

Why Early Intervention? A Great Opportunity for Children and Families

Early intervention (EI) helps children achieve important milestones and life skills right from the start. It also helps families support their child's development and growth. EI is "family centered," meaning that the family takes an active role in intervention services—and all treatment is based on a family's preferences.



Benefits for Children

Provides the early boost a child may need. Children grow and develop in unique ways. Many reach typical speech, language, social, cognitive and physical milestones on their own. But some need a little extra support getting there. EI helps children develop these necessary life skills right from the start.

Helps build a strong foundation, with effects that last a lifetime. Birth to age 3 is a time of rapid development and growth. If children have a communication or other delay or disorder, these early years are the ideal time for intervention. This is when the brain is most flexible. The skills they master now are their building blocks for future learning, academic, social, and job success.

Gets children ready for school. Families may not be thinking about their child's *kindergarten readiness* before their child turns 3, but the groundwork for developing the language, communication, and social-emotional skills that their child needs in order to learn begins very early. EI helps children meet the not-too-distant expectations of formal school. It also can reduce or eliminate the need for special education services in school.

Can reduce frustration and behavioral challenges.

When children can't express themselves or experience other communication, cognitive, or motor/physical challenges, tantrums and other problematic behaviors are more likely to occur. EI can help decrease these stressful situations and teach children to use positive behaviors to meet their needs.

Can make children happier—and healthier. EI can help with children's social, emotional, and communication development; improve their self-esteem; reduce frustrations; and ensure that they have the motor and physical skills needed to eat, move, grow, play, and thrive. They enjoy learning through real-world activities with the people most important to them.



Benefits for Families

Builds confidence in your own abilities. EI helps families expand upon what they already do within their daily routines to nurture their child's growth and learning. It also provides them with tools to practice new skills during regular activities without adding extra "homework" to their busy lives. As the leading experts on their child, families are empowered to advocate for their child and actively support their development.

Offers peace of "knowing." Many families spend months or even years hoping their child will "outgrow" a possible problem. But taking a "wait-and-see" approach often leaves families in a stressful state of limbo. By seeking an evaluation early, families gain the knowledge they need to act. If there's no developmental delay or disorder, nothing is lost—and they can have peace of mind. And if there is, they can start getting help sooner rather than later.

Supports family preferences and decisions. EI services follow the lead of the family. Sharing your concerns and suggestions lets your EI team know what is important to you and helps them offer services and supports that are the best fit for the family. No particular goal or treatment program is forced on any family. Individualized services are delivered with respect to the family's cultural, religious, and other preferences and values.

Makes life at home easier. EI services are provided in a child's "natural environment"—often their home or the daycare/preschool that they attend. This not only offers convenience to families but also allows children to frequently practice needed skills in their real-world routines and activities. Families can identify their biggest challenges at home, such as mealtime or morning routine, and problem-solve these situations with EI providers to create more positive interactions.

Cuts through clutter of information. There is so much information available on the Internet, from friends and family, and in the media. But not all information is reliable and accurate—and it isn't personalized to your child. EI provides expert, trustworthy information that applies directly to your child's needs and your family's priorities and concerns.



Better Hearing & Speech Month
BHSM
2021 • BUILDING CONNECTIONS

