



## Medical Procedures and Early Intervention Services

The following information is intended to provide clarification on the issue of the appropriateness for additional early intervention services following the identification of a medical condition or procedure.

**Question 1: When a child in First Steps undergoes a surgical or medical procedure requiring post-surgical rehabilitation, is it appropriate for First Steps to cover those services?**

No. In general, post-surgical rehabilitation is not a service addressed through the IFSP process. The medical specialist attending to the child will order and supervise the necessary rehabilitation through that specified time period. However, it is possible that the existing IFSP services will need to be re-evaluated by the IFSP team in order to determine if the services should be discontinued or modified while the child receives the post-surgical rehabilitation.

For example, a child with a diagnosis of cerebral palsy receives physical therapy through First Steps to compensate for movement dysfunction. The child is scheduled for a surgical procedure. The IFSP team may need to hold a meeting to review the outcomes and services for the child to avoid interfering with the rehabilitation physical therapy ordered by the physician following the surgical procedure. The IFSP team may determine to decrease, increase, or maintain services for a specified period of time.

**Question 2: Should the IFSP team consider the temporary impact of surgery on the child's development and regression during the recovery period?**

Yes. Because surgical procedures with infants and toddlers can impact a child's normal - development in a variety of ways, the IFSP team would consider the impact of the surgery on how the child participates in the activities currently outlined on his/her IFSP. The team would take into account the child's medical and physical status, including his/her ability to tolerate additional developmental services. The decision to increase, decrease or maintain services to a child and family is an IFSP team decision. This requires the team to reconvene and discuss the child and family's current priorities and concerns.

**Question 3: What are some talking points for the IFSP team discussion if a situation arises where an increase in service or an extensive amount of service is suggested for the child and family?**

The following are examples of questions the IFSP team should consider when discussing the frequency, intensity, and duration of services, keeping in mind that discussions about IFSP services comes after the development of outcomes, strategies, and activities.

**Discussion at an initial IFSP meeting:**

- How will this service engage the family?
- How will this service impact the family's daily routine?

- What is the family's priority?
- Given the age and developmental status of the child, how much service can s/he attend to or tolerate?
- What frequency, intensity, and duration of this service will fit with the family's schedule?
- What is the plan to transition the services to a transdisciplinary or early intervention team model?

### **Discussion at a review IFSP meeting**

- Is the child making progress at the current level of service?
- Was there a change in the child's medical or developmental status? How does this affect the family's needs?
- Given the age and developmental status of the child, how much service can s/he attend or tolerate?
- What is the family's priority?
- Is the amount or intensity of the service developmentally appropriate for children 0 – 3 years of age?
- Is the purpose of the suggested service to assist the child in participating in family and community life?
- How will this service connect to current IFSP outcomes?
- How will this service engage the family?
- How will this service impact the family's daily routine?
- How long will the increase in service last? A few weeks? A few months? How might new strategies/activities enhance what the existing providers are already working on with the child and family?
- If a new service/provider is suggested, how will the new provider work with the existing provider(s)?
- What is the plan to transition the services to a transdisciplinary or early intervention team model?