

A Family's Guide to the Early Intervention Data System

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) in Pennsylvania serves approximately 79,000 infants, toddlers, and children from birth until school age in the statewide Early Intervention System. Electronic data systems are needed to maintain individual child records and to collect data for program improvement. These electronic data systems assist OCDEL and your local Early Intervention (EI) program in collecting, monitoring, and analyzing information required by federal and state law to ensure continuous quality improvement that links directly to children's growth and development. As a family participating in EI, you

may find it helpful to know what data is collected about your child and family and your child and family's experiences in EI. Information collected on a state level is used to guide program development and professional development to best support children and families. It helps determine which supports best enhance the development of young children.

All data collected is kept confidential as required by federal and state privacy and confidentiality requirements.

What is the new “Data System”?

PELICAN EI (Pennsylvania's Enterprise to Link Information for Children Across Networks: Early Intervention) - is used to manage all the records of children receiving EI services across the commonwealth and contains:

- Demographic information about your child and family (e.g., name, address, contact information)
- Evaluation information
- Family information including routines, activities, and concerns you would like your child's team members to know
- Your child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Transition plans
- Information on your child's progress (ongoing assessment)

What are the benefits to this system?

When your child and family enroll in the Early Intervention program, all the information that you provide about your child and family will be maintained in the data system. You will not have to give the same information repeatedly as you move through the Early Intervention Program. Each child in the data system is given one identifying number, providing continuity and consistency for eligibility and progress monitoring. Each child receiving services will have only one record in the statewide system, regardless of how they entered the system or what services they receive.

Who has access to the information?

All information is kept confidential and only authorized EI personnel will have access to records. Early Intervention personnel will have access only to information that they need for their work. Programs must notify you annually of your rights regarding confidentiality of information and must keep a list of EI personnel who have accessed the file, the date, and the purpose.



Can information be shared without my consent?

Generally, programs must have written permission from the parent or guardian in order to release any information from a child's record. However, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows a program to disclose records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (FERPA 34 CFR § 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Parties must adhere to federal and state privacy and confidentiality requirements regarding child records.

Programs may disclose, without consent, basic information (provided by the parent) such as a child's name, address, telephone number, date, and place of birth. This does not include specific information about your child's development. For example, in Early Intervention, very basic information is shared when your child transitions from the Infant/Toddler EI Program to the Preschool EI Program and then again as your child transitions to kindergarten to help the programs plan for the number of children transitioning.

Can I see my child's record?

You have the right to review your child's record. Programs are not required to provide free copies of records and may charge a small fee for copies.

What if I disagree with the information that is in my child's record?

Parents have the right to request that a program correct records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the program decides not to amend the record, the parent can request mediation or a formal due process hearing. After the hearing, if the program still decides not to amend the record, the parent has the right to place a statement with the record that outlines the parent's view about the contested information. You can contact the PA Office for Dispute Resolution at 800-222-3353 for the assistance of a trained mediator to help solve disagreements.

How can I find out more information on confidentiality rights?

Your local program can provide you with information regarding local practices and give you a detailed list of who can access your family/child's information. For additional information on local and state use of collected data contact OCDEL ra-ocdintervention@state.pa.us. For more information on FERPA go to <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html> or call the Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Dept. of Education at (202) 260-3887.