

# Early Intervention Supports and Services: Facts for Families

*Early Intervention (EI) in Pennsylvania consists of coaching supports designed to help families with children who have developmental delays or disabilities. It is a process that promotes collaboration among families, caregivers, EI service personnel/providers and Early Childhood Education (ECE) professionals involved with your child.*

## Early Intervention Guiding Principles

EI programs provide services through coaching supports that are evidence-based and individualized for the child and his or her family, caregiver, and early childhood education (ECE) professionals recognizing young children learn best through everyday experiences and interactions with nurturing people in familiar contexts.



EI programs recognize the critical importance of the family and caregivers as the child's first teachers. You have the greatest influence on what and how your child learns. EI service personnel/providers share information and resources that are known to be effective to support you to help your child learn. They will explain how children learn and how adults can encourage learning through simple interactions, games, and caregiving routines. They will listen to you as you share your priorities and coach you on how to use various intervention strategies that fit into your everyday life. They work with you to support your child's learning.

During coaching, meaningful and functional outcomes are embedded within familiar learning opportunities that exist in the child's typical routines, within the home and community activities or ECE programs.

Young children learn best when they are taught everyday skills like playing, moving, and communicating when those skills are useful and meaningful. For example, Katie "talks" when she calls out to her mom each morning that she is awake, labels her clothes as she gets dressed for childcare, helps her mom pack favorite toys and snacks in the diaper bag, and gets in the car with her sister, Kendra. These everyday routines provide many opportunities to label favorite actions, objects, and emotions. Katie's mom plays "What's that?" or "I see..." games in the car-ride home or while at the park, picking places and objects that are familiar and important for Katie and Kendra. When going to bed at night, Katie and Kendra take turns telling their mom stories or finding pictures in their books. Teaching in everyday routines offers more opportunities for practice than traditional therapy. Katie can talk to her mom, sister, and caregivers or ECE professionals throughout the day. She is also learning more than talking. Teaching and learning in daily routines encourages participation, negotiating, problem solving, exploring, and describing concepts such as colors, numbers, and shapes.



El service personnel/providers and ECE professionals work collaboratively with the family, caregivers and each other to provide culturally responsive, family prioritized, coordinated and flexible coaching supports.



The services and supports identified for your child and family will reflect your unique activities, values, and community participation as well as your priorities and concerns. There are many ways for your family to receive services and supports. Location, frequency, or type of service or support is not based on your child's age or type of disability. The outcomes identified by your family and your child's team will guide the choices of services and supports necessary to accomplish them. Friends, neighbors, play groups, churches, libraries, and other community supports enhance the quality of every family's life.

Natural learning opportunities increase your child's opportunities for engagement, independence, and participation with your family and friends. Peers and family members are included in routines rather than isolating your child in one-to-one activities.

El coaching supports integrate all aspects of child development and learning from first contacts through transitions between and among ECE programs.

Services and supports match your family's priorities and concerns. This means the services and supports will vary from family to family and are flexible to change as priorities and concerns change. Initially, Katie's speech and language was delayed and her first plan focused on increasing her communication skills. As she increased her language, it was noted that Katie was having difficulty with activities such as putting puzzles together, coloring, and coordinating motor skills. El service personnel/providers and ECE professionals work collaboratively with your family, caregivers and each other to provide culturally responsive, family prioritized, coordinated and flexible coaching supports. El service personnel/providers have a thorough understanding of child learning and are able to facilitate the development of a comprehensive plan. Services and supports also change as needed. For example, when Katie first enrolled in El, her El teacher provided weekly home visits. When Katie's mom returned to work and Katie enrolled in Early Head Start (EHS), they planned for the transition to ensure it was positive for Katie and her family. Katie's El teacher and mom began meeting bi-weekly at the center. This allowed the El teacher to problem-solve with Katie's EHS teacher and her mom about routines, strategies and goals, and to develop a coordinated program that addressed all of Katie's needs. Katie later transitioned to Head Start and the El teacher provided coaching to her Head Start teacher while Katie's mom continued to participate through monthly home visits.

The primary role of El service personnel/providers is to coach and support the family members, caregivers and ECE professionals in a child's life.

El services should not complicate your family's life; it should complement your family's life as it supports you and your child. El team members coach and support your family members, caregivers, and ECE professionals to help your child grow and learn throughout the day. As a parent, you know that you and other caregivers or ECE professionals have many more opportunities for teaching and learning during typical routines and activities with your child than a team member will during a scheduled visit. The team will work with you to enhance your child's development.

