

VOLUNTARY SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR
STATES TO SUPPORT MILITARY-CONNECTED
CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR
FAMILIES UNDER THE IDEA



October 2024

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INTRODUCTION

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) of the U.S. Department of Education (Department) developed this two-part self-assessment as a voluntary technical assistance tool to assist States in supporting military-connected¹ children with disabilities² (CWD) served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The voluntary self-assessment is applicable for IDEA's provisions requiring a free appropriate public education (FAPE) under Part B, from ages 3 through 21 or early intervention systems under Part C for CWD, from birth to age 3. This first section identifies areas that State educational agency (SEA) and local educational agency (LEA) leaders may wish to focus on as part of providing special education and related services under Part B of the IDEA and supporting military-connected CWD through seamless transfers between LEAs.³ The second section identifies areas that State lead agencies (LAs) may wish to focus on when providing early intervention services under Part C of the IDEA to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

The self-assessment identifies best practices to support timely and effective provision of IDEA services to military-connected CWD and highlights specific IDEA regulations that may be of particular interest to their families, particularly when they transfer between school districts. However, it is important to recognize that all IDEA regulations are applicable to military-connected CWD, and SEAs and LEAs must comply with them in providing special education and related services to all CWD including military-connected CWD.

Our nation depends on the strength and readiness of our military, and it is important to assist this community, which includes CWD. The challenges faced by families of military-connected CWD are unique. Parents know their children best, and the role of the family is critical in supporting their children navigate successful transitions throughout their educational careers. The families of military-connected CWD may also have frequent transfers between and within states. This presents additional challenges such as frequent separation from parents and support networks as well as disruptions in the continuity of early intervention and special education and related services under IDEA. It is important for school

¹ Military-Connected Students. In addition, the National Defense Authorization Act of 2020 amended section 1111(h)(1)(C)(ii) of the ESEA to modify the definition of "military connected" by removing the term "active duty." Based on the amendment, this student group has been changed to "status as a student with a parent who is a member of the Armed Forces (as defined in section 101(a)(4) of title 10, United States Code)." Under 10 U.S.C. 101(a)(4), "Armed Forces" is defined to include the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, and Coast Guard, which would also incorporate their reserve components (i.e., Army National Guard and Air National Guard, and Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard Reserves). At a minimum, this student group must include students with parents on "active service." Under 10 U.S.C. 101(d)(3), this would include individuals on active duty, full-time or part-time National Guard duty, and full-time or part-time Reserve status. It would not include students with a parent who is a retiree, a veteran, or in the Retired Reserves or students with a family member (e.g., sibling or grandparent) other than a parent or guardian who meets the definition of being a member of the Armed Forces. While an SEA may establish a more expansive definition, the SEA must be able to report the military-connected student group consistent with the updated definition. The Department encourages each SEA to publish its definition of "military-connected" alongside this data, so it is clear to the public which students are included in the student group.

² In this document, CWD refers to children with disabilities as defined in the IDEA and not to children with disabilities who are served through other early intervention and educational programs administered by the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD).

³ This self-assessment is voluntary and is not a substitute for a careful review of the IDEA statute, its implementing regulations, and other applicable U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) and OSEP policy guidance. To request technical assistance from OSEP, please contact your OSEP State Lead.

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administrators and teachers to have accurate and timely information to meet their obligations to make FAPE available to military-connected CWD under IDEA.⁴

Military-connected families report issues with the timely provision of special education and related services for their children. Common reported issues⁵ include:

- Delays in completing evaluations and providing services that are compounded by frequent moves;
- Lack of understanding by school personnel and families of IDEA requirements; and
- Impact of personnel shortages in schools and the Exceptional Family Member Program.⁶

⁴ In April 2024, the Department of Defense estimated that there are nearly 1.6 million military-connected children.

⁵ OSEP staff learned of these issues during calls with the top 10 States with military-connected youth (VA, TX, CA, NC, FL, GA, WA, MD, CO, HI) in February 2024.

