



Florida's Early Intervention Professional Competencies

A. Understanding Early Steps

1. Demonstrates knowledge of Early Steps mission and philosophy, eligibility requirements, service areas, and state and local program structure.
2. Demonstrates knowledge of the Early Steps Program policy and guidance documents, quality assurance standards and indicators, and local Community Plan.
3. Demonstrates knowledge of relevant legislation impacting developmentally delayed/disabled infants, toddlers, young children and their families including, but not limited to: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, Parts B and C) and the Americans with Disabilities Act.
4. Demonstrates knowledge of the federal regulations (IDEA, Part C) and state requirements for Florida's version of the IFSP (Individualized Family Support Plan or IFSP).
5. Demonstrates knowledge of "child find" legislation, procedures, and local practices.
6. Demonstrates knowledge of the federal requirements and state regulations for service coordination.
7. Demonstrates knowledge of the federal requirements and state regulations for transition.
8. Demonstrates knowledge of federal and state procedural safeguards and due process requirements.
9. Demonstrates knowledge of federal, state, and local requirements and procedures for record keeping, reporting, and confidentiality.
10. Demonstrates knowledge of primary funding streams for early intervention services and the system of payment for early intervention services.
11. Demonstrates knowledge of state service guidelines and Medicaid requirements.
12. Demonstrates knowledge of state policy and procedures for responding to and reporting child abuse, neglect, and emotional distress.

B. Understanding the Child and the Family

1. Demonstrates awareness of the critical development that occurs during the prenatal period to three years of age.

2. Demonstrates knowledge of developmental theories and interrelatedness of developmental domains.
3. Demonstrates knowledge of the impact of prenatal, perinatal, and postnatal factors that place a child at risk for developmental delay or disability. These may include, but are not limited to attachment/emotional, environmental/cultural, abuse/neglect, biological, prematurity, birth trauma, and parental.
4. Demonstrates knowledge of types of developmental disabilities and disorders, their causes, symptoms, and impact on the child and family (i.e. sensory impairments, chronic illness, genetic syndromes, and cognitive delays).
5. Demonstrates knowledge of newborn development for an infant who is a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) graduate, including pertinent medical information and observational signals, developmental milestones and needs.
6. Demonstrates knowledge of typical and atypical development as a basis for developmental expectations.
7. Demonstrates knowledge of how developmental delays may impact a child throughout his/her life.
8. Demonstrates knowledge of frequently used medications and the affects for children with special needs.
9. Demonstrates awareness of family values across diverse cultures, languages, ethnic groups, and socioeconomic groups.
10. Demonstrates understanding of family systems theory.
11. Demonstrates knowledge of sources of support and information for families.
12. Demonstrates knowledge of the impact a special needs child has on the family, and how the impact on the family affects the child.
13. Demonstrates knowledge of the critical role the family plays in the life of the child, the child's development, and the child's self-image.
14. Demonstrates knowledge of first aid, CPR, and emergency care of seizures.

C. Understanding Evaluation and Assessment, Planning, and Service Provision

1. Demonstrates knowledge of the critical role the family plays in the screening, evaluation, and assessment processes.
2. Demonstrates knowledge of approaches/models for assessment including multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary as well as the advantages of each.

3. Demonstrates knowledge of principles of effective assessment including, family driven, strength based, functional, and authentic.
4. Demonstrates knowledge of possible influences /differences on the assessment process (i.e. cultural norms, geography, and language).
5. Demonstrates knowledge of types of assessment tools/instruments and their uses and limitations (i.e. norm-referenced tests, criterion reference tests, observation, and parent report).
6. Demonstrates knowledge of assessment strategies to determine the characteristics, sequence, and stages of child's development in the areas of physical, motor, communication, social-emotional, self-help/adaptive, cognitive, sensory, play, nutrition and feeding.
7. Demonstrates knowledge of appropriate basic health, safety, nutrition, and sleep appraisals.
8. Demonstrates knowledge of available resources for assessment including assistive technology.
9. Demonstrates knowledge of assessment strategies to determine family concerns, priorities and resources.
10. Demonstrates knowledge of the role of the Service Coordinator including first contacts, evaluation and assessment, planning, facilitating and implementing the IFSP.
11. Demonstrates knowledge of transition points for an infant/toddler/family including NICU/hospital to home, home to childcare, early intervention to preschool, and preschool to primary.
12. Demonstrates knowledge of adult learning principles that promote maximum involvement of family members and child caregivers.

D. Understanding Teams in Service Provision

1. Demonstrates knowledge of the differences among the following service provision models: multidisciplinary teams, interdisciplinary teams, and transdisciplinary teams.
2. Demonstrates knowledge of the role of team members, including the family in each of the models.
3. Demonstrates knowledge of the benefits of service provision teams for children, families, and providers.
4. Demonstrates knowledge of a wide variety of potential team members and their functions (i.e. nurse, educator, parent, physical therapist, speech/language pathologist).
5. Demonstrates awareness of attributes of successful teams (i.e. role release, openness, consensus building).
6. Demonstrates knowledge of team development theory and stages of team development.

