

# A CHILD CARE PROVIDER'S GUIDE



## TO EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES IN PENNSYLVANIA

Developed by:  
Early Intervention Technical Assistance  
Updated March 2002

For Additional Copies,  
Call EITA at (800) 360-7282

## WELCOME

Caring for and educating young children is exciting and challenging at the same time. As a child care provider you work in partnership with families to offer consistent, loving care for young children. You are one of a child's earliest and most important teachers. You are one of his or her earliest playmate and friend. The way a child views his or her world is influenced by your voice, touch, eyes, and smile.

Some children may need the extra help and support that can be offered through Early intervention services. This brochure will describe how the Early intervention system works and how you can help young children and their families get the help they need.

## WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

When you think of a child and how he or she is growing, you notice things like how soon he or she smiles, sits up, rolls over, or how well he or she walks, talks, holds a spoon, and feeds himself or herself. Children learn naturally during this time, by doing, by watching you and other children, and by being taught how to do different things. Because you know the children in your care so well, you might notice that one of them is growing or developing differently than other children of the same age. What you are noticing are changes in different developmental areas. The five primary developmental areas are:

- ability to move, see, and hear—physical development
- ability to talk, express needs—language and speech development
- ability to relate to others—social and emotional development
- ability to eat, dress, and take care of themselves—self help (or adaptive development)
- ability to think and learn—cognitive development

While all children grow and change at their own rate, some children can experience delays in their development. Sometimes this can be cause for concern. Early Intervention can help.

## WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT A CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT?

Talking about a child's growth and development should be a common occurrence between a child care provider and the family. You should be meeting periodically with parents to share information about their child's progress and participation in your program. If you have questions about a child's growth and development, it is best to discuss your concerns with the child's family. This may be a difficult conference. Some ideas to make the conference more comfortable for both you and the family are:

- Set a special meeting time with the family. Don't try to fit it into a hectic pickup or drop-off time. Hold the meeting in an area that is private and comfortable.
- Recognize that this may be a difficult and emotional conference for the family. Be prepared for a range of emotional responses. Take an active listening role and respect the family's feelings.
- Ask the parents to describe their perceptions of their child's development. Often families will have seen some of the same issues and have some of the same concerns.
- Document your concerns by collecting samples of the child's recent work, showing samples of observations that have occurred over a period of time, and by listing the modifications that you have made to your program to meet the child's needs.
- Do **NOT** try to diagnose the problem or label the child. This is not your role and should only occur after a comprehensive assessment.
- Be prepared with referral information. Provide the family with information about early intervention services and how to access them. Help to make the referral call if needed.

## WHAT IS EARLY INTERVENTION?

Being a child care provider can be especially challenging when you are providing care to a child with, or at risk for, developmental delays. Early intervention in Pennsylvania is a collection of services and supports designed to help families enhance their child's development. Early intervention builds upon the natural learning occurring in those first few years.

Early intervention services and supports may:

- answer a families questions about their child's development;
- provide you with supports and adaptations for your program;
- improve both developmental and educational growth;
- help children become more independent;
- prevent the need for more intervention in the future; and
- help communities become more aware of the gifts and abilities of all its children.

Early intervention services can include, among others, information on how children develop, early childhood education, therapies which help a child to move his or her body, information designed to help a family enhance their child's growing and learning, and ideas for how a child care provider can help the child at the program.

Early Intervention services and supports are provided in a family centered way. **Family centered** means that the child's services and/or supports are based upon the strengths, concerns, priorities, and resources as identified by the child's family. Services and supports are designed to respect the family's concerns, interests, and values.

## HOW TO ACCESS EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

The first step is to determine if the child is eligible for early intervention services. Families should contact their local early intervention service coordinator at the number listed on the back of this brochure. With the family's permission, the coordinator will do a **screening**, which is a brief checklist or survey about the child and the family's concerns. If the family continues to have concerns regarding their child's development after this initial screening, they have a right to request a full **assessment** or **evaluation**. This evaluation will look at all areas of concerns as well as any others that were indicated by the screening.

As mentioned before, you are an expert on the child and child development. Your input is very important. Ask the family if you can be included as a member of the assessment team. Plan ahead for the assessment by being ready to share information about the child's daily activities, likes and dislikes, abilities, skills and needs.

If there are areas of delay, the child may be eligible for Early Intervention services or supports. Families have the choice whether to accept those services, or not.

Following the assessment process, the team determines if the child is eligible for early intervention services. Eligibility is determined by the following definitions.

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES?

