Eligibility Guidance for Transition from Early ACCESS (IDEA Part C) to Special Education (IDEA Part B)

The below guidance was developed through a collaboration between Early ACCESS and special education practitioners and the Iowa Department of Education. This tool identifies practices that support a seamless transition for children exiting Early ACCESS services and being evaluated to determine eligibility for special education.

This guidance was developed after statewide Early ACCESS and early childhood leadership teams identified several challenges in transitioning from Early ACCESS services to special education. Some of these challenges include:

- maintaining continuity of family-guided routines-based interventions and caregiver coaching during the process of determining eligibility for special education;

- understanding how and what data from multiple Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) sources contribute to special education eligibility decisions (e.g., family's observations, service provider notes, IFSP child outcomes data, Early ACCESS reports);

- developing familiarity with Early ACCESS data sources and special education requirements so key information from families and providers inform special education eligibility decisions;

- changing team members from Early ACCESS and special education teams; and

- using evidence-based practices in Early ACCESS within family routines (and special education providers do not typically embed interventions into family routines); therefore, making special education eligibility decisions more complex.

This guidance was developed to support Early ACCESS and special education teams in collaborating to both meet child and family needs as well as contribute essential information for a comprehensive Full and Individual Initial Evaluation (FIE) to make an eligibility determination for special education.

The tables below provide guidance regarding practices that both support early intervention service provision as well as inform special education eligibility decisions. Additionally, guidance is provided regarding the types of information that can be gathered from the IFSP and Early ACCESS service providers to support special education eligibility decisions. A comprehensive FIE to determine eligibility for special education should consider multiple sources of information such as these to obtain additional information in addressing evaluation questions and making eligibility and programming decisions.

The tables below do not include comprehensive procedures or criteria for eligibility decisions or IFSP services. Additional guidance can be found in Iowa's Special Education Eligibility and Evaluation Standards, the Iowa Early ACCESS Procedures Manual, Iowa Administrative Rules for Special Education, and Area Education Agency (AEA) Special Education Procedures.

Suggested Practices

The information below provides a description of suggested practices that aid in both meeting a child's needs during IFSP services and contributing essential information toward special education eligibility decisions.

- Focus on building a relationship with the family to encourage ongoing open communication and update IFSP based on family concerns within routines.

- Describe concerns across all developmental areas and update performance on all areas at least annually (refer to the Iowa Early Learning Standards).

- Develop outcomes that are FUMM (Family-identified, Useful/participation-based, Meaningful, Measurable).

- Update outcomes in provider progress notes/log on every visit and include specific examples such as changes in the child's performance and family and agency supports.

- Include sufficient details in the outcome progress notes/log to document opportunities that the family provided the child to practice as well as what contributed to either limit or improve performance (e.g., types of family engagement, activities, prompts, interactions, consequences).

- Utilize all available data, including written documentation, interviews with providers, progress on child and family outcomes, and observations to inform eligibility decisions.

- Collaborate with Early ACCESS, special education professionals, and families to review the child's routines at home and early childhood settings (if applicable) to determine potential levels of independence and supports needed under various conditions.

- Support the family throughout the transition process by minimizing disruption in services and building positive relationships among Early ACCESS service providers, early childhood special education teachers, special education support service providers, and school districts.

Note: A common source of information is "*Associated Files*" in the web IFSP. Be sure to review these files to inform special education eligibility.

Description of the Concern: IFSP Data to Inform Special Education Eligibility Decisions

The determination of eligibility for special education requires the evaluation team to describe the concern(s). Concerns for special education can fall into one or more of the seven performance domains which align to the [Iowa Early Learning Standards](#) and developmental areas. Evaluations should be comprehensive and address all concerns related to the suspected disability. Concerns related to one or more of the performance domains for special education eligibility should be described: Academic, Behavior, Communication, Health, Hearing/Vision, Adaptive, Physical.

Key Tool: A child's strengths, interests, preferences, and concerns may be described in terms such as developmental areas, widely-held expectations, performance domains, or learning standards and benchmarks. Therefore, a tool was created to illustrate the [crosswalk of common terms](#) used to describe young children's age-relevant abilities.

