Mission and Key Principles for Providing Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments

MISSION

Part C early intervention builds upon and provides support and resources to assist family members and caregivers to enhance children's learning and development through everyday learning opportunities.

KEY PRINCIPLES

1. Infants and toddlers learn best through everyday experiences and interactions with familiar people in familiar contexts.
2. All families, with the necessary supports and resources, can enhance their children's learning and development.
3. The primary role of a service provider in early intervention is to work with and support family members and caregivers in children's lives.
4. The early intervention process, from initial contacts through transition, must be dynamic and individualized to reflect the child's and family members' preferences, learning styles and cultural beliefs.
5. IFSP outcomes must be functional and based on children's families' needs and family-identified priorities.
6. The family's priorities, needs and interests are addressed most appropriately by a primary provider who represents and receives team and community support.
7. Interventions with young children and family members must be based on explicit principles, validated practices, best available research, and relevant laws and regulations.

Workgroup on Principles and Pratcies in Natural Environments, OSEP TA Community of Practice: Part C Settings. (2008, March). *Agreed upon mission and key principles for providing early intervention services in natural environments.* Retrieved from http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/topics/families/Finalmissionandprinciples3_11_08.pdf

Developmental Pathways
DEDICATED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Nondiscrimination Policy

As a recipient of Federal financial assistance, Developmental Pathways, Inc. does not exclude, deny benefits to, or otherwise discriminate against any person on the grounds of race, color, national origin, disability, age, sex ,veteran status, sexual identity, genetic information, religion, or creed in admission to, participation in, or receipt of the services and benefits under any of its programs and activities, and in staff and employee assignments to individuals, whether carried out by Developmental Pathways, Inc. directly, through a contractor, or through any other entity with which Developmental Pathways, Inc. arranges to carry out its programs and activities.

This statement is in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (nondiscrimination on the basis of disability), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (nondiscrimination on the basis of age), regulations of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued pursuant to these three statutes at Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations (Parts 80, 84, and 91), and all applicable federal and state laws, rules, or regulations.

Additionally, in accordance with Section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, 42 U.S.C. § 18116, Developmental Pathways, Inc. does not exclude, deny benefits to, or otherwise discriminate against any person on the ground of sex (including gender identity) in admission to, participation in, or receipt of the services and benefits under any of its health programs and activities, and in staff and employee assignments, whether carried out by Developmental Pathways, Inc. directly, through a contractor, or through any other entity with which Developmental Pathways, Inc. arranges to carry out its programs and activities.

In case of questions, please contact:

Provider Name: Developmental Pathways, Inc.
Contact Person/Section 504 Coordinator: Erica Kitzman
Telephone number: (303) 858-2306

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES FOR PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW THIS NOTICE CAREFULLY.

Introduction

Developmental Pathways, Inc. ("DP ") safeguards your protected health information (PHI) as required by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA") and other applicable federal and state law and regulations. This Notice explains how DP uses and discloses your PHI and how you can exercise your rights under HIPAA.

DP Duties

1. Notify You Of DP's Privacy Policies. Federal law requires that DP notify you of its legal duties and privacy policies and procedures with respect to your PHI. This Notice is intended to satisfy that requirement.

2. Use And Disclose Your PHI Only As Described In This Notice. DP will abide by the terms of this Notice as long as it remains in effect. DP will use and disclose your PHI without first obtaining your written authorization only as described in this Notice. If DP obtains your written authorization for a use or disclosure not described in this Notice, you may revoke or modify that authorization at any time by submitting the appropriate form to the Privacy Officer designated on page 5 below. The Privacy Officer will provide you with a copy of the form upon request.

How DP Might Use Or Disclose Your PHI Without Your Authorization For Treatment, Payment Or Health Care Operations

1. Uses And Disclosures For Treatment. DP may use your PHI to provide you with medical treatment or services. We may disclose your PHI to physicians, psychologist and other professional persons providing services or support to you in an emergency situation which precludes obtaining consent .

2. Use For Payment Purposes: DP may use your PHI to prepare bills for services that it has provided to you and to collect payment for those services.

