

Determination of Initial Eligibility

Who is responsible: BabyNet Intake Coordinator

Categories of BabyNet Eligibility for Children Ages Birth to Three

In South Carolina, infants and toddlers are determined eligible for Part C if the child:

1. Is experiencing a developmental delay of 40% (2 standard deviations below the mean) in one area of development or a delay of 25% (1.5 standard deviations below the mean) in two areas of development, as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures. Areas of Development: Cognitive development, Physical development (including vision and hearing), Communication development, Social or Emotional development, Adaptive development.
OR
2. Has a diagnosed physical or mental condition (verified by a physician) that as a high probability of resulting in developmental delay: and includes conditions such as chromosomal abnormalities; genetic or congenital disorders; sensory impairments; inborn errors of metabolism; disorders reflecting disturbance of the development of the nervous system; congenital infections; severe attachment disorders; complications of prematurity; and disorders secondary to exposure to toxic substances, including fetal alcohol syndrome.

If a child's medical and/or other records indicate that a child meets state eligibility criteria for developmental delay, the child does not have to be evaluated. Medical and/or other records should be recent (within 90 days). With parental consent, the child will proceed to the child and family assessment.

Preparation for the Eligibility Evaluation

Unless there are exceptional family circumstances, the initial eligibility evaluation may be conducted the same day as the orientation, intake, and screening activities.

The BabyNet Intake Coordinator (BNIC) will ensure all items needed for evaluation are available, including scoring protocols, evaluation kit, and test item manipulatives.

Determining Eligibility Based on Established Risk Conditions

For children referred on the basis of an established risk condition, the BNIC will request and review all available information from the child's healthcare providers and determine if the child has a diagnosis or condition that meets state eligibility criteria. Eligibility on the basis of complications of prematurity may be determined for children referred to BabyNet before age two.

Scenario 1: Child's Diagnosis or Condition Meets State Criteria

For children eligible for BabyNet, the following **must** be completed by the BNIC prior to referring the child to a Service Coordinator (SC):

- Document multidisciplinary eligibility team decision in the BabyNet electronic record.
- Provide prior written notice of BabyNet's eligibility decision.

- Provide family with a copy of the evaluation results.
- Ensure all appropriate sections of the BabyNet electronic record are completed.
- State policy regarding selection of the SC requires the following:
 - If vision and/or hearing impairments are present, the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind (SCSDB) will provide service coordination.
 - If the established risk condition does not include impairment of hearing and/or vision, parents have one business day to choose a service coordination provider or the local service coordination matrix will be used. The SC has one business day to respond or the parent's next choice will be used. After accepting a referral, the service coordination agency will receive the file through BRIDGES and secure e-mail of hardcopy documents within one business day.
- Referral status update form is sent to the referral source.

Screening for Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD):

- All children referred between 18 and 24 months of age (with or without an established risk condition) and with the consent of the family shall also be provided with a screening for Autism Spectrum Disorders.
- If the results of both the general development screening and the ASD screening are negative for concerns, and the family does not choose to request an eligibility evaluation, the family must be given Prior Written Notice of the decision not to conduct an eligibility evaluation, the Notice of BabyNet Record Retention and Destruction, and the Notice of Child and Family Rights. The notice must include the family's right to request an evaluation regardless of the screening results.

If screening for ASD (MCHAT) documents concerns, the BNIC should proceed with determination of eligibility by documented significant delays, as described below, and refer the family to a qualified clinician to administer the MCHAT follow-up interview and if necessary the STAT (Screening Tool for Autism Toddlers, a 2nd-tier screening for Autism Spectrum Disorders). If the STAT documents concerns, the BNIC will:

- Determine the child eligible for BabyNet under Established Risk Conditions;
- Refer the child for service coordination, assessment of child and family, and development of the Initial Individualized Family Service Plan.
- Will seek BabyNet approval for ASD services if Early Intensive Behavioral Intervention (EIBI) is identified as a needed service by the IFSP team and ensure the diagnostic evaluation of ASD is completed.

