

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**Child and Family Services Agency**



**Administrative Issuance: CFSA-15-4**

TO: All Staff

FROM: Marie Morilus-Black  
Deputy Director for Well Being

DATE: July 17, 2015

RE: Early Intervention Child Development Screening Process

---

Research shows that the years between birth and 5 years are the most critical developmental period in the lives of growing children. During this same time frame there is a crucial window of opportunity for early assessment for developmental delays which assists in minimizing and in some cases preventing any long-term impact of identified delays. Early intervention programs can facilitate and nurture the optimal potential of the child's normal development, particularly the workings of the child's brain. It is therefore essential for social workers to understand the timely importance of assessing children between birth and 5 years old and referring them as soon as possible to early intervention programs when needed.

Early intervention services for eligible children and families are federally mandated through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This administrative issuance outlines the process for making referrals for early intervention screening and evaluation through the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) Strong Start and the DC Public Schools Early Stages programs. All social workers should thoroughly familiarize themselves with this process and take every step necessary to ensure that children on their case load are assessed early for developmental delays.

### **Children 0-3 Investigations and Family Assessments**

1. Child Protective Services (CPS) and Family Assessment (FA) social workers shall refer each child in the household who is under 3 years of age, regardless of disposition, to the Health Services Administration (HSA) within 7 business days of initial contact.

*Note: The CPS or FA social worker shall inform the parents that a referral to the District's early intervention program is being made, explain the importance of having children screened during this period of early development, and provide any additional information regarding the referral and screening process.*

2. The CPS and FA social worker shall complete the 0-3 Early Intervention Screening Referral Form, place the completed form in the HSA drop box located in the clinic, sign the log book, and place a copy of the form in the hard-copy case record.
3. The HSA shall receive all referrals for screening from the CPS or FA social worker.
  - a. The OSSE database for early intervention screening is checked to determine whether a child has already been screened.
  - b. Referrals are entered into the OSSE database for children who have not previously been screened.
  - c. Document the initial referral information in FACES.NET under the Medical Appointments Details/ 0-3 Screening, the status "Scheduled".

4. The ongoing social worker shall receive all information based on the outcome of the screening from the OSSE providers and enter that information into FACES.NET.
  - a. For the outcome of the screening, documentation shall be under the Medical Appointments Details/ 0-3 Screening. Under the Status drop down pick list, the social worker shall select the applicable term, e.g. Completed, No-Show, Assessment Needed, etc.
  - b. If the child is determined to be “at risk”, OSSE will conduct a further evaluation.
5. The ongoing social worker, as applicable, shall participate in the development of the Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP) and/or the development of any transition plans with Strong Start and the biological parents.

### **Children 0-3 in Out-Of-Home Care**

1. The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) is the screening tool used during the 30-day comprehensive medical assessment. Ideally the ASQ would be completed with the biological parents or primary caregivers. When this is not possible, the Healthy Horizons Assessment Center (HHAC) specialist shall complete the ASQ with the resource parent and the child.
2. The HHAC specialist shall complete the Strong Start Referral Form for all children who are “at risk” of developmental delays as indicated by the ASQ screening.
  - a. Fax referrals to Strong Start for further evaluation.
  - b. Document under the Medical Appointments Details/ 0-3 Screening, the status “Completed”.
  - c. Maintain a tracking log of all referrals and the outcomes.
3. The HHAC specialist shall receive all follow-up from Strong Start Program concerning evaluations and provide the information to the social worker for entry into FACES.NET as a contact note and follow up.
4. The ongoing social worker, as applicable, shall participate in the development of the IFSP with Strong Start and/or the development of any transition plan as requested.

### **Children 3-5 in Out-of-Home Care**

1. HHAC specialist shall complete and email the Early Stages Referral Form for all children who are “at risk” of developmental delays as indicated by the ASQ screening and email a copy of the referral to the ongoing social worker and supervisor.
  - a. Track all referrals for screening electronically by documenting the initial referral information in FACES.NET under the Medical Appointments Details screen as a new appointment. Under the Medical Type drop down pick list, the following shall be selected: “Developmental Assessment”.
  - b. Maintain a tracking log of all referrals and the outcomes.
2. The HHAC specialist shall receive all follow-up from Early Stages concerning referrals for screening, and provide the information to the social worker for entry into FACES.NET as a contact note and follow up.
3. The ongoing social worker shall:
  - a. Document information in FACES.NET including: outcome of the screening, further evaluations and follow-up information.
  - b. Participate in any case staffings or conferences requested by Early Stages.