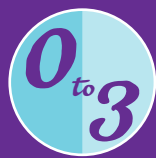


TIP SHEET:



Early Intervention

0 to 3 years



Parent Education & Advocacy Leadership Center

Promoting inclusion and access
in education and healthcare

Empowering families and
young adults across PA



What is Early Intervention?

Children grow and develop many skills through the first three years of life. Sometimes a child needs special help to make sure they are developing skills.

If you or someone else are concerned about your child's growth and/or skill development, help is available! **This is called Early Intervention.**

Early Intervention (EI) services:

- Meet the needs and priorities of the family and child
- Are provided at no cost to families
- Help the family understand and enhance the child's development in many areas:
 - ☑ Cognitive
 - ☑ Communication
 - ☑ Social and emotional
 - ☑ Physical, including vision and hearing



Who is eligible? What is developmental delay?

Infants and Toddlers who have:

- A 25 percent delay in one or more areas of development
- OR, a specialist's determination that there is a delay even though it doesn't show up on the assessments (called **informed clinical opinion**)
- OR, a known physical or mental condition that has a high probability for developmental delays (such as Down syndrome)



What is next for the family? What should be expected?

- 1. Referral**—To access early intervention services (EI), your child needs to be referred. A referral can be made by a family member, daycare/ preschool teacher, or doctor.
- 2. Service Coordinator**—A person called a Service Coordinator is assigned as your single point of contact to help the family understand and navigate the early intervention system.
- 3. Screening and Evaluation**—A parent must provide **written consent** and then a **screening** will be conducted to identify any possible developmental delays. If areas of concern are found, you will be asked to provide written consent in order to have a **full evaluation** completed. The evaluation determines if the child qualifies to receive early intervention services.
- 4. Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)**—If your child is eligible, a team, including parents, develops a written plan for individualized services. Team members may come from different agencies that can provide the unique support your child needs. As the child's parent or guardian, you have the right to be an **informed decision maker**.



This whole process should not take longer than 45 days.

If your child is not found eligible, you may want to consider other options or dispute the finding. Review your **Procedural Safeguards**.



TIP: → You know your baby and you can be your child's best advocate!

The Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP): What is next for the family? What should you expect?

The IFSP is a written plan that contains:

- Your child's current skills, development, and needs,
- Measurable goals and timelines to reach goals,
- Interventions and settings where interventions will occur,
- Duration of services,
- Plan of transition if needed, and
- Date to review the plan.

Services are highly individualized. Some examples are assistive technology, audiology/hearing, speech and language, counseling and training, medical services, nursing services, nutrition services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and psychological services.

Services are to be provided in natural environments. This means settings where children without disabilities participate, for example home, day care, nursery, etc.

Develop and share a vision for your child. Learn how to write a vision statement. Consider using the Student Snapshot tool, listed below.

You can **request a meeting to discuss any concerns and disagreements with the plan.**

Important Steps for Families

- ☑ Write down your concerns.
- ☑ Call CONNECT Helpline at 1-800-692-7288 to find local resources or to make a referral for early intervention services.
- ☑ You will be receiving calls and documents related to the process. Develop a way to keep your documents and contact information organized and in one place. This is very important!
- ☑ Inform providers whether you prefer email or phone communications and if you need any accommodations or interpretation and documentation in your native language.
- ☑ **Your participation is important—**communication is key!

Transition

When your child turns three, they transition from **early intervention to preschool early intervention** services. They will continue receiving services if they still have developmental delays and are in need of special education services.

At least 90 days before your child's third birthday, you will be asked to participate in your child's transition meeting.

The IFSP should include a transition plan outlining activities and timelines to get prepared for the next level of service, if found eligible.



RESOURCES

Comparison chart IFSP vs IEP: <https://bit.ly/36XlvYI>
Family Introduction to Early Intervention in PA: <https://bit.ly/2RYx8dK>
Overview of Early Intervention: <https://bit.ly/31qP6IP>
Parent Rights Agreement—Annotated: <https://bit.ly/2UwFMSe>
Problem Solving in Early Intervention: <https://bit.ly/2Ou8LTb>
Procedural Safeguards Early Intervention: <https://bit.ly/398LRbG>
Student Snapshot: <https://bit.ly/2Upr1AP>
Watch Me Grow!: <https://bit.ly/381PgJs>



Contact the PEAL Center for additional information.
Website: www.pealcenter.org • Email: info@pealcenter.org • Toll-Free: 866-950-1040



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