Information to Inform Special Education Eligibility: The IFSP, Early ACCESS service providers, family, and community partners provide details about the child's preferences, interests, strengths, and concerns as they relate to one or more of the seven performance domains.

Information to Inform Special Education Eligibility:

The below table provides guidance on how specific tabs of the IFSP contribute to describing the concern for special education eligibility decisions, including but not limited to, the following information:

- Child strengths, activities and preferences as well as concerns, priorities, child and family outcomes as identified from family, care providers, and private therapy or other agency providers
- Persistence, intensity, and pervasiveness of the concern across time and settings
- Summary of family resources that influence learning and development
- Engagement in age appropriate daily routines and activities (e.g., clean-up, household chores, dressing, reading, running errands) to aid in determining if a concern is due to lack of opportunity
- Description of child's performance in the developmental areas identified in the Iowa Early Learning Standards

  Note: Always look in "Associated Files" in the web IFSP

IFSP Data Sources	Data to Inform Special Education Eligibility: Description of Concern
Family tab; **Statements** sub-tab (includes child and family strengths, concerns, priorities)	Sources of Information (e.g.,): ● Routines Based Interview (family interview) ● ECO Mapping, etc. Types of Information: ● Child strengths, activities and preferences ● Family concerns, priorities, outcomes and goals ● Concerns identified and addressed through therapy or other agency involvement - (e.g., fine motor concerns, speech-language concerns, etc.). ● Summary of family resources that influence learning and development Limitations: ● Family may decline to have family assessment recorded in IFSP ● Family may withhold or may not be generous in sharing information ● Length of time in Early ACCESS may limit the information that is obtained and shared by family
Eval/Assess tab	Sources of Information (e.g.,): ● Routines-Based Interventions (what families do to address concerns) ● ECO Mapping (resources family has to address concerns) ● Private therapy/services reports ● *Developmental Assessment of Young Children* (DAYC) (skills/curriculum) ● *Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System for Infants and Children* (AEPS) (skills/curriculum), etc. Types of Information: ● Child strengths, activities, and preferences ● Summary of family resources that influence learning and development ● Engagement in age appropriate daily routines and activities (e.g., clean-up, household chores, dressing, reading, running errands) to aid in determining if concern is due to lack of opportunity ● Addresses persistence, intensity, and pervasiveness across time and settings of the concern (e.g., if there has or has not been access to learning opportunities) ● Description of child's performance on developmental milestones across all domains (current strengths, areas of concern or delay, and progress) Limitations: ● IFSP Evaluation data may not be current

Outcomes tab; includes **"Outcome Progress"** at bottom of loaded outcomes page	Sources of Information: • Provider progress notes/log • Family reports • Progress monitoring tool • Observation during service provision • Summary of progress Types of Information: • Progress made toward outcome while services are in place (e.g., indicated by progress monitoring, family report) • Adjustments made over time to child and family outcomes • Team members who support child and family outcomes • Child and Family Outcomes provide current information about concern/s Limitations: • Additional data may need to be gathered to support qualitative and quantitative data from the IFSP • If outcomes are not written using FUMM (Family-identified, Useful/participation-based, Meaningful, Measurable) they may not be as useful for decision-making

Instruction to Address Concern(s): IFSP Data to Inform Special Education Eligibility Decisions

The determination of eligibility for special education requires the evaluation team to describe the instructional strategies that were reviewed and/or established to address the concern/s (including IFSP services, family and community provided opportunities, and/or targeted/intensified supports). For preschool-age children, instructional strategies include the child's participation in appropriate activities consistent with age-relevant abilities or milestones typically developing children of the same age would be performing or would have achieved. ([Administrative Rules for Special Education](#) 41.51(1))

The description should include:

- How the learner's strengths were considered during instruction
- How strategies matched the learner's needs
- How instruction was implemented as intended
- How progress was measured

Information to Inform Special Education Eligibility:

The below table provides guidance on how specific tabs of the IFSP contribute to describing the instruction to address concerns for special education eligibility decisions, including but not limited to, the following information:

