

# Principles of Early Intervention in Pennsylvania

*Early Intervention (EI) provides coaching supports to infants/toddlers and preschool age children with disabilities and their caregivers so that they may help their children grow and develop.*



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 service personnel/providers recognize the critical importance of the family and caregivers as the child's first teachers. The consistent adults in a child's life have the greatest influence on learning and development. Just as supports and services are individualized with a variety of instructional strategies used for children based on family priority and child needs, it is also important to individualize coaching for the familiar adults in the child's life.
- EI service personnel/providers coach families and ECE professionals to identify and address family priorities for child learning. Working collaboratively, EI service personnel/providers, ECE professionals and families develop an individualized plan to support children's learning. They identify what is already working to promote the child's learning; identify learning opportunities in the child's everyday life and ways to embed instruction; create additional learning opportunities for the child; and use effective intervention strategies in those learning opportunities.

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.

- EI service personnel/providers engage in conversations with families, caregivers and ECE professionals to identify typical routines and activities that are functional, enjoyable and based on the child and family's interests. Learning is relationship-based and should provide opportunities to practice and build upon previously mastered skills. Peers and family members are active participants in routines rather than isolating the child in one-to-one activities.
- Opportunities are provided for frequent and meaningful practice using readily available materials, the typical routine sequence and natural reinforcers that are motivating and likely to be repeated throughout each day.

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.

- El service personnel/providers have conversations with the family and/or ECE professional about both the formal and informal resources that exist within their family, neighborhood, and greater community. Conversations can include discussion about resources that the family is currently using and those that the family needs. Conversations regarding cultural and linguistical considerations important to the family are essential when reviewing and identifying resources.
- El service personnel/providers recognize that each family's culture, experiences, spiritual beliefs and activities, values and traditions will be different from their own. They seek to understand the family's culture without judgement in order to support them holistically.
- Families, caregivers and ECE professionals are equal partners in the relationship with El service personnel/providers. Mutual trust, respect, honesty and open communication characterize these relationships.

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

- El service personnel/providers have a thorough understanding of how children learn, the interrelationship of skills, and the developmentally appropriate practices that are effective for all children.
- El service personnel/providers share their discipline specific knowledge and expertise with one another, so that children, families, caregivers and ECE professionals can benefit from a variety of disciplines without necessarily meeting face to face with each professional.
- El service personnel/providers plan and support the many transitions that occur in a child and family's life. These may include hospital to home, Infant Toddler El Program to Preschool El Program, El Program to ECE program, El Program to Kindergarten, and exiting when El services are no longer needed.

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 service personnel/providers design supports and services so that family, caregivers and ECE professionals are actively engaged in making decisions and promoting the child's learning and development.
- El service personnel/providers recognize the adults in a child's life have their own preferred learning styles and treat them as unique adult learners with valuable insights, interests, and skills.
- El service personnel/providers use recommended practices for coaching to engage all members of the child's El team.

