

Instructions For Determining If A Candidate Is Qualified To Be An “Early Intervention Specialist”

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Overview of the process

The purpose of creating a new personnel classification called “Early Intervention Specialist” is to address the shortage of evaluators in the statewide Family Centered Early Supports and Services (FCESS) Program. Addressing this shortage is necessary in order to maintain the current high level of compliance with the Federal Requirement for the timely development of IFSPs, which in NH means that IFSPs are developed (with parent consent) within 45 days of referral for children found eligible for the FCESS program . This process will also effectively create a ‘career ladder’ for personnel working in FCESS programs to become evaluators and independent service providers.

Process:

1. A person who meets the requirements in the definition section of this document for Early Intervention Specialist except for the demonstration of competencies lets their FCESS program director know of their interest.
2. The FCESS Program Director reviews the requirements for Early Intervention Specialist with the person and determines that:
 - They agree that the person qualifies, and
 - That they are willing to support the individual to become an Early Intervention Specialist,
3. The FCESS Program Director directs the person to send a written request to FCESS Part C office with all of the documentation listed in the Expectations, Candidate section.
4. Upon determination by FCESS Part C office that the application is complete, the individual submitting the documents is now considered to be a ‘candidate’. It is expected that candidates will accept responsibility for completing all requirements and for maintaining agreed upon contact with the FCESS Validator assigned to them.
5. FCESS Part C office assigns an FCESS Validator (as described in Expectations, Validator). The validator will determine when the candidate has demonstrated the required competencies.
6. The assigned FCESS Validator contacts the candidate and FCESS Program Director to set up an agreement about:
 - How and when to contact the validator.
 - How and when the candidate should submit their portfolio for validation.
 - When the interviews with the FCESS program director and co-workers will be conducted.

- When the candidate has met the competencies required for this personnel classification.
7. Upon notification (and submission of signed checklists) by the FCESS Validator that the candidate has completed the required competencies (see role expectations, FCESS Validator), FCESS Part C office will issue a certificate that the candidate has met the requirements for “Early Intervention Specialist”.
 8. A copy of this certificate should be kept in the candidate’s personnel record to demonstrate that the individual is qualified to be an independent service provider and evaluator in the statewide Family Centered Early Supports and Services Program.
 9. FCESS Part C office will develop and maintain a file of submitted documents for each candidate.

Definitions

Early Intervention Specialist is an evaluator and independent service provider who does not otherwise qualify as an evaluator according to He-M 510.09, but who has:

1. BA or Higher in related field
 - a. Human Services, Family Studies, Psychology, Child Development, Communication Disorders, Child Life Specialist, Education, Early Childhood
2. Certificate of completion of the “Welcome to FCESS” Orientation
3. 2 years or more in a Family Centered Early Supports and Services Program
4. Demonstrated the competencies listed in He-M 510.10 (Welcome to FCESS orientation topics)

Candidate is a person who currently works in a Family Centered Early Supports and Services Program, meets the requirements for Early Intervention Specialist (above), and wishes to become an “Early Intervention Specialist” by demonstrating the required competencies.

FCESS Validator is a person who possesses the following credentials and who has agreed to assist FCESS program staff to complete a Certificate of Competence by reviewing the candidate’s portfolio and validating demonstration of competencies.

Requirements to be an FCESS Validator:

1. Currently meets the requirements for an FCESS evaluator as defined by He-M510.09
2. 5 years experience in the Family Centered Early Supports and Services as an evaluator
 - a. If not currently employed in an FCESS program, must describe how they have remained informed of new developments in the field of early intervention in NH.
3. Certificate of Completion of “Welcome to FCESS” Orientation

Role Expectations

Candidate

Must:

1. Submit a request to FCESS Part C office to be accepted as a candidate for the “Early Intervention Specialist” B category of personnel. The request must include:
 - a. Evidence of a Bachelor’s degree in a related field.
 - b. Certificate of completion of the “Welcome to FCESS” orientation.
 - c. Currently working in FCESS.
 - d. Statement from the Program Director stating that the candidate has been working in an FCESS program for 2 years or more, or when the 2 year work experience will be completed.
 - e. Statement from the Program Director stating that the candidate is recommended and will be supported during the qualification process.
2. Take responsibility for:
 - a. Maintaining contact with the assigned FCESS Validator as agreed.
 - b. Seeking out resources as needed such as attending trainings, requesting a mentorship, asking for assignments which are relevant to the competencies being worked on, etc.
 - c. Completing the competencies in a reasonable amount of time as agreed upon with the FCESS Program Director and FCESS Validator.
 - d. Notifying FCESS Validator when their portfolio is ready for review.
 - e. Submitting a portfolio containing evidence of having met the required competencies as follows:

List of Protocols	Evidence
1. Observation of Individual	Completed protocol
2. Supervisor Interview	Completed protocol
3. Peer Interview	Completed protocol
4. Performance Plan	Completed protocol, performance plan
5. Family Survey	Family Survey
6. Evaluation Report	Completed protocol, evaluation report(s)
7. Progress Notes	Completed protocol, progress notes
8. IFSP	Completed protocol, IFSP(s)
9. Chart Review	Completed protocol, FCESS Part C office record review form

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- f. Maintain a copy of the portfolio and certification for future reference.

