

Glossary of Early Childhood Terms

Help Me Grow Leadership Team – June 2015

Federal laws

IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IDEA is the Federal special education law that ensures services to children with disabilities nationwide.

- Infants and toddlers with disabilities (birth through age 2 years) and their families receive early intervention services under IDEA **Part C**. This is also called **Early Intervention (EI)**.
- Children and youth (ages 3-21) receive special education and related services under IDEA **Part B**. Part B 619 is for age 3-5 years; this is also called **Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)**.
- Evaluation and assessment is conducted by a team of professionals to determine eligibility for services and the unique educational needs of each child.

HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act)

HIPAA is the Federal law that ensures protection of individually identifiable health information, while allowing disclosure of health information needed for patient care and other important purposes.

FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)

FERPA is the Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive Federal funds from the US Department of Education.

State agencies

DHS (Minnesota Department of Human Services)

DHS is the lead state agency for Medicaid, mental health, child protection, social services, childcare licensing, and other important early childhood services.

MDE (Minnesota Department of Education)

MDE is responsible for IDEA Part B and Part C services throughout the state, and houses the Head Start Collaboration office. MDE also oversees Early Childhood Screening, ECFE, School Readiness, and other early childhood education-related program.

MDH (Minnesota Department of Health)

MDH is responsible for Maternal Child Health (MCH), Children and Youth with Special Health Needs (CYSHN), and Women Infant and Children (WIC) programs throughout the state. It provides leadership to local evidence-based Family Home Visiting programs, Follow Along Program, Child and Teen Checkups providers and other early childhood programs.

Federal grants to Minnesota

ECCS (Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems)

Federal grant held by MDH in collaboration with MDE and DHS, focusing on developmental and social-emotional screening and referral, and cross-sector collaboration and coordination.

MIECHV (Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting)

MIECHV supports pregnant women and families and helps at-risk parents of children from birth to kindergarten entry tap the resources and hone the skills they need to raise children who are physically, socially and emotionally healthy and ready to learn. Minnesota utilizes this federal funding stream to support evidence-based home visiting programs in 28 counties.

RTT (Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge)

Federal grant held by MDE in collaboration with DHS and MDH, focusing on quality early care and education programs.

State and federal programs

MA (Medical Assistance)

MA is Minnesota's Medicaid program. It provides health coverage for low income Minnesotans through federal and state funds. Eligibility is administered at the county level.

MFIP (Minnesota Family Investment Program)

MFIP helps families with children meet their basic needs, while helping parents move to financial stability through work. Parents are expected to work, and are supported in working with both cash and food assistance. Most families have a lifetime limit of 60 months on MFIP. MFIP is funded through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) federal block grant to states.

CCAP (Child Care Assistance)

Minnesota's CCAP helps make child care affordable for income-eligible families. Child Care Assistance is available to: families participating in MFIP or Diversionary Work Program (DWP), families that had an MFIP or DWP case close within the last 12 months, and low-income families that may be eligible for the Basic Sliding Fee program.

Child and Teen Checkups (C&TC)

C&TC is Minnesota's version of the federal Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) program. Minnesota children 0 through 20 years of age who are eligible for Medicaid are eligible for C&TC, which covers well child checks and the diagnosis and treatment of conditions found on screening. DHS is the lead agency and is responsible for policy. MDH provides C&TC health consultation & training statewide. Counties and tribes provide local C&TC outreach to families and healthcare providers.

Early childhood development terms

Developmental milestones

Milestones are behaviors or physical skills seen in infants and children as they grow and develop. They are abilities achieved by most children by a certain age. They can include physical, social, emotional, cognitive and communication skills.

Infant and early childhood mental health (or social-emotional development)

The developing capacity of a young child to:

- Experience, regulate and express emotions;
- Form close and secure interpersonal relationships; and
- Explore the environment and learn;

All in the context of family, community, and cultural expectations for young children.

Developmental surveillance or developmental monitoring

Early childhood professionals can use their observations of the child or their interactions with the family to note whether a child is reaching expected developmental and social-emotional milestones. This does not include formal screening or assessment, but may involve the use of checklists.

Screening, evaluation and assessment

These terms have very specific meanings in different early childhood settings, and indicate varying levels of more formal ways to determine if a child's development is on track, whether delays exist, and what can be done to support the child's developmental trajectory.

Screening is the use of a brief, standardized tool population-wide to help decide if a child needs further evaluation.

- Healthcare example: Doing an ASQ:3 for every 9 month old well child check.
- Education example: providing developmental, hearing, vision and other screenings for every child before kindergarten entry

Evaluation is a more in-depth, comprehensive testing process that has different purposes in different settings:

- Healthcare or mental health settings: medical evaluation by primary care or medical specialists, or evaluation by a mental health professional, is done to determine a diagnosis, degree of concern, and potential treatment options.
- Educational settings: Educational evaluation determines if a child is eligible for Part C or Part B services.

Assessment is a term that in health or mental health settings may be used interchangeably with "evaluation". However, assessment has a specific meaning in educational settings:

- Ongoing formal and informal assessment informs decisions about a child's program, progress and outcomes. A family directed assessment is a part of the evaluation process for Part C services. Ongoing assessment is a part of a child and family's special education or early intervention plan.

Early childhood statewide infrastructure and programs

ECIs (Early Childhood Initiatives)

ECIs are community-level coalitions that bring a broad spectrum of partners together to build and support culture-specific early care and education approaches and interventions which are sensitive to the needs of diverse populations. There are currently 64 ECIs serving over 165 Greater Minnesota communities. The **Minnesota Initiative Foundations (MIFs)** jointly launched the Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative in 2001. The MIFs are 6 independent, regional foundations serving the 80-county area of Greater Minnesota.

ECFE (Early Childhood Family Education)

ECFE is a parenting education program for parents and families with children ages prenatal to grade 3.

Early Childhood Screening

Screening program offered through school districts for children ages 3 to kindergarten entrance. Children are required to be screened before entrance into kindergarten at a public school. Early Childhood Screening must include hearing, vision, developmental screening; immunization review,

height and weight, identification of risk factors that may influence learning, parent interview and referral and follow-up when potential needs are identified.

Follow Along Program

Program delivered through local public health agencies to provide families with children 0-36 months access to developmental and social-emotional guidance, screening, referral and connection to community-level services.

Head Start and Early Head Start

Federally funded programs that promote school readiness of children under age 5 from low-income families, through education, health, social, and other services.

Home visiting

Home visiting is a service delivery strategy to support families prenatally through early childhood. Home visiting can be offered universally to all families or targeted to at-risk families in a community. It may be offered to achieve short term goals or longer more intensive services may be provided in achieving long term goals. Home visiting is family-centered, strength based, relationship focused and voluntary.

IEICs (Interagency Early Intervention Committees)

Required in Minnesota statute, these 12 regional committees are responsible for Child Find, public awareness and outreach for the state's infant toddler intervention and preschool special education programs.

Parent Aware

Parent Aware is Minnesota's Quality Rating and Improvement System. Parent Aware uses a two-pronged strategy that (1) provides information about early care and education program quality to parents and other consumers, and (2) supports quality improvement of early care and education programs.

School Readiness

Preschool program offered through school districts to prepare children to enter kindergarten.

Other terms

EHR (Electronic Health Record)

An Electronic Health Record (EHR) is the health record of an individual with current information that can be used by health care providers to provide high quality health care. Minnesota law requires all health care providers to have an interoperable EHR by 2015.