

## Introduction

The South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (SCDDSN) serves two populations of children in Early Intervention; those children who are eligible for Part C (BabyNet) services under The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and those children who are eligible or are in the process of pursuing eligibility for services through SCDDSN.

SCDDSN provides services to children from birth to three years of age through a contract with South Carolina First Steps. First Steps is the State's lead agency for Part C services under IDEA. Through this contractual relationship, SCDDSN agrees to provide services to children birth to three in accordance with Part C requirements. IDEA sets forth requirements for states in key areas such as the specific types of early intervention services which must be made available, procedural safeguards that must be in place to protect the rights of children and their families, and the expectations regarding evaluations, the development of intervention plans, the provision of services in natural environments, and the involvement of families. While the BabyNet Policy and Procedure manual is reflective of current regulations regarding services to children birth to three, it must be used in coordination with this manual for those children who are either seeking SCDDSN eligibility or are currently eligible for SCDDSN services. Children who are eligible for SCDDSN services at the age of three may continue to receive Service Coordination and Family Training until the age of five if indicated.

This Manual is comprised of Procedural Bulletins that cover all of the required components of the service delivery system required by SCDDSN. It was written to incorporate requirements that are currently spelled out in the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Early Intervention Services Provider Manual as well as the Targeted Case Management Provider Manual. Each Procedural Bulletin is designed to cover a particular component of the system. Early Intervention providers use many words and acronyms with which readers may not be familiar. A glossary of many of these terms can be found at the end of this Manual. As state and federal regulations change or new requirements are added, Procedural Bulletins will be updated or developed and disseminated for substitution or inclusion in this Manual by SCDDSN. Procedural Bulletins are designed to delineate requirements and provide basic philosophical and background information to assist the reader in understanding the intent of the regulations and to guide implementation of established expectations. Readers may obtain technical assistance from the SCDDSN, Office of Children's Services.

The SCDDSN's, Office of Children's Services, wishes to acknowledge the use of policy and procedure documents from North Carolina in the development of this manual.

**Note:**

The word parent is used throughout this manual to mean the legal and custodial guardian of the child. For most children, this individual is the child's biological parent however, because this may not always be the case, readers must evaluate each situation and abide by appropriate custody regulation and practices.

For the sake of simplicity, the word parent has been used in the singular form. If there is more than one parent, both should be involved to the maximum extent possible.

## **SCDDSN's Mission and Values**

The SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, defined in the South Carolina Code of Law, serves persons with intellectual disability, autism, traumatic brain injury and spinal cord injury and conditions related to each of these four disabilities.

### **VISION: Where we are going**

Our vision is to be the best in the world at assisting persons with disabilities and their families.

### **MISSION: What We Do**

Assist people with disabilities and their families through choice in meeting needs, pursuing possibilities and achieving life goals, and minimize the occurrence and reduce the severity of disabilities through prevention.

### **VALUES: Our Guiding Beliefs**

Health, safety and well-being of each person  
Dignity and respect for each person  
Individual and family participation, choice, control and responsibility  
Relationships with family, friends and community connections  
Personal growth and accomplishments

### **PRINCIPLES: Features of Services and Supports**

Person-centered  
Responsive, efficient and accountable  
Practical, positive and appropriate  
Strengths-based, results-oriented  
Opportunities to be productive, and maximize potential  
Best and promising practices

## What is Early Intervention?

The purpose of Early Intervention is to accelerate or maximize the development of children who are at significant risk for problems, in thinking, communicating, relating to others, emotional functioning, and body functioning. Research over the past 50 years has shown that Early Intervention is an effective tool in increasing the developmental and educational gains for the child, improving the functioning of the family unit, and providing long term benefits to society.

The life of a child is full of opportunities for learning, but from decades of child development research, we know that learning is most rapid in the infant/toddler/preschool years. Every day, children encounter dozens of situation-specific experiences that involve interaction with people and their physical environment. It is through these experiences that children learn. However, physical limitations, visual impairments, language disorders, and illnesses change both the quality and quantity of learning opportunities for many children. With fewer meaningful interactions with people and things in our world, children with disabilities, or those at risk for disabilities, fall behind their peers in all developmental areas.

Therefore, the timing of intervention becomes particularly important when a child runs the risk of missing an opportunity to learn during the first few years of his or her life.

**Note:**

Throughout this manual the term Early Interventionist is used to globally describe the combination of services provided by DDSN providers. Early Interventionists provide the services of Family Training and Service Coordination in a blended manner, so in some areas this manual will refer to them as the Service Coordinator and still others as the Family Training provider. Both roles make up the job functions of an Early Interventionist.