

# IFSP 45 Day Timeline Requirements

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The initial IFSP must be developed within 45 days from the date the referral is received unless a delay is due to documented exceptional family circumstances. The Start Date of the IFSP is the date the parent signs the IFSP. An IFSP is good for one year from the Start Date.

Note: The date the referral is received counts as the first day of the 45 days.

The 45 day timeline does not apply when:

- The child or parent is unavailable to complete the screening (if applicable), the initial evaluation, the initial assessment of the child, or the initial IFSP meeting due to exceptional family circumstances that are documented in the child's early intervention records.
- The parent has not provided consent for the screening (if applicable), the initial evaluation, or the initial assessment of the child, despite documented, repeated attempts to obtain parental consent.

In the event the described exceptions exist, ITP staff must:

- Document in the child's early intervention records the exceptional family circumstances or repeated attempts by the early intervention program to obtain parental consent;
- Complete the initial evaluation, the initial assessments of the child and family, and the initial IFSP meeting as soon as possible, when the documented exceptional family circumstances no longer exist or parental consent is obtained for the initial evaluation and the initial assessment of the child; and
- Develop and implement an interim IFSP, to the extent appropriate, if parental consent is obtained and EI services have been determined to be needed before the evaluation and assessments are completed.

The initial family assessments must be conducted with the 45 day timeline, if the parent consents, and even if other family members are unavailable.

If the child is referred less than 45 days prior to his/her third birthday, the early intervention program is not required to conduct the initial evaluation, assessment, or IFSP meeting. In this instance, the program refers the child and family to their local school district immediately upon referral.

## Exceeding the 45 Day Timeline

If the initial IFSP is not completed and signed by the parent within 45 days from the referral day, the Service Coordinator must record an IFSP delay reason in the program's data system and document in a CSR. The information in the CSR should support the information recorded in the data system.

The following includes the acceptable family reasons for exceeding the 45 day timeline:

- Child/family illness or hospitalization
- Conflict with family scheduling/appointment
- Difficulty making contact with family
- Family cancelled
- Family indecisiveness to participate in the program
- Family moved

- Other – Family (must record a description of the family reason in the data system)

The following includes the acceptable extenuating circumstances for exceeding the 45 day timeline:

- Natural disaster
- Extreme weather

Agency reasons are not acceptable reasons for exceeding the 45 day timeline and are counted as untimely IFSPs. The following includes a list of agency reasons for exceeding the 45 day timeline:

- Conflict with agency scheduling/appointment
- Provider illness
- Delay in receiving documentation
- High referrals/caseloads
- Interpreter/translation issue
- New staff
- Other – Agency (must record a description of the agency reason in the data system)

The Service Coordinator should use the following guidance to determine the reason for delay in the 45 day timeline:

- Intake - A delay in obtaining parental consent for the evaluation of the child or in determining eligibility due to parent reason does not mean the amount of the delay can be added to the 45-day timeline. For example, if the child was scheduled for an evaluation on day ten and the parent rescheduled the evaluation for day 15 (which “lost” five days in the timeline), this does not mean those five days can be added on at the end of the 45-days to extend the timeline.
- Initial IFSP - Giving the family very little time to schedule the meeting cannot be coded as a parent delay. For example, a Service Coordinator calls the family on day 43. The parent is unable to meet in the next two days and requests to meet on the fourth day (which was two days over the 45-day timeline). Going over the 45-day timeline in this example cannot be coded as an acceptable family reason for the delay just because the parent requested to meet on a later day. The Service Coordinator needs to determine the reason for the delay leading up to day 43.
- Multiple Reasons - When there are multiple reasons for delaying the 45-day timeline, the decision of how to code this is based upon what caused the most significant delay. The following is an example of multiple reasons for a delay: The evaluation for eligibility took 35 days to complete due to 20 days of provider delay, and the Initial IFSP meeting was scheduled in time (on day 43); however, the parent cancelled the meeting at the last minute (on day 40) and re-scheduled it for day 47 (delaying the meeting 2 days past the 45th day). Since the majority of the delay was caused by provider delay in this situation, the final reason entered is an agency reason based on the specific provider delay.

## **Minimum Contact Information Needed to Start the 45 Day Timeline**

The Infant Toddler Program needs to identify the following minimum contact information regarding the parent/legal guardian of a child being referred to begin the intake process:

1. Parent name
2. Legal guardian name, if applicable
3. Parent address
4. Legal guardian address, if applicable

5. Parent contact number
6. Legal guardian contact number, if applicable

NOTE: If a parent/legal guardian contact number is not available, use the address to initiate contact. If a parent/legal guardian address is not available, use the contact number to initiate contact.

Refer to the Minimum Contact Information Required for Referral section for additional information.