



**Beyond Bubbles and Blocks**

Information for EI Home Visitors

**Do you know about accurate and reliable data in Early Intervention?**

The [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](https://sites.ed.gov/idea/) (IDEA) is a federal statute that ensures all children with disabilities have available to them a free and appropriate public education.

Section 618 of IDEA consists of data reporting requirements for Part C Early Intervention (EI) in 5 key areas: child count, child count and settings, dispute resolution, exiting, and settings. Based on Child Count 2021-2022 data collection, approximately 400,000 infants and toddlers ages birth through 2 were served under IDEA, Part C, and over 21,000 of those were served through Massachusetts’ early intervention system.

The IDEA statute and regulations also require that each State must use the targets established in the State’s performance plan under §[303.701](https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/c/h/303.701) and the priority areas described in §[303.700](https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/c/h/303.700)(d) to analyze the performance of each EIS program in implementing part C of the Act.

It is required that the state report annually to the public on the performance of each EIS program located in the State on the targets in the State’s performance plan as soon as practicable but no later than 120 days following the State’s submission of its annual performance report to the Secretary; and make the State’s performance plan under §[303.701](https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/c/h/303.701)(a), annual performance reports and the State’s annual reports on the performance of each EIS program available through public means, including by posting on the web site of the lead agency, distribution to the media, and distribution to EIS programs.

Accurate and reliable data are critical in EI to ensure that children and families receive the most effective services. Data must be consistently collected, precise, and reflective of the services received as well as the true progress and needs of children and families (i.e., child and family outcomes). Data is used to improve practice at the program, state, and federal levels. Data is also used to provide information on necessary funding for early intervention and ensure equitable services across different populations and geographic regions.

**How are data measured in Part C, Massachusetts?**  
In Massachusetts, Part C data collection involves systematic measurement processes that include but are not limited to tracking timeliness of evaluation and IFSP after referral, timeliness of service delivery, service delivery outcomes, timely transitions to Part B as well as family engagement metrics. This data is collected through various tools and assessments authorized by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and the Massachusetts Early Intervention Division to ensure compliance and effectiveness. The State has a performance plan that it uses to analyze the performance of each EIS program and the performance of the state on each federal indicator in implementing Part C of IDEA and reports this data annually to the federal government, as required.

**How do you explain data to families?**  
Explaining data to families involves translating complex information into understandable terms. It’s essential to focus on what the data means for their child’s development, how it informs the services they receive, and how they can best support their children’s development and learning. Data collected about children and families is protected. This data is used to inform decision-making and program planning and improvement.



**How are you incorporating accurate and reliable data in your work with families?**  
Incorporating data into work with families means using data to tailor interventions that meet specific needs. It involves regularly talking about and updating families on their child's progress and adjusting strategies and the IFSP as needed based on the latest data insights through EI research as well as through ongoing functional assessment with families (i.e., gathering information through observation, asking genuine questions, active listening). Building trust with families by showing how data-driven decisions positively impact their child's development is crucial.

**How are accurate and reliable data supported in EI?**   
Accurate and reliable data in EI are supported through federal and state monitoring, continuous training for providers, the use of validated assessment tools, and adherence to state and federal data collection guidelines.

**Reflecting on Your Practice:**  
As you consider your work with families and data, take a moment to reflect on the following questions:

1. How do you ensure that the data you collect is both accurate and meaningful for the families you serve?
2. In what ways do you integrate data analysis into your regular planning and decision-making processes for each child’s and family’s unique needs?
3. How do you collaborate with other team members to verify and validate the data collected to ensure consistency and reliability across different assessments?

**Resources:**

* [Authorized Data Collections - IDEA](https://sites.ed.gov/idea/data/#Authorized-Data-Collections)
* [Parts B and C Data and SPP/APR Document](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fsites.ed.gov%2Fidea%2Ffiles%2FParts-B-and-C-Data-and-SPPAPR.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* [DaSy Center Family Resources](https://dasycenter.org/resources/families/)