- Strategies the family uses to support their child's development toward meeting outcomes
- How strategies the family uses are embedded into family routines so as to address child interests and strengths
- Opportunities for the child's engagement in appropriate activities and daily routines (e.g., clean-up, household chores, dressing, reading, running errands)
- Regularity and fidelity with which family and service providers provided supports
- How IFSP outcomes and progress were measured

Note: Always look in "Associated Files" in the web IFSP

IFSP Data Sources	Data to Inform Special Education Eligibility: Instruction to Address Concern/s
Outcomes tab; includes **"Outcome Progress"** at bottom of loaded outcomes page	Sources of Information: ● Review of outcomes tab, progress monitoring (e.g., AEPS, etc.), review of video from family ● Interview with service provider/s and family ● Observation of family intervention Type of Information: ● Description of the family strategies to meet outcomes ● How outcomes and progress were measured ● How the instruction addressed the learner needs and their strengths ● Description of opportunities to participate in activities that occur for children of similar age without disabilities Limitations: ● Fidelity of family implementation of interventions may be difficult to assess ● Number of home visits by Early ACCESS service provider(s) likely does not correspond to family's implementation of interventions ● Additional data may need to be gathered to support qualitative and quantitative data from IFSP ● If outcomes are not written using FUMM (Family-identified, Useful/participation-based, Meaningful, Measurable), they may not be as useful for decision-making ● Outcomes are created based on family priority, not necessarily all areas of concern which would be required for a comprehensive evaluation
Services tab	Sources of Information: ● Provider progress notes/log ● Interview with Early ACCESS providers Type of Information: ● Developmentally appropriate activities and practices the child is provided ● Frequency, intensity, method, length, and location of services ● Types of Early ACCESS service providers ● Missed visits

	Limitations: - Fidelity of family implementation of interventions may be difficult to assess - Number of home visits by Early ACCESS service provider(s) likely will not correspond to family's implementation of interventions - The frequency and intensity of services listed may not accurately reflect the services that family is actually receiving
Family tab; **Providers** sub-tab: lists other providers involved with the family	Sources of Information: - Review documents and interview provider of services (e.g., medical providers, Department of Human Services, home visitation programs, child care, Early Head Start, etc.) - Review exchange/releases for family (on forms tab) - Waivers information (insurance sub-tab) Types of Information: - List of other services and providers involved with the family and child (formal and informal supports) Limitations: - Key collaborators may not be included; it is important to talk with the Early ACCESS providers and the family to gather this information

Progress: IFSP Data to Inform Special Education Eligibility Decisions

The determination of eligibility for special education requires the evaluation team to discuss the performance data resulting from the learner's response to the instruction. This should include:

- Describe the learner's initial performance level and performance level following instruction
- Summarize the learner's rate of progress when compared with expected performance over the same time period
- Describe any difference between the two rates
- Summarize the implications of the learner's rate of progress

Key Tools:

- [Iowa Early Learning Standards](#)

Information to Inform Special Education Eligibility:

The below table provides guidance on how specific tabs of the IFSP contribute to describing the child's progress over time which informs special education eligibility decisions, including but not limited to, the following information:

- Qualitative and quantitative information about changes in development over time as gathered through family, providers, ongoing assessments, etc.
- Fidelity of implementation, consistency of visits, and family engagement in early intervention
- Indicators of continued need

Note: Always look in "Associated Files" in the web IFSP

IFSP Data Sources	Data to Inform Special Education Eligibility: Progress
Outcomes tab; includes **"Outcome Progress"** at bottom of loaded outcomes page	Sources of Information: ● Provider progress notes/log ● Progress monitoring tool ● Family reports ● Observation of changes in skill over time obtained during service provision ● Summary of progress Types of Information: ● Family report of changes in progress ● Qualitative and quantitative information about changes in development over time ● Observations of the child over time that are noted by service providers Limitations: ● Additional data may need to be gathered to support qualitative and quantitative data from the IFSP ● If outcomes are not written using FUMM (Family-identified, ● Useful/participation-based, Meaningful, Measurable), they may not be as useful for decision-making
Services tab	Sources of Information: ● Provider progress notes/log ● Interview with provider Type of Info: ● Frequency, intensity, method, length, and location of services ● Types of Early ACCESS providers ● Consistency of services and impact on learning including issues that affect services (e.g., sickness, cancellation) Limitations: ● Fidelity of family implementation of early intervention may be difficult to assess and may impact progress ● Number of home visits by Early ACCESS service provider(s) likely will not correspond to family's implementation of interventions ● The frequency and intensity of services listed may not accurately reflect the services that family is actually receiving

