

First Connections' Application to Provide Early Intervention Services / Limited Open Enrollment -- 2017



First Connections, Arkansas' Early Intervention Program under IDEA, Part C, partners with parents and other caregivers to promote their capacity to support their child's early learning and development.

Paper / Mailable Form

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First Connections, Arkansas' Early Intervention Program under IDEA, Part C, partners with parents and other caregivers to promote their capacity to support their child's early learning and development.



First Connections: Mission & Key Principles

First Connections collaborates with families to facilitate the child's participation in family and community activities through intervention linked to specific family-centered goals which support the family's enhancement of their child's development.

Key principles:

- ✚ Parents and family members are a child's first teachers; with supports and resources all families can enhance their child's learning and development.
- ✚ Infants and toddlers learn best in their natural environment through every day experiences and interactions with familiar people in familiar contexts with typically developing peers.
- ✚ All children, no matter what their physical, cognitive, or emotional level of development, need meaningful opportunities to develop skills, establish a sense of self, and lay a foundation for life-long learning.
- ✚ All children learning together fosters the potential of every child; children with disabilities have the right to play and learn alongside children without disabilities.
- ✚ The family and IFSP team collaboratively plans and writes strategies/activities, services, and supports to enhance the child's participation and learning in natural environments and every day activities, using the child's and family's strengths to overcome challenges and to accomplish goals that reflect family priorities for their child's development.
- ✚ Active family/caregiver participation in the early intervention process is critical to a child's development with support and training from qualified early intervention service providers.
- ✚ Early intervention is designed to meet the needs of infants and toddlers who have a developmental delay or disability while offering supportive services to the family, like parent education/training to help parents understand their child's developmental abilities in order to promote their child's development.

Limited Open Enrollment:

Federal regulations that govern States' Part C programs requires the lead agency to ensure that early intervention services appropriate to meet the functional child outcomes on the IFSP are provided to the family and other caregivers of every eligible infant and toddler in the State. To ensure that families of children with developmental delay and/or disability have access to appropriate services, First Connections (Arkansas' Part C Program) under the lead agency of the Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities Services has identified areas of "high need." To better serve families and children in high need areas, First Connections is allowing individuals, organizations, or agencies that meet state licensing/credentialing and program requirements that are able to serve families in high need areas the opportunity to become a First Connections (or "Part C") Provider during Limited Open Enrollment. Limited Open Enrollment defines "high need areas" in which enrollment is limited to areas in which families have limited choice of providers.

Providers applying under the Limited Open Enrollment agree to:

- Carry an active caseload of families receiving early intervention (Part C service or services) in at least two counties identified as "high need" on this application
- Carry an active caseload in at least two counties for which they have enrolled as long as they are a provider for First Connections and receive Part C funding (whether or not Part C funding is accessed/utilized)
- Meet First Connections program requirements including use of the program's approved database (CDS) to document all activities with families, caregivers, and children served
- Attend IFSP meetings and participate in the development, update, and review of the family's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), including Transition Planning
- Provide early intervention services in the child's home, daycare, or other community location typical for that family to visit to meet natural environment (where the child would be if he/she did not have a disability) requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and First Connections' program guidelines. (Part C services through First Connections cannot be provided in a DDTC and/or CHMS setting).
- Provide intervention services in such a way that parents and other caregivers are not only involved in early intervention but also trained, coached, or otherwise supported in implementing IFSP strategies within their typical interactions with their child (their routine activities) to support their child's early learning and development

Becoming a First Connections' Provider:

The process for applying to become a First Connections' provider includes:

1. Complete EI Orientation (Web-based training) in the "EIS Provider" section of the First Connections Web page: <https://dhs.arkansas.gov/dds/firstconnectionsweb/#fc-eis-providers>
2. Complete EI Orientation online end of course exam with at least 70% accuracy
3. Use the fillable application form (pp. 4-5) to select services and counties in which to enroll. Submit completed, signed, and dated application form (pp. 4-5) with:
 - (a) certificate of completed EI Orientation Web training
 - (b) certification checklist(s) for each service applicant seeks to provide (see Certification Checklists, pp 7-11)
 - (c) all required documentation (from the certification checklist or checklists)

The application and documentation accompanying the application may be submitted electronically or via traditional mail to:

Tracy Turner, Part C Coordinator
PO Box 1437 – Slot N504
Little Rock, AR 72203-1437

e-mail: tracy.turner@dhs.arkansas.gov



First Connections Provider Application Form

Certification is for an: Individual or an Organization (or Provider Program)

Name of Provider Program, Agency, or Organization: _____

Program Director's/Administrator's Name: _____

(note: each provider at the provider program/agency must be certified to provide First Connections services)

Phone Number: () _____ E-mail address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

street address

city, state

zip code

Individuals applying to provide early intervention must meet state licensing/credentialing requirements in addition to First Connections certification requirements.

