

## **Speech and Language Services for Students with Early Childhood Developmental Delays (ECDD)**

### **Introduction**

Students experiencing multiple developmental delays may be eligible for special education services as Early Childhood Developmental Delay (ECDD). These students may experience delays in more than one of the following developmental areas: cognitive, physical, communication, behavioral, or medical/health. Once a student has been identified as eligible under Early Childhood Developmental Delay (ECDD), speech and language services can be added as a related service.

### **Definition**

Rule 340.1711 Early childhood developmental delay defined; determination.  
 Rule 11. (1) “Early childhood developmental delay” means a child through 7 years of age whose primary delay cannot be differentiated through the existing criteria within R 340.1705 (Cognitive impairment) or R 340.1713 (Specific learning disability) to R 340.1716 (Traumatic brain injury) and who manifests a delay in 1 or more areas of development equal to or greater than ½ of the expected development. This definition does not preclude identification of a child through existing criteria within R 340.1705 (Cognitive impairment) to R 340.1710 (Speech and language impairment) or R 340.1713 (Specific learning disability) to R 340.1716 (Traumatic brain injury).  
 (2) A determination of early childhood developmental delay shall be based upon a comprehensive evaluation by a multidisciplinary evaluation team.

Please note: In the above Rule 11, section one, references are made regarding rules R340.1705 to R340.1716. These rules specifically include:

- R340.1705- Cognitive Impairment (CI)
- R340.1706- Emotional Impairment (EI)
- R340.1707- Hearing Impairment (HI)
- R430.1708- Visual Impairment (VI)
- R340.1709- Physical Impairment (PI)
- R340.1709a- Other Health Impairment (OHI)
- R340.1710- Speech and Language Impairment (SLI)
- R340.1713- Specific Learning Disability (LD)
- R340.1714- Severe Multiple Impairment (SXI)
- R340.1715- Autism (AUT)
- R340.1716- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

### **SLPs Role in Assessment and Determination of Primary Eligibility as ECDD**

Children who are less than eight years of age and exhibit more than one developmental delay are best certified as ECDD. This certification allows the multidisciplinary team to evaluate the whole child over a period of time. As intervention is provided, by multiple team members, the child’s developmental profile becomes more clearly defined and the primary impairment becomes more apparent. The SLPs role in assessment is consistent

with the assessment consideration of the preschool child. Therefore, SLPs using this section may also refer to the Language Services for Preschool Children.

*Multidisciplinary Team Members/Roles (Roles May vary within Districts)*

*Speech-Language Pathologist-* Provide assessment, intervention and consultation to team members and families. The SLP may also be key in preparing special education paperwork prior to the initial Individualized Education Plan meeting.

*Psychologist-* Assist in coordination of evaluations when applicable, assess, and consult with team members and families.

*Social Worker-* Obtain social history, observe, and provide intervention with the child, and consult with team members and families.

*Teacher-* Provide assessment and instruction in the areas of language and literacy. The teacher would also schedule and complete the paperwork for annual IEP's.

### **Intervention Considerations for ECDD Students**

Once it has been determined that speech and language interventions are needed to meet the child's communication/education needs, services can be provided in a variety of ways. Service delivery models may include direct services on an individual, small group, or classroom basis. Consultation services may also be utilized with the classroom teacher or parents.

### **Service Delivery**

Students are found eligible as ECDD under Special Education Rule 340.1711. Most students with early childhood developmental delays have communication difficulties; however, many communication needs are met through a variety of special education supports. These supports may include services within the ECDD classroom and/or pull-out services. Because the foundation of the ECDD classroom is literacy and language-based, the language needs of the ECDD children are addressed by the classroom teacher. The SLP should consult with the ECDD teacher in regards to language-based curriculum needs. These consultations may include information regarding augmentative and alternative communication, pre-literacy, language acquisition and disorders, articulation impairments, and information regarding specific syndrome disorders. The SLP should provide direct service for articulation/phonological delays.

### **Special Considerations and Programming**

When working with ECDD students, the ECDD team may also have to consult with ancillary staff members such as occupational and physical therapists, autism consultants, and hearing impaired consultants. The team also has to consider the educational needs of transitioning students. As the ECDD child's family and special education team anticipates kindergarten placement, the developmental profile of the child should become more clearly defined. During the second semester of the ECDD year the special education team should begin a comprehensive evaluation of each child. These assessments should include cognitive and academic achievement, speech and language,

social emotional, and any other support service evaluations. It is also important during the second semester to suggest a regular education preschool opportunity. The team can be creative in determining what this programming may look like. For example, the ECDD child may participate in ECDD program two days a week and the regular education preschool three days a week or vice versa. During the regular education placement, it is important for the classroom teachers to maintain contact regarding the child's performance. It may also be helpful for an ECDD team member, typically the school psychologist or social worker, to observe the child in the regular education preschool. Once the evaluations and observations are complete, the ECDD team should then determine if the child should remain eligible for special education services as ECDD or if a more appropriate certification should be used. The SLP may also wish to use the School-Aged Language Eligibility Summary to assist in the transition of ECDD children to other educational placements.