



GROWING
Wings

Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program

Early Childhood Intervention

NM FIT Mission

To strengthen the capacity of families
to meet the developmental and
health-related needs of their infant and toddler



FIT VISION

All families of infants and toddlers
Who have or are at-risk for a developmental delay
receive quality early intervention services that are



What is the FIT Program?



The New Mexico Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program provides Early Intervention services and supports to families of children from birth to 3 who have, or are at risk of, a developmental disability or delay. Services are provided at NO COST to families using a combination of Medicaid, State General Funds, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) grant and private health insurance. Children do not need to have insurance to receive services. Services are provided without regard to residency or citizenship status. (The child does not need a social security number in order to receive services.)



What is the FIT Program?

The FIT Program ensures that families receive supports and services that are:

- Family-centered
- Based on relationships
- Focused on the strengths of the child and family
- Provided in natural environments
(where the child lives, learns and plays)



Who is Eligible for the FIT Program?



- Any child between the age of birth to 3 years is eligible to receive a Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Evaluation (CME) if the parent is interested and gives consent for the evaluation.

NOTE: Children referred within 45 days of their 3rd birthday will be referred by the FIT provider agency to the local public school Child Find program.

Who is Eligible for the FIT Program?

- To be eligible for ongoing services, the child must meet one or more FIT eligibility criteria:



- ✓ Established Condition (known to result in delays)
- ✓ Developmental Delay (>25% in at least one area of development)
- ✓ Medical Biological Risk (increased risk for delays)
- ✓ Environmental Risk (increased risk for delays)

Who, Why and When to Refer a Child

Who: Medical providers, child care providers, home visitors, social workers or any professional working with a child and family can refer with parent permission. Families can self-refer.

Why: Provider or family has a question or concern about the child's development; screening results – ASQ, M-CHAT – indicate that further evaluation may be helpful in understanding a child's developmental strengths and needs.

When: Any time between birth and the child's 3rd birthday (note children referred 45 days before their 3rd birthday will be referred to their local school district.)



How Do You Refer?

1. FIT Program Referral Form
Fax to 1-866-829-8838
2. Call a FIT Provider agency directly.
See list provided.

Information Needed:

- Child's Full Name
- Date of Birth
- Parent/Guardian Name
- Contact Phone #
- Address
- Reason for Referral

What Happens After Referral?

- FIT providers have **45 days from the time of referral to complete the intake process, perform an initial evaluation and write the service plan for eligible children.** Reasons for delays in the process may include:
 - **Family** schedule, choice, availability or illness
 - **Inclement Weather** Ice / snow, mud
- **Initial Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Evaluation (CME)**

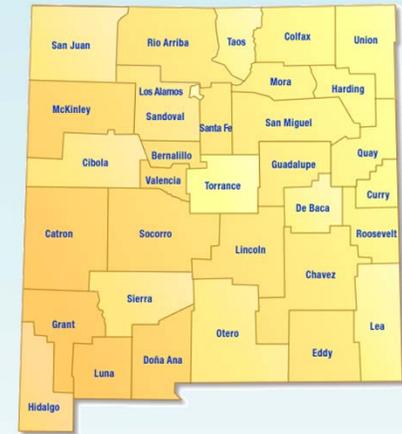
PURPOSE: Determine eligibility, developmental levels, child strengths/needs, family concerns

EVALUATORS: At least two professionals from different disciplines who meet the FIT evaluator requirements

