



**A  
Family's  
Guide  
to Early  
Intervention  
Services  
in  
Washington  
State**

**Individuals  
with Disabilities  
Education Act**

## Dear Parents,

I know if you have this booklet, you probably have a concern about your child's development or you have been told your child has a developmental delay.

I remember how overwhelmed and confused I was when my daughter, Suzi, was going through testing for her developmental delays. I didn't understand many words professionals used, let alone how to get services.

Once we got the services, through many helpful teachers and therapists, her development really improved. I'm so grateful for where she is today because of the early intervention she got in those critical early years. Also, being linked with other parents and sharing information was most important for our family.

I hope you will use this booklet as a guide to the services and supports your family needs.

*Cassie, Parent*



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## *Washington State Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program*

*As parents you are the most important people in your child's life. Children grow and change rapidly during their first three years. Think of your child and how he or she is growing. You know your child best. Notice things like how and when your child smiles, sits up, walks, talks, or holds a cup. What you are seeing is how your child is growing through the different developmental stages. When a child has a delay in development, services are available throughout the state. The Washington State Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program coordinates a statewide effort to help families get these services.*

“ When my son was six months old, he still didn't sit up. I thought maybe I was doing something wrong. I took him to our doctor who helped me connect with an early intervention program. Now my son is receiving services that are really helpful. He is making good progress, and I'm learning more about what I can do. I now know that it wasn't because I was doing anything wrong that Ian didn't do things as fast as other kids.

*Heather, Parent*

”



*When you learn your child has delays, you may have lots of feelings. You may feel scared, you may not believe what has been said, or you may even feel anger. These are not unusual feelings and you are not alone. Other parents have these experiences or feelings as well. There are statewide*

*programs that can help you connect with other parents who have also had these feelings or concerns. You can call the parent support numbers listed in the back of this book for more information and help.*

## What Is Early Intervention?

Early Intervention in Washington State is a collection of services families may need for their infants or toddlers with disabilities.

Early Intervention during the first years of a child's life can make a big difference in the future of that child.

Early Intervention may:

- ▶ Help you find services you need for your child.
- ▶ Help you understand your child's developmental growth.

### **What Is The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)?**

In 1986 Congress passed a law that encouraged states to improve early intervention services. This law is now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The law developed guidelines for states to follow in providing services to families with infants and toddlers with disabilities. Each state decides every year if they can continue to provide early intervention services as defined by IDEA. The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program (ITEIP) within the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) directs the coordination of the statewide system of early intervention services.

Early intervention services are designed to meet the developmental needs of each eligible child and the needs of the family related to enhancing the child's development.

If you need a sign language interpreter, one must be provided for you. If you do not speak English, an interpreter must be provided for you.



## What If I Have Questions About My Child's Development?

Call the Lead Family Resources Coordinator (FRC) in your local area. FRCs are in each county or geographic area. Their role is to help your family get the early intervention services your child may need. To find out the name of your local lead FRC, call the Family Health Hotline number at 1-800-322-2588. You can also call your local health department or school district.

Talk with your health care provider about your concerns. They can provide a screening or suggest other resources. If you don't have a doctor and want more information or help, call the Family Health Hotline number listed above. You do not need a doctor referral to get into early intervention services. You may self-refer as a parent.

### What is a Screening?

A screening is a quick look at how your child is learning and growing. Screenings are done by people trained to determine how your child is developing. If your child's development is a concern, your FRC can share information on how to get an evaluation for your child.

### What is an Evaluation?

An evaluation will look at your child's development. The evaluation is done with you, your child and early intervention professionals.

Evaluation looks at these areas of development:

- Cognitive – ability to learn and how your child learns;
- Physical – ability to move, see and hear;
- Communication – ability to understand language and express needs;
- Social or emotional – ability to relate with others; and
- Adaptive skills – ability to dress, eat and take care of yourself.

An evaluation is a way to see if your child is eligible for early intervention services. The evaluation will occur only with your written permission and at no cost to you.

### Tips for Evaluation Planning:

- Ask your Family Resources Coordinator (FRC) for help.
- Bring any questions or concerns you might have about your child's development.
- Share all information that you think is important: medical records, a baby book, growth chart or other reports.
- Decide what times or locations would work for you and your family.
- Invite other family members, a friend or support person if you wish.
- Inform your FRC if you need any interpreters or other assistance.

After the evaluation, you and the other members of the team will talk about what your child is doing and identify any concerns. If there are areas of delay, your child may be eligible for early intervention services. You have the choice to receive or refuse these services.

You may refuse one or more of the services and still receive the other services you want.

## Who Is Eligible For Early Intervention in Washington State?

To be eligible, a child must have a 25% delay or show a 1.5 standard deviation below his or her age in one or more of the developmental areas. A child may also be eligible if he or she has a physical or mental condition, such as Down Syndrome, that is known to cause a delay in development.

