

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

Board Review Date: October 20, 2011  
Board Resolution #11-10-09  
Effective Date: October 21, 2011  
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. 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". 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 impairment. This individual's role is also that of a liaison between HMG and DCBDD.

In addition to the role described in the paragraph above, the EI Specialist and/or 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. Delaware County families can also discuss with their EIS or HMG EI Liaison the benefits of waiver-funded services and determine if applying for the Level 1 or IO Waiver waiting list would best meet their child's needs.

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 HMG EI 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 an EIS or 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, DCBDD 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 Family and Children First Council (FCFC) members include parents, representatives from local agencies, and schools serving children birth to five. FCFC works to identify gaps in services and improve outreach, child find, and intake processes through shared priorities of communication, collaboration, and service coordination. The Early Childhood Coordinating Committee (ECCC) is a subcommittee of the FCFC. As per HMG policy, the ECCC assists the FCFC in the design, coordination, and implementation of a comprehensive, interdisciplinary, family centered system of services for families with an infant or toddler at risk for or with developmental delays.

DCBDD does not provide central intake and referral. Referrals to DCBDD 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. Children with a diagnosed physical or mental condition associated with developmental disabilities and included on the Ohio Department of Health Help Me Grow website are automatically eligible for Early Intervention services. For all others, completion of an evaluation for eligibility

will occur within 45 calendar days of initial contact with the family. Factors that are assessed include self-help skills, physical development (fine and gross motor), cognitive development, language, speech, or communication skills, social and emotional development, and sensory development. DCBDD provides an expert in the area of delay for HMG eligibility evaluations (see #3 below).

Public Law (PL 99 457, Part C) describes regulations for Early Intervention supports and services for infants and toddlers with disabilities. 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 (prenatal and/or newborn home visits) 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 prenatal or newborn home visit 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  
Eligibility is determined through 1) documentation of a diagnosed physical or mental condition associated with developmental disabilities or with a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay or disability, 2) developmental delay, or 3) informed clinical opinion.

If not eligible through a diagnosed physical or mental condition, two disciplines must be present to conduct the eligibility evaluation. DCBDD provides a contracted therapists and/or a contracted EI specialist to add assistance to the eligibility team. DCBDD covers the cost of the therapist or EI specialist involved in each evaluation resulting in eligibility for Part C services.

The eligibility evaluation is conducted using the following procedures: standardized evaluation tool, observation, descriptive data, medical reports, and/or informed clinical opinion. To be eligible for Early Intervention programming due to a developmental delay, an infant or toddler shall be under three years of age and demonstrate at least one delay of -1.5 standard deviation below the mean in one or more areas of development (cognitive, fine motor, gross motor, language, adaptive, or social emotional). The Ohio Department of Health HMG website lists the physical or mental diagnosed conditions that automatically qualify infants or toddlers for Early Intervention supports and services. 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 and receiving services from DCBDD shall have ongoing assessments for program planning by the EI Specialist at least annually and prior to the annual IFSP review. In addition to annual reviews, 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 every 180 days. 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:

DCBDD employs one HMG service coordinator/EI Liaison whose role includes authorizing and monitoring individual budgets for the children eligible for Part C on her caseload. HMG employs seven service coordinators who work with children eligible for Part C and those “at risk”.

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 and be an active participant in the writing of the IFSP outcomes.

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 DCBDD contracted 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, posting current newsletter on DCBDD website, and parent workshops. Specifically, DCBDD provides administrative support space and additional support as needed for support group meetings, coordinating Family Information Network (FIN) workshops and collaboration and/or facilitation of parent workshops, meetings, etc.

6) Specialized Services in Everyday Routines, Activities, and Places (ERAP)

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/caregiver 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). In some situations, services may occur in a clinic setting if that is the parent's choice. EI providers encourage and coach strategies with the parent or caregiver to fit into their everyday learning opportunities. The expectation that

providers follow evidence-based practices for services and supports to families in Early Intervention is incorporated into the DCBDD contract.

### **Community Support Services**

Alternate funding, such as Medicaid, private pay, or other community resources must be explored during the planning process.

- **Respite:** to provide parents with the opportunity for a brief reprieve from 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:** All Adaptation/Modification requests need prior approval from A/M committee.
  - **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 and are subject to family co-pay based on a sliding fee scale.