Forms tab; **Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO)** listed under "**Form Title**" (completed at initial meeting and at exit): Social-Emotional; Knowledge/Skills; Meet Needs	Sources of information: ● Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) <u>rating</u> (1 to 7) and answer to progress question addressing if child has gained new skills or behaviors Types of information: ● Consolidated indicator of progress over time and/or continued need Limitations: ● ECO summary completed at entrance and exit only ● ECO progress reflects any degree of change - qualitative and/or quantitative progress in skills or behaviors child has gained ● Inconsistency in completing the ECO summary process may affect reliability

Discrepancy: IFSP Data to Inform Special Education Eligibility Decisions

Evaluation for special education services requires the evaluation team describe the learner's performance compared to age/developmental expectations. Components of discrepancy should include:

- multiple and recent data sources related to the domain and area(s) of concern,
- description of peer/expected performance, and
- description of the learner's current level of performance.

Key Tools:

- [Crosswalk of common terms](#)
- [Iowa Early Learning Standards](#)

Information to Inform Special Education Eligibility:

The below table provides guidance on how specific tabs of the IFSP contribute to describing the discrepancy between the child's development and typical developmental expectations to inform special education eligibility decisions, including but not limited to, the following information:

- Child's present level of development
- Qualitative and quantitative description of child's performance on the typical developmental expectations in each of the area/s of concern gathered from multiple sources

Note: Always look in "Associated Files" in the web IFSP

IFSP Data Sources	Data to Inform Special Education Eligibility: Discrepancy
Eval/Assess tab	Sources of Information (e.g.): ● Review, Interview, Observation, Test (RIOT) ● Routines Based Interview ● Private therapy and services reports ● *DAYC-2* (skills/curriculum) ● *AEPS* (skills/curriculum) ● Etc. Types of Information: ● Child's present level of development ● Description of child's performance on typical developmental expectations or milestones across all domains (current strengths and unique needs) Limitations: ● Test scores may not be updated ● Standard scores may not be available
Forms tab; **Early Childhood Outcomes** listed under "**Form Title**" (completed at initial meeting and at exit): Social-Emotional; Knowledge/ Skills; Meet Needs	Sources of information: ● ECO rating (1 to 7) and answer to progress question addressing if child has gained new skills or behaviors while receiving Early ACCESS Types of information: ● Consolidated indicator of progress over time and/or continued need Limitations: ● ECO summary completed at entrance and exit only ● ECO progress reflects any degree of change - qualitative and/or quantitative progress in skills or behaviors child has gained ● Inconsistency in completing the ECO summary process may affect reliability

Needs (Special Education and Support/Related Service Needs): IFSP Data to Inform Special Education Eligibility Decisions

Evaluation for special education services requires the evaluation team to describe all of the child's special education and support/related service needs, whether or not commonly linked to the disability.

In conducting the evaluation for young children who may require special education, the team must include information related to enabling the child to participate in appropriate activities ([Administrative Rules for Special Education](), 41.51(1)). Appropriate activities are consistent with age-relevant abilities or milestones (i.e., [Iowa Early Learning Standards]()) and are embedded into activities and routines throughout the child's typical day (e.g., at child care, home, other early childhood settings, etc.).

Needs should be described to include the following (SCIL):

Setting. What aspects of the environment help or hinder the child's learning? The setting is the environment in which instruction takes place. It includes the physical arrangement of the setting, routines, schedule, expectations, and interactions among and between those in the environment such as the family members, teachers, learner, and others in the environment. The setting also includes the interaction of the learner and the learner's natural environment, such as family routines or community activities.