Intervention Specialist Applicants:

Applicant seeks to provide the following Part C (early intervention) direct service (or services) for First Connections:

Developmental Therapy/Special Instruction

State license or certification (see certification checklist) attached reflecting the credentials required to work in the field selected? Yes No Applicant's Medicaid Provider Number: _____

Occupational Therapy **Physical Therapy** **Speech Therapy**

State license attached reflecting the credentials required to work in the field selected? Yes No

Applicant's Medicaid Provider Number: _____

Therapy Assistant*: (enter discipline: OTA, PTA, etc)

* **therapy assistant (only)** – is a copy of the supervision agreement attached? Yes No

Family Support Specialist Applicants:

Individual is seeking to provide the following Part C (early intervention) service or services for First Connections:

Service Coordination in _____

county/counties

Applicant holds a Bachelors or Masters Degree received in:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early Intervention | <input type="checkbox"/> Child Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child/Family Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Work | <input type="checkbox"/> "Related field:" |

Transcript attached that reflects the degree listed above? Yes No

Applicant has completed 40 hours of SC Certification training and attached certificates? Yes No

All applicants – all three pages of this application (pages 4, 5, 6) form must be completed and submitted to be considered – go to page 2 of this application form:

Select high need area (below by region):

Applicant must agree to provide early intervention in at least two high need counties from the options below in order to become a First Connections Provider during Limited Open Enrollment:

- (1) Mark the counties in which early intervention services will provided to caregivers of eligible infants/toddlers in the child’s natural environment (home or community locations). **NOTE: Part C services through First Connections cannot be provided in a DDTC and/or CHMS setting**
- (2) Select the high need service or services listed for each county the applicant has applied to serve.

Southeast Region:

- Arkansas County OT PT
- Ashley County OT PT
- Bradley County OT PT
- Calhoun County OT PT
- Chicot County OT PT
- Cleveland County OT PT
- Desha County OT PT
- Drew County OT PT
- Jefferson County OT PT
- Lincoln County OT PT
- Phillips County OT PT Sp

Southwest Region:

- Clark County OT PT
- Columbia County OT PT Sp
- Dallas County OT PT Sp
- Grant County OT PT
- Hempstead County OT PT Sp
- Hot Spring County OT PT Sp
- Howard County OT PT Sp
- Lafayette County OT PT Sp
- Montgomery County DT OT PT Sp
- Nevada County OT PT Sp
- Ouachita County OT PT
- Pike County OT PT Sp
- Polk County OT PT Sp
- Sevier County DT OT PT Sp
- Union County OT PT

Northeast Region:

- Baxter County OT PT
- Clay County OT PT
- Cleburne County OT PT Sp
- Crittenden County OT PT Sp
- Cross County OT PT Sp
- Fulton County OT PT
- Greene County OT
- Independence County OT PT
- IZARD County OT PT
- Lawrence County OT PT Sp
- Lee County OT PT Sp
- Mississippi County OT PT
- Monroe County OT PT Sp
- Poinsett County OT PT Sp
- Prairie County OT PT Sp
- Randolph County OT PT
- St. Francis County OT PT Sp
- Sharp County OT PT
- Stone County OT PT Sp

Northwest Region:

- Boone County OT PT Sp
- Carroll County OT PT Sp
- Crawford County OT PT Sp
- Franklin County OT PT Sp
- Johnson County OT PT Sp
- Logan County OT PT Sp
- Madison County OT PT Sp
- Marion County DT OT PT Sp
- Newton County OT PT Sp
- Scott County OT PT Sp
- Searcy County OT PT Sp
- Van Buren County OT PT Sp

All applicants – all three pages of this application form (pages 4, 5, 6) must be completed and submitted to be considered – go to page 3 of this application form:

Other Federally-Defined EI Services Applicants:

- CONS – Psychological Services** county/counties:
- CONS – Audiological Services** county/counties:
- CONS – Vision Services** county/counties:
- CONS – Nutrition Services** county/counties:
- CONS – Social Work Services** county/counties:

- FSSV – Nursing/Attendant Care** county/counties:
- FSSV – Child Care/Respite** county/counties:
- FSSV – Parent Education** county/counties:
- FSSV – Health Services** county/counties:
- FSSV – Medical Services** county/counties:
- FSSV – Specialized Evaluation** county/counties:

State credentials or license attached for the field or fields selected? Yes No
Assurance Letter Attached? Yes No
Applicant’s Medicaid Provider Number: _____

All applicants:

Applicant has completed the First Connections **EI Orientation** Webinar and post-test and has attached the certificate of completion to this application? Yes No

To participate in First Connections’ Limited Open Enrollment, I agree to carry an active caseload of families receiving early intervention (Part C service or services) in at least two counties designated as a high need area as long as I am a provider for First Connections and receive Part C funding (whether or not I access/utilize that funding): Yes No

By signing and dating this application, I agree to meet First Connections program requirements including use of the program’s approved database (CDS) to document all activities with families, caregivers, and children served: Yes No

By signing this application, I agree to attend IFSP meetings and participate in the development, update, and review of the family’s Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), including Transition Planning, Transition Conference, and steps for the child and family to exit Part C: Yes No

By signing and dating this application, I agree to provide early intervention in the child’s natural environment (where the child would be if he/she did not have a disability) in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), First Connections’ program guidelines, and best practices for early intervention: Yes No

By signing and dating this application, I agree to provide intervention services in accordance with the First Connections Parent Participation Agreement. I agree to provide intervention services in such a way that parents and other caregivers are not only involved in early intervention but also trained, coached, or otherwise supported in implementing IFSP strategies within their typical interactions with their child (their routine activities) to support their child’s early learning and development: Yes No

Signature of Applicant

Date

The Credentialing Process

- In order to be reimbursed for early intervention services provided, programs/providers must have a current contract through Contract Support Services and be enrolled with Medicaid, as applicable, prior to service delivery.
- The credentialing process begins when a completed application is received. The application will be screened to ensure all necessary components are present. If the application is complete, it will be sent to Licensing/Certification for review. Incomplete applications will not be processed. Applicants submitting an incomplete application will be notified. The notification will include information about what is missing and what the applicant can do to complete the application.
- Once application has been processed, the applicant will receive notification of provider status. New providers for First Connections may provide services to families of eligible infants and toddlers according to the family's IFSP once they have received written notification with the following requirements:
 - (a) New providers and service coordinators must complete CDS Training (use of the data system) within thirty (30) days of written notification of provider approved status. CDS Training may be completed by attending a scheduled CDS training workshop or the provider may be trained by another provider who has completed CDS Train the Trainer training (and the trainer on site creates a certificate to include date and hours completed). Certificate is loaded into the provider's account in CDS.
 - (b) New direct service providers must complete the 2-day Core Competencies Training workshop and the online Report Writing training within 90 days from their approval date and upload the certificates of completion into the provider's account in CDS.

Potential Exceptions:

1. Family Support Specialist Applicants applying to provide service coordination services who have obtained their early intervention credential in another state may submit a copy of their credential and evidence of that state's required competencies and credentialing process. The Credentialing Committee will then determine if additional First Connections coursework and/or work samples are required.
2. Intervention Specialist Applicants serving in the role of therapy assistant are not required to meet the licensing/certification requirements of their supervising professional but must meet therapy assistant requirements outlined in the First Connections Certification Standards and must submit a copy of their supervision agreement with their completed application.

The Renewal Process

Renewal will be required every three years from date of approval. Provider program administration cannot certify their own program and/or staff members. Providers maintain their credentials (including uploading certificates/documentation annually of ongoing professional development hours) in their provider profile in CDS (the approved data system). A portion of all annual professional development hours must be relevant to infants, toddlers and their families (see Certification Standards or contact the CSPD Unit for information, if needed). Providers cannot provide First Connections certification courses as part of staff training for their own program or another Part C provider/program other than CDS training when they have a site trainer who has completed the CDS Train the Trainer Workshop.

Quality Assurance performs random reviews/audits of certification credentials in the data system to ensure program/provider compliance with maintaining records. Provider program administration must notify QA or their monitoring specialist of any changes or additions to services and/or staff.

