ECI Nuts and Bolts

Eligibility Criteria:

1. Medical Diagnosis- A condition that is likely to cause developmental delay and child exhibits a need for services. This can be a case management or educational need if the child does not have developmental concerns at that time.
2. Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH)/Visual Impairment (VI)- as defined by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Must have medical documentation to verify identification.
3. Developmental Delay- 25% delay in one or more area of development (social-emotional, communication, motor functions, or cognitive skills). If child only exhibits a delay in expressive language, a 33% delay must be identified.

Accessing DHH/VI Services:

* DHH- Documentation:
1. Consent to release/request information with Local Education Agency (LEA) and medical providers to share pertinent information or plan ECI services.
2. Audiological Examination (Part B)- by Licensed Audiologist
3. Otological Examination (Part A)- by an Otologist, Otolaryngologist, or an Otorhinolaryngologist. Typically comes from an Ear Nose and Throat Doctor (ENT). If an Otologist is not reasonably available, any licensed medical physician can complete the otological examination. The child’s chart must contain documentation noting that an otologist, otolaryngologist, or an Otorhinolaryngologist was not reasonably available to complete the evaluation. This is only to begin home services. Child cannot get hearing technology which includes hearing aids, bone conduction aids, cochlear implants, and auditory brainstem implants until ENT signs the report.
4. Communication Evaluation (Part C) – completed by certified DHH teacher
5. IFSP - ECI must provide 10-day notification to DHH teacher. This is the invitation for all IFSP meetings.
* VI- Documentation:
1. Consent to release/request information with Local Education Agency (LEA), medical providers, and HHS Blind Children’s Vocational Discovery and Development Program for purposes of sharing pertinent information or to plan ECI services.
2. Texas Eye Examination Report- by Ophthalmologist or Optometrist
3. Referral to HHS Blind Children’s Vocational Discovery and Development Program
4. VI and O&M evaluation- completed by certified TVI and O&M Specialist
5. IFSP – ECI must provide 10-day notification to VI teacher. This is the invitation for all IFSP meetings.

Timelines:

* Referral - As per 34 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) Sec. 303.303 (a)(2)(i), health care professionals to include hospitals (prenatal and post-natal care facilities), physicians, public health facilities, social service agencies, and clinics; must refer a child as soon as possible, but in no case later than 7 days after the child has been identified
* Initial IFSP- must occur within 45 days from referral date, if child qualifies for ECI services
* For hearing needs:
* ECI Service Coordinator must refer a child, with parental consent, within 5 working days to a licensed Audiologist (or Primary Care Provider if necessary), if a child has been identified as having a need for further hearing assessment and the child has not had a hearing test within 6 months of the hearing needs identification.
* If ECI Service Coordinator receives an audiological assessment that indicates a child is deaf or hard of hearing, ECI must make a referral to the LEA to participate in eligibility determination process within 5 working days and refer child to an otologist/otolaryngologist for an otological examination (with prior written consent). ECI must refer any child who uses amplification to LEA.
* For vision needs:
	+ ECI Service Coordinator must refer a child (with parental consent) within 5 working days to an ophthalmologist or optometrist (or Primary Care Provider if necessary), if the child has been identified as having a need for further vision assessment and the child has not had a vision assessment within 9 months of the vision needs identification.
	+ If ECI receives a medical eye examination report that indicates vision impairment, ECI must, within 5 business days of receiving the report, refer the child to the LEA and refer child to the HHS Blind Children’s Vocational Discovery and Development Program.
	+ The referral to LEA must be accompanied by the Texas Eye Examination Report
* ECI Services – begin within 28 days of Initial IFSP date or date of IFSP adding a new service
	+ Child must be registered with the LEA however services can begin before registration is complete.
* Periodic IFSP Review must occur at least every 6 months (6-month Review/ Annual Review) to evaluate and revise plan but can occur anytime that a need is identified.
	+ ECI Service Coordinator must provide at least a 10-day notice to DHH/VI teacher in order to attend any IFSP Meetings
	+ DHH/VI Teachers are not required to attend IFSP meetings unless changes to the plan will occur that are impacted by the hearing loss and/or vision loss or there will be changes to the DHH or VI services themselves
	+ No changes can be made to DHH/VI services without DHH/VI Teacher present
	+ The MOU states: For children who are referred to the LEA for a suspected AI or VI, ECI programs are required to invite a teacher certified to teach children who are auditory impaired or visually impaired, as appropriate, to the initial Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting. ***Participation by the appropriate Al and/or VI teacher is required at the initial and annual IFSP meeting, and to other IFSP meetings when issues related to or affected by the Al or VI will be addressed***;
	+ If provider is *not required* to attend an IFSP meeting
1. The SC will obtain DHH/VI Teacher input
2. SC will send DHH/VI Teacher the IFSP to review, sign, and return to ECI
3. If DHH/VI Teacher disagrees with any portion of IFSP, they have 5 days to request another IFSP meeting
* IFSP Participants in Initial and Annual IFSP Meetings- As per Texas Administrative Code (TAC) If a child has a documented:

(1) auditory impairment as described in §108.813(a) of this chapter (relating to Determination of Hearing and Auditory Status), the IFSP team for an initial IFSP meeting and annual IFSP evaluation meetings must include a certified teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing; or

(2) visual impairment as described in §108.815(a) of this chapter (relating to Determination of Vision Status), the IFSP team for an initial IFSP meeting and annual IFSP evaluation meetings must include a certified teacher of the visually impaired.

* Transition
	+ Transition Steps must be completed between 27-33 months as part of the IFSP (options discussed/a plan is established based on family preferences)
	+ Transition Conference must be completed between 27-33 months, but no later than 90 days prior to a child’s third birthday

IFSP Reminders-

* Create SMART goals for your kiddos!
	+ The family is an equal team member. Remember to base goals on a “wish” they have identified
	+ Provide your Service Coordinator with updates regarding met goals and any new goals that you have developed. This can occur at any time during service delivery
* Services should be provided as listed on the IFSP as this is a legally binding document
* IFSP meetings do not count as a direct service
* Co-visits are welcomed, but justification must be documented as to why this is a direct benefit to the child/family
* If you are not able to attend an IFSP meeting, please share your input with the service coordinator, review IFSP, sign and return

Progress Notes:

* We must provide documentation for each visit listed on the IFSP. Please include notes regarding cancellations, inability to contact, no shows, and makeup visits if extra time is being added.
* ECI must report all progress notes to HHSC to show that services are being provided as planned. The state reporting system T-kids, has a deadline for entering notes from the prior month. Please submit your notes to your ECI program weekly if possible. If monthly is more feasible, please provide notes by the 3rd of the following month.
* You may use ECI’s progress note, or your own with required elements

TAC Progress Note Required elements –

* Name of child
* Name & discipline of ECI contractor/ DHH Teacher/ VI Teacher
* Date, start time & total time
* Place of service
* Service type
* Method: Individual/Group
* Goal
* What occurred during visit? Coaching? Strategies?
* Signature of provider with credentials

Contact Info:

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