

Eight Things Every Parent Should Know Before Making a Referral to Early Intervention

1. Not all children with developmental delays are eligible for Early Intervention.

- By New York State law, the EIP only works with children who have a significant delay and who meet New York State eligibility standards. See the Parent Guide from the NY State Department of Health for more information:
<http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/0523.pdf>

2. Early Intervention services do not replace the services provided by your child's doctor or health care team.

- Your child's doctor may recommend services specifically to treat a medical condition. These medical services are different from Early Intervention services. Medical services may require the supervision of a doctor, and may be provided in the clinic setting.
- If your child has a medical condition, your child's Early Intervention team will contact your child's doctor to ensure that services are provided in a safe and appropriate way, and are coordinated with Early Intervention services.

3. Your doctor or specialist may recommend a specific number of hours of therapy for your child. This may be different from the number that is authorized at the Early Intervention Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting.

- Your child's doctor may have a different recommendation because he/she is familiar with how services are provided in a medical setting, which is different than how services are provided by EIP.
- Keep in mind that Early Intervention uses a coaching approach in working with children and families – this is different from medical care.
- The provider's job is to help your family understand and meet your child's *developmental* needs throughout everyday activities. The doctor may be thinking of your child's *medical* needs. Early Intervention services do not address medical needs.
- Some children benefit from a combination of Early Intervention and other services. Speak with your child's doctor and your service coordinator about other medical and community resources that can assist you and your child.

4. You and your Early Intervention team create an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) that is tailored to your child and family.

- Your child is unique, and so is his/her service plan. It is written specifically for you and your child. The service plan may even look different for children from the same family or who have the same diagnosis or disability. It may also look different from what Early Intervention plans look like in other states.
- How often you and your child receive Early Intervention services depends on a number of things:

- How much time you need with providers to develop plans for working with your child between intervention sessions;
 - How long you can practice new skills with your child before he/she gets tired; and
 - How quickly your child learns new things.
- The types of services that you receive, and how often you receive them, may change over time. You and your Early Intervention team will measure your child's progress and decide when to ask for a change in the plan.

5. More is not always better

- The amount of service is not always what is important, because your child's learning happens between sessions.
- It is the activities that you and other caregivers do with our child between Early Intervention sessions that make progress possible. A family alone, a provider alone, or a social worker alone is unlikely to achieve the success that might be possible when all the important people in the child's life work with him/her whenever they're together.

6. Your Early Intervention team understands that this may be a very emotional and stressful time for you and your family.

- The EIP will work hard to make things go as smoothly as possible for everyone. There are times when it may seem that things are not happening as quickly as you would like. Please be patient as we work to connect you to all the resources you and your child need.

7. Your EIP team will work with your family or anyone who takes care of your child during the day.

- It is important that everyone who takes care of your child knows how to meet his/her special needs and teach him/her new skills. This includes people such as daycare center staff or a baby sitter. Early Intervention staff will work with all of your child's caregivers.
- Your involvement and regular communication with your team is very important. Let your team know how to share information with you, in phone calls, e-mails, or whatever method works for you. We have some information on our website that can help.

8. Your child will transition from Early Intervention around the age of three, or earlier if he/she has achieved all IFSP goals.

- Your child will transition out of the EIP around his/her third birthday. The exact time depends on the date of his/her birthday, and whether he/she is eligible for services through the Department of Education. You may also choose to use other resources in the community (e.g. Head Start, Day Care). Your Ongoing Service Coordinator will explain the next steps after leaving the EIP