Curriculum. What are the strengths or gaps between the child's skills and the curriculum expectations? Curriculum is what is taught. This includes the Iowa Early Learning Standards and benchmarks and skills that are the focus of instruction, both on a short-term and a long-term basis. It also includes alignment of curriculum, instruction, and ongoing child assessment.

Instruction. How does the child respond to various instructional strategies? What strategies have you already tried? Instruction is how curriculum is taught. It includes selection and implementation of various teaching techniques and instructional materials. For children and families in Early ACCESS, this includes family-guided routines-based interventions and caregiver coaching.

Learner. What are the child's unique qualities or traits? What would increase the child's participation? Is the learner independent? What does a typical response look like? The learner is the individual being taught. This includes the learner's performance data.

Key Tools:

- [Crosswalk of common terms](#)
- [SCIL Matrix](#)

Information to Inform Special Education Eligibility:

The below table provides guidance on how specific tabs of the IFSP contribute to descriptions of the child's educational needs to inform special education eligibility decisions, including but not limited to, the following information:

- Strategies that worked best at children's home and families felt comfortable continuing as well as those strategies too complex for the family to implement
- Frequency, intensity, method, length, duration, and location of services were planned and provided (as reviewed since entry into Early ACCESS)
- Specific skills the child worked on and achieved; types of interventions and supports the child needed to succeed
- Description of recommendations of activities the child needed to progress

Note: Always look in "Associated Files" in the web IFSP

IFSP Data Sources	Data to Inform Special Education Eligibility: Needs (special education and related service needs)
Eval/Assess tab	Sources of Information (e.g.): ● RIOT ● PEACH tool ● *DAYC-2/AEPS*/Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) ● Service provider assessments ● Community provider reports ● Checklists and observations to identify unique needs Types of Information: ● Identify child's strengths, needs, and abilities in all developmental areas to determine appropriate early intervention services ● Description of recommendations of activities the child needs to progress Limitations: ● IFSP evaluation data may not be current ● Amount of information depends on how long the family has participating in Early ACCESS and receiving IFSP services ● More special education evaluation data will be needed if IFSP services have been in place for little time or it was a late referral ● Families' homes, child care, and other early childhood settings have different expectations and structures; it may be difficult to make generalizations about the child's needs in these various settings ● Vocabulary used in Early ACCESS and special education is different (i.e., Developmental Areas for Early ACCESS and Performance Domains for special education). Therefore, a tool was created to illustrate the crosswalk of common terms used to describe young children's age-relevant abilities.

Outcomes tab; includes **"Outcome Progress"** at bottom of loaded outcomes page	Sources of Information: ● Provider progress notes/log ● Interview with service provider ● IFSP Child and Family Outcomes met and not met as well as supports provided to address outcomes ● Strategies used by family (called a variety of names across the state - clipboard sheet carbon copied to parent) - will be in child's file, not in IFSP Types of Information: ● Specific skills the child worked on and achieved; types of interventions and supports the child needed to succeed ● Strategies that worked best at children's homes and that families felt comfortable continuing as well as those strategies; too complex for the family to implement ● Revisions made to support progress toward achieving IFSP Child and Family Outcomes Limitations: ● IFSP focuses on family identified resources, priorities, and concerns and may not address all areas of need; information about the child's needs in other performance domains may need to be gathered as part of the FIE ● Family priority for the IFSP family and child outcomes may be difficult to generalize to a school or other early childhood settings
Services tab	Sources of Information: ● Provider progress notes/log ● Interview with Early ACCESS providers who have logged notes ● Notes from Early ACCESS providers who have engaged with family but may not be providing early intervention services specified on the IFSP Types of Information: ● Planned types and amounts of services and settings that promote learning ● Frequency, intensity, method, length, and location of services to be provided ● Reasons for change in services noted

