What is Early Intervention?

Early intervention (EI) is a program authorized under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to help infants and toddlers who have a developmental delay or disability. Sometimes, EI is referred to as Part C, the title of IDEA under which the program is authorized. The goal of early intervention is to provide services and supports that will help your child develop skills that will help your child develop skills that will help him catch up to other children his age. EI helps children age birth through 2 (up to 3 years old) to reach their developmental milestones (walking, talking, eating, socialization, etc.). Research has shown that early intervention services lead to improved long-term outcomes.

Unlike most school-based services, EI is a family-based program. Families, working with their children and with professionals, are the core of the program. EI is required to be delivered in the child’s natural environment, i.e., the child’s home, daycare center, etc. Families and other caregivers are provided the supports they need to help the child learn now and in the future.

Is My Child Eligible for Early Intervention Services?

In Virginia, to be eligible for EI, your child must:

- Be between the ages of 0 and 3 (through age 2).
- Have a developmental delay or difference in:
  - Thinking, learning, and playing
  - Moving, seeing, and hearing
  - Understanding and using sounds, gestures, and words
  - Taking care of oneself such as eating and dressing
  - Developing social relationships

Some examples (not all inclusive) of diagnosed conditions that will likely cause a delay include: Down Syndrome, born at 29 weeks or younger, Spina Bifida, 28 days or more spent in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Cleft lip and/or Palate, Vision and/or Hearing loss, Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Resources on Early Intervention

- Infant & Toddler Connection (ITC) of Virginia
- New Path Family Support Network
- Developmental Milestones Information (Learn the Signs)

Contact Us:
800-869-6782 / 703-923-0010
www.peatc.org
Hablamos Español
How Do I Access Early Intervention Services?

If you have concerns about your child’s development or need contact information for Early Intervention services, visit Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia or call Virginia 2-1-1 to find services in your area.

Early intervention services are provided to eligible families **regardless of ability to pay**. For those who can afford to participate in the cost of services, there is a **sliding fee scale**. Medicaid and other health insurance, including Tricare, pays for EI as well.

How are Services Delivered?

If your child is eligible for EI, he will be assigned a **service coordinator** (like a case manager), and an **Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP)** will be developed. The family is a key part of the IFSP team, and the IFSP includes your child’s **agreed upon outcomes and the services and supports that will help your child achieve those outcomes**. The services and supports are **designed to fit into your family’s regular routines and environments**, including home and community-based activities.

The **amount and frequency** of services depends on the child’s and family needs. For example, your child may receive occupational therapy once a week because you are able to effectively work on these skills between sessions. But you may not feel as comfortable working on language development and request that speech therapy be delivered more frequently.

If you disagree with decisions by the IFSP team, you have the right to appeal through the following avenues: administrative complaint, mediation, or due process. Mediation and due process can be filed at the same time. If your child is receiving EI services through Medicaid, you also have the right to file an appeal with the Department of Medical Assistance Services. More information can be found in the **Notice of Child and Family Rights and Safeguards**.

PEATC's mission focuses on building positive futures for Virginia's children by working collaboratively with families, schools and communities to improve opportunities for excellence in education and success in school and community life.

For more information about us, please contact:

800-869-6782 / 703-923-0010
www.peatc.org

The contents of this factsheet were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education, #H328M140013-18. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government Project Officer. PEATC is not a legal services agency and cannot provide legal advice or legal representation. Any information contained in this factsheet is not intended as legal advice and should not be used as a substitution for legal advice.