### **Infants and Toddlers (birth to three years of age):**

- a significant delay in one or more areas of development compared to other children his or her age;
- a physical disability, a hearing or vision loss;
- a specialist's determination that there is a delay even though it doesn't show up on the assessments (called informed clinical opinion)
- known physical or mental conditions which have a high probability for developmental delays

Infants and toddlers who are not eligible for early intervention services may still be eligible for follow-up screening and tracking. Infants and toddlers eligible for screening and tracking are:

- under three and one half (3 1/2) pounds birth weight;
- cared for in neonatal intensive care units;
- born to chemically dependent mothers;
- seriously abused or neglected;
- confirmed to have dangerous levels of lead poisoning.

### **Preschoolers (three years of age to age of beginners):**

- Diagnosed with autism, visual impairment including blindness, deaf-blindness, hearing impairment including deafness, learning disability, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, traumatic brain injury, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, serious emotional disturbance, speech or language impairment or has a developmental delay in one or more areas of development; and
- In need of special education and related services.

A plan is developed for each child who is eligible for early intervention services. The plan for children between birth to three years of age is called the **Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)**. The IFSP lets the family help decide how early intervention services will help their child and family. It is the family's opportunity to share with others how much help they want and in what form they would like it to occur.

## DEVELOPING A PLAN FOR EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

The **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)** is the name of the plan used to determine the early intervention supports and services that are needed for children from three to the start of school. It should be based upon the identified needs of the child and must provide services in the setting that meets his or her needs.

The IFSP and IEP include information on the child's strengths and needs related to his or her development, the family's concerns, and the child's strengths and needs identified in recent evaluations. Among other information, the IFSP or IEP must include a statement of the services to be provided and the setting where the services will occur.

## WHO DEVELOPS THE IFSP OR IEP?

The family, along with other team members, decides who should be on the team and who should help write the IFSP or IEP. The best IFSP/IEP will reflect the active involvement and planning of all team members. Encourage the family to include you as a member of the team. Help the family to see all the valuable information you can bring to the IFSP/IEP process. As the child's caregiver and educator, you have valuable insight into the child's strengths and have important information on the environment in which the child spends a great deal of time.

You can help develop the IFSP or IEP:

- By identifying the child's unique qualities and strengths, you begin to build a framework on which you can provide him or her with the best opportunities for learning.
- By reviewing the activities that occur in a typical day. Identify the activities in which the child has difficulties participating and those activities that work well.
- By identifying what the child really enjoys doing. Playing with water or sand? Sitting for long periods of time? Building blocks? Listening to music? How can you build on those skills to help other areas of development?
- By identifying the special needs the child has within the child care setting. Think about what the child might need to reach his or her full potential. Adaptive equipment? Feeding or self help skills?
- Be open to working with the family and early intervention staff in developing the IFSP and in determining the types of services that might be offered at your child care program.

## WHERE ARE SERVICES DELIVERED?

Services must be delivered in settings that are consistent with the needs of the child and family. Considerations must be made to reflect the child's best place for learning. This may include services within the child care or other community settings. Whatever the setting, the IFSP or IEP must be based upon the strengths and needs of the child.

When deciding how the IFSP and IEP are to be implemented:

- A range of placement options must be carefully considered.
- Services should be delivered in settings that meet the needs of the child and family.
- Children birth to three, services should be provided to the extent appropriate in the types of settings in which infants and toddlers without disabilities would participate (**Natural Environments**).
- Children three and older must be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with children who are not disabled (**Least Restrictive Environment**).
- The length and frequency of early intervention services are based on individual needs as identified by the IFSP/IEP team.

Early intervention services are mandated by both federal legislation (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), and state legislation, (Act 212).

## EARLY INTERVENTION: THE LAW IN PENNSYLVANIA

### **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA)**

#### **Part C:**

- gives rights to eligible children and their families at birth until the child's third birthday;
- administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare;
- services for eligible infants and toddlers are developed and written into an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) by a team on which the child care provider can be an important member; and
- services must be delivered in a natural environment for the child and family.

#### **Part B:**

- gives rights to eligible young children and their families from child's third birthday to age of beginner;
- administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education;
- services for eligible young children are written into an Individualized Education Plan (IEP); and
- the setting in which services are delivered must be the least restrictive possible.

### **Act 212: The Early Intervention Services System Act of 1990**

- assures eligible young children (birth until the age of beginners) and their families to early intervention services and programs;
- assures for developmental services in the following areas: physical, sensory, cognitive, language and speech, social-emotional and adaptive, or self help; and
- assures services specifically designed to address the needs of the family to enhance their child's development.

### **Local Interagency Coordinating Councils (LICC)**

Established by Act 212, these local councils provide for local representation from parents, school districts and intermediate units, early intervention providers, service coordinators, agencies, child care programs, and other community members. While each LICC is different, their overall goal is to enhance local early intervention services and supports through collaboration. They are located throughout the Commonwealth and can be accessed through the numbers on the back of this book.

