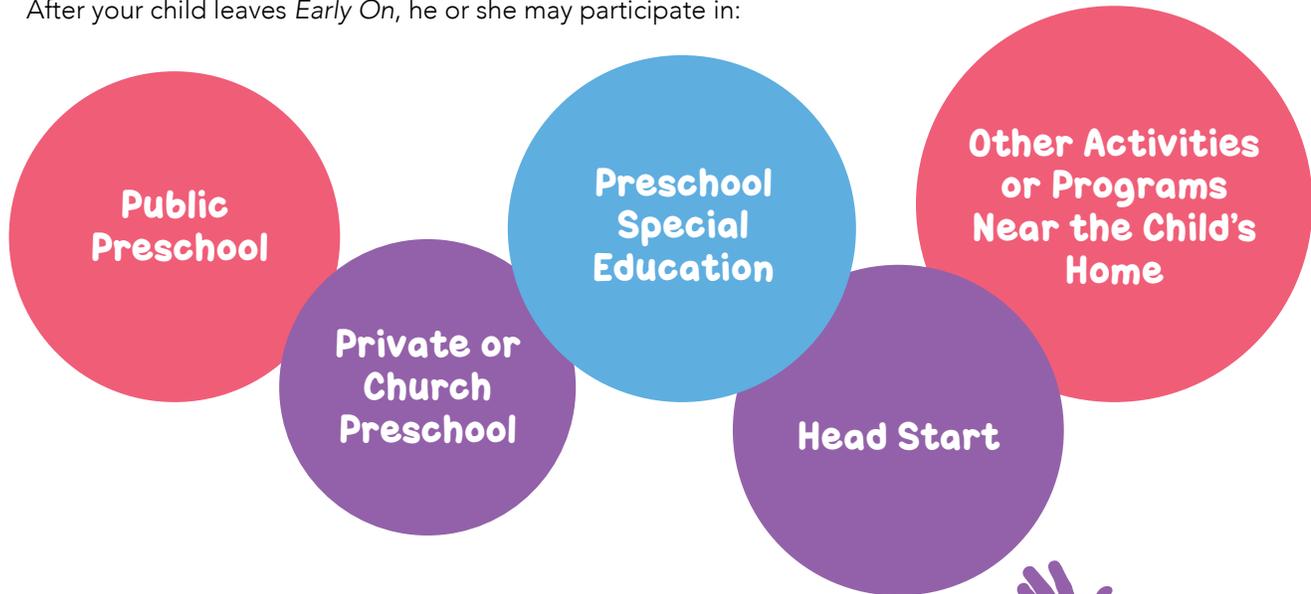


Your Transition Plan Should Include:

- What you hope can happen next for your child;
- Next steps to be taken (like visiting a school);
- Who is responsible for the next steps (like a parent and service coordinator);
- Strategies that can help your child prepare for changes, including steps to help your child adjust and learn in a new setting;
- Timelines for completion; and
- How to ensure that your child's **record** (including the IFSP) transitions with your child.

What Are Your Options for Services/Programs?

After your child leaves *Early On*, he or she may participate in:



You may want to visit potential sites to see what will work best for your child and family. Your service coordinator will help you think about which environment and program might be best for your child. Your service coordinator can also help you understand the eligibility requirements for the available programs.

Transition Conference/Meeting for a Child Receiving Special Education Services

 If your child has been receiving **special education** services and needs these services to continue after *Early On*, your service coordinator will hold a **transition conference/meeting** when you and your team decide it is best to start working on the plan. By law, this must occur at least 90 days (but no more than nine months) before your child's 3rd birthday. Your service coordinator will invite a representative from the local school district to this meeting. At this meeting the team will decide what supports and services are needed to assist your child with the transition to new services or programs. Your transition plan and your transition conference can be completed in one meeting or in separate meetings, with your consent and with prior written notice.



What Is an Individualized Education Program?

If your child is transitioning to a preschool special education program or services, you will develop an **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** with the local school district or intermediate school district that will be providing programs or services for your child. Similar to an IFSP, the IEP is a written statement of the educational program designed to meet a child's individual needs. It lists the location for and type of services your child will receive and explains how these services will help your child meet goals and outcomes. Your *Early On* record, including the IFSP, will transfer to the school district in preparation for this meeting, and can be used as a reference document when developing your child's IEP.