3. Uses And Disclosures For Health Care Operations. DP may use your PHI for agency operations. These uses are necessary to manage DP's operation and to monitor the quality of your care. DP may disclose your PHI to qualified professional personnel of authorized external agencies whose responsibility it is to license, to accredit to monitor, to approve, or to conduct other functions as designated by the Executive Director of the Department.

How DP Might Otherwise Use Or Disclose Your PHI Without Your Authorization

1. Appointment Reminders: We may use your PHI to contact you about an upcoming appointment or to provide you with information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you.

2. Disclosures To Family Members Or Authorized Representatives. DP may disclose your PHI to your parent if you are a minor, to your guardian, or to an individual designated by you, or designated by your parent, if you

are a minor, or by your guardian, if appropriate, to assist you in acquiring or utilizing services or supports from DP to the extent access to confidential is within the scope of the designated person's authority.

3. Disclosures To Business Associates. DP has contracted with one or more third parties (referred to as a business associate) to use and disclose your PHI to perform services for DP. DP will obtain each business associate's written agreement to safeguard your PHI.

4. Uses And Disclosures For Health Oversight Activities. DP may disclose your PHI to qualified professional personnel of community centered boards, regional centers and other service agencies, including boards of directors and Human Rights Committee members to the extent necessary for the acquisition, provision, oversight or referral of services and supports. DP may disclosure your PHI to the Colorado Department of Human Services ("DHS") or its designees as deemed necessary by DHS' Executive Director. DP may disclose your PHI to The Legal Center for People with Disabilities and Older Persons (the "Legal Center"), 455 Sherman St., Suite 130, Denver, CO 80203, as long as that organization serves as the protection and advocacy system for Colorado, when (a) the Legal Center has received a complaint has from you or on your behalf, or (b) if you do not have a legal guardian or if the State of Colorado or the State's designee is your legal guardian.

5. Uses And Disclosures For Judicial And Administrative Proceedings. DP may use or disclose your PHI in connection with court proceedings, such as disclosures of your PHI to a court or to persons authorized by an order of the court, issued after a hearing, notice of which was given to you or your personal representative, where appropriate, and to the custodian of the information.

6. Uses Or Disclosures Required By Law. DP may use or disclose your PHI as required by any statute, regulation, court order or other mandate enforceable in a court of law.

7. Disclosures To HHS. DP may disclose your PHI to the United States Department of Health and Human Services ("HHS"), the government agency responsible for overseeing DP' compliance with federal privacy law and regulations regulating the privacy of PHI.

Your Privacy Rights As A Participant In One Or More Of DP's Programs

You may exercise the rights described below by contacting DP's Privacy Officer at the mailing address or telephone number listed below and requesting a copy of the appropriate form.

1. Right To Access Your PHI. You may request a review or photocopies of your PHI on file with DP by submitting the appropriate form to the Privacy Officer. DP will provide access, or will mail the photocopies to you, within 30 days of your request unless the PHI is not available on-site, in which case DP will provide access or mail the photocopies within 60 days of your request. DP may extend the deadline for access or mailing by up to 30 days. DP will provide you with a written explanation of any denial of your request for access or photocopies. DP may charge you a reasonable, cost-based fee for photocopies or for mailing. If there will be a charge, the Privacy Officer will first contact you to determine

whether you wish to modify or withdraw your request.

2. Right To Amend Your PHI. You may amend your PHI on file with DP by submitting the appropriate request form to the Privacy Officer. DP will respond to your request within 60 days. DP may extend the deadline by up to an additional 30 days. If DP denies your request to amend, DP will provide a written explanation of the denial. You would then have 30 days to submit a written statement explaining your disagreement with the denial. Your statement of disagreement would be included with any future disclosure of the disputed PHI.

