DAUPHIN COUNTY PROGRAM
POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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<th><strong>MH</strong></th>
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<td>Effective Date</td>
<td><strong>1-16-12</strong></td>
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<td><strong>EI</strong></td>
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<td>Revision Date</td>
<td><strong>10-4-2013</strong></td>
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**Title:** Eligibility for Early Intervention Services Including Informed Clinical Opinion & Exit Criteria

**Policy:** Eligibility for early intervention services is determined using the procedures outlined in Chapter 4226, Early Intervention Services. Children ranging in age from birth to two years of age, inclusive, who are experiencing developmental delays or have a diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay(s), are eligible to receive early intervention services.

**Procedure:**

1. A Child is determined eligible for Early Intervention Services based on a documented developmental delay: An evaluation must be completed in each of the five developmental areas and the child is determined eligible for services based on a developmental delay using the following criteria:
   A. The child’s score on a developmental evaluation, which yields a score in months, indicates that the child is delayed by 25% of their chronological age in one or more developmental areas: cognitive development; physical development, including vision and hearing; communication development; social or emotional development; and adaptive development.
   B. The child is delayed in one or more of the areas indicated and the delay is documented by the test performance of 1.5 standard deviations below the mean on standardized tests or recognized standardized tests for infants and toddlers.
   C. The informed clinical opinion of the team when there are no standardized measures, or the standardized measures are not appropriate for a child’s chronological age or developmental area. The child shall then be determined eligible for services. Informed clinical opinion makes use of qualitative and quantitative information to assist in forming a determination regarding difficult-
to-measure aspects of current developmental status and the potential for early intervention. If informed clinical opinion is used as the basis for determining eligibility, the team must consider an evaluation at a later date to determine eligibility based on test performance. The MDE report must clearly document the reasons for the use of informed clinical opinion.

2. A child is determined eligible based on a diagnosed physical or mental condition with a high probability of developmental delay: Infants and toddlers with a “diagnosed physical or mental condition, which has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay” are children who have been determined through the initial screening process to have an identifiable physical or mental condition, whether or not they are exhibiting delays in development at the time of diagnosis. Examples of conditions with a high probability of developmental delay include but are not limited to:
   A. Down syndrome, Klinefelter’s syndrome, and other chromosomal disorders
   B. Sensory impairments, including vision and hearing impairments
   C. Inborn errors of metabolism, such as PKU or Hurler’s syndrome
   D. Microcephaly
   E. Severe attachment disorder or failure to thrive
   F. Seizure disorders
   G. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

3. Children shall be exited from the Dauphin County program based on one or more of the following criteria:

   A. The child has reached age 3 and is therefore no longer eligible for early intervention services provided by the county Program.
   B. The child functions within the range of normal development as verified by the IFSP team. All parent rights will be explained.
   C. The parent or guardian withdrew the child from early intervention services for other reasons. All parent rights will be explained.
   D. It is determined that the family cannot be located following reasonable efforts to do so. All efforts made to locate families are documented in service coordinator case notes.
   E. The child and family have moved to another county or state. For moves within Pennsylvania, with parent permission, the service coordinator and EI SC Supervisor will electronically transfer records of the current IFSP, evaluation reports, and other necessary information stored in the Pelican EI System to the county program to which the family is moving. Children who move to another State can have the same records mailed to the receiving program with parent consent so that the child can receive the needed IFSP services there.

4. Eligible children transfer from other county Early Intervention programs, as well as from other states to Dauphin County. Dauphin County is often contacted by families who intend to move to this county or upon their relocation. Regardless of where the child
transfers from, the service coordinator will work with families to begin services comparable to those listed on their current IFSP. Within Pennsylvania, county-to-county transfers of all demographic information, Evaluations and IFSPs will be performed in Pelican by the referring County and accepted by CMU’s EI SC Supervisor. Pelican revisions to the child’s demographics, ER and IFSP from that time on will be completed by CMU SCs and/or the EI SC Supervisor.

A. If an eligible child transfers from another county program, the Dauphin County early intervention program will implement services comparable to those on the child’s current IFSP until the Dauphin County service coordinator and service providers can develop a new IFSP or determine that the child is no longer in need of service. The IFSP will consider new routines, use of community, and changes in family concerns and priorities. In addition, if the child’s evaluation occurred more than six (6) months prior to the transfer, another evaluation may be conducted if more information is necessary.

B. If an eligible child transfers from another state, upon receipt of the referral, the Dauphin County early intervention program will obtain as much information as possible from the referring state and begin the process of determining whether a child may be eligible for early intervention services in Pennsylvania. This will include gathering information on the supports and services the family is currently receiving, and obtaining the early intervention record of the child, including the existing evaluation and IFSP. If based on the information gathered, the eligibility of the child for early intervention services in Pennsylvania is in question, an evaluation will occur within the 45-day timeline for evaluation and initial IFSP development. If the child’s current evaluation (within the past 6 months using appropriate norm-referenced testing tools) and IFSP information, medical records and/or other information indicate that the child already meets the eligibility criteria for early intervention services in Pennsylvania, then the Dauphin County service coordinator will begin the process for scheduling an initial IFSP meeting as soon as possible to complete the family assessment and identify the unique strengths and needs of the child and the recommendations for appropriate early intervention services. The IFSP will consider new routines, use of community, and changes in family concerns and priorities. Children referred from other states should be considered new referrals for reporting in PELICAN.

Also refer to EI Manual, September 2003, October 2010, and November 2011, September 2013