## GLOSSARY

**Act 212:** the Early Intervention Services System Act of 1990 that provided for Early Intervention services for eligible children in Pennsylvania.

**Adaptive skills (functional skills):** those skills used in daily living such as eating, dressing, and toileting.

**Age of beginners:** the minimum age that a child can attend first grade in his or her own school district.

**Assessment:** a process that helps find the child's unique strengths and needs.

**Cognitive:** the ability to learn, understand, and to solve problems.

**Developmental delay:** being behind other children of the same age in achieving cognitive, adaptive, physical, and social skills.

**Due process:** the procedure which guarantees a person's right to disagree, refuse, change, or permit recommended educational services.

**DPW:** Department of Public Welfare, responsible for the provision of early intervention services birth to three years of age.

**Early Intervention:** a collection of services and supports for eligible children from birth to age of beginners to provide stimulation and education.

**FAPE:** free appropriate public education guaranteed by Public Law 94-142, at no expense to the parents and family.

**Goals:** broad, general target areas of development written by the IFSP or IEP team.

**ICC:** the Interagency Coordinating Council is an advisory group made up of parents and professionals to advise the Governor and the Departments about early intervention issues in Pennsylvania.

**IDEA:** Federal early intervention legislation revised in 1997 called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

**IEP:** Individualized Education Plan developed by parents and staff for eligible children from their 3rd birthday to 21 years of age.

**IFSP:** Individualized Family Service Plan developed by parents and staff for eligible children birth to 3rd birthday.

**Inclusion:** to have the opportunity to participate in all of the activities available in a community.

**Language and speech development:** the ability to talk, express needs, and or communicate.

**LICC:** Local Interagency Coordinating Council made up of parents and professionals to coordinate and plan for early intervention services in the local community.

**LRE:** Least Restrictive Environment required by IDEA providing that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children that are non-disabled.

**MDE:** the Multidisciplinary Evaluation performed by the Multidisciplinary Team.

**MDT:** the Multidisciplinary Team is comprised of the child's parents and professionals from various disciplines responsible for evaluating and re-evaluating children thought to be eligible for early intervention services.

**MH/MR:** County programs responsible for the provision of early intervention services from birth to their third birthday.

**MAWA:** Mutually Agreed Upon Written Arrangement to designate who has the contract with the state to provide Early Intervention services in your local area for children three through five years of age.

**PDE:** Pennsylvania Department of Education responsible for the provision of services for children three to age of beginners.

**Physical skills:** the ability to move, see, and hear.

**Social and emotional development:** the ability to interact with others.

**Screening:** A process to determine if a more extensive assessment needs to be completed.

**Service Coordinator (case manager):** the individual assigned to coordinate the planning and delivery of early intervention services to children.

**Special Education:** Specially designed instruction.

**PENNSYLVANIA CHILD CARE/EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT TRAINING SYSTEM**

3823 West 12th Street  
Erie, PA 16505-3301  
800-492-5107

[www.kurcchildcare.org](http://www.kurcchildcare.org)

Pennsylvania's Child Care and Early Childhood Development Training System provide training opportunities for all licensed and registered child care providers.

WHERE TO GO FOR  
MORE INFORMATION

**CONNECT HOTLINE FOR EARLY INTERVENTION**

150 South Progress Avenue  
Harrisburg, PA 17109  
800-692-7288

Will assist in locating local, state, and national associations for individuals with disabilities, local services, and information.

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION LINKAGE SYSTEM (ECELS)**

Rosemont Business Campus  
919 Conestoga Road, Building 2, Suite 301  
Rosemont, PA 19010  
800-24-ECELS

[www.he.net/~dvk/ecels/eceldesc.htm](http://www.he.net/~dvk/ecels/eceldesc.htm)

A statewide project to improve children's health and safety by linking health professionals with staff of early childhood programs.

**PENNSYLVANIA TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NETWORK**

**EARLY INTERVENTION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

2527 US Highway 522 South  
McVeytown, PA 17051  
814-542-2501 or  
717-899-7143

[www.pattan.k12.pa.us](http://www.pattan.k12.pa.us)

A statewide training network that will provide information and workshops related to young children with disabilities and their families.

**PARENT TO PARENT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

150 South Progress Avenue  
Harrisburg, PA 17109  
717-540-4722 or  
800-986-4550

[www.parenttoparent.org](http://www.parenttoparent.org)

A project to connect families in similar situations with one another so that they may share experiences, offer practical information and/or advice.

