

## I. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Subsidized child care services can be provided to eligible children with special needs when care is needed to support the parent's education/training, employment, to support child protective services, the developmental needs for the child or to support child welfare services. The family of a child with special needs must meet the applicable income guidelines based on the reason care is needed.

## II. DEFINITION OF SPECIAL NEEDS

Special needs children are children who have developmental delays, an established condition, or development that is atypical. If the parent indicates that the child has not been evaluated and the child care social worker believes the child may have special needs, the child care social worker should encourage the parent to have the child evaluated. Families may be referred to the local agency under the auspices of the following state agencies which are responsible for overseeing that children with special needs are identified and assessed:

- The Early Intervention Branch in the Women's and Children's Health Section of the Division of Public Health (DPH) of the Department of Health and Human Services for children under age three (3).
- The Exceptional Children Division in the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) for children age (3) and over.

The regional Children's Developmental Services Agency (CDSA) and local education agency (LEA) staff are responsible for referrals of children for eligibility assessments. Although the CDSA and LEA are the primary resources for making referrals on behalf of children with special needs, the local management entity (LME) may make referrals when children have a specific diagnosis such as traumatic brain injury or chronic disease such as cystic fibrosis. After the evaluation of a child's needs is completed, families are involved in making decisions about how the child can best be served. An Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is developed for children with special needs birth to age three (3) and an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for children over the age of three (3). The definitions and criteria for pre-school children with disabilities are included in [Appendix C](#).

Although children may have been identified as having a special need through DPH's Infant-Toddler Program or DPI's Preschool Program, parents have the right to refuse services under these programs. However, if parents refuse these services, children may still receive community-based services through the Children Service Coordination Program in the local public health department. Child Service Coordinators in the local public health department may also make referrals for supplemental payments for children with special needs. Refer to the Instruction pages in [DCD-0093](#), [DCD-0094](#), [DCD-0454A](#) and [DCD-0454B](#).