



**Beyond Bubbles and Blocks**

Information for EI Home Visitors

**Do you know about state determinations in Part C early intervention (EI)?**

State determinations are evaluations conducted by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to assess how effectively states implement Part C of the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](https://sites.ed.gov/idea/) (IDEA). These evaluations effect a state’s funding which ultimately impacts service delivery and outcomes for children and families. State determinations can be explained as a quality control measure evaluating the state’s adherence to federal standards in providing EI services. OSEP uses a set of criteria to assess performance across various indicators, which helps identify strengths and areas for improvement. By understanding these determinations, EI service (EIS) providers can align their practices with federal expectations, ultimately leading to better service delivery for children and families.

**How does OSEP make state determinations?**
State determinations are based on the state’s performance on results and compliance indicators from its State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report and other factors such as child and family outcomes, timeliness of services, dispute resolution, and data completeness (i.e., how many children are included in the child outcomes data).According to OSEP guidelines, the data collected by the state is analyzed using a combination of quantitative measures (e.g., assessment scores and service delivery timelines) and qualitative feedback (e.g., family perspectives surveys). This multifaceted approach provides a comprehensive view of the EI system’s effectiveness.

OSEP classifies states based on their performance across these indicators into four categories using information from the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR), information obtained through monitoring visits, and any other public information. A state may be classified as "Meets Requirements" if it demonstrates compliance with federal regulations and shows positive outcomes for children and families. States that meet some requirements but have areas needing improvement are designated as "Needs Assistance." Those that consistently struggle to meet requirements fall into the "Needs Intervention" category, necessitating targeted support from OSEP. Finally, states that demonstrate significant noncompliance with federal regulations are classified as "Needs Substantial Intervention," requiring intensive oversight and assistance to address systemic issues.

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**What is OSEP’s state determination for Massachusetts?**

Massachusetts EI received 93.75% for compliance indicators (15/16 possible points), this is the same score we received in this category last fiscal year and 62.5% for our results indicators (5/8 points), this is an improvement from last year, up from 50%. A score deficit in the results category was the data completeness score because a limited number of children were evaluated using the Batelle Developmental Inventory at both an initial evaluation and follow-up evaluation.  Massachusetts reported on 22.1% of children served for the child outcomes data in this category. Although low, this is an increase from 14.46% last fiscal year. However, this percentage is below OSEP’s expectation and therefore resulted in 0 points towards the results category for data completeness. Massachusetts received a determination in 2023 and 2024 of “Needs Assistance.”

**How are state determinations explained to families?**
Family engagement is a critical component of the EI process. OSEP emphasizes the importance of involving families in decision-making and service-planning, noting that robust family participation leads to improved child outcomes. When explaining state determinations to families, it is important to focus on how these evaluations help ensure that the EI services they receive are effective and of high quality. Families should understand that these assessments contribute to the continuous improvement of services, which can lead to better outcomes for their children. Clear communication about the purpose and significance of these evaluations fosters trust and transparency between families and service providers. Encouraging families to share their experiences and progress contributes to the overall assessment of the EI system. Actively involving families in this process not only enhances the effectiveness of services but also empowers families to take an active role in their child’s development.

**How are state determinations incorporated in your work with families?**
Every day, your work as an EIS provider has far-reaching implications beyond individual service delivery. By understanding how your efforts contribute to the state’s compliance and performance evaluations, you can take pride in your role as a key player in the EI system.

As EIS providers, you are essential in data collection and analysis. The evaluations, assessments, and documentation you provide on child development and family outcomes are vital to the state’s performance metrics. Each piece of data you collect contributes to the larger narrative of service effectiveness and compliance with IDEA requirements. Accurate and comprehensive data collection supports not only your individual clients but also strengthens the state’s ability to demonstrate effective service delivery on a larger scale.

Your role in fostering strong partnerships with families is instrumental in building family engagement. By ensuring that families are engaged, and their voices are heard, you help tailor services to meet their unique needs and preferences, ultimately leading to better outcomes for children. As families experience their needs being addressed, they become advocates for the services provided, which further strengthens the state’s ability to demonstrate compliance with federal standards.

**How are state determinations supported in EI?**
State determinations are supported in EI through ongoing professional development, training, and collaboration among providers. OSEP provides technical assistance and resources to states like ours to help them meet the indicators set forth for determinations. EIS programs are also supported in Massachusetts by their assigned Clinical Oversight and Support Specialists. This support fosters a culture of continuous improvement and enables EIS programs to better meet the needs of children and families, ultimately impacting state evaluations positively. Such support reinforces the commitment to lifelong learning and collaboration within the EI community.

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

* How do you see your role in shaping the outcomes measured by state determinations?
* How can you help families understand the value of having an initial and follow-up BDI as a means of assessing progress, building strengths, and developing/updating outcomes?
* What specific strategies can you implement to enhance family engagement in the EI process?
* In what ways can your data collection practices be improved to better reflect family and child outcomes and the overall impact of EI?
* How can communication about state determinations be enhanced with families?
* How can collaboration among EIS providers be strengthened to improve service delivery and outcomes?

**Resources:**

* [How the Department Made Determinations](https://sites.ed.gov/idea/how-the-department-made-determinations/)
* [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](https://sites.ed.gov/idea/) (IDEA).
* [Part C Determinations 2023 Guidance](https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/how-the-department-made-determinations-part-c-2023.pdf)