An Overview of the Massachusetts IDEA Part C /Early Intervention System

Emily White, PhD, BCBA-D, LABA
Director, Early Intervention Division
Overview

• What is Part C? Why is it important?
• How does Part C work in Massachusetts?
• Successes of Part C in Massachusetts
• Key Priorities for FY24
What is Part C? Why is it important?

- Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the program for infants and toddlers with disabilities
- Part C was created to:

  - Enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities and minimize potential developmental delay
  - Maximize the potential for individuals with disabilities to live independently
  - Reduce educational costs by minimizing the need for special education and other services for children
  - Enhance capacity for families to meet the special needs of their infants and toddlers with disabilities
  - Enhance capacity of state and local agencies to identify, evaluate, and meet the needs of all children
How does Part C work in MA?

Referral → Evaluation → Eligibility Determination → Enrollment → Transition
How does Part C work in MA?

Referral → Evaluation → Eligibility Determination → Enrollment → Transition
What is Referral?

Referral is simple

- Potentially eligible child is connected to early intervention program(s)
- Inquiries returned within 14 days
- No prescription or insurance authorization needed
- Overview of early intervention
- Discussion of:
  - Medical & developmental history
  - Family Rights & Procedural Safeguards
Who Refers to Part C?

- Physicians are most common referral source
- Parents often self-refer
- Department of Children & Families refers under Child Abuse Prevention & Treatment Act

Week ending 9/30/23
How does Part C work in MA?

Referral → Evaluation → Eligibility Determination → Enrollment → Transition
What Happens During an Evaluation?

Evaluate child’s current skills:

- Review of child’s medical and developmental records
- A multi-disciplinary team of certified early interventionists administer a standardized tool
- Evaluation occurs face-to-face in the child’s natural environment and incorporates family routines
- Voluntary assessment of risk factors
How does Part C work in MA?

- Referral
- Evaluation
- Eligibility Determination
- Enrollment
- Transition
Who is Eligible for Early Intervention?

Four Categories of Eligibility:
1. Established Conditions
2. Established Developmental Delays
3. At-Risk for Developmental Delay
4. Clinical Judgement
How does Part C work in MA?
Quick Facts About Enrolling in Part C

Who does EI serve?

Serves infants and toddlers from birth to age 3 and their families

What is the cost of EI services?

Services are free of charge for families

Who provides EI services?

Services are offered at 59 EI services programs and 20 Specialty service programs
How Does a Family Enroll in Early Intervention?

Families are part of the team:

- Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) developed collaboratively within 45-days of the parent’s consent
- Written in family’s native language
- Includes:
  - Current levels of development
  - Family priorities & concerns
  - Services designed to enhance the child’s development and the capacity of the family to meet the child’s needs
- Measurable Outcomes
What do Early Intervention Services Look Like?

Families are partners:

- Intervention includes the child, caregiver, and early interventionist
- Dyadic relationship between caregiver & child
- Provided in natural setting for the child
- May include:
  - Physical therapy
  - Speech & language services
  - Early intensive behavioral intervention
  - Vision services
How Does Part C Work in MA?

Referral → Evaluation → Eligibility Determination → Enrollment → Transition
What Happens When a Child Exits Early Intervention?

**Transition is a warm hand-off:***

- Guided by MOU on Early Childhood Transitions (Dept of Public Health, Dept of Early Education & Care, Dept of Elementary & Secondary Education)
- Transition plan with steps & services
- Transition conference
- Notification to local education agencies, community partners
Why do Children Exit Part C?

- Most children exit at age 3 and transition to Part B services (DESE)
- 10% “Graduate” Part C before age 3

FY 23: July 1, 2022—June 30, 2023
Why do Children Exit Part C?

Program Completion - No Longer Eligible for Part C Prior to Reaching Age Three

Exit at Age Three - Part B Eligible, Exiting Part C

Not Eligible for Part B, Exit with Referrals to other Programs

Not Eligible for Part B, Exit with No Referrals

Part B Eligibility Not Determined

Withdrawal by Parent or Guardian

Attempts to Contact Unsuccessful

Hispanic/Latino
American Indian or Alaska Native
Asian
Black or African American
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
White
Two or More Races
Successes—FY23 MA Part C System Highlights

- **41K**: MA Part C served over 41,000 infants and toddlers
- **80%**: 80% of children who entered EI below age-expectation substantially increased their acquisition and use of knowledge and skills
- **90%**: 90% of families enrolled in EI reported that services helped their children's learning and development
- **99%**: 99% of services were provided in the child's natural environment by embedding learning within their everyday routines
FY23 Budget Highlights and Financial Investments

- Services for infants and toddlers: $48.7M
- Data System Upgrades: $2.3M
- Public Awareness Program: $488K
- Trainings & Supports for Providers: $1.1M
EI Priorities for FY24

- Improve representativeness of families responding to outcomes survey
- Improve child outcomes
- Revise monitoring to meet federal guidance
- Improve data quality
Thank you for the opportunity to present this information today.

Please direct any questions to:

Emily White, PhD, BCBA-D, LABA
Director, Early Intervention Division
Bureau of Family Health and Nutrition
Emily.A.White@mass.gov