Speech-Language Pathology Services in the Home (Early Intervention)

Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) work with children in their homes on communication and feeding/swallowing skills.

DID YOU KNOW?

Early Intervention (EI) is available in every state and in the District of Columbia under federal law—often at no or low cost to families and caregivers.

LEARN MORE AT WWW.ASHA.ORG/PUBLIC
WHO:

SLPs work with children ages birth to 3 and their families. In some states, early intervention (EI) programs may continue until a child is 5 years old.

WHAT:

SLPs support families and caregivers in helping young children with their:

- **speech and language skills** (e.g., gesturing, talking, listening, understanding);
- **cognitive skills** (thinking, learning, problem solving);
- **social–emotional skills** (playing, understanding feelings, making friends);
- **early reading and writing skills** (e.g., recognizing sounds and words, connecting pictures to words); and
- **feeding and swallowing skills** (e.g., improving how well they can suck from a bottle or drink from a cup, helping them chew foods).

EI services support the beliefs and customs of families and caregivers—in the language that the family is most comfortable using.

WHERE:

SLPs may come to a child’s home—or to another location in their natural environment, like the child’s daycare or even a park—to provide services.

HOW:

Families/caregivers who are concerned about their child’s development may contact their local EI program directly to ask for an evaluation. **Families and caregivers do not need a referral.**

- **Families and caregivers can connect with their local program** by asking their child’s pediatrician, child care provider, or teacher; calling their state’s department of health or education; or searching online for the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center or Parent Training and Information Center.
- **If a child qualifies for services,** an EI team writes an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) that defines goals for the child and family/caregivers to meet—along with the services and supports that will be provided. Qualification is based on the evaluation of the child’s developmental skills—not income.
- **A child’s progress toward their goal(s) is measured by the IFSP team,** which includes the family and caregivers. This helps determine whether services will continue or change—or, if a child has made sufficient progress, when they can end.

WHY:

A lot happens in the first few years of life. For children who are not meeting their expected milestones, getting help from an SLP early can make a big difference—setting them on a path to academic, social, and life success.