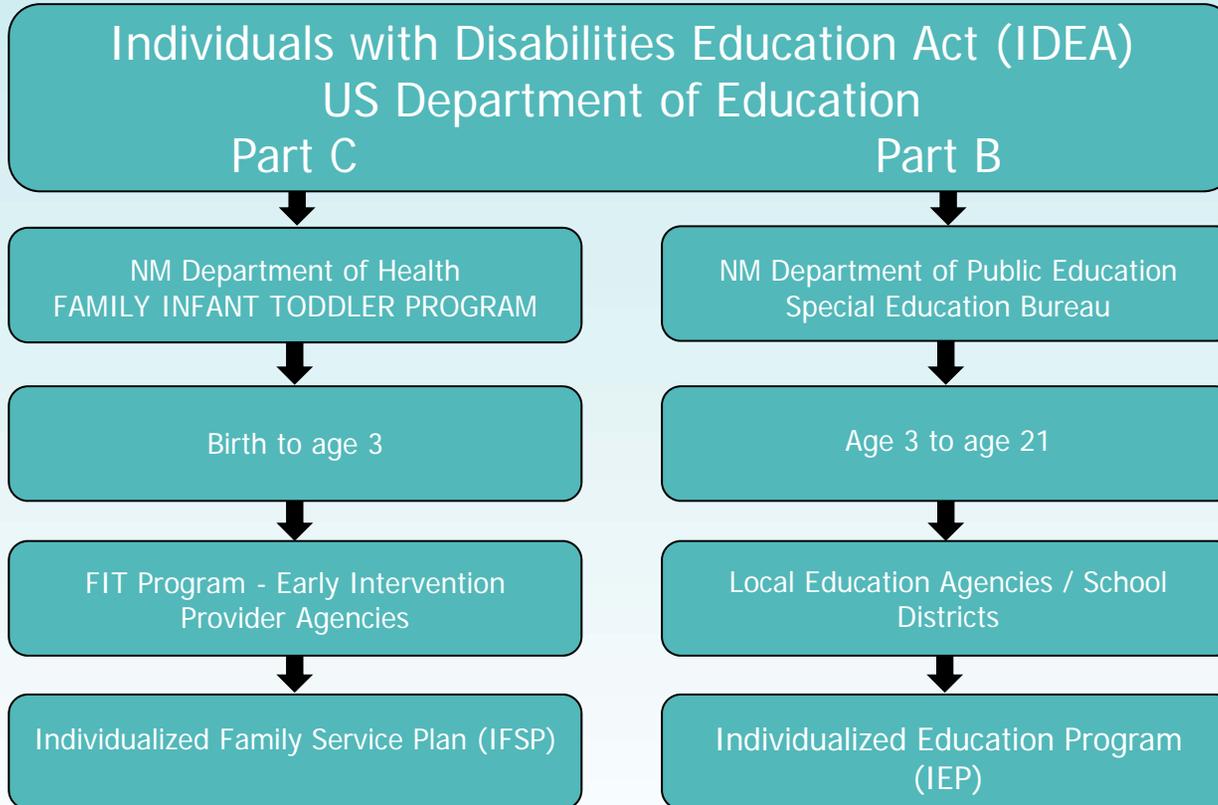


What are FIT Provider Service Areas?

- There are FIT provider agencies throughout New Mexico.
- In some areas of the state there is only one FIT provider serving a county, while in other areas, there are several.
- The FIT Program has a list of all providers and the counties they serve.
- All agencies will help a family or provider find the FIT provider agency that serves the area in which the family lives or the child attends child care.



What is IDEA?



What is IDEA Part C?

Congress finds that there is an urgent and substantial need:

- To enhance the development of Infants and toddlers with disabilities, to minimize their potential for developmental delay and to recognize the significant brain development that occurs during a child first 3 years of life.
- Reduce educational costs to our society including our Nation's schools, by minimizing the need for special education and related services after infants and toddlers with disabilities reach school age.
- To maximize the potential for individual with disabilities to live independently in society.
- To enhance the capacity of families to meet the special needs of their infants and toddlers with disabilities.



Initial Evaluation and Annual Reassessment

Must include:

- ✓ Routines-Based Interview with family and other caregivers
- ✓ Review of medical records and other assessment results
- ✓ Administration of FIT-approved developmental test instruments
- ✓ NM Birth to Three Vision screen tool
- ✓ Hearing screening (unless results received show “pass” within previous 6 months)
- ✓ M-CHAT R/F: Children 18-30 months (unless results received show “low risk” within previous 6 months)
- ✓ FIT Environmental Risk Assessment tool (when appropriate)

Children must be reassessed annually to redetermine eligibility, child’s progress and current strengths/needs.

What is an Individualized Family Service Plan?

An Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is written:

- Is a legal document that drives services
- For children who are eligible for ongoing services
- By the Family Service Coordinator with the family and the team who will assist them to support their child's development

IFSP Teams include:

- Family
- Family Service Coordinator
- One or more early intervention providers such as:
 - Developmental Specialist
 - Speech-Language Therapist / Occupational / Physical Therapist
 - Social Worker / Family Therapist / Psychologist
 - Nurse / Nutritionist
 - Specialists from NMSBVI and/or NMSD, etc.



What is in the IFSP?

The IFSP includes:

- Description of the child and family's everyday routines and activities.
- Summary of the child's present abilities, strengths and needs.
- The child's medical history and other assessments, including hearing and vision.
- Family goals/outcomes for their child and family, and strategies to support the family in achieving those outcomes.
- List of services and supports that will help the family to achieve those goals/outcomes. Note: The type, frequency and location of services is based on child and family needs.
- Transition Plan

IFSPs are reviewed at least every 6 months.

If the child continues to be eligible, a new plan is written each year.



What is the FIT Service Delivery Model?

FIT services are provided in the child's home or community settings (child care, etc.).

KEY PRINCIPLES

- Infants and toddlers learn best through everyday experiences and interactions with familiar people in familiar contexts.
- The primary role of a service provider in early intervention is to work with and support family members and caregivers to learn strategies that support the child's development in daily life .
- Early Intervention service providers work as a transdisciplinary team to coach and consult with the family / caregivers.



How Long Can Children be Enrolled in Early Intervention Services?

- Early Intervention through the FIT Program is available until a child turns three years of age.
- If a family moves within New Mexico, they may transfer to another FIT provider with little to no interruption in the child's eligibility or services.
- Some children exit out of the FIT program before their 3rd birthday because IFSP outcomes have been met, the child does not meet annual eligibility requirements or family choice.
- Other children receive services until their 3rd birthday and transition to:
 - Public school special education preschool services
 - Private Therapy through their health plan
 - Community preschool or home with their family, Head Start, etc.
- One part of every child's IFSP is a Transition Plan that helps the family and team prepare for and support their child's transition as they approach their 3rd birthday.



What is the Impact of the FIT Program?

- The FIT Program serves more than 15,000 children statewide each year.
- 1 in 10 children in New Mexico between the ages of birth and 3 years are served by the FIT Program.
- \$1 invested results in savings that range from \$7 to \$17 in benefits by the time the individual is an adult.

You can support FIT services by increasing awareness about the FIT Program and the importance of early intervention with colleagues, friends, community organizations and legislators.

Milagro's story ...

"The early intervention that our child is receiving makes a significant difference in her development. It gives us such hope that our child is being supported by experts in realizing her potential. Because of the FIT Program and Early Intervention, we know that our daughter will be best prepared for school and her life."

– Milagro's father



Questions?

