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Criteria for Eligibility

Initial Eligibility

Infants and Toddlers in Oklahoma who are developmentally delayed are eligible for SoonerStart services. As used in the Oklahoma Early Intervention Act, [*Oklahoma State Statutes Title 70, Section 13-123*] “developmentally delayed” means children who:

- Exhibit a delay in their developmental age compared to their chronological age of fifty percent or score two standard deviations below the mean in one or more of the following areas or in a sub-domain of one of the areas: cognitive, physical, communication, social or emotional, or adaptive development;
- Exhibit a delay in their developmental age compared to their chronological age of twenty-five percent or score one and one-half standard deviations below the mean in two or more of the following areas or in a sub-domain of two or more of the following areas: cognitive, physical, communication, social or emotional, or adaptive development; or
- Have a diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in delay. This includes, but is not limited to: chromosomal disorders, neurological abnormalities, inborn errors of metabolism, genetic disorders, congenital malformation of the brain, congenital infections, sensory abnormalities and impairments, or identified syndromes (**Appendix K**).

In addition to “developmentally delayed”, IDEA, Part C regulations (*34CFR 303.321(a)(3)(ii)*) require that informed clinical opinion be used as an independent basis to establish eligibility even when other instruments do not establish eligibility.

Ineligibility

An infant/toddler is not eligible for SoonerStart services if he or she does not meet the criteria for developmentally delayed or is not determined eligible by informed clinical opinion (see Initial Eligibility). If the child is not eligible for services, the evaluation team is responsible for explaining parent rights and procedural safeguards and making any recommendations for other appropriate community resources and/or services. Information on how to make a re-referral to SoonerStart if needed should also be provided.

If the parent does not agree with the evaluation results documented on the Multidisciplinary Evaluation and Child Assessment Team Summary (MECATS) (**Appendix J**), the service coordinator is responsible for providing the parent with the SoonerStart Parent Rights – Notice of Procedural Safeguards handbook and explaining their right to a timely dispute resolution of their concerns.

Continued Eligibility

If continued eligibility for an infant/toddler in the SoonerStart program is questioned, a multidisciplinary team evaluation should be administered. Parental consent is required before an evaluation for continued eligibility is conducted. The *Consent: Re-Evaluation and Prior Written Notice* form (**Appendix G**) satisfies both the PWN and parental consent requirements. For the purposes of determining continued eligibility for early intervention services, the child must exhibit:

- A delay in their developmental age compared to their chronological age of 25 percent or score one and one-half standard deviations below the mean in one or more domains or sub-domains; or
- Continue to have a diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in delay. This includes, but is not limited to: chromosomal disorders, neurological abnormalities, inborn errors of metabolism, genetic disorders, congenital malformation of the brain, congenital infections, sensory abnormalities and impairments, or identified syndromes **(Appendix K)**.

The continuation of services for children who do not qualify for SoonerStart services limits available services for other children in the community. Local team leaders are to insure that services provided are reserved for children that meet the programs eligibility requirements.