

***County Comprehensive Early Intervention  
System of Services and Supports***  
**Delaware County Board of Developmental Disabilities**

Board Review Date: 10-15-09  
Board Resolution # 09-10-04  
Effective Date: 10-16-09  
Reviewing Department: Early Intervention

**Description of Services:**

The Delaware County Family and Children First Council (FCFC) is responsible for coordinating existing services and supports for children birth through twenty-one years of age.

The Delaware General Health District houses the Help Me Grow (HMG) program, Delaware County's coordinated, community-based infrastructure that promotes family-centered services and supports to eligible expectant parents, newborns, infants and toddlers, and their families. Help Me Grow staff includes Service Coordinators responsible for coordinating services for infants and toddlers with delays and disabilities.

The Delaware County Board of Developmental Disabilities (DCBDD) is a direct service provider for children birth through age two with developmental delays and disabilities. DCBDD employs professional, certified Early Intervention Specialists trained to develop and implement strategies and interventions which includes, but are not limited to, the special instruction identified in IDEA, Part C. Early Intervention is designed to stimulate development early in life and to provide families with information, skills, and support related to enhancing their child's development. DCBDD also employs one HMG credentialed Service Coordinator with specialization in working with family members with hearing impairments. This individual's role is also that of a liaison between HMG and DCBDD.

EI services are year round and locally funded. EI Specialists enable families to access EI services by means of developing individual budgets and choice of supports through contracted and/or community providers using the concept of "self-determination". In addition to the role described in the paragraph above, the EI Specialist and the HMG EI Liaison authorizes and monitors the family's individual budget.

Delaware County Board of Developmental Disabilities provides limited direct

therapy services based on the triage level according to a child's needs and approved funding limits. Therapy services above and beyond the approved funding amounts may be accessed through private insurance, Medicaid, or private pay if the family chooses to do so. Families are encouraged to pursue such benefits, as the amount of therapy DCBDD can provide may be less than what a specialist (doctor or therapist) recommends. There are three areas of Early Intervention (EI) funded services that have budgeted amounts per eligible individual: Therapy, Community Support, and Adaptation/Modification. All services (e.g. therapies, respite, community classes, equipment, etc.) paid for through Delaware County Board of Developmental Disabilities must have pre-authorization in writing by the child's Early Intervention Specialist (EIS) or Early Intervention Liaison. Pre-authorization is a multi-step process ending with a "Payment Authorization for Services" (PAS) entered in Gatekeeper by DCBDD staff. Receipt of the PAS is the verification that services are approved for funding. Funding will not cover immunizations, medical tests, or expenditures that are *typical* expenses for a family. A computer, for example, would be considered a typical expense for a family. Modification to a computer (i.e. a switch, or specific software) could be a request that relates to the child's disability and therefore would likely be authorized. Items requested to be purchased by DCBDD must relate to the child's disability and be accompanied by a therapist goal.

EI funds are pro-rated if the child turns three within the plan year.

In addition to EI Specialist home visits and the three areas above, DCDD also offers families EI Specialty Groups at a variety of locations throughout the community. Families may access up to three groups per plan year.

### **Delaware County Board of Developmental Disabilities Role in the Provision of the six Help Me Grow Components listed below:**

#### 1) Outreach/child find/intake/procedural safeguards:

The Delaware County FCFC birth to six "workgroup" established in the Spring of 2007 plans and oversees the implementation of strategies and activities to increase the percentage of infants, toddlers, and young children in the community screened and identified with developmental delays. Composition of the FCFC birth to six "workgroup" includes parents, and representatives of local agencies that meet the needs of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

Delaware County Board of Developmental Disabilities participates in local Child Check activities coordinated through the local school districts.

Referrals to the Delaware County Board of Developmental Disabilities Early Intervention program originate through the Help Me Grow Central Intake for Delaware County, which is housed at the Delaware General Health District.

The Help Me Grow office will contact families within two days of receiving a referral and share information about the assessment process. Completion of the evaluation for eligibility will occur within 45 calendar days of initial contact with the family. Public Law (PL 99-457, Part C) describes regulations for Early Intervention infants and toddlers with disabilities. Factors that are assessed include self-help skills, physical development (fine and gross motor), cognitive development, language, speech, or communication skills, psychosocial or physical maturation, and sensory development.

For all Part C eligible infants and toddlers served by DCBDD, families are informed of their procedural safeguards afforded under the lead agency, and provided a copy of the complaint resolution procedure annually. HMG requires services listed on the child's initial Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) be in place within 30 days of signing the plan.

- 2) HMG provides services to first time mothers, mothers with children under 6 months of age with additional risk factors, or for children "at risk" of developmental delay due to substantiated abuse or neglect as part of the county's comprehensive supports to families. DCBDD does not provide services to children "at risk" unless the child has been determined eligible for Early Intervention (Part C) services through HMG (See # 3 below).

