

Handout

Talking about ... Early Intervention

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WHAT IS EARLY INTERVENTION?

Early intervention consists of services for infants and toddlers who are delayed in development or have a diagnosis that puts them at risk for delays. Early intervention services are funded by each state.

WHO QUALIFIES FOR EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICE?

Children between the ages of birth and 36 months may be eligible for early intervention services. To qualify, these infants or toddlers must have delays in one or more of the following areas of development: physical, cognitive, adaptive, communicative, or social and/or emotional development.

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR EARLY INTERVENTION?

Early intervention is designed to improve skills by providing early, appropriate, and intensive treatment during a period when the brain is still developing. Treatment can include speech therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy.

WHERE DOES EARLY INTERVENTION TAKE PLACE?

Treatment for early intervention can take place within the child's home, child care center, preschool, play group, or in other settings familiar to the family.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO TO HELP AT HOME?

Parents are the primary teachers of speech and language for their children. The more parents talk to their child, the faster the child will learn language. Talking to the child while he or she explores his or her environment will increase the child's language skills over time. Parents should use a variety of techniques, such as these:

- Imitating the child's vocalizations
- Modeling words and phrases for the child to repeat. Tell the child "You say ..."
- Responding positively to the child's communication attempts
- Using simple signs and gestures with speech
- Singing songs
- Asking lots of questions
- Repeating what the child says and then expanding on it. Child says, "ball," and parent says, "bounce ball"
- Talking about pictures in a book and, later, reading books.

WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION:

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association: www.asha.org/public

Zero to Three: www.zerotothree.org.

Division of Speech-Language Pathology, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center:
www.cincinnatichildrens.org/speech