7. Demonstrates knowledge of the consultative model for providing early intervention services and its benefits.

E. Completing Child and Family Assessment

1. Demonstrates ability to use communication principles and techniques with families (i.e., active listening, reflections of feelings and content, questioning techniques).
2. Demonstrates ability to establish a collaborative partnership with the family and engage them in the assessment process.
3. Demonstrates ability to explain the components of the evaluation and assessment process to the family including screening, pre-assessment planning, child assessment, and family assessment of concerns, priorities, resources, and periodic review.
4. Demonstrates ability to determine which team model should be employed, and who should be part of the team for evaluation and assessment, as guided by referral information and the family's needs, concerns and priorities for their child's development.
5. Demonstrates ability to select and apply appropriate assessment tools/instruments/strategies to use for child evaluation and assessment, as guided by referral information and the family's needs, concerns and priorities for their child's development.
6. Demonstrates ability to participate as a team member with families and other professionals in planning and conducting evaluation and assessment activities.
7. Demonstrates ability to conduct a home assessment to identify safety issues to incorporate into the IFSP.
8. Demonstrates ability to assess the characteristics, sequence, and stages of an individual child's development in the following areas: physical, motor, communication, social-emotional, self-help/adaptive, cognitive, sensory, play, and nutrition/feeding.
9. Demonstrates ability to conduct a family assessment, using appropriate tools and techniques to address family concerns, priorities, and resources. Considers available family supports, daily routines, and adaptations for developing goals for the IFSP.
10. Demonstrates ability to employ all necessary resources for evaluation and assessment including assistive technology.
11. Demonstrates ability to provide adjustments/considerations for cultural and linguistic differences.
12. Demonstrates ability to effectively interpret, summarize, and communicate the findings of the evaluation and assessment in verbal and written forms that may be easily understood by family members and other team members to include common, understandable language; the family's concerns, priorities and resources; logically organized pertinent information; recommendations.

13. Demonstrates ability to provide recommendations for functional, routine-based interventions linked to assessment findings.
14. Demonstrates ability to ensure completion of all assessments and communicate results in a professional and timely manner.

F. Developing the Individualized Family Support Plan

1. Demonstrates the ability to develop an IFSP, with the family and other team members, which is family-driven, culturally sensitive, and based on consensus decision-making.
2. Demonstrates the ability to develop an IFSP, with the family and other team members, which is measurable (with regular documented evidence of progress toward achieving outcomes).
3. Demonstrates the ability, with the family and other team members, to use evaluation and assessment information to formulate outcomes and to identify effective strategies, activities and resources that address those outcomes.
4. Demonstrates ability to identify and recommend available resources within the child's family and community and how they are accessed and/or strengthened to meet the unique needs of the individual child and family.
5. Demonstrates ability to develop an IFSP, with the family and other team members, with integrated interventions that focus on children's interests within the context of family preferences and daily routines, including natural interactions with family members and other caregivers.
6. Demonstrates ability, with the family and other team members, to develop a plan to deliver services in the natural environment, when not immediately feasible to do so.
7. Demonstrates ability to determine appropriate developmental interventions to be included in the IFSP that will reduce stress, promote self-regulation and interaction.
8. Demonstrates the ability to suggest developmental activities to address immediate family/caregiver concerns.
9. Demonstrates ability to facilitate the ongoing IFSP process that is adaptable to individual child and family's changing needs
10. Demonstrates ability to integrate transition planning into the IFSP process (i.e., writing child/family transition outcomes, activities, etc.).
11. Demonstrates ability to identify sources for payment of services including Medicaid, private insurance, school-sponsored services, etc.

G. Implementing the Individualized Family Support Plan and Service Delivery

1. Demonstrates ability to maintain a collaborative partnership with the family to successfully implement the IFSP.
2. Demonstrates ability to consult with others and collaborate as a team member to implement the IFSP
3. Demonstrates the ability, with the family and other team members, to implement and monitor the IFSP that incorporates child and family outcomes within natural environments.
4. Demonstrates ability to provide ongoing assistance to the family in understanding their procedural safeguards.
5. Demonstrates ability to assist the family in establishing relationships with well childcare providers including primary health provider, vision/hearing screening, and immunizations.
6. Demonstrates ability to implement integrated interventions that focus on children's interests within the context of family preferences and daily routines including natural interactions with family members and other caregivers
7. Demonstrates ability to assist family in accessing resources in the community outlined in the IFSP, while considering the unique needs of the family including: emotional, language, cultural, religious, and geographic.
8. Demonstrates ability to assist the family in integrating the child into the most natural learning environments to the greatest degree possible.
9. Demonstrates ability to assist the family in accessing services in the most natural service delivery environments including: home, sitter's home, daycare home, family member's home, neighborhood playgroup, childcare with appropriate ratios of typically/atypically developing children, community setting, and other individualized options.
10. Demonstrates ability to collaborate with service providers (including family members) to evaluate appropriateness of curricula being used to plan for daily activities while considering the child's physical, cognitive, social-emotional, self-help/adaptive skills, and language development.
11. Demonstrates ability to identify and use developmentally and functionally appropriate materials, equipment, and environments.
12. Demonstrates ability to provide periodic evaluations of the child's progress as indicated in the IFSP.
13. Demonstrates ability to implement policies and procedures that support children and families as they transition into, within, and from Early Steps.

H. Professionalism and Ethics

1. Demonstrates professionalism by displaying appropriate characteristics and behaviors associated with workplace roles and relationships.
2. Demonstrates knowledge of professional standards of practice and codes of ethics and behaviors.
3. Demonstrates knowledge of the role of advocacy as a professional.
4. Demonstrates knowledge of professional organizations in the field of early intervention and children with special needs.
5. Demonstrates understanding of self-empowerment and responsibility for personal management by developing a personal vision.