



Eric Holcomb, Governor
State of Indiana

Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services

First Steps

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To: First Steps System Points of Entry (SPOEs), Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ISBVI), and Visually Impaired Preschool Services (VIPS)

From: Meghan Smith, First Steps Policy Manager

Subject: Specialty Assessment Process: Blind/Low Vision

This memo is to provide clarification on the process for specialty assessments completed by blind/low vision specialists. Please note that the procedures do **not** apply to vision specialists (i.e., optometrists and ophthalmologists).

Please find the required form in a separate attachment and contact Maggie McCall, First Steps Quality Assurance Manager, with questions: Maggie.McCall@fssa.in.gov.

Specialty Assessment Process: Blind/Low Vision

1. Child is suspected (or confirmed through diagnosis) of needing specialty services.
 - a. This can be at referral, intake, assessment or IFSP
2. SC contacts specialty provider or agency
 - a. This can be at intake, assessment or IFSP
 - b. A specialty assessment can take place prior to the IFSP if request is submitted to provider/agency by SC but **cannot** occur prior to completion of intake
3. If assessment will occur prior to IFSP, SC sends the Request for Authorization – Specialty Assessment form to provider/agency along with the child’s EI record
4. After assessment, provider sends report of findings (assessment) and completed Request for Authorization – Specialty Assessment form to the SC for data entry of assessment authorization
 - a. SC and provider are in contact to discuss need and appropriateness of ongoing services
5. On IFSP it can be written as assessment by specialty provider or ongoing services by provider
 - a. SC should be in contact with provider prior to writing IFSP to see what works
 - b. If ongoing services are written on IFSP, this starts the 30 day clock for 1st visit
 - c. SC sends IFSP to the provider/agency
6. If assessment will occur after IFSP, SC sends the Request for Authorization – Specialty Assessment form to provider/agency along with child’s EI record



7. After assessment, provider sends report of findings (assessment) and completed Request for Authorization – Specialty Assessment form to the SC for data entry of assessment authorization
 - a. SC and provider are in contact to discuss need and appropriateness of ongoing services
8. If ongoing services are recommended SC discusses with family and completes the addition of services process
 - a. This starts the 30 day clock for 1st visit
 - b. SC sends Changes to the IFSP form and the IFSP to the provider/agency

Remember:

1. Family must be given 10 day notice prior to start of ongoing services. This is counted as 10 days from the date of parent signature on the IFSP or from date of agreement to change in services.
2. Family must choose agency or provider to perform specialty assessment as this is the agency that will also be providing ongoing services if found in need of services.
 - a. If the child is suspected of needing specialty services at referral or intake this choice can be made at intake meeting.
3. Family always has the right to decline assessments or services even if a need is identified through diagnosis or by the assessment team.
4. SC must send the entire IFSP to the provider/agency
5. SC should complete the child Information and Service Coordinator sections of the Request for Authorization – Specialty Assessment form prior to sending to provider/agency