What to Expect for Your Transition Meeting

Your family should:

- Share your hopes and concerns for your child;
- Ask about supports for your family beyond early intervention; and
- Ask questions about anything that is unclear.

Early intervention staff will:

- Share information about your child's progress;
- Help write a transition plan that details the steps for transition;
- With your permission, make sure the new program has all the information they will need about your child (evaluation and assessment information, a copy of the IFSP, etc.); and
- Help you identify additional community resources and supports.

School district/Head Start/preschool staff will:

- Explain the eligibility requirements and your rights;
- Explain the process for applying/registering;
- Discuss options for the delivery of services your child will need; and
- Help determine whether any additional evaluations will be needed prior to transition.

Date of Your Transition Meeting: _____

Things to Think About and Do Prior to the Meeting:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

What If I'm Concerned About My Child's Transition?

Transition from one program to another can be a difficult adjustment. You may wonder how it will work for your child and family in a new program. Many other parents of young children have been through this experience. You may wish to talk with a parent who has been through the transition process. Ask your service coordinator or call Michigan Alliance for Families at 1-800-552-4821 to speak with a parent mentor.

My Child Didn't Participate in *Early On* and Now They're Over Age 3. Is It Too Late?

Although services for *Early On* end at age 3, supports for preschool age children (age 3 through 5) are available through your public school district if your child qualifies for preschool special education services and programs. You may have a child who didn't show signs of a developmental delay until age 3 or after. In Michigan, preschool special education programs and services are available for young children with disabilities. If you have or know of a child in this age range who is having a difficult time in areas such as speech and language, gross or fine motor skills, or social and emotional behavior, contact Build Up Michigan to find out what you can do. Visit BuildUpMi.org.



Early On Checkpoint

This checklist can help you follow the steps in *Early On*. Use this to be sure each step is completed.

- The *Early On* team talked about a transition plan for when my child left *Early On* at 3 years of age. The team began planning the transition at least 90 days before his or her 3rd birthday.
- When it was time for my child and family to leave *Early On*, my *Early On* team helped me create a transition plan.
- The transition plan lists the next steps I will take to continue to support my child's development. The plan also includes how the next steps will happen.
- I received my parent rights and a prior written notice for my child's transition planning.
- I asked questions. I made sure I understood what was said. I made sure I knew what was going to happen for my child and our family.



Understanding Your Family's Rights and Procedural Safeguards

By law, you and your family have rights. These rights are protected by a process referred to as procedural safeguards. As an *Early On* family, you should be familiar with your rights and entitlements under the law.



Your Family Has the Right to:

- Learn if your child is eligible
- Participate in *Early On*, if eligible
- Give consent for screening, evaluation, assessment and services
- Receive prior written notice about evaluations, or possible changes to eligibility or services
- Have a plan for services within 45 days of referral
- Fully understand each step in the *Early On* process
- Consent to or decline services
- Have your child and family information protected
- Review records
- Help resolve disagreements
- Submit a complaint

When you are referred to *Early On*, your service coordinator will review your rights and procedural safeguards with you. You should also receive a detailed written description of your rights once they have been discussed with you. Below is a summary of your rights and the procedural safeguards for protecting your rights. For more detailed information, please refer to *Early On* Family Rights and Procedural Safeguards for Families, at Michigan.gov/EarlyOn or 1800EarlyOn.org/family.

The Right to Participate

Participation in *Early On* is voluntary. It is up to you to decide to participate in *Early On*. If you accept services, you determine the level of participation. You are an important part of planning services for your child. You must agree to services for your child and sign the plan before these services begin.

The Right to Learn If Your Child Is Eligible

When your child is referred to *Early On*, you have the right to have your child's medical records reviewed or to have an evaluation to determine eligibility. If you disagree with the results of the evaluation you can file a written complaint or request a due process hearing.

