

SECTION 2
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Early Intervention services are therapeutic, training, and support services that facilitate the developmental progress of children ages birth to six years. Children eligible for Early Intervention services may have certain diagnosed conditions, delays in their development, or be experiencing circumstances, which are likely to result in significant developmental problems, particularly without intervention. Services are designed to serve children who are experiencing developmental delays in one or more of the following areas: cognitive, physical, social/emotional, communication (receptive and/or expressive), and adaptive developmental skills.

Early Intervention services include developmental assessments, treatment planning, home visits, and supports to enhance the development of the child and support his or her family in the care of the child that promote the competency of the family and designated caregiver (s) to respond to the developmental needs of the child.

The purpose of this manual is to provide pertinent information to Early Intervention providers for successful participation in the South Carolina Medicaid program.

Updates and revisions to this manual will be made by the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) and will be made in writing to all providers. .

SCDHHS encourages the use of “evidence-based” practices, and “emerging best practices” in the context of a system that ensures thorough and appropriate screening, evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment planning; and fosters improvement in the delivery system of early intervention and mental health services to children in the most effective and cost-efficient manner.

In order to be covered by the Medicaid program, a service must be medically necessary. Medical necessity is defined as the need for treatment services that are necessary to diagnose, treat, cure, or which may relieve pain, improve health, or prevent an illness or participation in services is reasonably expected to relieve pain, improve or preserve health, or be essential to life. A licensed physician or LPHA must certify that the beneficiary meets the medical necessity

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW (CONT'D.)

criteria for services. This must be documented in the child's clinical record.

Early Intervention services consist of Family Training and Counseling and Interpreter services for children with a developmental delay and/or disability. These services are also available to the family on behalf of the eligible child.

To the maximum extent possible, all Early Intervention services are provided in the child's natural environment. Early Intervention services and supports should occur in settings most natural and comfortable for the eligible child and his or her family. These services should foster opportunities for the child's development of peer and family relationships with children without disabilities. Early Intervention services must promote the development of a natural system of support within the family's community. Early Intervention services assist the family in maximizing resources outlined in the Individual Family Service Plan IFSP/ Family Service Plan (FSP).

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Early Intervention services are available to Medicaid-eligible children birth to six years of age when the following criteria are met:

- The child has developmental delays in one or more of the following areas: cognitive, physical, social/emotional, communication (receptive and/or expressive), and adaptive developmental skills. This must be documented through an assessment or EPSDT screening.
- Medical necessity for the service(s) is confirmed by a physician or other LPHA
- When services are identified within the context of the child's IFSP
- The child meets eligibility requirements for services provided through South Carolina First Steps (BabyNet), South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN), or the South Carolina School For the Deaf and Blind (SCSDB)
- Resides with a family member, legal guardian, or in a community training home or other **non-institutional** setting

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ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS (CONT'D).

Medicaid is usually the payer of last resort. There are some exceptions to the provisions of Medicaid, as a payer of last resort, that allows Medicaid to be the primary payer to another federal or federally funded program and these include Medicaid-covered services listed on a Medicaid-eligible child's IFSP/FSP. If services are not listed on the IFSP/FSP, the provider must comply with third-party billing policies.

To ensure Medicaid payment, providers should verify a child's Medicaid eligibility utilizing the South Carolina Medicaid Web-based Claims Submission Tool (Web Tool). The referring state agency is responsible for ensuring that the child's eligibility is current and for furnishing the provider with the correct Medicaid ID number and the child's Medicaid card.

PROVIDER REQUIREMENTS

Providers must ensure that all treatment staff, subcontractors, and other individuals under the authority of the provider rendering Early Intervention services to Medicaid beneficiaries are qualified and properly trained.

Prior to rendering Early Intervention services, providers must document that pre-service orientation has been provided and approved by the provider's administrative agency including any specialized training requirements (*i.e.*, SCSDDB training for servicing sensory impaired and BabyNet training for Early Interventionists servicing the BabyNet population). Providers must also ensure that newly employed staff has comprehensive training and adequate supervision.

In addition to the above requirements, SC Medicaid requires a supervising entity (physician, dentist, or any program that has a supervising health professional component) to be physically located in South Carolina or within the 25-mile radius of the South Carolina border.

Providers must comply with all other applicable state and federal requirements.

PROGRAM STAFF

Early Intervention Professionals (known as Early Interventionists)

Early Interventionists must have a minimum of a bachelor's degree from an accredited university or college in early childhood education, elementary education, special education, child and/or human services field (social and

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Early Intervention Professionals (known as Early Interventionists) (Cont'd.)

behavioral), or allied health services with one year of documented experience working with infants and toddlers, early childhood development, or one year experience with children age birth to five years with disabilities or meet qualifications of a Licensed Practitioner of the Healing Arts (LPHA).

