



## PROCEDURE

<b>Title/Subject: Eligibility Criteria - Early Intervention Services</b>			
<b>Policy #: OPS - 200</b>	<b>Page 1 of 2</b>	<b>Adoption Date:</b>	<b>Revision Date: 6/18/07</b>
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The Florida Center provides comprehensive prevention and early intervention services to young children (primarily ages birth through five years of age) and their families in an effort to prevent, reduce or eliminate any disabling condition that may interfere with normal, healthy development.

Children eligible for our Early Childhood Education (ECCE) and Developmental services include, but are not limited to, children with:

- ✓ Prematurity
- ✓ Genetic disorders
- ✓ Neurological impairments
- ✓ Physical handicaps
- ✓ Speech and language disorders
- ✓ Behavior or emotional problems
- ✓ Physical or sexual abuse and neglect histories
- ✓ Lack of effective parenting

### **Eligibility Criteria -- Early Intervention Services**

Developmental Program's early intervention services include assessment and therapy for children aged birth through eight years, in the following therapeutic areas: Speech and Language, Feeding, Occupational and Physical. Therapy services are typically prescribed or authorized by a child's primary care physician. They may also be recommended by the School Board, Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources Services (FDLRS) or Early Steps programs. Early Steps and FDLRS employ their own eligibility standards. Children covered under insurance, Medicaid, private pay or other funding sources will be determined to be eligible for services based on guidelines from their particular funding sources and/or results of their evaluation. Services may be provided in their natural environment, birth to three only, through Early Steps. A family-centered, team approach is the focus of this service. Children will be

discharged from therapy services upon documentation of achievement of age appropriate skills in specific disciplines, as appropriate, or due to lack of compliance.

Children 12 months to five(5) years of age, with or without disabilities, are eligible for our Early Childhood Education/Preschool programs. A natural preschool environment is provided for children at risk for/or with disabling conditions, as well as for typically developing children. Children who are recommended for Classroom Placement through the Sarasota County School Board are provided therapeutic preschool services. Classroom services are typically recommended by the School Board (FDLRS) or other community resources. FDLRS employs its' own eligibility standards. For non-school board children, or for coverage of additional services such as after school care, tuition costs are covered by private pay or other funding sources. Children are eligible for services based on guidelines from their particular funding sources. Children are discharged from services when they reach the age limits described, or due to lack of compliance with program policies, as documented in the Parent Handbook.

The Community Outreach Program serves children from six weeks to six years. The Inclusion Program provides screening, referral, inclusion support and consultation as well as Teacher Training to community child care providers. Children are referred due to parent or caregiver concerns and/or screening results. The Esperanza program provides developmental consultation, translation, service coordination and general support to the Hispanic Community. An Infant and Toddler Developmental Specialist provides in there natural environment support to children, aged birth to three and their families, who are found to be eligible and are referred through the Early Steps Program. A family-centered, team approach is used. Service availability and eligibility to each of these programs is determined by their specified grant funding source.

Through the intake department, an initial contact with the parent or other referral source is made. Eligibility for services is reviewed and an initial screening is performed where appropriate. Based on the availability of services, the potential client is either given an appointment time or placed on a waiting list for services. If the potential client is unable to wait for services or is in need of services we are unable to provide, staff will provide the person with information on other services available to them in the community.

A description of our array of service programs, is provided to all clients and potential clients of The Florida Center. The client is assisted in accessing any services that they may be eligible for and that are provided through our service network. A clear description of fee schedules and fee adjustment procedures for all services are provided to new clients at the time of enrollment. No child is refused service solely based on the family's inability to pay.

Priority for service is given to children and families based upon the urgency of their needs. Potential clients are never screened for any reason other than urgency of need in order to ensure equitable treatment of all persons who come to us for care. A limited number of scholarships for Early Childhood Education or Developmental Therapy services are offered based on availability and financial need.