

Beyond Bubbles and Blocks

Information for EIS Home Visitors



Do you know about local determinations in Massachusetts (MA) Part C Early Intervention (EI)?

Each year the MA EI Division, as the Lead Agency for Part C of the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) (IDEA), issues local determinations to every early intervention service (EIS) program across the state. These determinations represent a snapshot of how well programs are meeting key federal and state performance indicators. They highlight both strengths and opportunities for growth. In sum, they serve as an essential tool for quality improvement, program accountability, and ensuring that infants and toddlers with developmental needs and their families receive timely, consistent, high-quality services across the state.

Why do you as an EIS provider need to know about local determinations?

As a provider, your everyday practices — evaluations, IFSP development, service delivery, data entry, documentation, family communication, and transition planning — directly influence the determination outcome for your program. Local determinations are not just a compliance exercise, but a meaningful way to support program quality and child and family experiences.

How are local determinations measured in MA?

Program monitoring must cover both quantifiable and, when necessary, qualitative indicators. In practice, MA builds on this regulatory foundation through its State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR), submitted yearly by the MA EI Division to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) of the Department of Education. The SPP/APR includes compliance indicators (e.g., timely services, initial IFSP meeting within 45 days, complete transition plan, LEA notification within the timeframe, transition conference within the timeframe) and results indicators (e.g., services provided in the natural environment, child and

family outcomes). Data for Compliance Indicators, for example, are pulled and analyzed from the Early Intervention Client System (EICS) for a specific-identified timeframe. Data for Results Indicators such as the family outcomes come from the NCSEAM family surveys and are based on state-targeted percentages. Based on these data from the EICS — along with monitoring visits and publicly available information — the State assigns one of the determination categories: “Meets requirements,” “Needs Assistance,” “Needs Intervention,” or “Needs Substantial Intervention” for each program. It should be noted that just as the State makes local determinations for each program, OSEP in turn rates each state using these same determination categories.

What specific factors does the EI Division use in making local determinations?

Local determinations in MA are calculated using a set of federally mandated indicators, along with state-selected measures that reflect EIS program performance and compliance. OSEP requires that the EI Division must consider the following factors in making a determination:

- (1) Performance on Compliance Indicators
- (2) Performance on Results Indicators
- (3) Valid and reliable data
- (4) Correction of identified noncompliance
- (5) Other data available to the State about the EIS program’s compliance with the IDEA including relevant findings

How do you explain these determinations to families?

Families can be told that each EIS program receives a yearly determination based on reported data showing how well it meets statewide goals—such as identifying children early, starting services promptly, providing services in natural settings (like the family’s home), maintaining accurate records, and supporting smooth transitions. These

determinations help ensure programs meet high standards and that children and their families receive timely, effective, and coordinated services. Programs use this information to improve how they support children and caregivers. This explanation links local determinations to tangible benefits families experience: timely supports, skilled services, and accountability.



How do you incorporate local determinations into your work with families?

As a provider, you can integrate the principles of local determinations into your everyday interactions with families. That means, for example, ensuring evaluations and IFSPs are completed on schedule, delivering consistent EI services in natural environments whenever appropriate, diligently maintaining documentation, and starting transition conversations early. Through supervision, team discussions, and monitoring, you can continually align your practices with the indicators that make up the determination process, creating a direct connection between daily work and program-level outcomes.

How are local determinations supported in EI?

Local determinations are not meant to be punitive; they exist within a broader system of supervision, technical assistances, and continuous improvement. Statewide trends are analyzed quarterly to identify technical assistance and training needs. EIS programs are supported in MA

by their assigned Clinical Oversight and Support Specialists. Such support reinforces the commitment to MA's core values of lifelong learning and collaboration within the EI community. Programs that receive "Needs Assistance" or other lower determinations receive additional guidance, support, and opportunities for improvement, including technical assistance, data-quality support, and enhanced supervision.

Reflecting on your practice

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

- How do your everyday practices align with the performance indicators, such as timely initial IFSP, services in natural environments, timely services, and transitions?
- How accurate, complete, and timely is your documentation and data reporting?
- What can you do to ensure evaluations, IFSP meetings, and service initiation are consistently completed within required timelines?
- How can families be more meaningfully engaged in evaluation, IFSP development, and transition planning?
- How can you and your team use local determinations to reflect on strengths, celebrate progress, and identify opportunities for growth?
- What support (technical assistance, supervision, training) would strengthen your program's alignment with Part C requirements and improve family experiences?

References and resources

- 34 CFR § 303.700 — State Monitoring and Enforcement for Part C Early Intervention. [eCFR :: 34 CFR 303.700 -- State monitoring and enforcement](#)

- 34 CFR § 303.703 — Annual Determinations Regarding State and Program Performance under Part C. [eCFR :: 34 CFR 303.703 -- Secretary's review and determination regarding State performance](#)
- Local Determinations PowerPoint Presentation, M. Gilbride, May 2025
- [The 2025 Determination Letters on State Implementation of IDEA](#) published by the U.S. Department of Education.