Please refer to Licensed Practitioner of the Healing Arts below for a list of qualified professionals authorized to render Early Intervention services.).

Licensed Practitioners of the Healing Arts

The following list indicates the professional designations of those considered Licensed Practitioners of the Healing Arts for Early Intervention Services:

- SC Licensed Physician
- SC Licensed Psychologist
- SC Licensed Independent Social Worker
- SC Licensed Master Social Worker
- SC Licensed Professional Counselor (master's and doctoral level only)
- SC Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
- SC Licensed Physician's Assistant
- SC Advanced Practice Registered Nurse
- SC Speech Language Pathologist
- SC Licensed Audiologist
- SC Licensed Physical Therapist
- SC Licensed Occupational Therapist

All LPHAs should have documented experience working with infants and toddlers, early childhood development, or documented experience with children age birth to five years with disabilities.

Interpreters

The **Interpreter** must hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree from an accredited university or college in interpreting, special education, or a related field, and one year of interpreting experience; or an associate degree from an accredited university or college in interpreting and three years of interpreting experience; or high school diploma with three years of interpreting experience.

SECTION 2 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION****Interpreters (Cont'd.)**

The Interpreter must be certified by the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) for one of the following certificates:

- The Comprehensive Skills Certificate (CSC)
- The Certificate of Interpretation (CI)
- The Certificate of Transliteration (CT)

PROGRAM SERVICES**Family Training and Counseling Services**

Early Intervention services include the following:

Family Training and Counseling services are interactions with the child and family as well as other team members and collaterals in natural environments to help minimize the impact of the child's disability by fostering normal growth and development. Family Training and Counseling sessions are designed to implement the goals and objectives of the IFSP/FSP provided according to the frequency outlined in the plan. Services involve assisting the family in maximizing resources as outlined in the IFSP/FSP. Documentation must show that Family Training and Counseling is a core component of the Early Intervention services provided. If services are rendered more or less frequently than listed in IFSP/FSP, the Early Intervention provider must document the reason in the clinical service note and update the plan if a change is needed.

The early interventionist shall meet with the family and discuss the possible outcomes of the Family Training and Counseling. Once trained, the parent and/or caregiver should be able to reinforce the training provided by the early interventionist.

Family Training and Counseling services are available for all family members and/or caregivers, including siblings and grandparents. If necessary, the training is provided after regular working hours or on weekends as indicated in the IFSP/FSP. Family Training and Counseling services must be provided on behalf of the child and relate to his or her treatment goals.

Family Training and Counseling services will:

- Provide the appropriate parental skills and/or supports to enhance the child's developmental growth and recreational development
- Encourage the child's participation in family activities

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Family Training and Counseling Services (Cont'd.)

- Assist the family in maximizing the resources outlined in the IFSP/FSP, including assistive technology devices, waiver supports, nutritional services, and therapies directly related to the developmental needs of the child, when necessary
- Encourage overall positive parent-child interaction
- Empower the family to be aware of and know how to exercise their child's personal rights including the choice of a provider, access to a wide range of services, and other procedural safeguards
- Encourage the family and/or caregiver to become the child's primary service provider

Family Training and Counseling services include an **assessment component**. An initial assessment is required for all Medicaid beneficiaries receiving Family Training and Counseling services. The assessment process is used to determine the strengths and the needs of a child and his/her current level of development and used to develop the IFSP/FSP. Assessments should always be timely, comprehensive, and multidisciplinary. Information for assessments must be updated throughout the year as needed.

Family Training and Counseling child assessments shall measure the following:

- Cognitive development
- Gross and fine motor development
- Communication
- Emotional and social development
- Adaptive/self-help skills
- Visual and auditory status

If the assessment is the document confirming medical necessity, it must be signed by a licensed physician or LPHA.

Program Staff

Program staff rendering Early Intervention services shall coordinate with multiple agencies to provide the services required to meet the eligible child's needs, provide parental support, and attend staff meetings with other organizations on behalf of the child at the parent's request. The Early Intervention provider assists with crisis intervention and/or

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Program Staff (Cont'd.)

emergency planning, arranges appointments at the parents' or caregiver's request, and monitors access to healthcare providers as necessary.

