

WHAT IS Early Intervention?

Massachusetts Early Intervention (EI) is a program for infants and toddlers (birth to 3 years old) who have developmental delays or are at risk of a developmental delay.

EI services are designed to help support families and caregivers, and to enhance the development and learning of infants and toddlers through individualized, developmentally appropriate activities within the child's and family's everyday life experiences.

Early Intervention provides family-centered services that support the development of eligible children by assisting the child to:

- Develop positive social-emotional skills (building relationships).
- Gain knowledge and skills (learning).
- Use appropriate behaviors to meet their needs (developing independence).

And by helping families to:

- Know their rights.
- Communicate their child's needs.
- Help their children develop and learn.

Where can I learn more about Early Intervention?

Call the Central Directory at 1-800-905-8437, or visit www.massfamilyties.org for a listing of certified Early Intervention programs serving your city or town. Call and speak with a local EI program to make a referral or visit the **Parent Leadership Project** at www.eiplp.org to learn more.



Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Bureau of Family Health and Nutrition
Division of Early Intervention Services

250 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02108

www.mass.gov/dph/earlyintervention

Call: (617) 624-6060



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Who is eligible for EI?

Any Massachusetts family with a child under three years of age may be eligible for EI services if the child:

- Is **not reaching age-appropriate milestones** in one or more areas of development.
- Is **diagnosed** with certain conditions that may result in a developmental delay.
- Has a medical or social history which may put the child **at risk** for a developmental delay.

How is a referral made?

The process is simple. Anyone (a parent, doctor, care giver, teacher or friend) can find a certified Early Intervention program by calling 1-800-905-8437 or visiting the Family TIES website at www.massfamilies.org. Referrals are made directly to a certified program. A prescription or insurance referral from a health care provider is not needed.

What happens after a referral?

An EI team will complete an evaluation to determine eligibility. The evaluation looks at all areas of a child's development as well as information about the child's birth, medical history and family. If the child is eligible, an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is developed in partnership with the family. An IFSP is a working document that outlines the early intervention outcomes and services to be provided with the child, family and other caregivers.

A meeting to write the IFSP occurs within 45 days of when the child was referred to the EI Program. A service coordinator is assigned to ensure that a family's priorities, needs and concerns are addressed and to coordinate collaboration among all EI and community team members.

Who provides EI services?

Services are provided by a team which includes the child's family. EI services may be provided by a developmental specialist, physical therapist, speech – language pathologist, psychologist, occupational therapist, social worker, nurse, and other specialty service providers.

The EI team believes in the importance of establishing relationships and equal partnerships with family members and caregivers so that activities and strategies can occur throughout the day to enhance a child's development.



Where and how are services provided?

Infants and toddlers develop and learn through meaningful everyday experiences and interactions with familiar people in familiar places. This may mean that services are provided at home, in early care and education programs, play groups, or within the family's community. Services work best when families and caregivers participate in home visit activities.

The Early Intervention process from the initial contact through transition out of the program, is collaborative, individualized and reflects the child's and family's priorities, learning styles, culture and community.

Who pays for EI?

Most health insurances cover EI services. There are no co-payments or deductibles or other costs to the family. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health, MassHealth and private health insurance cover EI services.