### What is an Assessment?

An assessment is an ongoing collection of information that looks at your child's strengths and needs. Assessments are used to make sure your child is getting the kind of help needed, while your child is receiving services.



## What Happens Next?

You might ask, “What services does early intervention include?”

Services your child may need, might include:

- ◆ Assistive technology devices and assistive technology services
- ◆ Audiology (hearing)
- ◆ Early identification, screening, and assessments services
- ◆ Family training, counseling, and home visits
- ◆ Health services
- ◆ Medical services only for diagnostic or evaluation purposes
- ◆ Nursing services
- ◆ Nutrition services
- ◆ Occupational therapy
- ◆ Physical therapy
- ◆ Psychological services
- ◆ Service coordination (Family Resources Coordination)
- ◆ Social work services
- ◆ Special instruction
- ◆ Speech–language pathology
- ◆ Transportation and related costs necessary to enable a child and family to receive early intervention services
- ◆ Vision services

Please contact a Family Resources Coordinator (FRC) in your area for further information about the above services.

## What Happens Next? (continued)

### Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

If eligible, your child may receive IDEA early intervention services. You will have a meeting with your Family Resources Coordinator (FRC) and other service providers. Your family, with others, will write a plan. This is an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). Services begin when you have agreed to the IFSP that has been developed. Work with your FRC to ensure the plan reflects your family's concerns, interests and values.

The IFSP is an ongoing process that meets the changing needs of your child and family. It is reviewed at least every six months and rewritten on a yearly basis.



An IFSP includes:

- ▶ **Present levels of functioning** – what your child is doing now.
- ▶ **A family statement** – a statement of your family's concerns, priorities and resources; your family statement is an important part of the IFSP, but you may choose not to have one.
- ▶ **Outcomes** – changes you want to see for your child and family.
- ▶ **Early intervention services needed** – how often and how long, where they will happen, and who will pay for them (many different sources fund early intervention services).
- ▶ **Natural environments** – a statement of the natural environments in which early intervention services will be provided. IFSPs must include a written justification if services will not be provided in natural environments.
- ▶ **Timelines** – when services will begin and end, and when you will look at your plan again.
- ▶ **Other services** needed that are not funded by IDEA – who can help you find these services.
- ▶ **A Family Resources Coordinator (FRC)** – named in your plan.
- ▶ **A transition plan prior to age three** – looking and planning for services after your child is three years old.

You may want to invite other family members, a friend or support person to the meeting. Bring any information about your child you feel is important.

## What Happens At Age Three?

At least six months before your child turns three, your Family Resources Coordinator (FRC) will assist you in planning a move to the next service provider or agency serving your child. This can change where and how services are provided. In early intervention, this change is called transition. IDEA requires a written plan for this transition. A transition plan meeting must take place at least 90 days before your child turns three. Your transition plan will identify special education or community-based services your child may need.

Your FRC will ask you to sign a permission form, so the next agency or service provider can be contacted to plan for transition. A meeting between you, your FRC, service provider(s), and the local school district will be set up.

The school district determines if your child is eligible for preschool special education services. They will discuss the results of their tests with you and give you information about your rights. If your child is eligible, their services will be provided through an Individual Education Program (IEP).

Your FRC will assist you in planning a move to other possible services if your child is not eligible for special education preschool services.

### **Tips for the Transition Meeting:**

- ▶ Gather as much information as possible about the proposed change.
- ▶ Ask about possible program options or choices.
- ▶ Ask what training and supports the new program offers families.
- ▶ Visit the new program before the change.
- ▶ Ask for written materials and learn the procedures for entering and participating in the new program.
- ▶ Provide as much information about your child as possible to the new program.



## What Are My Rights Under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act? (Procedural Safeguards)

Every law includes rights for citizens and IDEA is no different. **Your Family Resources Coordinator (FRC) will give you the Parent Rights Brochure that explains your rights.**

### You have rights under IDEA to:

- ▶ Be the primary and final decision maker for your child.
- ▶ Access services which include:
  - early identification of concerns/ Child Find;
  - a timely multidisciplinary evaluation and assessment;
  - determination of your child's eligibility; and
  - Family Resources Coordinator/ coordination.



### If your child is eligible, you have the right to:

- ▶ An Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).
- ▶ Ongoing Family Resources Coordination with an FRC, until your child's third birthday.
- ▶ Ask for a different Family Resources Coordinator (FRC).
- ▶ Receive early intervention services related to your child's development.
- ▶ Agree to the services, but disagree with how often or where the services will be provided.
- ▶ Refuse some services recommended by the IFSP team and still receive other services.
- ▶ Participate in all meetings concerning your child's early intervention services and changes in delivery of services.
- ▶ Have meetings at a time and place agreeable to your family.
- ▶ Receive timely written notice of:
  - any changes with any service involving your child;
  - any meeting dates and times; and
  - who will attend the meeting.
- ▶ Receive notices and IFSP documents in your native language or the way of communication used in your home.

