



**Beyond Bubbles and Blocks**

Information for EI Home Visitors

**Do you know about exiting categories in Part C Early Intervention?**

Exiting categories are classifications used when a child leaves early intervention (EI) services. These categories help measure the outcomes of EI and guide program improvement. Understanding how and why children exit EI services is essential to ensuring accurate data collection and effective family support.

**How are exit categories measured in Part C EI, Massachusetts?**  
Data are gathered for all children “who were under age three and had an active individualized family service plan (IFSP) in place at some point during the reporting period and at the end of the reporting period were no longer receiving EI services under IDEA Part C or had reached their third birthday” (FS901, p. 1). Exiting data are required by the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](https://sites.ed.gov/idea/) (IDEA), Section 618. Data are reported every year by all states to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). In Massachusetts, exit categories are tracked through the EICS (Early Intervention Client System). These categories include:

* No longer meets eligibility criteria for services prior to reaching age 3
* Withdrawal by parent/guardian (documented in child’s record)
* Reached age three, Part B eligible
* Not eligible for Part B, exit with referrals (e.g., to Head Start)
* Not eligible for Part B, exit with no referrals
* Part B eligibility not determined
* Moved out of state or deceased
* Attempts to contact unsuccessful
* Missing

These classifications help determine trends in service effectiveness and inform statewide planning and support. Data are also analyzed by geographic region, racial ethnicity and sex.

**How do you explain exit categories to early intervention service (EIS) providers?**  
Exit categories are best explained as standardized ways of documenting a child’s status at the time of leaving EI. They are not judgments of success but tools for measuring outcomes and transition effectiveness. Training should emphasize the importance of accurate documentation and ensure providers understand each category and its appropriate use.

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**How do you explain exit categories to families?**  
When discussing exit categories with families, it's important to use clear, compassionate language. Explain that these categories help the EI program understand how children and families transition out of services. Emphasize that this is a routine part of the process and reassure them that their child’s unique journey is respected and valued, regardless of the category assigned.

**How are you incorporating exit categories in your work with families?**

Incorporating exit categories starts with thoughtful transition planning. Providers can integrate discussions about next steps early, align them with the family’s goals, and document outcomes appropriately. Using family-friendly language during the transition process helps families feel informed and supported, improving the accuracy of the exit data.

**How are exit categories supported in EI?**  
Exit categories are supported through:

* State level training on data entry and category definitions
* Supervision and reflective practice discussions
* Ongoing quality assurance monitoring
* Technical assistance from EI division staff and data specialists

Programs are encouraged to create a culture of data accuracy, where staff are trained to understand the value of exit data and feel confident in applying it correctly.

**Conclusion**

Exit categories help tell the story of each child’s journey in EI. By using them accurately and thoughtfully, we support smooth transitions, clear communication with families, and strong program data that reflects the impact of our work.

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

* How confident am I in identifying and documenting exit categories?
* How do I support families in understanding their child’s transition from EI?
* What challenges have I encountered when assigning exit categories?
* How can our team improve the way we incorporate exit planning and category assignment into family conversations?

**References/Resources**

* Bernstein, H., Gooden, C., and Romero, L. (April 2016). *Part C Exiting Data Matrix*: Categories with Child-Level Examples, (Version 1.0). *IDEA* Data Center. Rockville, MD: Westat
* EMAPS User Guide: IDEA Part C Exiting Survey – SY 2022-23, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC.
* FS901 – Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities (IDEA Part C) Exiting File Specifications v20.0(SY 2023-24), U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC: ED*Facts*. Retrieved [2025] from <https://www.ed.gov/data/edfacts-initiative>
* Henson, J., Gooden, C., Bernstein, H., Romero, L., Colgan, S., and Finello, K. (2016, December). *Examining Part C Exiting Data Variation, White Paper*, (Version 1.0). *IDEA* Data Center. Rockville, MD: Westat.
* Massachusetts Department of Public Health – Early Intervention Operational Standards
* U.S. Department of Education. (2021). Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part C: Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities. Retrieved from <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/>