



# First Steps

# #7

## Early Intervention Services

Our children do not come with instructions. Parents Reaching Out provides resources that help families make informed decisions about the care and education of their children. We thank the families who have asked questions and found successful ways to advocate for their child for providing the inspiration for these fact sheets.

*Early intervention services enhance the capacity of families to meet the needs of their children and the child's ability to participate in everyday routines and activities. Early Intervention programs are required to offer some services while helping families to access others.*

*There are 17 services that may be accessed through early intervention programs, families may accept or reject any services that are offered.*



**Assistive Technology:** Assistive technology devices are pieces of equipment, or product systems that are used to increase, the capabilities of eligible children. Assistive technology may include a communication device or seating chair.

**Audiology:** This service provides hearing tests for children and other auditory services including hearing aids or specific training regarding hearing needs.

**Developmental Consultation:** The design of and consultation on the developmentally appropriate activities that families and caregivers can include in a child's daily routine.

**Family Training, Counseling and Home Visiting:** The early intervention agency may provide learning opportunities to assist families in understanding their child's identified needs.

**Medical Services:** Diagnostic or evaluation services by a licensed physician used to determine a child's medical status and how it may affect development.

**Nursing Services:** Provides health assessments, nursing education to prevent health problems and administration of treatments.

**Health Services:** Offer assistance to help a child benefit from other services. It may include: clean and intermittent catheterization, tracheotomy care, tube feeding, changing dressings or colostomy collection bags, and consultation on special health care needs.

**Nutrition Services:** Dietitian/nutritionist evaluates the child's nutritional needs. It may include feeding skills and recommendations for feeding problems or diet.

**Occupational Therapy:** Therapists help children gain skills needed for play and participating in the family's daily activities. It includes designing and providing adaptive devices, as well as addressing sensory and fine motor needs of the child.

**Physical Therapy:** This services is focused on helping families and caregivers enhance the child's movement abilities (including crawling, standing, walking and balance) through therapeutic activities that can be incorporated into the family and child's daily routine.

**Psychological Services:** This may include psychological testing or counseling for children and parents, family counseling, consultation on child development, parent training, and education programs.

**Respite:** This is a flexible, temporary family support service that can give parents a break from the day-to-day care giving of the child. Your respite care provider will assist your child in activities of daily living. You the family schedules respite care, in collaboration with the respite care agency.

**Service Coordination:** These providers assist families through the intake, evaluation and eligibility determination process and facilitate the IFSP process. Service coordinators also offer information about and make referrals to other community resources. They coordinate and ensure the delivery of all services.

**Social Work Services:** Provides individual and family-group counseling for parents and other family members with emphasis on social skill building activities for a child.

**Speech-Language Therapy:** Therapists help families and caregivers enhance the child's understanding of language and develop communication skills that may include speech, sign language and gestures.

**Transportation:** This service provides transportation and related costs that are necessary to enable an eligible child and family to receive early intervention services.

**Vision Services:** These include evaluation and assessment of vision, visual and mobility training, as well as referral to medical and other professional services necessary.

## Here are some ways that will help your family receive the most benefit from early intervention services

- Make sure you are home or make sure that your child's caregiver knows when the early intervention services have been scheduled.
- Arrange for services at times that are good for you and your family.
- Write down appointment dates and times.
- Participate when early intervention services are provided.
- Ask questions!
- Try out the activities and ideas that your early intervention professional shows or describes to you.
- Take a break from early intervention activities – sometimes play can just be play!
- Involve other family members including grandparents, brothers and sisters in early intervention activities.
- Make learning activities fun!
- Find teachable moments in everyday routines such as during shopping trips, mealtime, playtime etc.
- Take time for yourself!



### It is never too early for Early Intervention Services!

Early Intervention is not a medical program and a doctor's order is not necessary to participate in services.

### What if our Early Intervention provider is unable to provide the service that our child needs?

Your service coordinator will make arrangements for and coordinate the services through a different provider.

*For more information call Parents Reaching Out. We offer phone consultations and provide workshops in English or Spanish to communities throughout New Mexico. This publication was developed under a grant from the New Mexico Department of Health Family Infant Toddler program. However, the views here expressed do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Health and should not be assumed to be an endorsement by the New Mexico Department of Health.*