The Right to Give Your Parental Consent and Ability to Decline Services

Early On needs your permission to take any actions that affect your child. You will be asked to give your consent in writing before an evaluation is done or services are provided. Be sure you completely understand the suggested activities. You do not have to agree to all services recommended. You can say no to some services and choose others. If you decide you want to try other services at a later date, you can give your consent then. By being involved, you can help *Early On* plan services that match your child's and family's needs. *Early On* needs to explain what

happens if you give your consent and if you do not give your consent.

The Right to Prior Written Notice

Early On must give you prior written notice about any evaluations or changes in eligibility or services affecting your child. The information you share with *Early On* will make sure that the evaluations and services are right for your child and family. This "paper work" ensures that you get all the details before any activity.

The Right to Plan for Services within 45 Days of Referral

Within 45 days of referral, if eligible for *Early On*, your family has the right to a written plan for services. This plan is your Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and includes early intervention supports and services based on your child's needs.

The Right to Understand

It is your right to thoroughly understand all activities and written records about your child. If you prefer another language or way of communicating (e.g., Braille, sign language, etc.), *Early On* will get an interpreter, if possible. *Early On* wants you to understand so that you can be an informed team member and decision-maker.

The Right to Confidentiality

Early On will ensure your records are kept private. *Early On* values the information you and other service and healthcare providers have learned about your child. Your service coordinator may ask others for this information, but they need your written permission to do so. Just as *Early On* needs your permission to get your child's records from other providers, the record that *Early On* will develop will only be shared with school personnel, authorized representatives and other participating agencies in *Early On* unless you give your permission.

The Right to Access Records

The *Early On* record is your family's record. You can see anything in the *Early On* record about your child and family. If you do not understand the way records are written, the information in your child's record will be explained to you in a way you understand. You are a team member, and we want you to have the same information as other team members.

The Right to Ask for Help with Solving Disagreements

Sometimes parents and the *Early On* team disagree on an evaluation, assessment, early intervention service or other things. If there is a disagreement, try talking to your service coordinator, who may be able to help resolve the issue informally. *Early On* recognizes your right to make decisions about your child and will take your concerns seriously.

If, after discussing the situation, you and your *Early On* team do not agree on plans or services, or if you have other concerns about your experience with

Early On, there are formal procedures for resolving problems quickly.

One option is mediation. Mediation is a voluntary process that you may participate in either before or after filing a formal State Complaint. If you have requested a due process hearing, mediation will not slow down the hearing process. During mediation, a trained, impartial mediator from the Michigan Special Education Mediation Program (MSEMP) will facilitate problem solving between you and *Early On*. You may be able to reach an agreement that satisfies you both. Openly discussing and solving problems can improve communication and make programs stronger. You can contact MSEMP at 1-800-873-7658 or msempp.cenmi.org.

Another option available, if you feel your rights have been ignored or violated, is to file a written complaint with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) with a copy of the complaint going to your local intermediate school district. This is called a State Complaint. Filing a complaint is free and your service coordinator can assist you. For further information and forms for filing a complaint, visit 1800EarlyOn.org/family.

If a complaint you have filed concerns the identification, evaluation, eligibility, assessment, or services related to your child, you also have a right to request a due process hearing. You may choose to have your service coordinator help you with this request. During a due process hearing, you have the right to be accompanied and advised by a lawyer and/or persons with special knowledge or training regarding problems of children with disabilities. You can learn more about the due process complaint and hearing procedures at 1800EarlyOn.org/family.



Early On Checkpoint

This checklist can help you follow the steps in *Early On*. Use this to be sure each step is completed.

- I was advised of my rights as an *Early On* parent and family.
- I understand the steps in the *Early On* process and where to obtain information about my rights as a parent and family.
- I understand where to find help in resolving disagreements involving *Early On* services.

If you have questions about any of these steps, you may talk to your service coordinator.

Who Do I Call with Questions?

If you have questions or concerns while receiving *Early On* services, there are many people and places you can contact for help and information:

Call your service coordinator. His or her name and phone number will be on your IFSP. He or she can help connect you with resources to support you and your child.

