

About Early Intervention

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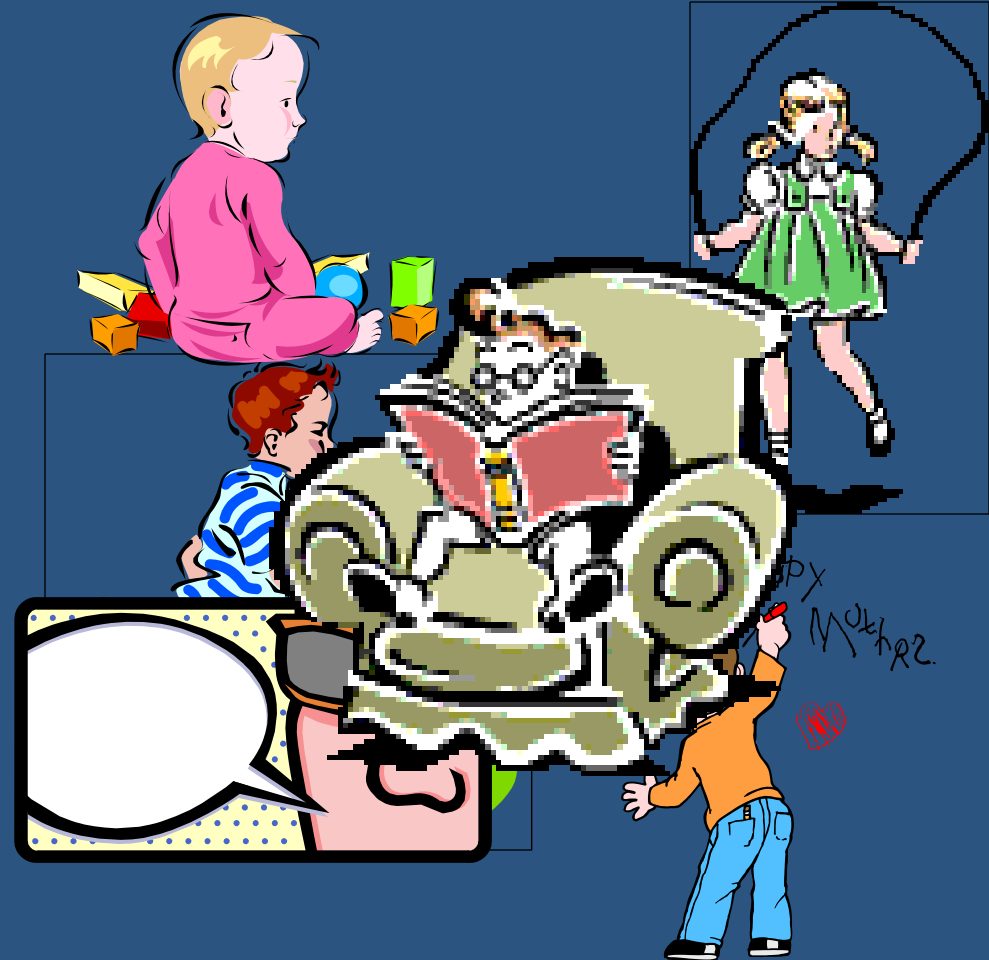
What is it?

The early intervention program is funded through a combination of federal and state money. It is mandated as a part of the federal Special Education law ensuring free, appropriate, public education for all students, regardless of their ability.

The program is divided into two parts, one which provides services for children Birth to 3 years old, and the other for children 3 and Older (up to the time of school enrollment). In South Dakota, services in both programs are provided by the same teachers and therapists.

Services that are available

- Physical therapy - focuses on large muscle groups and movement
- Occupational therapy - focuses on small muscle groups
- Speech/Language therapy - focuses on elements of speech and communication
- Early Childhood Instruction - focuses on cognitive skills, problem solving, and general readiness



Where are services provided?

- Home
- Daycare
- Preschool
- School

Our goal is to make it as easy as possible for your child to receive services.

What do services 'look' like?

- Specific activities are designed to meet your child's needs, abilities, and age
- Activities are dependent on which service provider is working with your child
- Play is an important component of ALL therapy sessions – this is the way children learn best

What is the goal?

The goal of our program is that all children will use their abilities to the fullest potential. This is achieved through:

- opportunities
- experiences
- guidance and instruction

What are the benefits?

- Statistics show that the earlier a child receives intervention, or help, the more successful he will be in the long run.
- Parents can get new ideas for ways of helping the child and family cope with the problems
- Families can get more information on the

What are the benefits?

child's specific issues and needs, and
upcoming conference or workshop
opportunities

- Families can get help accessing programs
such as respite care or other support
services

How do children get placed in the program?

- Referral is received by the school district
- Evaluations are conducted, with parent authorization
- A meeting is held to discuss results and options
- The child begins receiving services, with parent approval

Referral

Anyone who knows a child and has concerns about the growth and development can make a referral

- Parents
- Doctors
- Daycare providers
- Family members

Referral

When a referral is made to the school district, service providers will contact the family. The child will be observed in various environments, and it will be determined if the child should be tested, pending parent permission.

Evaluations

The school service team will determine what areas of a child's development to be assessed. These may include:

- Cognitive development (thinking skills)
- Behavior and Emotional Development
- Motor skills (involving muscles)
- Speech and Language

Evaluations

- Adaptive behavior (how the child is able to get his needs met in his environment)

Evaluations will include standardized tests (which compare the child to other children his age), observations of the child, checklists of activities he is able to do, and parent comments.

Placement Meeting

- Parents, therapists, teachers, and school administration meet
- Evaluation results are discussed and team members make recommendations about if services are recommended
- The team decides what, if any, special education the child will receive
- The team writes desired goals for the child to work on for the current year

Important facts to remember

- Parents have the right to say yes or no to any services or testing the team recommends
- Evaluations by school personnel and services are provided to parents at no cost
- Parents are the child's first teachers!

Important facts to remember

- Therapists and service providers are not here to judge your child, family or parenting skills, but to offer suggestions of new things to try or different ways of doing things

If you have questions...

- Call your local school district
- Talk to your doctor or county health nurse
- Call the South Dakota office of Early Intervention: 800-529-5000

Visit these websites for further information:

Kidsource USD Global Early Intervention Network

Family Village - This site has more links