

# Understanding the State Performance Plan/ Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR)

## What is the SPP/APR?

The Maryland's Infants and Toddlers Program, operating under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the Preschool Special Education Program, governed by Part B/619 of IDEA, are federally funded initiatives. These programs must adhere to all federal regulations pertinent to their respective sections of IDEA. A key requirement is the development of a State Performance Plan (SPP), detailing Maryland's strategies to meet the full scope of IDEA, and an Annual Performance Report (APR), which evaluates the performance of each program. Each state must submit an APR to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the United States Department of Education by February 1<sup>st</sup> each year.

The SPP/APR helps make sure that young children with disabilities get the best start in life by ensuring that the services they receive are effective and continually improving. It's like having a yearly report card for the State's early intervention and preschool special education programs.

## How Are Early Intervention and Special Education Programs Evaluated?

In the SPP/APR, specific criteria called *indicators* are used to evaluate a state's performance. There are two types of indicators, compliance indicators and results indicators.

### Compliance Indicators

These indicators primarily focus on whether states are meeting specific procedural and legal requirements under IDEA. Compliance indicators include:

- **Timely Service Delivery (Part C):** Measures the requirement to provide early intervention services within 30 days of parental consent.
- **45-Day Timeline (Part C):** Measures the requirement to evaluate, initial assess, and develop an initial IFSP meeting within 45 days of referral.
- **Early Childhood Transition Planning (Part C & B/619):** Measures early childhood transition requirements including the timeliness of adding steps and services to the IFSP (Part C), notifying the Part B of children potentially transitioning (Part C), providing transition conferences (Part C), and ensuring an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed by the child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday, as appropriate (Part B/619).

### Results Indicators

Results indicators are more focused on the outcomes of the services provided. These indicators include:

- **Child Find (Part C):** Measures states ability to effectively identify, locate, and evaluate all infants and toddlers who may need early intervention services.
- **Child Outcomes (Part C & B/619):** Measures whether children are making progress in social-emotional skills, knowledge and skills, and the use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.
- **Family Outcomes (Part C):** Measures the impact of early intervention services on the family's understanding of their rights, ability to support their child's development, and participate in decision-making processes.
- **Service Settings (Part C & B/619):** Measures whether services for with IFSPs and IEPs occur in settings where infants, toddlers, and preschoolers typically spend their time, rather than in segregated groups or facilities (Natural Environments for Part C and Least Restrictive Environments for Part B).

- **State Systemic Improvement Plans (SSIP) (Part C<sup>1</sup>):** Measures the state’s progress on the development and implementation of a multi-year plan that targets increasing the capacity of the state to improve specific outcomes for children with IFSPs and IEPs.

## SICC Feedback

Because the primary role of the SICC is to advise and assist Maryland’s State Department of Education in the implementation and administration of the Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program, each year SICC members are invited to review the SPP/APR data and provide feedback. State data on Part C and Part B 619 indicators will be presented at the January 4th General SICC meeting.

### Reflecting on the Data

Here are some things you may want to consider as the data are being shared:

- What is your initial reaction to the data presented? Does anything stand out to you?
- Was there any part of the report that was particularly unclear to you? What information would you like to have explained in more detail?
- Is there any part of the report that particularly relates to your experiences or the experiences of someone you know?

### Breakout Group Discussions

In addition, during the meeting we will break into small groups to discuss specific areas for SICC members to provide their perspective and ideas for improvement. These areas are:

- Compliance and staffing
- Public awareness
- Child outcomes

The SPP/APR process reflects our commitment to enhancing the quality and effectiveness of early intervention and preschool special education in Maryland. Your feedback as SICC members is invaluable, helping to steer these programs towards continuous improvement and ensuring that every young child with disabilities receives the best possible start in life.

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland’s Part C SSIP is focused on increasing social-emotional development progress. There is a Part B SSIP but the current focus is elementary mathematics and not related to Part B/619.

## Reference Guide

This is a quick reference guide for acronyms, entities, and phrases you will hear during the SPP/APR presentation.

**Baseline Data:** The initial data collected on performance indicators, serving as a starting point for measuring progress.

**Child Find:** A component of IDEA requiring states to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities who need early intervention or special education services.

**Child Outcomes:** Refers to the developmental progress of children in areas such as social-emotional skills, language and communication, and cognitive abilities.

**Family Outcomes:** Measures the impact of early intervention services on the family's understanding of their rights, ability to support their child's development, and participate in decision-making processes.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** A federal law that requires states to provide free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to children with disabilities.

**Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP):** A plan for special services for young children with disabilities, which is often referenced in the context of the SPP/APR.

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):** Pertaining to the IDEA requirement that children with disabilities receive education and services in settings that are as similar as possible to those for peers without disabilities.

**Natural Environments:** Settings in which early intervention services are provided, ideally in environments where children without disabilities participate.

**Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP):** A federal office within the U.S. Department of Education that administers the IDEA and oversees the SPP/APR process.

**Part C of IDEA:** The section of IDEA that deals with early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities.

**Performance Targets:** Specific goals set within the SPP for each indicator, against which annual performance is measured.

**SPP/APR:** A comprehensive tool used by states to plan and report on their progress in meeting the federal requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The SPP outlines the state's multi-year objectives for these programs, while the APR provides an annual update on the progress and effectiveness of achieving these goals. There is an SPP/APR completed for both Part B and Part C.

**State Determination:** After submitting the report, the data are reviewed by OSEP and the state receives a "grade" indicative of the state's ability to meet the requirements of the IDEA.

- **Meets Requirements**
- **Needs Assistance**
- **Needs Intervention**
- **Needs Substantial Intervention**

**State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP):** A detailed plan that states develop to improve educational and functional outcomes for children with disabilities. SSIPs must focus on an SPP/APR indicator (e.g., child outcomes).

This is not a comprehensive list of important terms in early intervention. However, MSDE provides a [Glossary of Terms Used for Early Intervention and Special Education Services](#) if you would like more information.