	● Consistency of services and impact on learning including issues that affect services (e.g., sickness, cancellation) Limitations: ● May require interview with service providers as IFSP may be written broadly (e.g., x times/year) ● May describe service history, but may not be detailed ● Special education staff may not be able to access provider progress notes/log before the eligibility meeting ● Frequency and intensity of services listed may not thoroughly represent the services that family is receiving ● Provider progress notes/log are not always complete ● Services listed may not thoroughly represent reflect all developmental areas being addressed by Early ACCESS provider(s)
Family tab; **Providers** sub-tab: lists other providers involved with the family	Sources of Information: ● Review and interview of provider of services (e.g., medical providers, Department of Human Services, home visitation programs, child care, Early Head Start, etc.) ● Review exchange/releases for family (on forms tab) ● Waivers information (insurance sub-tab) Types of Information: ● Report and interviews reflecting the types and amounts of services the child has received and may continue to need ● Types of settings the child has experienced ● Language spoken at home and/or that the child has been exposed to (child information sub-tab) Limitations: ● Information may have limited detail or be outdated

Evidence for Access to Appropriate Instruction and Concern is not due to Limited English Proficiency: IFSP Data to Inform Special Education Eligibility Decisions

Evaluation for special education services requires the evaluation team describe evidence indicating whether the child responds to appropriate instruction. Evidence of appropriate instruction, both before and during the evaluation, should be described and reviewed.

Note: A learner should not be identified as having a disability before concluding that his/her performance deficits are not the result of a lack of appropriate instruction. For preschool-age children, what evidence indicates the child has received instruction and appropriate activities aligned with the Iowa Early Learning Standards provided within daily routines and activities either in a child's home or in an early childhood setting that typically developing children of the same age would be receiving? (Administrative Rules for Special Education, 41.51(1))

Key Tools:

- Crosswalk of common terms

Information to Inform Special Education Eligibility:

The below table provides guidance on how specific tabs of the IFSP contribute to describing the child's access to appropriate instruction to inform special education eligibility decisions, including but not limited to, the following information:

- How the language spoken in the home may influence learning
- How the family's activities and routines support learning
- How additional services and community partners support learning
- Provider progress notes/log toward achieving family and child outcomes

Note: Always look in "Associated Files" in the web IFSP

IFSP Data Sources	Data to Inform Special Education Eligibility: Evidence for Access to Appropriate Instruction & Concern is not due to Limited English Proficiency
Family tab; **Statements** sub-tab (includes child and family strengths, concerns, priorities)	Sources of Information: ● Family interview tool ● Child and family strengths, concerns, resources and priorities Types of Information: ● Language(s) spoken in the home (child information sub-tab) ● English as a Second Language and understanding of English ● Family activities and routines ● Informal/formal supports and resources, and/or interventions such as Early Head Start Limitations: ● Opportunities to complete a family assessment are required only at initial entry ● Information may have limited detail or be outdated ● Providing family statements may be declined by the family
Outcomes tab; includes **"Outcome Progress"** at bottom of loaded outcomes page	Sources of Information: ● IFSP Child and Family Outcomes ● Provider progress notes/log ● Interview with providers Types of Information: ● IFSP Child Outcomes addressing developmental needs in areas of physical, cognitive, communication, social or emotional, and adaptive development ● IFSP strategies with description of frequency, intensity, method, length, and duration of services ● Provider progress notes/log toward achieving IFSP Child Outcomes Limitations: ● Information may be limited depending on the IFSP Child Outcomes and documentation over time ● System does not require a routine review of IFSP Child Outcomes
Services tab	Sources of Information: ● Services and providers ● Method of delivery (individual or group) ● Provider progress notes/log

Types of Information:
- Frequency, intensity, method, length, and location of services provided over time
- Review of historical picture of services may aid in determining what instruction was provided
- Reasons for change in services noted
- Early ACCESS providers or other individuals who provide services (child; child:adult; family:caregiver)

Limitations:
- The family identifies what services are desired to meet priorities and concerns
- Child may not necessarily receive all services s/he needs based on developmental delays based on family choice
- The frequency and intensity of services listed may not thoroughly represent the services that family is receiving
- Provider progress notes/log may not be complete
- Services listed may not thoroughly represent all developmental skills being addressed by Early ACCESS provider(s)