PROGRAM OPERATIONS

CLERC CENTER
AT GALLAUDET

Initial IFSP Checklist for Families of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

BEFORE THE INITIAL IFSP MEETING

Purpose: Guide families through the early steps of the IFSP process after their child is identified as deaf or hard of hearing. This checklist helps families prepare for meetings, understand their rights, ask questions, and work confidently with their early intervention team so the IFSP reflects their child's needs, language choices, and family priorities.

At every step of the IFSP process, your family's voice and choices matter most.
You have the right to shape the plan so it reflects your child's identity, communication access, and future possibilities.

Before the Initial IFSP Meeting

◯ Understand what an IFSP is

- An IFSP is a legal, family centered plan for children from birth to age 3.
- It focuses on your child's development AND your family's priorities, not just therapy.

It is required under IDEA Part C and must be completed within 45 days of referral, if your child is found eligible for early intervention services.

◯ Know your rights

- Services must be:
  - Family centered
  - In your preferred language
  - Scheduled at a time and place that works for your family
- You can invite anyone you want to the meeting (family member, advocate, friend).

You must receive prior written notice before your first meeting IFSP.

◯ Gather key documents

Create a simple folder (paper or digital) with:
□ Medical and audiology reports
□ Any evaluations or assessments
□ Notes about:

- How your child communicates
- Languages used at home (ASL, spoken language, both, etc.)
- Your child's interests, strengths, and areas you'd like to address.

- [ ] Reflect on your daily routines

  Think about:

  - What does a typical morning, afternoon, and evening look like?
  - Where does communication feel easy?
  - Where does communication feel hard?
  - What routines feel stressful (mealtime, bath, daycare drop off)?
  - What do you want to be easier in everyday life?

- [ ] Identify family priorities

  Ask yourself:

  - What do we want our child to be able to do in daily life?
  - What support do we need as a family?
  - What matters most to us right now? (Not what you think “should” matter.)