



early intervention

supporting families and child development

# Welcome to Rhode Island Early Intervention







## Welcome to RI's Early Intervention Program

Early Intervention is a program designed to help families support the growth and development of their children, birth until age three, who have a developmental delay or a diagnosed medical condition known to cause developmental delay. Services are provided in places where children usually play or take part in daily activities. For most children this means their home or childcare.

**Early Intervention is often called "EI" for short.**

**Early Intervention is a federal program defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) section 34 CFR Part 303 (Part C). These regulations pertain specifically to infants and toddlers, birth to three.**

**Early Intervention is provided at no cost to families. It is paid for by private insurance and/or Medicaid and federal dollars.**

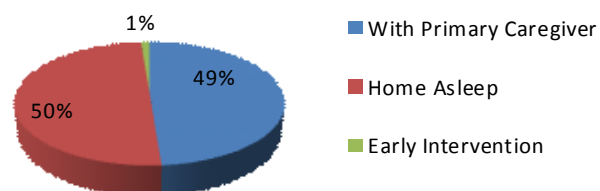
### How Do Infants and Toddlers Learn Best?

Parents and caregivers play a critical role in how we provide services to infants and toddlers. Research tells us that young children learn best from their favorite adults, in places that are familiar and comfortable.

Very young children need lots of practice when learning new skills. For example, children learn best when they are taught new skills like eating, communicating and playing during times when they need to eat, talk and move. This happens best through everyday activities that are fun, motivating, and interesting. Our job is to build upon what you are already doing.

The chart below shows just how much time young children spend with their primary caregivers vs. their EI provider. Your EI provider(s) will help you and your child learn new skills.

### A typical week for a child in EI



Early Intervention programs throughout the country work toward the same outcomes for infants and toddlers.

We want infants and toddlers to:

### 1. Have Positive Social

#### **Emotional Skills Including**

**Social Relationships:** *This includes behaviors like responding to touch, regulating and displaying emotions and interacting with family members.*

### 2. Acquire and Use Knowledge and Skills:

*This includes the use of communication and language, responding to directions or requests, problem solving, exploration of toys/objects, and demonstration of cause and effect.*

### 3. Taking Action to Meet

**Their Needs:** *This includes communicating individual needs such as showing hunger; taking care of their own basic needs such as dressing, feeding, toileting; following rules, and using tools such as utensils or crayons.*

**You are already providing your child with learning experiences.**

**EI professionals will support you to make your teaching more effective.**

## What makes a child eligible for Early Intervention?

Some children are eligible because they have a diagnosed condition known to cause developmental delay. Other children will have a multidisciplinary evaluation to identify whether there is a delay in any one of five areas including:

- ◆ *Cognitive skills (Includes thinking and learning)*
- ◆ *Physical development (Includes motor skills and screenings for vision and hearing)*
- ◆ *Communication (receptive and expressive)*
- ◆ *Social and emotional development (forming relationships and exploring the environment); and*
- ◆ *Self-help skills (getting needs met in age expected ways)*

Your EI provider will describe this process and will review all the information gathered during the evaluation process.

## What does an EI evaluation look like?

EI evaluations use toys and activities often used during play. The evaluators will assess your child's development in comparison to his/her same age peers.

It is important to remember that during the evaluation there may be times when you will not be able to help your child with a requested task. Sometimes this can be difficult, but it is important because each evaluation has certain protocols, or ways it has to be presented to all children. This ensures we get accurate information about your child and his/her skills.





Be sure to schedule your child’s EI evaluation for a day and time that works for you and your child. Share as much information about your child as you can.

We know this is new to many families, so as you think about questions, write them down. We want you to ask us.

### **What is an Individualized Family Service Plan?**

Once we have learned about your child and family we will spend time asking you about times of the day that work well and what parts are challenging.

We will document the concerns you have for your child and family, talk about your priorities and what you hope to gain from Early Intervention. Together we will use all this information to create your Individualized Family Service Plan.

**An Individualized Family Service Plan is often called “IFSP” for short.**

**In order for your family to receive the maximum benefit from Early Intervention, it is critical for you to fully participate in all aspects of EI services and supports.**

**You are the most important decision-maker for your child and family.**

### **What services will my child get in EI?**

The services your child receives will be individualized based on the needs of your family and the outcomes you and your EI team develop. Outcomes are statements that describe what skills or behaviors you want your child to gain or supports needed for you and your family.

**EI Early Intervention home visiting staff must meet our rigorous Personnel Standards.**

**Professionals include:**

- **Educators**
- **Nurses**
- **Occupational, Speech and Physical Therapists**
- **Nutritionists**
- **Social Workers and**
- **Mental Health Counselors**

**You and your EI provider will develop outcomes as part of the IFSP process.**

**Outcomes are developed so we can measure your child's progress in acquiring the functional skills and behaviors you want him/her to have.**

**We will also help you identify family outcomes i.e. things you want to achieve for your family.**

**You and your EI providers will work together to write outcomes when new ideas or concerns arise. Infants and toddlers grow and change so quickly they often attain your original outcomes and move onto new ones.**

## **What will an EI visit look like?**

- Your EI visits will begin with talking about what has gone well and what you have found difficult since your last visit. We will celebrate progress and review the outcomes we will work on together during the day's visit.
- We will talk about your daily routines and activities. Together we will try some strategies and activities to help your child participate more independently in daily routines (e.g. meals, bath, and playtime) and activities. We will use the toys and materials you have in your home so they are familiar to your child and accessible when EI is not there.
- We will talk about typical child development, parenting ideas, and community resources that may help your child's development and learning.
- At the end of each visit, we will decide on activities and strategies you would like to work on with your child before we see you again.



## Your rights in Early Intervention



It is important that families know their rights and procedural safeguards while in Early Intervention. Your EI professional will provide you with a brochure, *RI Early Intervention Procedural Safeguards and Funding*. This brochure will help explain your rights in EI including your right to receive written notice before any decisions related to the IFSP are made. It will also explain the importance of gaining your consent each time we make a change to the IFSP, a service, or conduct an evaluation.

We want you to be well informed and receive the support you need to help your child grow and develop.

### What is an Early Intervention Service Coordinator?

Your Service Coordinator will be your primary contact during your time in EI.

Some of what your Service Coordinator will do includes:

- Ensuring you understand your rights by explaining RI Early Intervention's Procedural Safeguards.
- Work with you to plan for the evaluations and assessments your child will need.
- Coordinate the development of your IFSP or Individualized Family Service Plan.
- Finding answers to questions you may have about your child.
- Finding resources that may be helpful to your child and/or family.
- Coaching you on strategies to meet your IFSP outcomes.
- Helping you to coordinate with other specialists involved with your child and family.
- Planning for your child's transition out of Early Intervention.
- Facilitating any disagreements you may have with your child's services or members of your IFSP team.

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