



# NEW JERSEY EARLY INTERVENTION SYSTEM

## PERSONNEL STANDARDS FOR NJEIS PRACTITIONERS

### GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- As the Lead Agency for early intervention, the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) has established personnel standards in accordance with Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Early Intervention System Rules at N.J.A.C. 8:17. Each individual seeking to provide services to eligible children and their families in the early intervention system must meet the appropriate professional and paraprofessional requirements. Each provider agency is responsible for ensuring that each staff member employed by the agency to provide early intervention services to eligible children and families meets the appropriate personnel standards prior to and throughout the duration of their employment with the agency.
- Each regional and local participating agency shall develop and implement written policies to require personnel providing early intervention services for eligible children and their families to meet appropriate professional requirements established by the Department of Health and Senior Services.
- All New Jersey Early Intervention System (NJEIS) personnel are expected to fulfill their job-related responsibilities in a manner reflecting high professional and ethical standards of conduct that apply to their specific profession or discipline.
- In addition to the personnel standards listed below, all practitioners enrolled with NJEIS by a provider agency and individuals seeking employment therein must pass a criminal history background check (pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 8:17-15.2*) in order to provide early intervention services.

### DEFINITIONS

1. **Appropriate professional requirements in the state** mean entry level requirements that:
  - a. Are based on the highest requirements in the state applicable to the profession or discipline in which a person is providing early intervention services; and
  - b. Establish suitable qualifications for personnel providing early intervention services to eligible children and their families who are served by state, local, and private agencies.
2. **Highest requirements in the state applicable to a specific profession or discipline** means the highest entry-level academic degree needed for any state approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to that profession or discipline.
3. **Profession or discipline** means a specific occupational category that:
  - a. Provides early intervention services to eligible children and their families;
  - b. Has been established or designated by the state; and
  - c. Has a required scope of responsibility and degree of supervision.
4. **State approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements** means the requirements that a state legislature either has enacted or has authorized a state agency to promulgate through rules to establish the entry-level standards for employment in a specific profession or discipline in the state.

## STATE PERSONNEL STANDARDS

1. **Audiologist:** Licensed Audiologist, State of New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of Consumer Affairs, Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Advisory Committee (pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 45:3B-1 through 24*). This includes temporary licensure as described in number twenty (20) below.
2. **Behavior Specialist:** Bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited institution in a related health, human service, or education field; **AND** has completed coursework from an accredited institution in behavioral methodology for children; **AND** has at least one year of documented professional experience implementing behavioral intervention programs for individuals from birth to five years of age who have developmental delays and disabilities.
3. **Child Development Specialist:** Bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited institution in a related health, human service, or education field; **AND** has at least one year of documented professional experience with individuals from birth to five years of age who have developmental delays and disabilities; **OR** at least six (6) credits in infant or early childhood development and/or special education coursework.
4. **Family Therapist:** (1) Licensed Clinical Social Worker, State of New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of Consumer Affairs, Board of Social Work Examiners (pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 45:15BB-1 through 13*); **OR** (2) Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, State of New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of Consumer Affairs, Board of Marriage and Family Therapy Examiners (pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 45:8B-1 through 50*).
5. **Interpreter for the Deaf:** (1) Associate's degree from an accredited institution indicating completion of an accredited sign language interpreter training program; **AND** completion of screening established by the NJ Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing, NJ Department of Human Services; **OR** (2) Certificate of Interpretation and Certificate of Transliteration, Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.
6. **Nurse:** Licensed Registered Nurse, State of New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of Consumer Affairs, Board of Nursing (pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 45:11-23 through 52*).
7. **Nutritionist:** (1) Registered Dietitian, Commission on Dietetic Registration; **OR** (2) Board Certified Specialist in Pediatric Nutrition, Commission on Dietetic Registration; **OR** (3) Certified Nutrition Specialist, Certification Board for Nutritional Specialists, American College of Nutrition.
8. **Occupational Therapist:** Licensed Occupational Therapist, State of New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of Consumer Affairs, Occupational Therapy Advisory Council (pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 45:9-37.51 et. seq. and N.J.A.C. 13:44K*); **AND** preferably has at least one year of documented professional experience with individuals from birth to five years of age who have developmental delays and disabilities. This includes temporary licensure as described in number twenty (20) below.
9. **Orientation and Mobility Specialist:** Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS), Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals.
10. **Pediatricians/other Physicians:** Licensed Physician (MD or DO), State of New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of Consumer Affairs, Board of Medical Examiners (pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 45:9-1 through 27.9*).
11. **Physical Therapist:** Licensed Physical Therapist, State of New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of Consumer Affairs, Board of Physical Therapy (pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 45:9-37.11 et. seq. and N.J.A.C. 13:39A*); **AND** preferably has at least one year of documented professional experience with individuals from birth to five years of age with developmental delays and disabilities. This includes temporary licensure as described in number twenty (20) below.
12. **Psychologist:** Licensed Psychologist, State of New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of Consumer Affairs, Board of Psychological Examiners (pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 45:14B-1 through 46*). This includes temporary licensure as described in number twenty (20) below.
13. **Service Coordinator:** (1) Meets the standards for any professional level early intervention personnel position **OR** (2) Bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited institution in a related health, human

