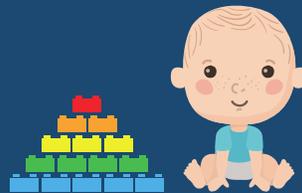


What Is Early Intervention?

EARLY INTERVENTION - PART C (BIRTH TO 3 YEARS OF AGE)

Early Intervention (EI) is a system of services designed to support your child, birth to age 3, with developmental delays or who may be at risk for developmental delays. Early Intervention is focused on helping families help their infants and toddlers learn basic developmental skills that typically develop during the first three years of life. Early Intervention is offered at NO COST to families.



In Wyoming, infants/toddlers (birth to 3 years of age) with a diagnosed hearing loss (unilateral, bilateral, mild, moderate, severe, profound hearing loss) are categorically (automatically) eligible for early intervention services.



Early Intervention is provided through your local child development center in the least restrictive environment (your child's natural environment) – wherever your child spends time. This can include the home, child care center, school setting, a relative's home etc.



What Does Early Intervention Look Like?



Why is Early Intervention So Important?

Language Development

Early Intervention for infants and young children who are deaf or hard of hearing should begin as close to birth or identification as possible – ideally before 6 months of age. For children, language development (spoken or signed) begins the day a child is born.

The Early Intervention program takes advantage of the earliest months of life for optimal language development to make sure the child who has a hearing loss is developing language along with their peers.

Brain Development

Decades of research shows that children's earliest experiences play a critical role in brain development. The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University has summarized this research.¹

- o Neural circuits, which create the foundation for learning, behavior and health, are more flexible or "plastic" during the first three years of life. Over time, they become increasingly difficult to change.
- o High quality Early Intervention services can help a child's development and improve outcomes for children, families, and communities.
- o Intervention is likely to be more effective and less costly when it is provided earlier in life rather than later.

¹National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare.

(2009) Substance-Exposed Infants: State Response to the Problem. <http://www.ncsacw.samhsa.gov/giles/substance-exposed-infants.pdf>

Minimize Developmental Delays

Early Intervention is critical to your child's learning speech and/or language (communication). It is instrumental in helping to minimize the impact of any delays to help your child reach his/her full potential.

Early Intervention services can change a child's developmental path and improve outcomes for children, families, and communities. Families benefit from Early Intervention by being able to better meet their children's needs from an early age and throughout their lives. The first 3 years are vital to your child's lifelong learning ability.

Long Term Success

Hearing loss is invisible. Early Intervention helps to give a child the best tools for their success (these may be only realized/seen as your child ages). You may see the benefits of all the hard work when your child is older.