⁶ [Exceptional Family Member Program — The Exceptional Family Member Program Family Support provides information, resources, skills and support to help military families with special needs navigate systems of care.](#)

VOLUNTARY SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR PART B EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES TO SUPPORT MILITARY-CONNECTED CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

IDEA PART B STATE AND LOCAL EDUCATION SELF-ASSESSMENT

Based on the above issues commonly reported by military-connected families, OSEP has designed the following questions as a voluntary tool for SEAs and LEAs. This will help them assess how well they ensure the timely provision of special education and related services for military-connected CWD under IDEA Part B, particularly given their frequent educational transitions as military families transfer between duty stations.⁷

Under IDEA Part B, SEAs are required to have policies and procedures in place to meet their responsibilities under IDEA Part B to ensure services are provided to all eligible CWD from ages 3 through 21 and their families in a timely manner. SEAs may wish to review their policies and procedures and their [general supervision](#) system that includes activities to monitor the implementation of those policies and procedures. These questions can be used in SEA and LEA self-assessments, monitoring, or reviews to help gauge compliance with the highlighted IDEA Part B requirements in areas including implementation of policies and procedures, integrated monitoring and sustaining compliance, dispute resolution, technical assistance, and data. As explained above, the IDEA Part B requirements highlighted in this voluntary self-assessment are only a subset of all the IDEA Part B requirements that apply to all CWD, including military-connected CWD.

Military-Connected Children with Disabilities

Data and other Demographic Information

1. What is the estimated population of military-connected CWDs in the State?

2. In which LEAs are military-connected CWDs enrolled?

⁷ The IDEA regulations cited in this document apply to all children with disabilities, including military-connected children with disabilities.

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3. How many State complaints or due process complaints have been filed with the State in the last five years regarding timely evaluations, eligibility determinations, and individualized education program (IEP) implementation for military-connected CWDs?

4. Which State agency serves as the State's representative to the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3)?⁸

5. Is the SEA represented on the MIC3 State Council? If yes, which SEA office serves as the representative?

6. How does the SEA office that administers IDEA collaborate with other organizations that support military-connected CWDs, including those organizations that do not participate on the MIC3 State Council?

7. How else does the SEA consider and address the needs of military-connected CWDs, such as including a military-connected parent representative on the State Special Education Advisory Council?

⁸ See, <https://mic3.net/>.

Policies and Procedures

General

1. What, if any, are the SEA's or LEA's written policies specific to military-connected CWDs?

2. What methods does the SEA or LEA use to monitor the implementation of its written policies specific to military-connected CWDs?

3. How are the SEA's or LEA's written policies specific to military-connected CWDs made available to LEAs or other stakeholders?

4. What, if any, are the SEA's or LEA's policies and/or strategies to specifically engage with parents of military-connected CWDs?

5. What policies does the SEA or LEA have to address the impact of personnel shortages on military-connected CWDs?

Child Find ([34 C.F.R. §§ 300.111, 300.131](#))

1. What are the SEA's or LEA's written policies regarding child find for military-connected CWD, including those placed by their parents in private schools?

2. What methods does the SEA or LEA use to monitor the implementation of its written child find policies regarding military-connected CWD?

3. How are the SEA's or LEA's written child find policies regarding military-connected CWD made available to LEAs and other stakeholders?

Evaluations ([34 CFR §§ 300.301 through 300.311](#))

1. How does the SEA or LEA ensure that evaluations are completed as expeditiously as possible and within 60 days of receiving parental consent for the evaluation or within the State-established timeline, consistent with applicable Federal regulations, for a military-connected CWD who transfers to a new school district in the same school year, whether in the same State or in a different State, after the previous school district has begun but has not completed the evaluation?

2. What are the methods the SEA uses to encourage LEAs to complete evaluations of military-connected CWD within expedited timeframes (e.g., within 30 days to the extent possible), consistent with each military-connected child with a disability's individual needs, whenever possible?

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3. What methods does the SEA use to inform LEAs that they may not postpone evaluations, including to complete a Multi-tiered System of Support process, for military-connected children who change LEAs after the previous LEA began, but had not yet completed, an evaluation?

4. What methods does the SEA use to monitor each LEA's implementation of evaluation procedures under IDEA Part B as they relate to military-connected CWD?

5. What is the average timeframe from initial referral to the completion of evaluations under IDEA Part B for military connected CWD?

IEP Development, Implementation, and Placement ([34 C.F.R. §§ 300.320](#) through [300.324](#))

1. How does the SEA monitor its LEAs for IEP development and implementation timeframes for military-connected CWD?

2. What are the factors that lead to any delays in IEP development and implementation timelines for military-connected CWD in the LEA or in the State?

