

Legislative Health & Human Services Committee Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program

August 16, 2018

FIT Program Overview



- FIT Program provides early intervention services in accordance with federal the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C** and state statute and rules.
- The FIT Program has a statewide network of **33 provider agencies** statewide and contracts with agencies for training and TA, data base and fiscal agent services etc.
- FIT Program has 10 FTEs
- Funding sources include SGF, IDEA Part C grant, Medicaid and private insurance. Annual expenditures ~\$54 million.
- For more information
<https://nmhealth.org/about/ddsd/pgsv/fit/> or
www.fitprogram.org

FIT Program Growth

- The FIT Program served **16,000** children birth to age three and their families in FY 2019, which is a growth of 266 children (1.7%) over the previous fiscal year.
- Average growth over the past 5 years is 4.7%

Fiscal Year	Children Served	Percent increase
FY 2015	13,211	3.1%
FY 2016	14,090	6.7%
FY 2017	14,647	3.8%
FY 2018	15,734	6.9%
FY 2019	16,000	1.7%
	Average Increase	4.7%

- Referrals from medical, social services and early childhood providers and parents themselves.

FIT Program Performance and Quality

- The FIT Program received the highest rating of **‘Meets Requirements’** from the US Office of Special Education Programs based on 11 national indicators under the Annual Performance Report (APR).
- Funds through the Preschool Development Grant Birth – 5 (PDG B-5) the FIT Program are being used to implement:
 - training in **evidence based early intervention practices**, Family Guided Routines Based Intervention (FGRBI)
<http://fgrbi.fsu.edu/>
 - training on **‘practice-based coaching’** including use of video. See <http://cdd.unm.edu/ecln/FIT/fit-focus-video-library.html>

FIT Program Eligibility Requirements

- **Developmental Delay of 25%** in either: Cognitive, motor, communication, social and emotional and adaptive (self help) developmental domains.
- **Established Medical Conditions** (including diagnosed conditions such as Down Syndrome, cerebral palsy; autism, vision and hearing loss, etc.)
- **Biological / Medical risk Conditions** (including diagnosed conditions such as prematurity, low birth weight, exposure to substance in utero, etc.
- **Environmental Risk** (including exposure to substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, abuse and / or neglect, etc.

All children receive a comprehensive multidisciplinary developmental evaluation. A risk assessment tool is used to determine environmental risk eligibility.

LFC Recommendation 1.

Validate the FIT Environmental Risk Tool or use an ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Tool

- 1) It is estimated that it would cost \$50K - \$60K to validate the current FIT Environmental Risk Assessment Tool. This is not currently budgeted.
- 2) A validated tool is not required by the US Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and other states have a simple list of environmental / family risk factors. The current tool has been in use since 2004 and was validated at the time.
- 3) ACEs tools are typically used to look retrospectively at a wide range of health and socio-economic effects of exposure to adverse childhood experiences, rather than as predictor of risk of developmental delay. Using an ACEs tool could result in a significant increase in number of children eligible for the FIT Program.

LFC Recommendation 2.

Develop a standardized measure of developmental progress for children only at-risk for a developmental delay.

- 1) The FIT Program collects Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) data as one of the required federal performance measures for OSEP. ECO measures a child's developmental progress from when they first enter the FIT Program to when they exit.
- 2) ECO data can be disaggregated in order to just review the data for children who are eligible under one or both of the at risk eligibility categories.
- 3) The FIT Program will explore additional tools that could be used to measure other outcomes for children eligible under environmental risk – such as measures of positive parent-child interactions.

LFC Recommendation 3.

Develop a policy wherein all children at risk for delay due to environmental risk factors are referred to a state-funded home visiting service with developmental screening continuing to occur at least annually.

- 1) It is recommended that the public policy decision regarding whether children eligible under the environmental risk category should be served in the FIT Program or through the state home visiting program should be made by the new Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD).
- 2) The ECECD will have data and public input from the Preschool Development Grant Birth – 5 (PDG B-5) needs assessment and strategic plan in order to make a policy decision of this kind.
- 3) Developmental screening is required to be conducted under Home Visiting – therefore there would be no need for annual developmental screening to be conducted by the FIT Program.

LFC Recommendation 4.

FIT Program should limit FIT services for children who are only at-risk for delay due to environmental factors to those who do not live within a home visiting program service area.

See Recommendation 3 above.

Additionally:

- 1) If the decision is made by the new Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) to have the children eligible under environmental risk factors be served through home visiting, rather than the FIT Program, the Department will be able to develop a transition plan that takes into account:
 - 1) the expansion of the state home visiting program, and
 - 2) the capacity (including funding) to serve all families statewide.

Notes and next steps

- 1) The **FIT Interagency Coordinating Council** (Governor appointed parents, providers, state agencies and stakeholders) endorsed the FIT Program's plan regarding the LFC recommendations.
- 2) The FIT Program is working with the Governor's office and colleagues from CYFD and PED in the **transition planning for the new ECECD**. Note: The current draft organization chart includes the FIT Program and Home Visiting within the same Division, which will support collaborative planning.
- 3) The FIT Program is part of the leadership team for the **Preschool Development Grant Birth – 5 (PDG B-5)** needs assessment and strategic plan that will provide data and public input regarding all early learning programs that will include issues of equitable access, governance, funding and workforce.
- 4) The Governor appointed Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) is involved in policy decisions regarding state early learning programs. They have not yet reviewed the LFC recommendations