

The ABCs of Early Intervention

If you are worried about your child's development, know there is help in your community. Early intervention (EI) programs are available in all states to children **ages birth to 3 years** and their families. EI helps children when there are concerns about developmental skills such as talking, walking, hearing, understanding, and feeding/swallowing.



The earlier you get help, the better! Here are some important **ABCs of EI**:



A call or click away. To get help, you don't need a referral. Make the call yourself. To find your state's EI agency, visit www.ectacenter.org/search/mapfinder.asp. Your child's pediatrician can also put you in contact with your local EI program to schedule a free evaluation, which will determine whether your child qualifies for EI services. Qualification is based on how severe your child's delay is, whether they have a disorder, or if they are at risk of a delay or disorder due to another medical or health condition. Eligibility can vary by state.



Based on the child/family's unique priorities and needs. Each child is different. Treatment plans are individualized and may target any of the following skills: *cognitive* (e.g., thinking, learning, and problem-solving); *communication* (e.g., gesturing, talking, and listening); *social-emotional* (e.g., playing, understanding feelings); *physical and sensory* (e.g., walking, seeing, and hearing); and *adaptive or self-help* (e.g., eating, bathing, and dressing).



Culturally and linguistically responsive. Services are provided with respect to a family's cultural beliefs and customs—and in the language(s) that the child/family uses at home. If needed, an interpreter will join the family and the EI provider during visits. This will be documented in a family's *individualized family service plan*, which is the written plan that explains the EI services and support that the child and family will receive.

EI providers are specialized professionals and include audiologists, speech-language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, special education teachers, and more. They are experts in early childhood development and health. With families as their partners, they can help a child learn and grow.

Learn more about how EI can help your family.
Visit www.asha.org/public/speech/early-intervention/.