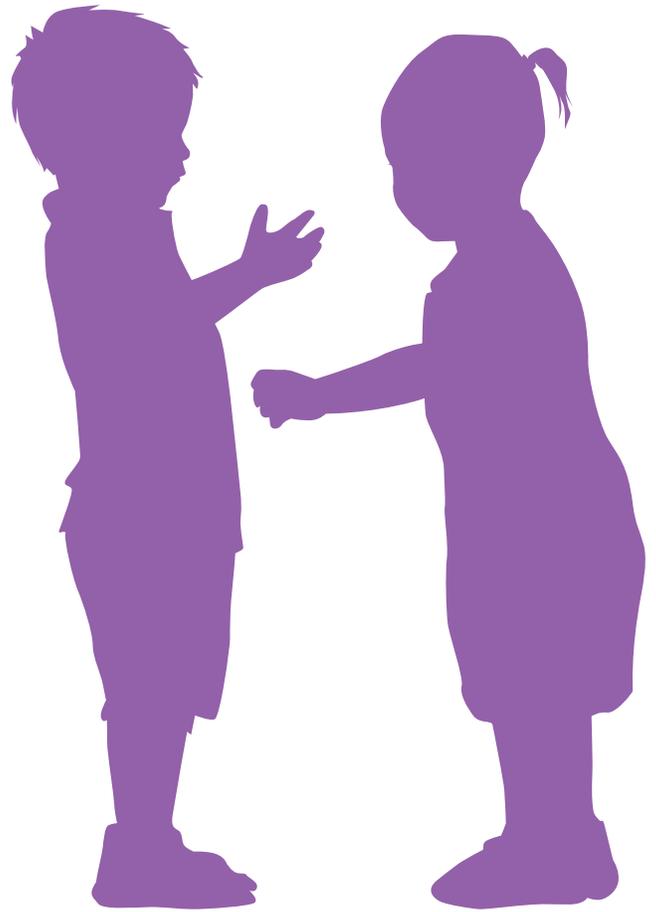
Contact your *Early On* Coordinator. In each service area, *Early On* has a person in charge. If you do not receive the help or support you need from your service coordinator, you can contact your ***Early On* Coordinator**. He or she can answer your questions or concerns. You can get your *Early On* Coordinator's name and phone number from your service coordinator or at **1800EarlyOn.org**.

Talk to other families who are participating in *Early On*. They may have information to share that can be helpful to you. You may ask your service coordinator to share your name with other families, or join the *Early On* parent electronic mailing list at **1800EarlyOn.org**.

Talk to parents involved in the **Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC).** They may be aware of local resources that might be helpful to you. You may ask your service coordinator to share their names with you.

Contact support groups. Often, groups of parents with similar experiences meet to talk and share ideas and stories for managing similar situations. Ask your service coordinator about finding a support group in your area.

Engage an organization that can help you understand your rights. These groups can also speak and act on your behalf if you choose. The Michigan Alliance for Families is a statewide resource to connect families of children with disabilities to resources to help improve their children's education. The Michigan Alliance for Families facilitates parent involvement as a means of improving educational services and outcomes for students with disabilities.



The Alliance can be reached at 1-800-552-4821, and more information about the Alliance is available at **MichiganAllianceforFamilies.org**.

Call 1-800-EARLY ON (1-800-327-5966) or visit 1800EarlyOn.org for information about resources that may help answer your questions.

Authorization to Share Information

An authorization that allows *Early On* to collect and compile information about your child from service providers and programs, including physicians.

Child Assessment

An ongoing process that measures and identifies your child's strengths and needs.

Development

The process of growing and learning.

Developmental Delay

Developmental delay is defined as any delay for infants up to two months of age (adjusted for prematurity) or 20% in one or more areas of development for infants and toddlers between two months and 36 months.

Due Process Hearing

A hearing in which an impartial officer reviews evidence to resolve a disagreement between a parent and an *Early On* provider.

Early On

Michigan's early intervention system.

Early On Coordinator

A person in charge of *Early On* in a local county or counties.

Early On Parental Consent

A form asking parental permission to screen, evaluate, assess, provide services, use public insurance and share personal information.

Early On Record

All the information from your time in *Early On*. It is also all the information you gave and that was gathered from others.