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3. For a military-connected CWD who transfers within the State during the school year, how does the SEA make LEAs aware that the new LEA (in consultation with the parents) must initially provide FAPE to the child, including the provision of services comparable to those described in the child's IEP from the previous LEA, until the new LEA either adopts the child's IEP from the previous LEA or develops and implements a new IEP for the child?

4. For a military-connected CWD who transfers from out of State during the school year, how does the SEA make LEAs aware that the new LEA (in consultation with the parents) must initially provide FAPE to the child, including the provision of services comparable to those described in the child's IEP from the previous LEA, until the new LEA conducts its own evaluation (if determined to be necessary by the new LEA) and develops and implements a new IEP for the child, if appropriate?

5. How does the SEA ensure that each military-connected CWD who transfers to a new LEA during the summer has an IEP in effect at the beginning of the school year?

6. Explain how the SEA or LEA ensures that Extended School Year (ESY) services are provided as part of comparable services for in-State transfer students whose IEP from the previous LEA contains those services, especially military-connected CWD who transfer during the summer or holiday breaks, for the duration of time determined appropriate by the newly-designated IEP Team or until the new LEA adopts the child's IEP from the previous LEA or develops and implements a new IEP for the child.

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7. Explain how the SEA or LEA ensures that ESY services are provided as part of comparable services for out-of-State transfer students whose IEP from the previous LEA contains those services, especially military-connected CWD who transfer during the summer or holiday breaks, for the duration of time determined appropriate by the newly-designated IEP Team or until the new LEA conducts its own evaluation and eligibility determination, if determined necessary by the new LEA, and develops and implements a new IEP for the child.

Exchange of Records ([34 C.F.R. § 300.323\(g\)](#) and [Military Compact](#))

1. What are the SEA's written policies regarding the prompt exchange of relevant education records made available to LEAs and other stakeholders?

2. What methods does the SEA use to ensure that LEAs accept hand-carried copies of relevant education records as not to delay enrollment and placement of military-connected CWD while waiting for official records?

Procedural Safeguards ([34 C.F.R. §§ 300.500](#) through [300.536](#))

1. What methods does the SEA use to ensure that parents of military-connected CWD are informed of their rights, including the opportunity to present and resolve complaints through the due process complaint and State complaint procedures?

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2. How does the SEA and LEA ensure that parents of military-connected CWD understand the differences between the services provided under the IDEA and through the Exceptional Family Member Program?

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VOLUNTARY SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR PART C LEAD AGENCIES TO SUPPORT MILITARY-CONNECTED CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

IDEA PART C EARLY INTERVENTION

In the second part of this document, OSEP identifies areas that State Part C lead agencies (LAs) may wish to focus on when providing early intervention services to military-connected infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and supporting the seamless transfers of such children to new LAs or early intervention service providers (EIS providers).⁹

This document identifies best practices to support IDEA service provision to military-connected infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. This self-assessment identifies specific IDEA Part C regulations that may be of interest to military-connected infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families, particularly when they transfer between States and EIS providers. However, it is important to recognize that all IDEA regulations are applicable to military-connected infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

Under IDEA Part C, LAs are required to have policies and procedures in place to meet their responsibilities under IDEA Part C to ensure early intervention services are provided to all eligible infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families in a timely manner. LAs are also required to have a [general supervision](#) system that includes activities to monitor the implementation of policies and procedures. These activities should be implemented to identify and address disparities related to access that may include child find, evaluation and assessment, and eligibility, program experiences, and the provision of services necessary to ensure positive outcomes for all children and families served under the Part C of the IDEA. Military-connected families with infants and toddlers with disabilities may require unique supports and services as they may face stress due to frequent relocation, separation, and changes in or loss of support systems. It is therefore critical that States have effective policies and procedures in place to ensure military-connected families with infants and toddlers with disabilities can access timely early intervention services under Part C of IDEA.

Military-connected families have reported barriers in accessing IDEA Part C early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities. Commonly reported issues¹⁰ include:

- Transfer-related delays impacting the determination of Part C eligibility and development of the individualized family service plan (IFSP) that are created or compounded by frequent moves,

⁹ This self-assessment is voluntary and is not a substitute for a careful review of the IDEA statute, its implementing regulations, and other applicable U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) and OSEP policy guidance. To request technical assistance from OSEP, please contact your OSEP State Lead.

¹⁰ OSEP staff learned of these issues in calls held with the top 10 States with military-connected youth (VA, TX, CA, NC, FL, GA, WA, MD, CO, HI) in February 2024.

