

INFORMATION TO ASSIST IN SERVING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**I. IFSP/IEP DEFINITIONS**

The Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is a key document for all children under three years of age who have special needs. It is developed jointly by the child service coordinator from the local program and the family. Often other involved service providers participate in the development of this document. Examples of this include a speech therapist for a child with speech and language goals or the child care provider for children enrolled in child care. The IFSP has summary information on the various assessments completed and the results of these assessments. It includes specific goals or outcomes for the child and in many cases the family as well. The plan then sets forth the specific activities and services that will be provided for the child as well as the location, frequency and intensity of the services. The payment plans for special needs services often involve varying lengths of time. The agencies and the family must review the plan at least every six months. The agencies are legally bound by the Plan and all services listed must be made available. A single form is used statewide. (A [sample Service Delivery Plan page](#) is attached.) The area mental health program is responsible for assuring that all eligible children have an IFSP. Further information may be found in Bulletin 26 and 27 of the “NC Infant-Toddler Program Manual” published by the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, And Substance Abuse Services, Developmental Disabilities Section.

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a similar document completed for children age three and older who have special needs. It also provides assessment information as well as goals, activities and services to be provided. A statewide form is used. (A [sample Service Delivery Plan page](#) is attached.) The exceptional children’s program coordinator for the Local Education Agency must assure that all eligible children have an IEP. Further information about it may be found in Section .1507 of “Procedures Governing Programs and Services for Children with Disabilities” published by the Public Schools of North Carolina Exceptional Children Division.