Early On Team

A team that includes you, your service coordinator, and other professionals involved in providing ongoing services to your child and family. Also referred to as the IFSP team.

Eligible

When a child qualifies to receive services from *Early On*. To be eligible for *Early On*, your child must have a developmental delay or an established medical condition that is likely to lead to a developmental delay.

Eligibility Determination

Formal notice of a child's eligibility to receive *Early On* services.

Established Health Condition

A diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay. For a full list of established health conditions go to **1800EarlyOn.org**.

Evaluation

Determining your child's eligibility for *Early On* services by gathering information about your child from records, assessments and using professional judgment.

Evaluation Report

A written summary of a child's evaluation records, assessments, and status.

Family Assessment

A voluntary process to learn about a family's strengths, resources and priorities related to their child's growth and development.

Family Rights

Rights entitled to an infant/toddler and parent under Part C of the IDEA law.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

A written plan that will guide the outcomes/goals expected for the child to grow and develop and fully participate in daily activities and community activities. It lists the services to be provided by *Early On*.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

A written plan that guides the educational activities for children found eligible for special education after *Early On*.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The federal law that guides the education of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities. Part C of the IDEA law is the part of the law that pertains to *Early On* and early intervention services for children birth to age 3.

Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC)

Local planning and advisory bodies for the *Early On* system. They are made up of family members who have children with special needs and representatives from Education, Community Health, Department of Human Services and other organizations that provide services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

Mediation

A way to settle a conflict so that both sides reach an agreement that satisfies you both. Parents and other professionals discuss their differences and, with the help of a trained and independent mediator, reach a settlement that both sides accept.

Michigan Department of Education

The state agency that oversees *Early On* in Michigan. *Early On* (Part C) funding is provided by the federal government to the Michigan Department of Education. For more information, visit Michigan.gov/EarlyOn.

Natural Environment

Settings that are natural or typical for a same-aged infant or toddler without a disability, and may include the home or community setting.

Outcomes

Statements of changes (or goals) you want for your child and/or family that are documented in the IFSP.

Parent

Any person responsible for the care and well-being of a child. It could include birth parents, adoptive parents, guardians, grandparents and foster parents.

Periodic Review

A meeting held at least every six months. The team looks at whether changes need to be made to the outcomes on the IFSP.

Prior Written Notice

Advance information, provided in writing, about evaluations and changes in eligibility or services.

Procedural Safeguards

Policies and practices that are consistently, fairly applied to ensure the protection of children's and families' rights.

Record

See *Early On* Record.

Referral

A recommendation to have a child evaluated to see if he or she is eligible for *Early On*. The referral starts the *Early On* process. It occurs because of a concern about a child's development or health issue.

Screening

A brief process used to identify children who may have a developmental delay and may need further evaluation.

Service Coordinator

A person who works with your family to help coordinate the evaluation, assessments, the IFSP, and early intervention services as well as other community supports and resources for your child and family.

Services

A specialized form of support from a trained professional to help parents and caregivers learn how to support the development of a child within his or her daily activities.

Special Education

Specially designed instruction and services to meet the education needs of infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities aged birth through 26 in Michigan.

Supports

The help, resources or information given to a family.

Transition

The process of planning for supports and services for when your child will leave *Early On*.

Transition Conference

A meeting to discuss services a toddler may receive under preschool special education or other appropriate services.

Transition Plan

Steps and services within the IFSP to help a child and family leave *Early On* and succeed in their next activity. If your child is leaving *Early On* at age 3, this plan must be made at least 90 days before your child's 3rd birthday.

Written Complaint

A document filed with the Michigan Department of Education and your local intermediate school district in circumstances where a parent thinks a state or federal regulation has been violated. Filing a complaint is free and results in a thorough state-level investigation.

Understanding This Guidebook

If you need help reading or understanding the contents of this guidebook, please contact your service coordinator.

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Statement of Compliance with Federal Law

The Michigan Department of Education complies with all Federal laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination, and with all requirements of the U.S. Department of Education.

Print date: 10/14

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1-800-EARLY ON (327-5966)
1800EarlyOn.org