**SPECIAL KIDS NETWORK**

P.O. Box 850 HS74  
Hershey, PA 17033  
800-986-4550

[www.health.state.pa.us/PHP/special.htm](http://www.health.state.pa.us/PHP/special.htm)

The Special Kids Network is a free, statewide resource and referral service which connects families of children with special health care needs to agencies which provide a broad range of services within their community.

## PHONE NUMBERS TO CALL FOR HELP/INFORMATION BY COUNTY

If you have trouble accessing local services through the numbers below, contact CONNECT by phone at 1-800-692-7288 or by e-mail at <http://www.pattan.k12.pa.us/ISP/CONNECT>. Persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired may access all voice numbers through the PA Relay Service at 800-654-5984. Persons without TDD needing to access TDD numbers can also access the PA Relay Service at 800-654-5988.

<b>County:</b>	<b>Birth to Three</b>	<b>Three and up</b>	<b>County:</b>	<b>Birth to Three</b>	<b>Three and up</b>
Adams	717-632-8040	717-624-6475	Luzerne	570-826-3030	570-826-0850
Allegheny	412-885-6000	412-394-5736	Hazelton Area SD	570-826-3030	570-826-0850
Pittsburgh (City)	412-885-6000	412-323-3960	Lycoming	570-326-7895	570-323-8561
Armstrong	724-545-1234	724-463-5300	McKean	814-362-7216	814-887-9287
Beaver	724-847-6225	724-774-7800	Mercer	800-345-0033	800-345-0033
Bedford	814-623-2161	814-472-9821	Farrrell Area SD	800-345-0033	724-346-1112
Berks	610-236-0530	610-987-8543	Mifflin	717-242-0351	717-899-7143
Blair	814-949-7230	800-228-7900	Monroe	570-421-2901	610-252-5550
Altoona SD	811-949-7230	814-946-8465	Montgomery	610-278-3642	610-539-8550
Bradford	570-265-2211	570-596-4188	Montour	570-275-6080	570-523-1155
Bucks	215-442-0760	800-770-4822 (x1716)	Northampton	610-559-3270	610-252-5550
Butler	724-287-0791(x170)	800-345-0033	Northumberland	570-988-4282	570-523-1155
Cambria	814-472-4400	800-228-7900	Perry	717-240-6320	717-732-8400
Cameron	814-486-3657	814-887-9287	Philadelphia	215-731-2110	215-731-2110
Carbon	610-377-0773	610-799-4111	Pike	570-296-6484	610-252-5550
Centre	814-355-6782	814-342-0884	Potter	814-544-7315	814-887-9287
Chester	610-344-6265	610-524-5031	Schuylkill	570-628-1180	570-544-9131
Clarion	814-226-4122	800-672-7123 (x161)	Snyder	570-275-6080	570-523-1155
Clearfield	888-797-9800	814-342-0884	Somerset	814-443-4898	800-228-7900
Clinton	570-326-7895	814-342-0884	Sullivan	570-265-2211	570-596-4188
Columbia	570-275-6080	570-523-1155	Susquehanna	570-278-3393	570-876-9275
Crawford	814-724-8380	814-734-5610	Tioga	570-724-5766	570-622-0617
Cumberland	717-240-6320	717-732-8400	Union	570-275-6080	570-523-1155
Dauphin	717-232-8761	717-732-8400	Venango	814-677-1336	800-672-7123 (x161)
Delaware	610-713-2406	610-237-0642	Warren	814-726-7401	814-734-5610
Chester-Upland SD	610-713-2406	610-447-3500	Washington	724-225-6940	724-938-3241
Elk	814-772-4333	814-887-9287	Wayne	570-253-0321	570-876-9275
Erie	814-878-3500	814-734-5610	Western Wayne SD	570-253-0321	570-253-0321
Erie (City)	814-878-3500	814-871-6241	Westmoreland	724-837-1808	724-836-2460
Fayette	724-430-1370	724-938-3241	Wyoming	800-732-6330	570-826-0850
Forest	814-726-7401	800-672-7123 (x161)	York	717-771-9618	717-757-1531
Franklin	717-264-2184	717-263-1732			
Fulton	717-264-5387	717-899-7143			
Greene	724-966-5081	724-938-3241			
Huntingdon	814-643-6100	814-542-2501			
Indiana	724-465-0303	724-463-5300			
Jefferson	888-797-9800	800-672-7123 (x161)			
Juniata	717-242-0351	717-899-7143			
Lackawanna	570-348-6100	570-876-9275			
Lancaster	717-399-7323	717-560-6160			
Lawrence	724-658-6064	800-345-0033			
Lebanon	717-274-3415	717-665-2366			
Lehigh	610-782-3125	610-799-4111			