

Policy:

Public Awareness and Central Directory

Effective:

July 2019

Federal Authority:

Title 34 of the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, Vol. II, Chapter III, Parts 300-399:

§§ 303.116-117; 303.301

Title 20 of the U.S. Code of Law, Chapter 33. §§1400-1499:

§§ 1435(a)(6)-(7); 1437(a)(7); (9).

Public Awareness Program

The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) will maintain an ongoing public awareness program using a variety of methods to inform the public about the importance of early identification of infants and toddlers with disabilities and the availability of Early Intervention Services (EIS). The target audience shall include, but is not limited to, individuals with disabilities, public agencies at the state and local level, private providers, professional associations, parent groups, and advocacy associations.

The lead agency will develop, prepare, and disseminate public awareness materials for distribution through primary referral sources.

Methods for informing the public and locating children and families include:

- Maintaining an up to-date central directory.
- Maintaining a toll-free access line that will link families and other concerned individuals to the IDEA/Part C Central Referral Team.
- Development and implementation of a plan for effective outreach for underserved areas of the state or specific populations.
- Maintaining a website which provides pertinent information regarding the early intervention system.

The public awareness program will inform the public about:

- The State's early intervention system
- The child find system including:
 - The purpose and scope of the system.
 - How to make referrals to the early intervention system.
 - How to gain access to a comprehensive, multidisciplinary evaluation, and other EIS.

Central Directory

SCDHHS or its designee shall develop and maintain a central directory of information which identifies EIS, resources, experts, professionals, and other groups (including parent support groups and advocate associations) that provide assistance to eligible children and their families. The directory will be developed in coordination with families and community groups, including local early intervention systems.

The Central Directory will include:

- Public and private EIS, resources, and experts available in the State.
- Research and demonstration projects being conducted in the State.
- Professional and other groups that provide assistance to eligible children and their families.

The Central Directory must be:

- Readily accessible to the general public.
- Updated at least annually.
- Available through the SCDHHS website and other appropriate means
- Accessible by persons with disabilities or with limited English proficiency.