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Getting Started in Early Intervention

Illinois Action Early Intervention



Illinois EI overview



<https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12&officetype=4&county>



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Find your local CFC (<https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12&officetype=4&county>)

I'm a professional making a referral (<https://eiclearinghouse.org/resources/referral/>)

The first step is to call your local [Child and Family Connections](https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12&officetype=4&county) (CFC) office to request a developmental evaluation. To find your local CFC office, call (800) 843-6154. A physician or a child care professional may have already recommended that you contact the Illinois Early Intervention Program. For more information, visit the tabs below.

What Is Early Intervention?

Early intervention is a statewide program that provides supports and services for families to help their children under age 3 meet [developmental milestones](https://eiclearinghouse.org/getting-started/dev-milestones/). After a child is determined [eligible](https://eiclearinghouse.org/getting-started/eligibility/), a team of specialists (or service providers) will meet with the family and discuss services and supports that can be provided. Services may include speech, developmental, physical, or occupational therapy; audiology services; or nutrition services. A service coordinator will help you during your time in the early intervention system and provide guidance on the transition into the next option(s) for your family.

Your child's brain and body are growing rapidly during the first three years of life. He is learning many new things about the world around him. While all children need love and support to grow and learn, some children need a little extra help. An early intervention team can support your family and help your child reach his potential.

Connecting with Early Intervention

Anyone can [refer](https://eiclearinghouse.org/resources/referral/) a child to early intervention—parents, physicians, other health care providers, child care providers, social service agencies, early learning programs, etc. Once a referral is made, it is up to the family to decide whether they want to participate.

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your local CFC office, call (800) 843-6154.

Families should receive a call back within two business days.

Having an Evaluation

You will meet with a service coordinator to talk about your concerns about your child. You will then meet with service providers to help evaluate your child's development and to determine whether your child is [eligible](https://eiclearinghouse.org/getting-started/eligibility/) for early intervention supports and [services](https://eiclearinghouse.org/getting-started/ei-program-services/).

Develop a Plan

If your child is eligible, you will work with your team to develop a [plan](https://eiclearinghouse.org/einotes/ifsp/) for supports and [services](https://eiclearinghouse.org/getting-started/ei-program-services/), called an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). These services will be provided at a convenient time for your family and in familiar places where your child learns and plays, such as your home, child care center, the park, or the library. You can view a sample IFSP [here](https://blogs.illinois.edu/files/6039/114604/89608.pdf).

The IFSP team will [review your child's progress](https://eiclearinghouse.org/einotes/6month-review/) and services after your child has received services for six months and again after a year. The IFSP team may meet more frequently if needed or upon your request. After a year, if your child is determined to still be eligible for services, the team will develop a new IFSP.

For more information on IFSPs, view our tip sheets [What's in Your IFSP?](https://eiclearinghouse.org/einotes/ifsp/) and [Six-Month Review: An Important Part of the EI Process](https://eiclearinghouse.org/einotes/6month-review/).

Find more information about the early intervention process by reading our [EI basics tip sheets](https://eiclearinghouse.org/series/tipsheets-eibasics/).

Helpful Resources

The Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse regularly creates tip sheets to help families and providers understand the EI process.



- [EI basics](https://eiclearinghouse.org/series/tipsheets-eibasics/) (https://eiclearinghouse.org/series/tipsheets-eibasics/) tip sheets include information to help families navigate their EI experience from assessment to transition and everything in between.
- [Everyday EI](https://eiclearinghouse.org/series/tipsheets-everydayei/) (https://eiclearinghouse.org/series/tipsheets-everydayei/) tip sheets provide fun and easy ideas to help families work on EI outcomes during everyday routines.
- [Child development](https://eiclearinghouse.org/series/tipsheets-childdev/) (https://eiclearinghouse.org/series/tipsheets-childdev/) tip sheets provide information about the development of young children.
- [COVID-19](https://eiclearinghouse.org/series/tipsheets-videovisits/) (https://eiclearinghouse.org/series/tipsheets-videovisits/) tip sheets describe live video visits and how families and providers can work together virtually.

[The Illinois Early Intervention Program: A Guide for Families](https://www.dhs.state.il.us/OneNetLibrary/27897/documents/Brochures/4279R0518.pdf)

(<https://www.dhs.state.il.us/OneNetLibrary/27897/documents/Brochures/4279R0518.pdf>) includes information on the Illinois Early Intervention (EI) Program, why EI services are important, how to find out whether your child is eligible for the EI program, starting and leaving EI services, your legal rights, and questions frequently asked by families.

[A Journey through Early Intervention](https://blogs.illinois.edu/files/6039/114592/169838.pdf) (https://blogs.illinois.edu/files/6039/114592/169838.pdf)

provides families with reflection questions and discussion topics throughout the EI process.



What Is a Developmental Therapist?

A developmental therapist works closely with families and additional members of a child's team, including the service coordinator, to ensure that the services provided are appropriate to a family's needs and desires.