Program Director

Assist the candidate from your program as follows:

1. Verify that the candidate is currently working in your (or similar program – please name the program) program for 2 years.
2. State that you approve the candidate’s request. Please note that approving the candidate’s request means that you will provide assistance in mastering the competencies listed by providing opportunities to participate in evaluations as the third person and by providing supervision in regard to the other competencies.

3. Be willing to participate in the supervisor interview and assist in arranging a time for the outside program FCESS Validator to verify that the candidate has sufficiently demonstrated the required competencies.
4. Disseminate parent survey to families with whom the candidate has worked.
5. Maintain a copy of the candidate's Early Intervention Specialist certification with program staff certifications for future reference.

FCESS Validator

1. Submit your credentials to qualify as an 'FCESS Validator' that includes:
 - a. Copy of license/certification in area of specialty,
 - b. Certificate of Completion of the Welcome to FCESS Orientation,
 - c. Evidence that you have been an evaluator in FCESS for 5 years or more.
 - d. If not currently employed, please state how you have kept abreast with changes in the field of early intervention in NH.
2. Be willing to accept an assignment to another FCESS Program for the purpose of validating that the candidate has demonstrated the competencies required in order to be certified as an 'Early Intervention Specialist'.
3. Notify FCESS Part C office when a working agreement has been established with the Candidate and the Candidate's Program Director.
4. Negotiate with the Candidate how you will communicate during the qualification process to determine when competencies have been demonstrated, i.e., the candidate may mail written products to the FCESS Validator at agreed upon intervals for review, or, all written products will be submitted at one time, etc.
5. Schedule a minimum of one meeting to conduct supervisor and peer interview and review information from the parent survey.
6. The arrangement agreed upon by the FCESS Validator and Candidate should be negotiated very early in the qualification process.
7. When the Candidate has demonstrated all of the required competencies, sign and submit the completed checklists to FCESS Part C office for final approval.
8. At completion of the process, the FCESS Validator may submit a log of activities and time spent to receive a certificate of professional development.

FCESS PART C OFFICE

1. When a request to be designated as an Early Intervention Specialist along with required documentation of prerequisites has been received, contact a qualified FCESS Validator who is willing to work with the candidate. Provide the Candidate's contact information to the FCESS Validator.
2. Maintain a log:
 - a. Of requests for designation as an Early Intervention Specialist
 - b. Name and contact information for the FCESS Validator
 - c. A record of the FCESS Validator who was assigned to each candidate
 - d. When a working agreement was reached
 - e. When the Candidate successfully completed the qualification process and was granted the designation of Early Intervention Specialist.
3. A file will be maintained at FCESS Part C office containing only the completed checklists and initial documentation. No child or family identifiable information will be maintained at FCESS Part C office.

Summary of Early Intervention Specialist Competency Protocols

The protocols used in this process are based the competencies that were identified in 2001 by a work group who reviewed the work of 2 states (Massachusetts and Connecticut) as well as other relevant documents. These competencies are currently also being used in 3 Institutes of Higher Education (UNH, Plymouth State University, and Granite State College) in their work to develop curriculums to assist students to be prepared to work with infants and toddlers and their families in early intervention.

List of Protocols	Completed by:	Evidence
1. Observation of Individual	FCESS Program Director or designee (Possesses qualifications equal to FCESS Valuator)	Completed protocol
2. Supervisor Interview	FCESS Valuator	Completed protocol
3. Peer Interview	FCESS Valuator	Completed protocol
4. Performance Plan	FCESS Valuator and FCESS Program Director	Completed protocol, performance plan
5. Family Survey	Family receiving services from Applicant	Family Survey
6. Evaluation Report	FCESS Valuator	Completed protocol, evaluation report(s)
7. Progress Notes	FCESS Valuator	Completed protocol, progress notes
8. IFSP	FCESS Valuator	Completed protocol, IFSP(s)
9. Chart Review	FCESS Valuator	Completed protocol, FCESS PART C OFFICE record review form

Documentation submitted to the FCESS Valuator for review must have identifiable information removed prior to submission. Once the protocol has been completed to the satisfaction of the person completing the protocol with the candidate, both persons must sign the protocol indicating agreement that the competencies represented on the protocol have been met prior to submission.