The Early Intervention provider coordinates transitions to and from other services (*e.g.*, between Early Intervention services and public school, Head Start, Early Head Start, and childcare in the community) and establishes a formal transition process to the community programs selected by the parents when the child is 30 months old. The Early Intervention provider will conduct a transition conference at least 90 days prior to the child's third birthday for the purpose of developing a transition plan that is incorporated into the IFSP/FSP (see **Individualized Family Service Plan/Family Service Plan** later in this section).

The family shall, at all times, remain free to choose any Medicaid-enrolled provider. At no time shall the provider limit the family's choices of a primary care physician, other medical care providers, or case managers.

Billing Frequency

Family Training and Counseling is billed in a 15-minute unit with a maximum frequency of eight per day.

Special Restrictions Related to Other Services

Family Training and Counseling services may not be billed on the same date of service as Targeted Case Management by the same provider.

Sign Language or Interpreter Services

Sign Language or Interpreter services use a system of manual, facial, or other body movements (*i.e.*, hand signs) as a means of communicating with people who are hearing impaired. The child and his or her family members shall receive training in the use of expressive and receptive sign language techniques.

Billing Frequency

Sign Language or Interpreter services are billed in a 15-minute unit with a maximum frequency of eight per day.

Special Restrictions Related to Other Services

No restrictions

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PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

CLINICAL RECORDS

Early Intervention service providers must maintain and allow appropriate access to clinical records that fully disclose the extent of services provided to the eligible child. The clinical record must contain documentation sufficient to justify Medicaid reimbursement and document that the services are medically necessary. Clinical records found to be incomplete or incorrect will result in recoupment of previous payments by SCDHHS. It is essential that internal record reviews be conducted to ensure that services are medically necessary and that the service delivery, documentation, and billing comply with Medicaid policies and procedures.

Providers are required to maintain a clinical record on each eligible child and include documentation of all Medicaid-reimbursable services. Clinical records must be current, meet documentation requirements, and provide a clear descriptive narrative of the services provided, as well as progress toward treatment goals. The information in the clinical service notes must be clearly linked to the goals and objectives listed on the IFSP/FSP. Clinical records shall be arranged in a logical order so that clinical information can be easily reviewed, copied, and audited.

Each clinical record must include the following:

- Signed Consent and Confidentiality forms
- Referral sources
- Initial Assessment signed/titled and dated by the Early Intervention provider. If used to establish medical necessity, the assessment must be signed by licensed physician or LPHA.
- Current IFSP/FSP signed/titled and dated
- Test results and evaluation reports
- Clinical service notes signed/titled and dated
- A signature sheet that identifies all staff by names, signatures, and initials

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Individualized Family Service Plan/Family Service Plan

Each eligible child receiving Early Intervention services must have an Individualized Family Service Plan/Family Service Plan. The IFSP/FSP validates the necessity and the appropriateness of the services. The IFSP/FSP is developed by the multidisciplinary team that outlines the strengths and needs of the child and his or her family.

The multidisciplinary team is composed of the family, the early interventionist, and professionals who interact with the family of the child. The team participates in the annual revision and review of the IFSP/FSP and meets at locations and times convenient for the family. The family has the right to approve or disapprove the composition of the team.

The IFSP/FSP includes, but is not limited to the following:

- The child's identifying information
- An outline to address the assessed needs of the child
- The current health and development status
- The child's assessment and evaluation results
- The goals and objectives
- The frequency and duration of services and activities outlined
- The schedule of reviews and annual redevelopment

The IFSP/FSP shall be developed within 45 days of the initial visit and must be signed/titled and dated by the multidisciplinary team members including the parent and/or caregiver. If the IFSP/FSP is used to substantiate medical necessity, it must be signed by the physician or other LPHA, with professional title, and date.

Clinical Service Notes

Early Intervention services must be documented in a clinical service note to be reimbursed by Medicaid. A clinical service note is a written summary of each service or activity provided to or on the behalf of the eligible child. The clinical service note must be clear and reflects the goals and objectives listed in the IFSP/FSP. In the event that services are discontinued, the provider must indicate the reason on the clinical service note for discontinuing the service.

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Clinical Service Notes (Cont'd.)