### **You also have safeguards regarding records. You have the right to:**

- ▶ Request, review, and correct records and receive copies of the records.
- ▶ Be informed about the types and the locations of records collected, maintained, or used in the program, who in the program has access to those records, and when they see those records.
- ▶ Request information about who has seen the records or copies of the records. You may review all records that relate to your child including:
  - screening
  - evaluation
  - assessment
  - eligibility
  - all information that is a part of the IFSP
- ▶ Challenge information in a record you believe is inaccurate or misleading or violates the privacy or rights of your child or family.
- ▶ Receive and review records regarding any individual complaint concerning your child.

### **Information about your family is confidential. You have the right to:**

- ▶ Confidentiality of personal and identifiable information including:
  - The name of your child, yourself, or other family members.
  - The address of your child.
  - Any personal characteristics or other information that would make it possible to identify your child with reasonable certainty.
- ▶ Request local policies and procedures regarding how confidentiality is protected.
- ▶ Give informed written consent for any screening, evaluation and assessment, Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), early intervention services and sharing of information or records.

### **Additional Procedural Safeguards:**

In addition to the parent/ family rights, children have the right to a surrogate parent if:

- No parent can be identified;
- The service provider/ public agency, after reasonable efforts, cannot discover the whereabouts of a parent; or
- The child is a ward of the State.

## What If I Don't Agree With A Decision About My Child's Services?

Please talk with your Family Resources Coordinator (FRC) about the problem. If that doesn't work or you are not comfortable, you may choose to use any or all of the following options:

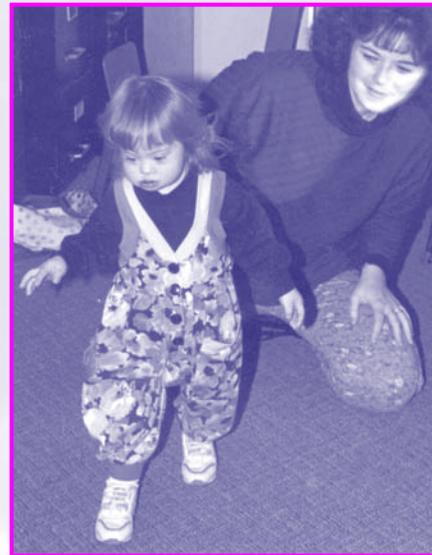
- ▶ **Mediation** – Mediation will be provided to you at no cost to help resolve a dispute. Mediation is offered as an alternative to a formal administrative hearing. Mediation is a voluntary process.
- ▶ **Advocacy services** – These are programs that will give you information and help you plan how to address the problem. One advocacy organization is PAVE (see page 10). Your FRC can provide you with information about advocacy services in your area.
- ▶ **Administrative hearing (proceeding)** – This is a formal hearing or proceeding conducted by an administrative hearings officer. A request for an administrative hearing must be in writing and include the complaint. Address the request to the director of the early intervention services provider or your local early intervention services contractor. Your FRC can give you their names and addresses or you can call (360) 725-3500 and ask for help.

## What If I Think An Agency or Early Intervention Services Provider is Not Doing What The Law Requires?

Any person or organization may file a citizen's complaint if they think an agency or early intervention services provider is violating a requirement of the law. The complaint must be written, signed and include the facts about the complaint. Send the complaint to:

Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program  
P.O. Box 45201  
Olympia, WA 98504-5201

The complaint will be reviewed and a response written within 60 days.



## Where Can I Go For More Help Or Information?

The following organizations and groups can provide more information, assistance and support;

- Family Health Hotline

**1-800-322-2588 (VOICE)**

**711 TTY**

**Website: [www.withinreachwa.org](http://www.withinreachwa.org)**

This hotline maintains current information on public and private early intervention resources, including Family Resources Coordinators (FRCs). It also includes information about immunization, nutrition, and other children's health services available in Washington State.

- Family Educator Partnership Project (FEPP)

**1-888-754-8798**

**Website: [www.arcwa.org](http://www.arcwa.org) or Email: [FEPP@arcwa.org](mailto:FEPP@arcwa.org)**

This is a statewide project that encourages families, educators and community agencies to work together in supporting children and youth who need special education services.

- Parent to Parent

**1-800-821-5927 Website: [www.arcwa.org](http://www.arcwa.org)**

A statewide parent network providing emotional support and information to parents who have young children with disabilities or developmental delays.

- Washington State Father's Network

**(425) 747-4004 (ext. 218) Website: [www.fathersnetwork.org](http://www.fathersnetwork.org)**

Advocates for, and provides support and resources for, all men and families who have children with special needs.