- Identifying IDEA-related resources and accessing supports in new communities,
- Delays in the receipt or release of early intervention records.
- Difficulty receiving early intervention services in natural environments when IDEA Part C EIS providers are unable to consistently access family housing on military bases, and
- Communication challenges between the Exceptional Family Member Program¹¹ and IDEA Part C requirements leading to delays in referrals, eligibility determination, and timely service delivery.

PART C LEAD AGENCY AND EARLY INTERVENTION PROVIDER SELF-ASSESSMENT

Based on the above issues commonly reported by military-connected families, OSEP has designed the following questions as a voluntary tool for States to assess how well your State is providing early intervention services to military-connected infants and toddlers with disabilities under IDEA Part C, particularly given how frequently military families transfers between duty stations.¹² These questions can be used by LAs and EIS providers as part of their monitoring activities or other reviews to determine compliance and identify best practices in areas such as the implementation of policies and procedures, integrated monitoring and sustaining compliance, conducting dispute resolution, and providing technical assistance and data.

Military-Connected Infant and Toddler with Disabilities

Data and other Demographic Information

1. Does the State have available data or information on, and if so, what is the State's estimated population of, military-connected infants and toddlers with disabilities?

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¹¹ [The Exceptional Family Member Program Family Support provides information, resources, skills and support to help military families with special needs navigate systems of care.](#)

¹² The IDEA Part C regulations cited in this section of the document apply to all infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families served under IDEA Part C, including military-connected infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families served under IDEA Part C.

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2. In which EIS providers are military-connected infants and toddlers with disabilities receiving IDEA services?

3. Which State agency serves as the State's representative to the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3)?¹³

4. How does the LA's office that administers IDEA Part C collaborate with other organizations that support military-connected infants and toddlers with disabilities, including those organizations that do not participate on the MIC3 State Council?

5. How else does the LA consider and address the needs of military-connected infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families, such as including a military-connected parent representative on the State Special Education Advisory Council?

6. How does the LA implement IDEA's payor of last resort and coordination of all financial resources, including TRICARE, to pay for IDEA Part C services?

¹³ See <https://mic3.net/>.

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7. How does the LA's system of payments policy reflect identification and coordination of TRICARE and Medicaid as part of IDEA Part C's coordination with all financial resources requirement?

Policies and Procedures

Data Collection (34 C.F.R. [§ 303.701](#))

1. What mechanisms does the LA or EIS provider have in place to collect information about military-connected infants and toddlers across its IDEA 618 and 619 data collections?

2. How does the LA or EIS provider use and analyze its data to identify performance gaps for military-connected infants and toddlers and their families?

3. How does the LA use and analyze its data to identify noncompliance or technical assistance needs of EIS providers serving military-connected infants and toddlers and their families?

IFSP Development, Review, and Revision (34 C.F.R. [§§ 303.340](#), [303.342](#) through [303.345](#))

1. Military-connected infants and toddlers and their family may relocate frequently. How does the LA or EIS provider analyze data to assess if there are more delays or longer delays in the implementation of the IFSP for military-connected infants and toddlers?

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2. What are the LA or EIS policies and procedures to ensure timely implementation of the IFSP supports and services if an infant and toddler is moving from one EIS program to another EIS provider within a State?

3. How are IFSP teams trained to discuss the steps that should be taken to support a smooth transition between EIS provider when military-connected families are relocated?

4. How are IFSP teams trained on supporting families to apply for the Exceptional Family Member Program if the family is not connected to the program?

Natural Environments ([34 C.F.R. §§ 303.26 and 303.126](#))

1. What are the formal interagency agreements, memorandums of understanding, or other written procedures in place to help ensure Part C EIS providers are allowed access to family housing on military bases so that military-connected infants and toddlers receive services in natural environments?

2. What are the formal interagency agreements, memorandums of understanding, or other written procedures with the Exceptional Family Member Program and/or other military programs which support coordination of services for military-connected families?

Personnel Systems ([34 C.F.R. §§ 303.31, 303.118 through 303.119](#))

1. What efforts are the LA or EIS provider taking to recruit and retain personnel near military bases?

2. How does the LA collaborate with institutions of higher education on preparing personnel to work with military-connected families?

3. How does the LA or EIS provider provide training and professional development focused on the military-connected family lifestyle and unique needs of military-connected families with infants and toddlers with disabilities?

