

What happens at the time of a referral call?

A service coordinator will obtain basic information about the child and describe the Early Intervention Services and resources available to children and their families. The service coordinators will work with the family to determine whether a multidisciplinary evaluation of the child's developmental levels is needed. This evaluation will focus on specific developmental skills, including cognitive, language, motor, social, emotional, behavioral, and self-help. Evaluation and assessment services are provided at public expense with no cost to families.

What services are provided?

If the child is determined to be eligible following the multidisciplinary evaluation, an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) will be developed for early intervention services. This plan will describe the services that are needed by the child and family and how they will be provided. These services may be provided by public education, public health, or social services.

Early Childhood Intervention services are geared to promote children's healthy development and supporting their families during the early years. These services emphasize developmentally appropriate activities in natural learning environments. Some examples include evaluation, specially designed instruction, service coordination, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language therapy, and assistive technology.

As the child approaches three years of age, the Early Childhood Intervention service coordinator will assist children and families with the transition from infant/toddler services to a preschool program and/or other support services that the child and family may need.

Where and how are services provided?

An Early Intervention team, consisting of early childhood professionals from education, health, and human services, provide these services for the child and family as determined by the needs of the child and family. These services are delivered in natural environments and may include the home, childcare setting, early childhood special education program, or other early childhood education sites. Serving children in natural environments can help them to participate more easily in everyday activities and with peers. The frequency of services is based on the child's individual needs and determined by the team, which is led by the family. Every effort is made to communicate with families in their chosen language, using interpreters when necessary.

Who pays for Early Childhood Intervention?

The Minnesota Departments of Children, Families & Learning (CFL), Health (MDH), and Human Services (DHS) work together with IEICs to provide coordinated interagency services and funding for each eligible child and his or her family. Minnesota Statute specifies that "core early intervention services" are available at no cost

to children and families. These services include: identification and referral, screening, evaluation, assessment, service coordination, special education and related services, and procedural safeguards. (MN Statute 125A.27)

How can a child and family become involved with Early Childhood Intervention?

Just as a primary care physician connects a patient to a specialist, a physician can also give information to a family about the value of earlier intervention services and assist them in making a referral. The process is simple, because anyone—physicians, caregivers, teachers, parents, and friends—can make a referral.

Whom should I contact?

To refer a child for an evaluation or to learn more about Early Childhood Intervention services, contact the IEIC "central point of intake" in the families' county or local school district. This information can be found online at <http://cfl.state.mn.us/ecfi/partc.htm>. Click on "Interagency Early Intervention Committees (IEICs) by Member District & County Agencies". Or, contact Minnesota Children with Special Health Needs (MCSHN) at (651) 215-8956 or (800) 728-5420 in Greater Minnesota for further referral information.