If the results of the diagnostic evaluation do not confirm the diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder, an IFSP Change Review meeting must be held to:

- Use existing information from all BabyNet Service Providers to determine if the child is eligible by Documented Significant Delays in Developmental as defined below.
- Revise the Eligibility section of BRIDGES.
- Review the appropriateness of early intervention services in the current IFSP.

Scenario 2: Child's Diagnosis or Condition Does Not Meet State Criteria

Option 1: The BNIC may consult with his or her supervisor to ensure the diagnosis does not include a high-risk of lifelong impairment.

Option 2: The BNIC may proceed to determine if the child is eligible on the basis of significant delays in development.

Determining Eligibility Based on Significant Developmental Delays

Approved tools for initial eligibility:

- Battelle Developmental Inventory-2 (BDI-2)
- For infants and toddlers who were eligible in another state, a standard evaluation tool or the most recent assessment of the child (less than 90 days old) may be considered in the eligibility decision.

The BNIC will:

- Ensure prior written notice of the evaluation has been provided, and the parent has provided consent.
- Explain the purpose of the evaluation and how the BDI is administered.
- Administer the BDI by using the domain books or BDI Mobile Data Solution evaluation protocol appropriately.
- Once BDI is completed, the BNIC will enter results in the BDI Data Manager and BRIDGES.

Scenario 1: Child Meets State Criteria for Significant Developmental Delay

For children eligible for BabyNet, the following must be completed by the BNIC prior to referring the child to a SC:

- Document multidisciplinary eligibility team decision in the BabyNet electronic record.
- Provide prior written notice of BabyNet's eligibility decision.
- Provide family with a copy of the evaluation results.
- Ensure all appropriate sections of the BabyNet electronic record are completed.
 - Parents have one business day to choose SC Provider or matrix will be used. SC has one business day to respond or the parent's next choice will be used.
 - After accepting a referral, the service coordination agency will receive the file through BRIDGES and secure e-mail of hardcopy documents within one business day.
 - Referral status update form is sent to the referral source.

Scenario 2: Child Does Not Meet State Criteria for Significant Developmental Delay

The BNIC will provide family with a copy of the evaluation results. If parents are not satisfied with the results, discuss the case with the BNIC supervisor for further guidance.

If the family has no further concerns, the BNIC will:

- Provide family with information about other resources based on the child's situation (private therapy providers, home visitation programs, etc.)
- Provide prior written notice of BabyNet's eligibility decision and of the family's right to appeal or re-refer at any time before the child reaches 3 years of age. Families of children re-referred after 34.5 months of age will be directed to their local school district as potentially eligible for Part B services.
- Send the referral status update form is sent to the referral source.
- Document multidisciplinary eligibility team decision in the BabyNet electronic record.
- Enter all necessary data for exit and closure in the BabyNet electronic record.
- Ensure all appropriate sections of the BabyNet electronic record are completed.
- Close the BabyNet electronic record and follow established procedures for closure in SCDHHS data systems.

Use of Informed Clinical Opinion (ICO)

If the diagnosis or the eligibility evaluation results do not meet state criteria ***and*** the BNIC has evidence the child has a significant delay, ICO may be used as an independent process for eligibility. All sources of documentation (i.e., medical records, therapy records), observation, and interview information should be considered as part of the ICO process.

There is no single evaluation tool that will capture every child with a significant delay. It is critical for the BNIC to obtain and review as much information as possible. If there is documentation to support a significant delay, the BNIC should staff the case with their supervisor. If additional discussion is needed, they should contact the state BabyNet Eligibility Director.

Native Language of the Child

Reasonable efforts must be made to conduct the initial eligibility evaluation in the native language of the child (as defined in this manual) unless it is not developmentally appropriate for the child.

There may be instances when conducting the initial eligibility evaluation in the native language of the child is not possible because, for example, interpreters for a particular language cannot be located. The BNIC will make every effort to make sure foreign language or sign language interpretation is available, as appropriate. Refer to the BabyNet provider list for approved interpreter.