

Overview of Early Intervention

Official Early Intervention Taskforce Report
Illinois Department of Human Services
Division of Community Health & Prevention
Bureau of Early Intervention

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Overview of Early Intervention

The Part C Early Intervention (EI) Program is a statewide program of evaluation and assessment for infants and toddlers under three years of age and of services for those who have a disability, a 30 percent delay in development in any area, or are at risk of developmental delays. Part C provides an entitlement for all eligible infants and toddlers to receive early intervention services. Services are provided to assist eligible children to develop basic developmental skills. Parents provide most of the care needed to help their children develop, guided by the therapists who serve their children.

The Part C Early Intervention Program in Illinois is federally funded, in small part, through Part C of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). However, the bulk of funding for the EI Program comes from General Revenue funds and from HFS through Medicaid reimbursement. Additional funding comes from billing eligible family's private insurance and charging families who have the ability to pay a participation fee - which is permissible under federal law.

Longitudinal studies conducted in the HighScope Perry Preschool in Ypsilanti Michigan have shown that early intervention produces dramatic net savings over time on the order of more than \$16 in educational, health and social service costs for every dollar spent on the program.

In Illinois, families access the Part C EI Program through one of 25 local Child and Family Connections (CFC) offices where they are assigned a Service Coordinator (sometimes called a Case Manager in other social service programs). The EI Program

provides 16 EI services and other family supports through a variety of individual and agency providers, some not-for-profit and some for-profit, which enroll and sign provider agreements with DHS. The most frequently provided services are speech therapy and developmental therapy.

Illinois' Part C EI Program is advised by a state council called the Illinois Interagency Council on Early Intervention (IICEI), which is mandated by federal law and appointed by the Governor. The IICEI works closely with the Part C EI Program to ensure that all eligible infants/toddlers and their families are receiving appropriate services and supports.