INITIAL CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST: SERVICE COORDINATION

- DDS EI Orientation training certificate
- Adult Maltreatment Central Registry Check
- AR Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check
- Criminal Background Checks

- Bachelor's degree (or higher) in Education, Social Work, Early Intervention, or related field
OR DDS Certification as a Case Manager
 - If working as a DDS Certified Case Manager, include signed Code of Ethics Agreement

- Documentation of completion of 40 hours of First Connections Service Coordination Certification courses
- Documentation 2 years previous experience working with individuals with developmental disabilities

INITIAL CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST: DEVELOPMENTAL THERAPIST

- First Connections EI Orientation training certificate of completion
- Adult Maltreatment Central Registry Check
- AR Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check
- Criminal Background Checks

- Current certification by AR Dept. of Education in Early Childhood Education as an Age 3-4 Endorsement, an Early Childhood / Special Education Integrated Birth – Kindergarten, a Special Education Instructional Specialist (P-4), a Special Education Early Childhood Instructional Specialist (P-4)

OR:

Currently working toward completion of Alternate Learning Plan (ALP) approved by organization/entity working for and submitted to DDS

- If working under ALP, documentation of completed coursework annually

OR:

Completed DDS-approved Developmental Therapist coursework at Henderson State University or other accredited institute of higher education

- documentation of completed coursework/degree

INITIAL CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST: DEVELOPMENTAL THERAPY ASSISTANT

- First Connections EI Orientation training certificate of completion
- Adult Maltreatment Central Registry Check
- AR Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check
- Criminal Background Checks

- Supervision Agreement signed by a DDS-certified Developmental Therapist
- Copy of Supervisor's certificate in EC Special ED or ALP

NOTE: DT and DTA must document completion of First Connections Core Competencies Training and Report Writing Training within 90 days of initial certification by uploading certificates of completion in the CDS (approved data system) provider profile.

INITIAL CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST: OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

- First Connections EI Orientation training certificate of completion
 - Adult Maltreatment Central Registry Check
 - AR Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check
 - Criminal Background Checks
 - Current license in Occupational Therapy by AR State Medical Board
-

INITIAL CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST: OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT

- First Connections EI Orientation training certificate of completion
 - Adult Maltreatment Central Registry Check
 - AR Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check
 - Criminal Background Checks
 - Current license as an Occupational Therapy Assistant by the AR Board of Medicine
-

INITIAL CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST: PHYSICAL THERAPIST

- First Connections EI Orientation training certificate of completion
 - Adult Maltreatment Central Registry Check
 - AR Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check
 - Criminal Background Checks
 - Current license as a Physical Therapist by Board of Physical Therapy Examiners
-

INITIAL CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST: PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSISTANT

- First Connections EI Orientation training certificate of completion
 - Adult Maltreatment Central Registry Check
 - AR Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check
 - Criminal Background Checks
 - Current license as a Physical Therapist Assistant by the Arkansas Board of Medicine
-

INITIAL CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST: SPEECH THERAPIST

- First Connections EI Orientation training certificate of completion
 - Adult Maltreatment Central Registry Check
 - AR Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check
 - Criminal Background Checks
 - Current license in Speech Therapy by AR Board of Audiology and Speech Language Pathology
-

INITIAL CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST: SPEECH THERAPY ASSISTANT

- First Connections EI Orientation training certificate of completion
- Adult Maltreatment Central Registry Check
- AR Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check
- Criminal Background Checks
- Current certification as a Speech Therapy Assistant

NOTE: OT, PT, SLP and all therapy assistants must document completion of First Connections Core Competencies Training and Report Writing Training within 90 days of initial certification by uploading certificates of completion in the CDS (approved data system) provider profile.

INITIAL CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST: OTHER FEDERALLY-DEFINED EI SERVICES

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY/ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT

- Proof of status as a Durable Medical Equipment provider with Arkansas Medicaid Program
- Proof of registration with the Office of AR Secretary of State to do business in Arkansas
- Letter of Assurance

RESPITE

- Letter of Assurance

ALL OTHERS (CONS AND FSSV):

- First Connections EI Orientation training certificate of completion
- Adult Maltreatment Central Registry Check
- AR Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check
- Criminal Background Checks

CONS/CONSULTATION SERVICES:

VISION

- Current license from AR Board of Optometry or AR Board of Ophthalmology or be certified as an Orientation Mobility Specialist
- Letter of Assurance

PSYCHOLOGY

- Current license as a Psychologist or Psychological Examiner by AR Board of Examiners in Psychology
- Letter of Assurance

SOCIAL WORK

- Current license from AR Board of Social Work
- Letter of Assurance

NUTRITION

- Current registration as a Registered Dietician by the American Dietetic Association, or Current provisional registration by the American Dietetic Association, or Current Physician's license by AR Board of Medicine
- Letter of Assurance

AUDIOLOGY

- Current license by AR Speech, Hearing and Language Association
- Letter of Assurance

FSSV/FAMILY SUPPORTS:

ATTENDANT/NURSING

- Current nursing license by AR Board of Nursing
- Letter of Assurance

HEALTH CARE SERVICES

- Letter of Assurance

PARENT TRAINING/EDUCATION

- Letter of Assurance