

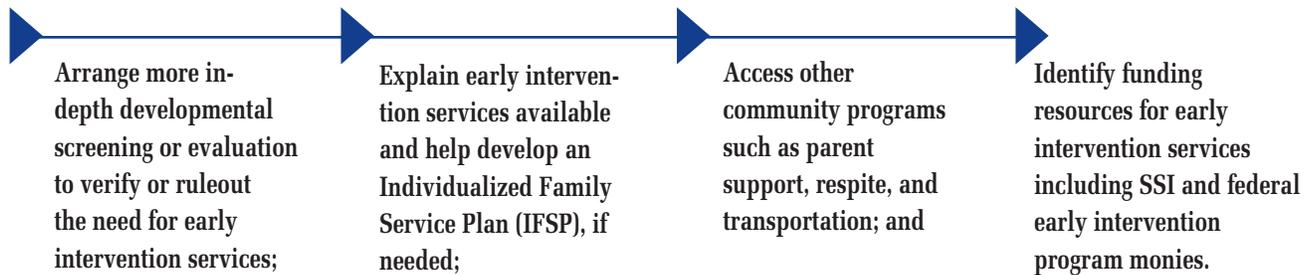


Dear Washington Referral Sources,

Many babies and toddlers with disabilities or delayed development in our state are benefiting from early intervention services. Yet we know that about half of all children with such difficulties are not identified until they reach school age.

As a primary referral source dedicated to the support and services for young children and families, people turn to you for information and advice. *You are in a key position to identify, at the earliest possible age, children with potential developmental delays.*

If you or a family has a concern about a child's development, help is available in Washington. The **Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT)** program coordinates a statewide system of early intervention services and assistance in accessing those services. When you call a **Family Resources Coordinator (FRC)**, they will assist you and families to:



Developmental screening and evaluation and FRC services are provided at no cost to families.

Families continue to provide testimony about the positive impact of intervention and early referral on the lives of their children and families. Here are a few examples of what families are saying about early intervention services:

"Looking back on it, it was hard; but at least our doctor didn't say 'Let's just wait and see.' He didn't put us off. After the evaluation we knew what our son needed. We didn't waste a lot of time just worrying about what to do."

"My Family Resources Coordinator (FRC) really goes the extra mile. She is an amazing information resource. If she does not know what the solution is, she says 'We'll find a way.'"

"The therapists have been great. They have been a major source of support both in terms of giving us information about our child's diagnosis and the emotional support of having a child with a disability."

"Our son will never reach the major developmental milestones – he'll never walk or talk – but he is definitely making progress. Therapy has helped us appreciate his small triumphs and allowed us to simply enjoy him as our son."



Parents' Rights for Referral

Federal and state legislation assert that parents have a right to be referred for early intervention services if there is an established or suspected delay in their child's development. The intent is that every family who might need services has information about the availability of programs and that referrals be made in a timely manner.

Washington requirements for ESIT state that individuals, such as primary referral sources, who are in a position to make early intervention referrals shall:

- ▶ Refer families to an FRC within seven days of identifying a developmental delay or a disability that could lead to a delay, unless a family requests an extension to the timeline or requests that a referral not be made;
- ▶ Explain the services available to families when they accept a referral to an FRC (including screening, evaluation, service coordination, an IFSP, and the potential for special funding);
- ▶ Inform parents that the referral does not commit them to participate in the early intervention program;
- ▶ Maintain written documentation of the parent's permission to refer, the parent's request that a referral not be made, or the parent's request to extend the seven-day referral timeline.

Therefore primary referral sources are asked to:

- ▶ Attend to developmental milestones.
- ▶ Ask parents about their children's development.
- ▶ Respond to parents' concerns.

From a pediatrician's experience:

"Doctors are often worried that talking about a child's development will scare the parent. The opposite is true. Parents are often pleased to be offered a venue to talk about their child's development and relieved to share any concerns they may have.

Parents worry in their hearts, in their guts. Yet many may not bring up their concerns during the well child visit, especially when the doctor seems so busy."

So...

Please Ask, Babies Can't Wait

Additional information about the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers program is available at 360-725-3500 or at www.del.wa.gov/esit

Thank you for referring to early intervention services and for your ongoing commitment to Washington's children and their families.

Please
Ask
Babies Can't
Wait.



Karen Walker, MA.Ed., MBA
ESIT Program Administrator
State of Washington, Department of Early Learning



Elizabeth M. Hyde, Ph.D.
Director
State of Washington, Department of Early Learning



Daniel Lessler, M.D., MHA, FACP
Chief Medical Officer
State of Washington, Health Care Authority

How to contact a Family Resources Coordinator (FRC)

Call the Family Health Hotline at 1-800 322-2588 or TTY 711 for the name of the Family Resources Coordinator in your local area. Families can call the FRC directly or, with the family's permission, you or your office staff can make the call. The FRC can also provide you with brochures and posters about the **Early Support for Infants and Toddlers program** and child development charts for sharing with families or posting in your office.

Also, anyone can call the Family Health Hotline (1-800-322-2588) for local resource and service information, or visit their website at: www.withinreachwa.org