

## Section 9: Interagency Collaboration

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### **Introduction**

This section describes the requirements for collaboration according to the *Iowa Administrative Rules for Early ACCESS* and the Memorandum of Agreement between Signatory Agencies.

Examples of documents and procedures that may facilitate interagency collaboration have been included in this section.

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### **Required integrated system**

*Iowa Administrative Rules for Early ACCESS* clearly delineate requirements of a statewide, integrated system of interagency services and supports:

Early ACCESS is the statewide comprehensive, interagency system of integrated early intervention services that supports eligible children and their families. Early ACCESS is part of a larger early care, health, and education system. Services are provided by public and private agencies in partnership with families. The purpose of Early ACCESS is to work together in identifying, coordinating, and providing needed services and resources, including informal supports provided by communities, that will help families assist their infants or toddlers to grow and develop [281–120.4].

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### **Purpose**

Collaboration between agencies is intended to create a flexible system of services and resources for children and families and to promote a high level of quality and consistency throughout the state while minimizing duplication of services between agencies.

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### **Lead Agency role**

As the Lead Agency, the Department of Education is responsible for the development of policies and procedures to meet federal requirements for implementation of IDEA-Part C, 2004.

Reauthorization of the federal law, every five years, requires development of new policies and procedures at the state and regional level. The Early ACCESS Executive Committee and the Iowa Council for Early ACCESS review updated policies and procedures in their advise and assist role to the Lead Agency. Membership of these committees is comprised of individuals representing the four Signatory Agencies, Council leadership and families.

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### Signatory Agency roles

The Departments of Education, Public Health, and Human Services and the Child Health Specialty Clinics have entered into an *INTERAGENCY MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT* to formalize their joint commitments to the establishment and ongoing implementation and evaluation of a comprehensive, integrated, interagency Early ACCESS system.

The Iowa Department of Education is responsible for providing education programs and services for preschool and school-age students, including children with disabilities, from birth through 21 years of age.

The Iowa Department of Human Services administers social service programs in order to help and empower individuals and families to become increasingly self-sufficient and productive.

The Iowa Department of Public Health administers public health programs in order to promote and protect the health of Iowans.

The Child Health Specialty Clinics are the statewide public health program for children with special health care needs, as designated by the legislature [281-120.7(4)].

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### Regional Grantees, the AEAs

As Regional Grantees, AEAs have the *fiscal and legal obligation for ensuring that the Early ACCESS system is carried out regionally* [281–120.8(1)].

AEA personnel collaborate with local representatives of Signatory Agencies, community partners, and families in the development, implementation and monitoring of policies and procedures required in the Iowa Administrative Rules for Early ACCESS. [281—120.8(1)c]

Collaboration activities include developing and implementing interagency agreements and interagency systems of service coordination and personnel development.

**Note.** In order to have a collaborative interagency system, a contract or interagency agreement may be beneficial.

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### **Community partners**

Community partners are *local providers of Signatory Agencies, as well as other public or private community programs or agencies, including Early Head Start, childcare providers, Early Childhood Iowa areas, and health programs, that work with Early ACCESS (281-120.4).*

In some cases, community partners provide services that families need such as medical or family support. In other cases, community partners, such as Early Childhood Iowa, can be a source of financial support.

The Iowa Department of Education administers the School Ready state funds allocated to the numerous Early Childhood Iowa Area Boards (*formerly called Community Empowerment Boards*) for support of comprehensive early care, health and education services for children, families and early childhood professionals. These local funds may support general education aspects of the Early ACCESS system of services including: parent training of child development or Positive Behavior Intervention Supports, professional development for training referral sources; etc.

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### **Collaboration with community partners**

To maximize efficiency and reduce redundancy of services provided by various community partners, AEA staff promote awareness of Early ACCESS rules and procedures and support professional development related to Early ACCESS for community partners.

In addition, AEA leadership and staff contribute to collaboration in the following ways:

- Participate on local Early Childhood Iowa Boards/Committees.
  - Serve on grant review committees.
  - Share information about available resources.
  - Collaborate on professional development opportunities.
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### **Interagency system of service coordination**

The Signatory Agencies and community partners work with families to support an effective system of service coordination [120.15(2)].

In addition, all Signatory Agencies have agreed to implement IFSP procedures developed in conjunction with the Lead Agency. The IFSP is used to document ongoing planning between families and providers across all agencies providing services or resources to meet identified needs [281-120.39].

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### **Interagency comprehensive system of personnel development**

The Signatory Agencies support and implement an interagency comprehensive system of personnel development to ensure that there will be sufficient numbers of qualified and skilled providers of Early ACCESS supports and services.

The system provides for pre-service and in-service training conducted on an interdisciplinary basis, to the extent appropriate. It also provides professional development for a variety of personnel needed to meet the needs of eligible children, including

- public and private providers,
- primary referral sources,
- paraprofessionals, and
- persons who will serve as Service Coordinators.

AEAs collaborate with partners to develop and conduct trainings that are available to practitioners across a variety of agencies and disciplines (281-120.19(2)).

Regional trainings are available and can be reviewed. Early Childhood Iowa's Professional Development website is a source of current training opportunities throughout the state (<http://www.earlychildhoodiowa.org/professionaldevelopment/>). By using the expertise and resources of a wide variety of agencies, it is intended that an efficient and appropriate system of professional development can be maintained.

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### **Service Coordinator competency module training**

Iowa's Early ACCESS Service Coordination Training Program, which is research based, is composed of five modules.

- Module 1: Federal, State and Local Rules, Regulations, and Procedures for the Early ACCESS System
- Module 2: Family Centered Practices
- Module 3: The Early ACCESS Process
- Module 4: Coordinating Community Resources
- Module 5: Infant and Toddler Development

Each of the modules focuses on one of the identified competencies necessary for effective Service Coordination. Approved trainers provide this training in regions of the state annually and it is available to all Service Coordinators.

The training modules provide guidance on required transition procedures and guidelines that are especially important when children transition in or exit the Early ACCESS system.

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### **Resource book**

A State Resource Directory of interagency resources and services for young children with and without special needs and families is available at [www.EarlyACCESSIowa.org](http://www.EarlyACCESSIowa.org). The resources and services in the directory meet both the typical and unique needs of children who have or are at-risk for development delays and their families (e.g. housing; disability-related groups). This tool is helpful to families and other IFSP team members when exploring available services and funding sources to meet the identified needs of children and their families.

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