Clinical service notes must:

- Provide a pertinent clinical description of the activities that took place during the session, including an indication of the child's response as related to the goals and objectives listed in the IFSP/FSP
- Reflect delivery of a specific billable service
- Document that the services rendered correspond to billing as to the date of service, the type of service rendered, and the length of time of the service delivery
- Document the participation of family members and/or caregivers

Maintenance of Clinical Records

The maintenance of adequate clinical records is regarded as essential for the delivery of appropriate and quality services. Clinical records require the following maintenance procedures:

- Each entry must be individualized and child- and family-specific.
- Each entry must stand on its own and may not include arrows, ditto marks, "same as above," etc.
- All entries must be made by the provider delivering the service.
- All entries must be typed or legibly handwritten in dark ink. All copies must be legible and in chronological order. Photocopies are acceptable, if completely legible. Originals must be available if needed.
- All entries must be dated with month, day, and year and legibly signed by the provider of the service, with their professional title.
- Late entries (entries to provide additional documentation to supplement entries previously written) may be necessary at times to handle omissions in the documentation. Late entries should be rarely used, and then only used to correct a genuine error of omission or to add new information that was not discovered until a later date. Whenever late entries are made, providers

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Maintenance of Clinical Records (Cont'd.)

shall adhere to the following guidelines:

- o Identify the new entry as a “late entry”
- o Enter the current date and time.
- o Identify or refer to the date and incident for which the late entry is written.
- o Validate the source of additional information as much as possible.
- o Document all information as soon as possible.

All clinical service notes must include a narrative summary that supports the units billed. Clinical service notes must be placed in the record within seven calendar days from the date the service is rendered.

Error Correction Procedures

Clinical records are legal documents. Extreme caution should be used when altering any part of the record. Appropriate procedures for correcting errors in the clinical records are as follow:

- If an entry contains an error, clearly draw one line through the error, write “error” to the side in parentheses, enter the correction, and add signature/initials and date next to the correction. Errors in documentation should never be totally marked through, as information in error must remain legible.
- If an explanation is necessary to clarify the correction, one should be provided. In extreme circumstances, a correction and/or explanation may require a witnessed signature.
- Correction fluid, tape, or erasable ink must never be used.

Electronic Health Records

SCDHHS will accept electronic records and clinical notes in accordance with the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act (S.C. Code Ann. 26-6-10 et seq.) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) electronic health record requirements. Electronic information must be in a reasonably accessible format in order to be accepted by SCDHHS.

In general, electronic records must be maintained “to the same standards” as paper copies.

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QUALITY ASSURANCE

Medicaid requires providers to submit an annual evaluation report of their Medicaid programs. Providers must submit an annual report to SCDHHS no later than 60 days following the end of the fiscal year. The annual report should include the following:

- A detailed description of the program's stated goals, and objectives
- Outcomes based on identified needs
- A summary of the consumer satisfaction surveys
- Evidence of the program's compliance with the IFSP/FSP training timelines and procedures
- Evidence of compliance with the staff qualifications and the program guidelines under Medicaid policies and procedures
- Corrective action plans for compliance deficiencies

Results of the evaluations, including the corrective action plans will be used to review policies and practices and to institute changes when indicated.

Evaluations should be forwarded to:

South Carolina Department of Health and Human
Services
Division of Behavioral Health
Program Manager Early Intervention Policy
Post Office Box 8206
Columbia, SC 29202-8206

PROCEDURAL AND DIAGNOSIS CODING

In 1996, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) implemented the National Correct Coding Initiative (CCI) to control improper coding that leads to inappropriate increased payment for health care services. The South Carolina Medicaid Program utilizes Medicare reimbursement principles. Therefore, the agency will use CCI edits to evaluate billing of Current Procedural Terminology (CTP) codes and Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) codes by Medicaid providers in post-payment review of providers' records. For assistance in billing, providers may access the CCI Edit information online at the CMS Web site, <http://www.cms.hhs.gov>.

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NON-COVERED SERVICES

The following are NOT Medicaid reimbursable services:

1. Traveling to and from the various locations where services are rendered
2. Copying, filing, mailing reports, and other administrative duties
3. Time spent writing clinical service notes
4. Time spent attending provider, regional, and/or central office training or other agency training
5. Developing and/or mailing form letters that do not substantiate a billable activity specific to the child and/or reflective of a child's need
6. Attempted phone calls, home visits or attempted face to face contacts
7. Re-examining records (record reviews) for the purposes of familiarization
8. Participating in recreational, leisure, or social activities with a child just for social reasons unrelated to an IFSP/FSP goal
9. Submitting changes to any beneficiary information system, data tracking system, or review of documents regarding such systems
10. Observing a child. **Exception:** Observation for an assessment and plan development purposes
11. Providing emotional support. **Exception:** Providing information in a crisis situation
12. Participating in court issues
13. Billing for services after the IFSP/FSP expires
14. Billing for services if the provider has not completed all credential requirements within the specified time period
15. When the child resides in a nursing home, a correctional facility, or an intermediate care facility

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