



from Equip for Equality's Legal Advocacy Program

EFE FACT SHEET – Special Education

EARLY INTERVENTION (birth to three)

Brief Overview of Early Intervention Program in Illinois

Introduction

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA 2004) requires that state agencies which accept federal funds under Part C of the Act provide early intervention services to families of children birth to three who have been diagnosed with a disability or a developmental delay. The Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) administers the early intervention program in Illinois through a system of Service Coordinators known as Child and Family Connections. The EI program is mandated to seek out potential eligible infants and toddlers and to publicize its program to reach as many families as possible with an eligible infant or toddler.

Eligibility

Eligibility for early intervention services is based on developmental delays in one or more of the following areas:

- cognitive development
- physical development, including vision and hearing
- language and speech development;
- psycho-social development
- self-help skills
- diagnosed conditions such as cerebral palsy or Down syndrome
- certain family circumstances that place an infant or toddler at risk of substantial delays

Eligibility for the EI program may also depend on family income and availability of insurance. However, the need for early intervention services affects families from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Referral

Part C of the IDEA requires that parents of a child suspected of having a developmental delay or disability be referred to the EI services system within two working days after a child has been "identified." A child may be identified through referral from a variety of sources, e.g. social or community agencies, child care providers, physician's office, therapists.

Services

Services could include but are not limited to:

- developmental evaluations and assessments
- physical therapy
- speech/language therapy, nutrition services
- psychological services and
- social work services
- transportation to and from services
- parent training

The Early Intervention Program should ensure the following:

- That the Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) is developed to address the individual needs of the infant/toddler;
- That Service Coordinators help families obtain the services identified in the IFSP;
- That families are provided with information and training about their child's disability when needed;
- That services are coordinated, collaborative, culturally sensitive and competent, comprehensive and effective;
- That services are designed to help children reach their fullest potential.

How to receive Early Intervention services:

Illinois Department of Human Services

Public Awareness materials hotline: 1-800-851-6197

<http://www.dhs.state.il.us/ei>

Children's Services Directory

Referral information to EI Service Coordinators statewide: 1-800-323-4769

Attached to this fact sheet is the Early Intervention Resource Guide published by DHS, available on the DHS website.



DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION?

Contact Equip for Equality (all services are free of charge):

800.537.2532 (voice) or 800.610.2779 (TTY)

Contactus@equipforequality.org

www.equipforequality.org

This resource material is intended as a guide for people with disabilities. Nothing written here shall be understood to be legal advice. For specific legal advice, an attorney should be consulted.

Equip for Equality, an independent nonprofit organization, is the Illinois state Protection & Advocacy System whose mission is to advance the human and civil rights of children and adults with disabilities. This publication was made possible by a grant from the Chicago Bar Foundation. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not represent the official views of the Chicago Bar Foundation.