

## **Early Intervention Services**

Under IDEA '2004, infants, toddlers, and young children may be eligible for services designed to meet their specific developmental needs.

### ***Early Intervention Services for Infants and Toddlers (Birth to 3)***

#### ***Who can get Early Intervention Services?***

Children from birth to age 3 are eligible for Early Intervention services if they have a developmental delay or have a physical or mental disability (such as Down's syndrome) that is likely to result in a developmental delay. The term "developmental delay" includes delays in physical or cognitive development, language and speech, adaptive behavior, or self help skills.

#### ***What types of services are available and where are they provided?***

"Early Intervention" services can include, but are not limited to, occupational, physical, and speech and language therapies, and psychological services. Early intervention services can also include family training and counseling and other services needed by the family to support the child's development. All necessary services are provided without cost to the family.

Services can be provided in the child's home, at the child's day care center, or in a separate, specialized facility, depending on the child's needs. Children have the right to receive services alongside non-disabled children, to the extent appropriate to their needs.

#### ***How do I find out if my child qualifies for Early Intervention Services?***

If you think your child needs services, call your local Mental Health/Mental Retardation Center. Each county has one or more MH/MR Centers, sometimes called "base service units;" they are usually listed in the blue pages of your local phone book. MH/MR is the contact for all children needing Early Intervention services, including children who do not have mental health problems or mental retardation. MH/MR must then arrange for a full evaluation.

#### ***What kind of evaluation is done?***

The evaluation must be free and must look at all areas in which your child is thought to be delayed. It must also consider, with your approval, what types of services your family needs to help your child's development. The results are reviewed by a Team, called a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT), that includes the parents, a service coordinator, and at least two other people, such as a physical or speech therapist, who know your child's needs.

#### ***Who decides what services my child will get?***

The decision is made at a meeting of a Team that includes the parents. Service providers, agency personnel, and evaluators are also on the Team. The Team develops an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) for the child and family. The IFSP lists the specific types and amounts of services needed, where those services will be provided, and who or what agency will provide them. The IFSP must also contain goals and expected outcomes for each service, and a way to monitor the child's progress. The IFSP must be reviewed, and if needed revised, at least once every six months.

***What if I don't agree with the services offered?***

If you do not agree with all or some of the decisions of the Team (for example, you think your child needs more or different services), you have the right to refuse to sign the IFSP. The services that you do not object to will begin immediately. You can meet further with the provider and agency to try to work out differences. If you can't work things out, you have the right to use mediation or to have an impartial hearing to argue your case.

***How long does the process take?***

The evaluation of your child and the initial IFSP must all be completed within 45 calendar days after you contacted MH/MR to request services. However, with your permission, services can begin before the full evaluation is completed.

***Who actually provides the services?***

Early Intervention services are usually provided by a private agency or individual through a contract with the County MH/MR Office. However, it remains the responsibility of MH/MR to make sure that timelines are followed and that your child receives all needed services.

***What happens when the child turns three years old?***

Many children who are eligible for Early Intervention services will also be eligible for Early Intervention Pre-School Services from age 3 until they start kindergarten. Pre-school services are provided through the educational system, usually through Intermediate Units. Prior to your child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday, a meeting, which includes the parents, must be held to plan for future services. If there is disagreement over your child's eligibility after age 3, or the type or amount of services needed, your child will continue to receive Early Intervention services on the IFSP while you use the mediation or formal hearing process to resolve the dispute.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT BIRTH TO 3 SERVICES, CONTACT CAMERON-ELK COUNTY (CE) EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES .....(814) 772-8111**