- service, or education field; **AND** at least one year of documented professional experience working with children and families in a counseling, supporting, or case management role.
14. **Social Worker:** Certified or Licensed Social Worker, or Licensed Clinical Social Worker, State of New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of Consumer Affairs, Board of Social Work Examiners (pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 45:15BB-1 through 13*).
  15. **Special Educator:** Bachelor's degree or higher; **AND** certified by the New Jersey Department of Education as a Teacher with an endorsement as a Teacher of Students with Disabilities (pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-11.3*); **AND** has at least one year of documented professional experience with individuals from birth to five years of age who have developmental delays and disabilities; **OR** at least six (6) credits in infant and toddler or early childhood development.
  16. **Special Educator/Hearing Impaired:** Bachelor's degree or higher; **AND** certified by the NJ Department of Education as a Teacher with an endorsement as a Teacher of the Deaf or Hard of Hearing (pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-11.3*); **AND** has at least one year of documented professional experience with individuals from birth to five years of age who have developmental delays and disabilities; **OR** at least six (6) credits in infant and toddler or early childhood development.
  17. **Special Educator/Visually Impaired:** Bachelor's degree or higher; **AND** certified by the NJ Department of Education as a Teacher with an endorsement as a Teacher of the Blind or Visually Impaired (pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-11.3*); **AND** has at least one year of documented professional experience with individuals from birth to five years of age who have developmental delays and disabilities; **OR** at least six (6) credits in infant and toddler or early childhood development.
  18. **Speech-Language Pathologist:** Licensed Speech-Language Pathologist, State of New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of Consumer Affairs, Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Advisory Committee (pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 45:3B* and *N.J.A.C. 13:44C*); **AND** who preferably has at least one year documented professional experience with individuals from birth to five years of age who have developmental delays and disabilities. This includes temporary licensure as described in number twenty (20) below.
  19. **Vision Specialist:** Licensed ophthalmologist (pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 45:9-1 through 27.9*) or licensed optometrist (pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 45:12-1 through 27*), State of New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of Consumer Affairs, State Board of Medical Examiners.
  20. **Temporary Licensure:**
    - a. The Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) may permit the hiring of individuals who possess a temporary license issued by a State licensing board to address the immediate needs of eligible children and their families.
    - b. Personnel who are subject to State licensure, registration, and/or certification standards to provide services as professionals as listed in the Early Intervention System Rules at *N.J.A.C. 8:17-15.1(e)* and who hold only temporary or conditional licensure, registration, and/or certification, and who otherwise satisfy the standards put forth in *N.J.A.C. 8:17-1.3, 15.1* and *15.2*, are eligible to provide early intervention services with supervision pursuant to their licensed, registered, and/or certified scope of practice and subject to any conditions the State licensing, registering and/or certifying entity imposes, unless and until the earlier of either of the following occur:
      - i. The State licensing, registering, and/or certifying entity that issues the professional's temporary and/or conditional licensure, registration, and/or certification suspends or revokes the temporary and/or conditional licensure, registration, and/or certification; or
      - ii. The temporary and/or conditional licensure, registration, and/or certification expires.
  21. **Paraprofessionals/Assistants:**
    - a. The DHSS may permit the hiring of paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised (pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 8:17-15.4*), to assist in the provision of services. Minimum qualifications of various paraprofessionals and assistants are as follows:

- i. **Child Development Associate:** High school diploma or GED; **AND** documented experience working with individuals from birth to five years of age with developmental delays and disabilities.
  - ii. **Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA):** Licensed Occupational Therapy Assistant, State of New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of Consumer Affairs, Occupational Therapy Advisory Council (pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 45:9-37.51 through 37.75*); **AND** preferably documented experience working with individuals from birth to five years of age with developmental delays and disabilities.
  - iii. **Physical Therapy Assistant:** Licensed Physical Therapy Assistant, State of New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of Consumer Affairs, Board of Physical Therapy (pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 45:9-37.11 through 37.34f*); **AND** preferably documented experience working with individuals from birth to five years of age with developmental delays and disabilities.
  - iv. **Service Coordinator Associate:** High school diploma or GED.
    - (a) With DHSS approval, immediate family members, that is parents or siblings, of a child with special needs or community members of an underserved population, who do not meet the education requirement for a Service Coordinator Associate, may be hired in accordance with a written plan for the education requirement to be met within a specified time.
    - (b) The Service Coordinator Associate's roles, responsibilities, and level of supervision shall be commensurate with his or her experience.
- b. **Supervision of paraprofessionals:** Under the close and regular supervision of a qualified and responsible professional practitioner or provider agency, paraprofessional staff members may perform the following functions:
- i. Assist in provision of services to a child and/or his or her family in natural environments;
  - ii. Provide supplementary services addressing goals described in the IFSP of the child and/or his or her family;
  - iii. Serve as liaisons with organizations addressing issues of concern to the community; and
  - iv. Provide translation and/or interpreting services, if other certified and/or trained translators or interpreters are not available despite reasonable efforts to secure their services.