- 3) Evaluation to Determine Eligibility and Ongoing Assessments

Delaware County Board of Developmental Disabilities currently provides one contracted Early Intervention Specialist to work with the HMG Part C eligibility evaluation team. This person is one of two disciplines on the eligibility team and is considered by ODH to be an "expert in the area of delay". DCBDD has recruited a team of contracted therapists to add additional assistance to the eligibility team, and covers the cost of the therapist or EI specialist involved in each evaluation resulting in eligibility for Part C services.

Eligibility is measured using the following procedures: standardized evaluation tool (if no medical diagnosis), observation, descriptive data, medical reports, and/or informed clinical opinion. To be eligible for Early Intervention programming, an infant or toddler shall be under three years of age and demonstrate at least one developmental delay of -1.5 standard deviation below the mean in the above mentioned areas, or have a medical diagnosis as identified on Ohio Dept. of Health's diagnosed medical conditions list. Data used to verify the eligibility of an infant or toddler will be current within ninety days of eligibility determination. The service coordinator shall transfer data to the locally

designated tracking point within 45 calendar days of initial contact with the family.

All children eligible for Part C services shall have ongoing assessments for program planning by the EI Specialist at least annually and prior to the annual IFSP review. EI Specialists shall provide HMG Service Coordinators with updated information regarding the child's development for program planning for every IFSP review in all areas of development. The assessment shall include parent report, observation, and use of an evidence-based tool (Hawaii Early Learning) in all developmental domains. For children receiving services for a delay in a developmental domain, the HMG Service Coordinator shall request written documentation from the service provider (therapist contracted through DCBDD).

4) Service coordination/Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) development, implementation, and review:

The professionals involved in the initial assessment for eligibility will report the results in a manner that is immediately useful for planning program goals and objectives. Within forty-five days of the initial contact, the Help Me Grow Service Coordinator will facilitate the development of an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). The EI Specialist assigned will accompany the HMG Service Coordinator for the initial IFSP meeting for families choosing DCBDD supports and services.

As a direct service provider, Delaware County Board of Developmental Disabilities will participate either in person or by providing information to the HMG Service Coordinator for the IFSP review meetings. The Individualized Family Service Plan will be updated by the Help Me Grow Service Coordinator every 180 days, or more frequently if conditions warrant, or at the family's request. Ongoing, systematic data will be collected by service providers (DCBDD Early Intervention specialists and therapists) to measure progress on individual goals and objectives. An annual review shall be conducted to evaluate the IFSP and to revise as appropriate, based on ongoing assessments. If warranted, DCBDD shall provide initial assessments by a licensed OT/PT/SP when areas of concern are identified throughout the process of on-going assessment and review of the IFSP.

5) Family Support Services

HMG provides a Family Support Specialist who collaborates with DCBDD in the provision of parent support groups, mailings of newsletters, and parent workshops.

DCBDD provides the following Family Support direct services:

**Community Support Services** provided by DCBDD for Part C Eligible families includes:

- **Respite:** to provide parents with the opportunity for assistance with caring for a child who is eligible for DCBDD services. Parents can choose from DCBDD providers or secure a provider of their own. Family secured providers must meet specific criteria which can be found in the parent handbook.
  - **Community Classes:** to help meet the child's needs and current goals.
  - **Equipment:** to further assist with accomplishing specific therapy goals. Each piece of equipment must have a goal from a therapist.
  - **Special diets:** as prescribed by a doctor or another medical professional.
  - **Counseling:** to help a family through the many emotions faced with a diagnosis or other circumstances related to having a child with developmental delay or medical diagnosis. Counseling includes mental health, parenting, and behavior plans.
  - **Conferences, and/or training:** to help further a family's knowledge of their child's special needs.
- Parent Education Materials:** to increase a family's capacity of care, interactions, and understanding of a child with special needs

**Adaptation/Modification** provided by DCBDD for Part C Eligible families includes:

**Adaptation Items** include hearing aids, special car seats, ramps, and equipment that have been modified, adapted, or selected/fitted specifically for a child.

**Modifications** include changes made to the permanent structure of an owned home. Alternate funding, such as Medicaid, private pay, or other community resources must be explored during the planning process. All Adaptation/Modification requests need prior approval from A/M committee, and are subject to family co-pay based on a sliding fee scale.

6) Specialized Services in everyday routines, activities, and places

DCBDD Early Intervention service delivery is based on evidence-based practices, meaning they are most likely to make a difference in the lives of infants, toddlers, and their families when provided in everyday routines, activities, and places. In order for intervention to be successful, service providers **MUST** work with the parent when working with the child in places where the child and parent or other caregiver have routine interactions. DCBDD EI services occur in the child's home (or day care setting). EI providers encourage and coach strategies with the parent or caregiver to fit their everyday learning opportunities. The above statement is incorporated into the DCBDD contract with EI therapists, and is an expectation of every provider of DCBDD EI services and supports.