

Informed Opinion of Delay in Early Intervention Colorado

When to use Informed Opinion of Delay (IOD):

For infants and toddlers referred to early intervention (EI) because of a concern in development, informed opinion of delay can be used as the determining criteria for initial eligibility, especially when norm-referenced evaluation instruments cannot be used to adequately identify the presence or absence of a developmental delay.

Possible reasons for using IOD to establish eligibility for early intervention services include:

- The child has a significant health concern or illness that makes testing difficult
- The child has a limited ability to participate in the evaluation
- Using a norm-referenced evaluation instrument would require significant adaptations for the child to perform the required items, which would invalidate the results
- The evaluation instrument is not sensitive enough
- Cultural considerations might invalidate the results of a norm-referenced evaluation instrument

The use of IOD requires the evaluation team to consider and analyze ALL data related to the current developmental status of the child. This includes:

- Review of medical records and/or the results of previous developmental testing
- Information obtained through parent reporting
- Observation of the child
- The results of any evaluation or assessment tools conducted

All sources of information used in this determination must be documented.

When NOT to use IOD:

- To make a child eligible who is at risk for developmental delay due to environmental or biological conditions eligible for EI services
 - Examples of of these conditions are:
 - Pre or postnatal exposure to illegal substances
 - Parent/caregiver age, education or economic status
 - Housing arrangements of family
- To establish levels of functioning for annual assessment
 - IOD is used only as a basis for initial eligibility determination. Children enrolled in EI Colorado do not have eligibility redetermined annually.

Documentation of IOD:

It is necessary to document the reasons for using IOD in eligibility determination. This documentation describes the reasons that a child was determined eligible through IOD.

This documentation may include:

- Atypical developmental or behaviors
- Lack of progress or skill regression documented in prior medical or developmental records

This information should be detailed on the IFSP in the *Evaluation or Assessment* section, under *Summary Including Qualitative Information* for the related developmental area.

Example 1:

Developmental Domain: Physical

Nathaniel, 10 months of age

Physical	Moving my body to change position or location, such as reaching, playing, rolling over, creeping, crawling, standing and walking
Range of Delay	Informed Opinion
Developmental Level Min Age	7 months
Developmental Level Max Age	10 months

Results Summary Including Qualitative Information:

Nathaniel prefers his left side in all activities. He has difficulties holding his head steady when sitting. Nathaniel is not yet able to grasp and manipulate items with his right hand as easily as his left. He received low average scores in the area of physical development when tested. However, the difference in how Nathaniel moves in comparison to same-aged peers demonstrates a delay.

Example 2

Developmental Domain: Communication

Daisy, 16 months of age

Communication	Looking, listening , smiling, sharing emotions, using sounds, gestures and words
Range of Delay	Informed Opinion <input type="text" value="-"/>
Developmental Level Min Age	12 months
Developmental Level Max Age	16 months

Results Summary Including Qualitative Information:

Daisy often held her hands in awkward positions and rubbed her hands together repeatedly. She showed more interest in objects than people, and had limited eye contact with caregivers. Although the DAYC-2 scores did not show a 33% delay in the area of communication, there is a concern regarding regression of communication skills as documented in previous developmental information and obtained through parent report. Daisy had begun to use words such as "mama" and "dada" and several words for foods and has since stopped using words to communicate. Daisy is also showing some behaviors that are not usual for a child her age.

Please contact [Laura Merrill](#), EI Evaluation Manager with any questions

Additional resources for using informed opinion of day (also referred to as informed clinical opinion) as a basis for eligibility:

<https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/pubs/nnotes28.pdf>

http://www.puckett.org/Trace/endpoints/endpoints_vol2_no3.pdf

(Adapted in part from Early Access for Infants, Toddlers and Families, Iowa Dept of Education)