Selected Terms

The following terms are used throughout the Maryland Individualized Family Service Plan Process and are included for quick reference. A complete listing of definitions associated with the statewide early intervention system is included in COMAR 13A.13.01.

**Assessment** means the ongoing procedures used by appropriate qualified personnel throughout the period of a child’s eligibility to identify (a) the child’s unique strengths and needs and the services appropriate to meet those needs; and (b) the resources, priorities, and concerns of the family, and the supports and services necessary to enhance the family’s capacity to meet the developmental needs of the child.

**Early intervention services** means services which are (a) designed to meet the developmental needs of the eligible child and the needs of the family related to enhancing the child’s development; (b) selected in collaboration with the parents; (c) provided under public supervision, by qualified personnel, in conformity with an individualized family service plan, and at no cost to families, unless federal or State law provides for a system of payments by families, including sliding fees; (d) consistent with the standards of the State; and (e) to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of the child, provided in natural environments, including the home and community settings in which children without disabilities participate.

**Evaluation** means the procedures used by appropriate qualified personnel to determine a child’s initial and continuing eligibility, consistent with the definition of infants and toddlers with disabilities, including determining the status of the child in each of the following developmental areas: (a) cognitive development; (b) physical development, including vision and hearing; (c) communication development; (d) social or emotional development; and (e) adaptive development.

**Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)** means a written plan for providing early intervention and other services to an eligible child and the child’s family, which shall: (a) be developed jointly by the family and appropriate qualified personnel involved in the provision of early intervention services; (b) be based on the multidisciplinary evaluation and assessment of the child, and the assessment of the child’s family; and (c) include services necessary to enhance the development of the child and the capacity of the family to meet the special needs of the child.

**Infants and toddlers with disabilities** means children from birth through 2 years old who are eligible for early intervention services, as documented by appropriate qualified personnel, because they: (a) are experiencing at least a 25% delay, as measured and verified by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in one or more of the following developmental areas [cognitive development, physical development [including vision and hearing], communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development]; or (b) manifest atypical development or behavior, which is demonstrated by abnormal quality of performance and function in one or more of the above specified developmental areas, interferes with current development, and is likely to result in subsequent delay, even when diagnostic instruments or procedures do not document a 25% delay; or (c) have a diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay, with examples of these conditions including chromosomal abnormalities, genetic or congenital disorders, severe sensory impairments, inborn errors of metabolism, disorders reflecting disturbance of the development of the nervous system, congenital infections, disorders secondary to exposure to toxic substances, including fetal alcohol syndrome, and severe attachment disorders.

**Interim service coordinator** means the individual designated at the single point of entry to assist the referred child and the child’s family through the initial multidisciplinary evaluation and assessment and individualized family service plan process.

**Multidisciplinary** means the involvement of two or more disciplines or professions in the provision of integrated and coordinated services, including evaluation and assessment activities and the development of the IFSP.

**Natural environments** means settings that are natural or normal for the child’s age peers who have no disability.
**Parent** means a parent, a guardian, a person acting as a parent of a child, or a surrogate parent who has been appointed in accordance with established procedures.

**Qualified personnel** means persons who have met State approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the area in which the personnel are providing early intervention services.

Qualified personnel who provide early intervention services are responsible for: (a) consulting with parents, other service providers, and representatives of appropriate community agencies to ensure the effective provision of services in the area in which they provide service; (b) training parents and others regarding the provision of those services; (c) participating in the multidisciplinary team’s assessment of a child and the child’s family, and in the development of integrated goals and outcomes for the individualized family service plan.

**Service coordination** means the activities carried out by a service coordinator to assist and enable an eligible child and the child’s family to receive the rights, procedural safeguards, and services that are authorized to be provided under the State’s early intervention system. Each eligible child and the child’s family must be provided with one service coordinator who is responsible for (a) coordinating all services across agency lines and (b) serving as the single point of contact in helping parents to obtain the services and assistance they need.

Service coordination is an active process that involves: (a) assisting parents of eligible children in gaining access to the early intervention services and other services identified in the individualized family service plan; (b) coordinating the provision of early intervention services and other services (such as medical services for other than diagnostic and evaluation purposes) that the child needs or is being provided; (c) facilitating the timely delivery of available services; and (d) continuously seeking the appropriate services and situations necessary to benefit the development of each child being served for the duration of the child’s eligibility.

Service coordination activities include: (a) coordination the performance of evaluations and assessments; (b) facilitating and participating in the development, review, and evaluation of individualized family service plans; (c) assisting families in identifying available service providers; (d) coordinating and monitoring the delivery of available services; (e) informing families of the availability of advocacy services; (f) coordinating with medical and health providers; and (g) facilitating the development of a transition plan to preschool services, if appropriate.

**Service coordinator** means the individual designated in the individualized family service plan to carry out service coordination activities. Service coordinators may be employed or assigned in any way that is permitted under State law, so long as it is consistent with Part C requirements. A State’s policies and procedures for implementing the statewide system of early intervention services must be designed and implemented to ensure that service coordinators are able to effectively carry out on an interagency basis the functions and services listed above.

Service coordinators must have demonstrated knowledge and understanding about: (a) eligible children; (b) Part C of IDEA and 34 CFR 303; and (c) the nature, scope, and availability of services within the early intervention system, the system of payments for early intervention services, and other pertinent information.