- Washington PAVE (Parents Are Vital in Education)

**(VOICE/TTY) 1-800-5 PARENT**

**Website: [www.washingtonpave.org](http://www.washingtonpave.org)**

A statewide parent training and information center providing assistance to families who have children with disabilities, ages birth through adulthood.

- Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program (ITEIP)

**(360) 725-3500 (VOICE)**

**(360) 407-1087 (TTY)**

**[www1.dshs.wa.gov/iteip/](http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/iteip/)**

Directs the statewide system of IDEA early intervention services.

## How Can I Be More Involved?

You have an important role in the planning and developing of programs and services for your child. You can also take part in planning how your community provides services.

This planning is done at the county level through County Interagency Coordinating Councils (CICCs). Each CICC is required to have parents as members on the council. Together with all other members, parents help decide how services can best happen. CICC meetings are open to the public.

There is also a State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC). This council must also have parent representation. SICC meetings are open to the public. For more information about meeting times and locations contact your Family Resources Coordinator, ITEIP, or visit the website at [www1.dshs.wa.gov/iteip/](http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/iteip/).

*This booklet is a summary of the Washington State  
Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program (ITEIP).  
For full details on Washington's approved plan under  
IDEA or for more information about either your CICC or  
the SICC, contact the Washington State Infant Toddler  
Early Intervention Program at **(360) 725-3500 (VOICE)**  
or **(360) 407-1087 (TTY)***

[www1.dshs.wa.gov/iteip](http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/iteip)



## What Does That Mean? (Glossary)

### **Administrative Hearing**

A formal process with a neutral person, a hearings officer, who listens to the evidence and arguments of the parents/ family and the agencies and decides who is right and who must do what.

### **Assessment**

Ongoing procedures used by qualified professionals throughout a child's early intervention experience to identify his or her unique needs; the family's resources, priorities and concerns related to his or her development; and the nature and extent of early intervention services required to meet these needs.

### **Assistive Technology Devices**

Any item, piece of equipment or product system used to increase, maintain or improve your child's ability to do things, (for example; eat, communicate, move).

### **Assistive Technology Services**

A service that directly assists a child with a disability to select, get or use an assistive technology device.

### **Child Find**

Includes early identification, screening, referral, and initial service coordination.

### **Early Intervention**

A collection of services provided by public and private agencies and designed by law to support eligible children and families in enhancing a child's potential for growth and development from birth to age three.

### **Evaluation**

Procedures used by qualified professionals to determine a child's initial and continuing eligibility, which focus on determining the status of the infant or toddler in all of the developmental areas: cognitive, social/ emotional, physical (including vision and hearing), communication, and adaptive.

### **Family Centered Care**

The principle that promotes parents as the decision makers and builds parent/ professional partnerships.

### **Family Statement**

A family directed statement of family's concerns, priorities, and resources included on the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

### **Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)**

The written plan for providing early intervention and other services to eligible children and families that: (1) is developed jointly by the family and appropriate professionals; (2) is based on a multidisciplinary evaluation and assessment of the child and family; (3) has a family directed statement of resources, priorities and concerns if the family wishes; and (4) includes services necessary to enhance the development of the child and the capacity of the family to meet his or her developmental needs.

### **Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities**

Children from birth to three who are eligible for early intervention services because they are experiencing a 1.5 standard deviation or at least a 25% development delay in one or more of the following areas: cognitive, physical, communication, social/ emotional, or adaptive; or has a diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay.

### **Mediation**

Is an informal process in which a trained, impartial person may help parties in conflict resolve their differences and find a solution satisfactory to all sides.

### **Multidisciplinary**

The involvement of two or more disciplines or professions in the provision of integrated and coordinated services including evaluation and assessment activities, and the development of the IFSP.

### **Natural Environments**

Settings that are natural or normal for the child's age peers who have no disability. This may include the home, neighborhood, or community settings.

### **Outcomes**

Statements of changes that you want to see in your child or family as a result of early intervention services. These statements are part of your IFSP.

### **Screening**

A quick checklist or survey about your child's development to see if further evaluation is needed.

### **Surrogate Parent**

An individual appointed by the local or state agency to act in place of a parent or legal guardian in safeguarding a child's rights in the decision making process.

### **Transition Plan**

The plan developed for your child when leaving early intervention services at age three.

## Acknowledgments

The Family Guidelines Workgroup, a committee of the State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) developed this booklet.

Its purpose is to help parents of infants and toddlers with disabilities understand early intervention services

under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).



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Discrimination is prohibited in all programs and activities. No one shall be excluded on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, gender, age or handicap.



Our web address is:  
[www1.dshs.wa.gov/iteip/](http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/iteip/)