

FAQs Making a Referral to Early Intervention Birth to Three Services

❖ *What is Early Intervention?*

Children, birth to three years of age, with a suspected delay are referred to the early intervention program for their county. In Pierce County the lead agency is Pierce County Developmental Disabilities Division Services. In King County the lead agency is King County Developmental Disabilities Division.*
See below for contact information

❖ *Who is eligible for Early Intervention (EI) services?*

Any child under the age of 36 months, who resides in Washington and has a 25 percent delay* or shows a 1.5 standard deviation below his or her age* in one or more of the following developmental areas:

- Cognitive Development
- Physical development, including vision, hearing, and fine and gross motor skills
- Communication development
- Social or emotional development, and
- Adaptive development

A child may also be eligible if he/she has a physical or mental condition such as Down Syndrome or other congenital condition that has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay.

**The amount of delay is determined by a licensed professional (teacher, speech therapist, psychologist) using standardized assessment tools appropriate for the child's age.*

❖ *Who can refer a child to EI?*

Anyone who has a concern about a child's development may make a referral. PSESD Early Head Start staff are to assist families or caregivers in making a referral when the family or caregiver has concerns, or concerns are identified during on-going screening and assessment. Professionals such as pediatricians, other physicians, social workers, nurses, child care providers, or others who have contact with a child can also make a referral for EI services in collaboration with the family.

❖ *How do I support referral for a child?*

Parents or caregivers may contact an Early Intervention provider directly and speak to an Intake Coordinator. *See attached directory

Each county has a Lead Family Resource Coordinator who can connect with you an early Intervention Provider in your area. In King County contact WithinReach Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588. In Pierce County, the "single point of entry" number is 253-798-3790.

❖ ***What happens when families call?***

They will be asked for basic information, such as their name, address and telephone number, along with the reason for the referral. This is where EHS staff can be especially helpful by reviewing screening and assessment data with the family or caregiver, and helping the family articulate their concerns to the Intake Coordinator. The Family Resource Coordinator (FRC) will provide information about Early Intervention (EI) so the family can choose whether or not they want to continue to pursue an evaluation for Early Intervention

Timeline for Identification and Services for Early Intervention



❖ ***Who will conduct the evaluation of my child's development?***

Evaluations are conducted by at least two properly certified or licensed professionals (therapists, teachers, nurses and other specialists) who have training and experience in the development of infants and toddlers. If the family or caregiver already has recent evaluations that were completed by a properly licensed or certified professional, those results can be considered as part of the evaluation to determine eligibility for Early Intervention. The screening (ASQ and DECA-IT) information and assessment information (TSGOLD) are also important pieces of information to be considered.

❖ ***What is an IFSP and why do I need it?***

An Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is a written plan that is developed by the family, the EI specialists and others important in the child's life. The IFSP will be the roadmap that identifies goals, for the family and child as well as outlining the services needed to make progress toward those agreed upon goals. The family may decline any service and still choose to participate in others listed on the IFSP. The FRC will check the IFSP and progress every 6 months (or sooner) to make sure that the child and family are progressing toward the goals, adjustments may be made as needed.

❖ ***Will I have to pay for EI services?***

Early Intervention services and supports are paid for by various public and private funding sources. No IFSP service can be denied because a family cannot afford it. In King County, parents' participation in payment for services is limited to assigning their insurance to the EI provider so the provider can bill for EI services. Most insurance companies require co-pays and/or deductibles. Co pays and deductibles

cannot be paid for with Washington State Part C funds or with ESD EHS funds. If a family cannot afford their co-pay, the EI agency is still required to offer services outlined on the IFSP. A plan will be made between the agency and the family (i.e. sliding scale, co-pays covered by an "uncompensated care fund" etc.) If the family has a medical coupon for their child ,there is no out of pocket expense for them. For more information see the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers, Parent Financial Responsibility memo (external)."

❖ ***What if parents have a complaint about or do not agree with their child's evaluation or the IFSP services the child receives?***

Parents have rights and protections to resolve disagreements related to the EI services. Those rights are called Procedural Safeguards. A copy of those Procedural Safeguards should have been given to the family when the first IFSP was developed and every time the IFSP is reviewed. If the family cannot locate their copy, a copy can be found at <http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/esit>.

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