4. What efforts are being made to develop and implement cross agency trainings to increase understanding and coordination between agencies and programs serving military-connected families, specifically agencies and programs responsible for medical care, childcare, and IDEA services?

5. How are EIS providers trained to utilize trauma informed care practices with military-connected families to ease parental stress and address infants and toddlers' mental health and social, emotional, and behavioral development when a family member is deployed?

Transition Services ([34 C.F.R. §§ 303.209, 303.401 and 300.124](#))

1. What are the Part C to Part B transition policies and procedures that address requirements in circumstances when military-connected family relocation occurs during the transition period after two-year six months of age?

2. How does the LA and EIS provider conduct ongoing analysis in collaboration with the State educational agency and local educational agencies to assess their policies, procedures, and practices and identify improvement activities that enhance the infrastructure necessary to support successful transitions from Part C to Part B services for military-connected families?

3. LA are required to have policies and procedures to ensure a smooth and seamless transition from Part C to Part B. Describe any additional procedures the LA or EIS programs have in place to support military-connected families who are relocating to another State or EIS provider when military-connected families are relocated prior to the Part C to Part B transition.

Child Find Requirement ([34 C.F.R §§ 303.301 through 303.303, 303.115 and 300.111](#))

1. How does the LA or EIS provider regularly evaluate its child find system, including examining child find activities for families who frequently move within a State or from State to State, such as those from military-connected families?

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2. How are issues related to transferring from another State addressed in the LA or EIS provider policies and procedures for referral and intake of military-connected infants or toddlers with an active IFSP?

3. How does the LA and EIS provider collect and track referral data to support child find activities for military-connected families? (i.e., military affiliated service clinics, doctor's offices, and childcare)?

4. How does the LA or EIS provider update and share their central directory (i.e., access to information about services, resources, and supports) so it is readily available to military-connected families, referral sources on military bases, other States LA and EIS programs, and Exceptional Family Member Programs?

5. How does the LA or EIS provider target activities of public awareness (i.e., preparation of materials to help referring agencies understand how to identify and refer) to military-connected families?

6. How does the LA or EIS provider collaborate with the Exceptional Family Member Program to develop resources that clarify the roles of Part C Early Intervention (EI) and the Exceptional Family Member Program?

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7. What are the specific ways the LA or EIS provider includes military-connected families in family engagement activities?

Evaluations of the Child and Assessment of the Child and Family ([34 C.F.R. § 303.321](#) and [303.21](#))

1. How does the LA or EIS provider ensure timely provision of services for military-connected infants and toddlers? Specifically, what are the LA or EIS program policies and procedures that address a timely review of records to determine eligibility in the receiving State?

2. When and how do LA or EIS provider utilize interim IFSPs to ensure that early intervention services and supports that are determined to be needed can be immediately accessed by the child and the child's family?

Prior Notice and Procedural Safeguards ([34 C.F.R. §§ 303.400–303.449](#))

1. What specific considerations relevant to military-connected families, such as explaining how eligibility criteria, screening, and evaluation procedures differ between States the family is moving from or to, has the LA or EIS provider included within its prior notice and procedural safeguards?

2. What are the policies and procedures in place to ensure families are provided copies (electronic and/or paper) of their evaluations, assessment, and IFSP, particularly military-connected families that may need timely access to documentation for a transfer?

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3. How does the LA and EIS provider ensure that parents of military-connected infants and toddlers with disabilities understand the differences between the services provided under Part C of the IDEA and through the Exceptional Family Member Program.

State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC), Interagency Coordination, and Interagency Agreements ([34 C.F.R. §§ 303.600-303.605](#), and [303.120](#))

1. What efforts have the LA or EIS provider made to ensure military-connected families are represented on the SICC or, if applicable, Local Interagency Council?

2. Is there a representative from the Exceptional Family Member Program on the SICC?

3. What formal interagency agreements, memorandums of understanding, or other written procedures does the LA or EIS provider have in place with other agencies or programs that serve military-connected families to support meaningful cooperation and to resolve issues so that families can receive timely IDEA services?

4. Is the LA represented on the MIC3 State Council? If yes, which LA office serves as the representative and how does the State early intervention program coordinate with that office?

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5. How do the LAs collaborate with other organizations that support military-connected infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families, including those organizations that do not participate on the MIC3 State Council?