The Role of the Service Coordinator in Early Intervention

A service coordinator works in partnership with the family—from initial referral through transition out of early intervention—to help the family gain access to the early intervention system, identify supports



Who Is on Your Early Intervention Team?

In early intervention (EI), we work as a team to help your child learn and overcome challenges. The most important member of the team is the child's family. Every team includes a service coordinator. The team will look different for



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Your Family Rights



If your child is determined to be eligible



Family Stories

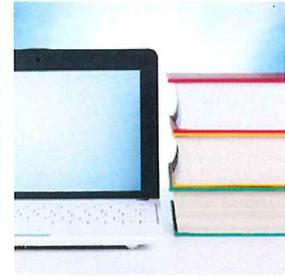
Stories of families whose infant or toddler received early intervention (EI) services.



Illinois Early
Intervention
Clearinghouse



Lending Library

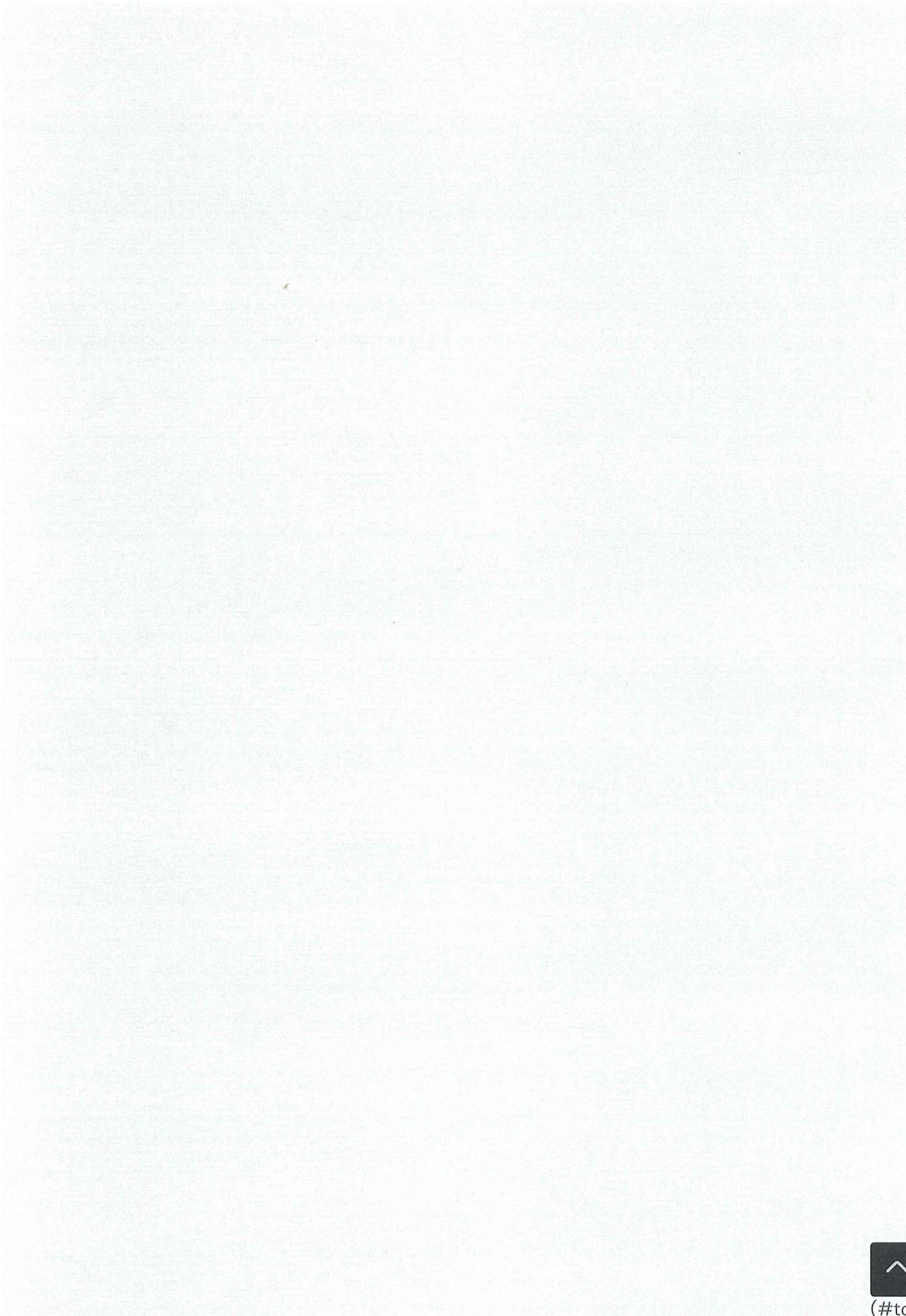


A collection of books, journals, and DVDs related to early childhood parenting

Glossary



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