3. Right To An Accounting Of Disclosures Of Your PHI. You may request an accounting of DP's disclosures of your PHI by submitting the appropriate form to the Privacy Officer. DP will provide the accounting within 60 days of your request. DP may extend the deadline by up to an additional 30 days. The accounting will exclude the following disclosures: (a) disclosures for "treatment," "payment," or "health care operations," (b) disclosures to you or pursuant to your authorization, (c) disclosures to family members or close friends involved in your care or in payment for your care, (d) disclosures as part of a data use agreement, and (e) incidental disclosures. DP will provide the first accounting during any 12-month period without charge. DP may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee for each additional accounting during the same 12-month period. If there will be a charge, the Privacy Officer will first contact you to determine whether you wish to modify or withdraw your request.

4. Right To Request Additional Restrictions On The Use Or Disclosure Of Your PHI. You may request that DP place restrictions on the use or disclosure or your PHI for "treatment," "payment," or for "health care operations" in addition to the restrictions required by federal law by submitting the appropriate request form to the Privacy Officer. DP will notify you in writing within 30 days of your request whether it will agree to the requested restriction. DP is not required to agree to your request.

5. Right To Request Communications By Alternative Means Or To An Alternative Location. DP will honor your reasonable request to receive PHI by alternative means, or at an alternative location, if you submit the appropriate request form to the Privacy Officer.

6. Right To A Paper Copy Of This Notice. You may request at any time that the Privacy Officer provide you with a paper copy of this Notice.

A Note About Personal/Authorized Representatives

All of the rights described above may be exercised by your personal representative after the personal representative has provided proof of his or her authority to act on your behalf. Proof of authority may be established by (a) designation of an authorized representative; (b) a power of attorney for health care purposes, notarized by a notary public; (b) a court order for appointment as guardian, or (c) any other document which the Privacy Officer, in his or her sole discretion, deems appropriate.

Your Right To File A Complaint

If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated because DP has used or disclosed your PHI in a manner inconsistent with this Notice, because DP has not honored your rights as described in this Notice, or for any other reason, you may file a complaint in one, or both, of the following ways:

1. Internal Complaint: Within 180 days of the date you learned of the conduct, you can submit a complaint using the appropriate complaint form to the Privacy Officer, Developmental Pathways, Inc., 325 Inverness Drive South, Englewood, CO 80112, or call (303) 260-6600 and ask for the Privacy Officer. You can obtain a complaint form from the Privacy Officer.

2. Complaint To HHS: Within 180 days of the date you learned of the conduct, you may submit a complaint by mail to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Hubert H. Humphrey Building, 200 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201.

DP Anti-Retaliation Policy

DP will not retaliate against you for submitting an internal complaint, a complaint to HHS, or for exercising your other rights as described in this Notice or under applicable law.

Whom To Contact For More Information About DP Privacy Policies And Procedures

If you have any questions about this Notice, or about how to exercise any of the rights described in this Notice, you should contact DP's Privacy Officer by mail c/o Developmental Pathways, 325 Inverness Drive South, Englewood, CO 80112-6012, or call (303) 360-6600 and ask for the Privacy Officer.

Revisions To The Privacy Policy And To The Notice

DP may change this Notice or DP's privacy policies and procedures at any time. If the change to DP's privacy policies and procedures would have a material impact on your rights, DP will notify you of the change by promptly mailing (either electronically or by U.S. Postal Service) a revised Notice to you which reflects the change. Any change to DP's privacy policies and procedures, or to the Notice, will apply to your PHI created or received before the revision.

Effective Date Of This Notice: December, 2008.

Early Intervention Colorado

A Family Guide to the Coordinated System of Payments for Early Intervention Services

Each time the Early Intervention (EI) Colorado program gets your consent to provide Early Intervention (EI) services, the program is required under Part C of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to give you a copy of the Family Rights Brochure that explains parental rights to mediation, due process and the State complaint process. In addition, the State is required to provide the following information about the following no-cost protections regarding the coordinated system of payments for EI services:

Entitled services that are provided with state and federal funds and at no cost to you or your insurance…

The EI Colorado program under the Colorado Department of Human Services, provides or purchases the following functions and services at public expense and at no cost to you and your child, as required under the Part C of the IDEA:

- Implementing child identification requirements (helping families know about the EI program);
- Evaluation and assessment, including the functions related to post-referral screening, evaluation, and assessment (looking at all areas of the development of your child and learning about your family's concerns);
- Service coordination services (having someone in your local Community Centered Board (CCB) who helps you understand the EI program and to make sure you are able to fully participate in making decisions for your child's services);
- Administration and coordination of the activities related to the development, review, and evaluation of your child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) (If your child is found eligible for EI services, a plan is developed and your service coordinator will make sure the plan is reviewed with you as needed); and,
- The implementation of the procedural safeguards and other components of the statewide program of EI services (these are family rights that help you know what is happening and why you are an important participant in all decisions and steps).

No family fees…

The EI Colorado program does not charge family fees for EI services. If you wish to contribute to the cost of EI services you may, but there is no state requirement to do so.

If you have <u>private</u> health insurance…

Consistent with Part C of IDEA, the EI program may not use your private insurance for your child to pay for EI services unless you provide parental consent. This includes the use of private insurance if you are dually insured, because it is a requirement that private insurance is used before Medicaid.

Your consent must be obtained:

- In order to disclose your child's personally identifiable information (PII) to the health insurance company to pay for the EI service(s) in the IFSP; and,
- For a child who has a non-qualifying plan as described below, at the start of billing for EI services and any time there is an increase (in how many times you have the service, how often the provider comes, or how long each session is) in the provision of services in your child's IFSP.

You are responsible for any health insurance premiums but the EI Colorado program will pay co-pays and deductibles up to the cost of the EI service(s).

Colorado has two types of private health insurance plans: Qualifying and Non-qualifying:

- ***Qualifying Health Insurance Plans***

  Health insurance carriers who offer Qualifying Health Insurance Plans that are issued or renewed by companies regulated by the Colorado Department of Regulatory Affairs (DORA) are required to make payment for EI services as documented on an IFSP for eligible infants and toddlers. The code "CO-DOI" is printed on the insurance card for Qualifying Health Insurance Plans.

  Qualifying Health Insurance Plans include the following protections for families:

  - No requirement to pay co-payments;
  - No requirement to meet an annual deductible before EI services will be paid for in full; and,
  - EI services are not included in the total annual or lifetime benefit maximum for the child.

- ***Non-qualifying Health Insurance Plans***

  Non-qualifying Health Insurance Plans will have many different restrictions. If you or your child is insured by a Non-qualifying Health Insurance Plan, your service coordinator will assist you to determine whether the services identified on the IFSP can be paid for with insurance.

  When using a Non-qualifying Health Insurance Plan, payment for EI services will be factored into the total annual or lifetime benefit maximum for the child. Also, co-payments and deductibles may apply and may be covered by the EI Colorado program. However, if the co-payment or deductible for a Non-qualifying Health Insurance Plan is more costly to the EI Colorado program than accessing the insurance plan for payment for a service, then other funding sources will be used.

As required under Part C of IDEA, when obtaining your consent or initially using benefits under your or your child's private insurance policy to pay for an EI service, your EI Colorado service coordinator must provide you with a copy of this document that identifies the potential costs that you may incur when your private health insurance is used to pay for EI services. These costs may include long-term costs such as the loss of

benefits because of annual or lifetime health insurance coverage caps under the insurance policy. This means you will receive this document each time your consent is needed.

EI services that are written in your child's IFSP, and to which you have consented, cannot be denied due to your refusal to allow your private insurance to be billed for such services. If you do not agree to have your private insurance billed, the agreed upon EI services on the IFSP will still begin or continue to be provided. You have the right to refuse to allow providers to bill your or your child's private insurance if you are concerned about the potential impact on your private health insurance, such as an increase in premiums or the lifetime cap.

If you have <u>public</u> insurance or benefits (Medicaid or CHP+)…

As a condition of receiving EI services from the EI Colorado program, you are not required to sign up for, or enroll in, the Medicaid or CHP+ program if you and/or your child are not already enrolled in this program.

You are responsible for any public health insurance premiums but the EI Colorado program will pay co-pays and deductibles up to the cost of the EI service(s).

Your written parental consent is required before sharing personally identifiable information (PII) for the purposes of billing Medicaid or CHP+ (PII may include your child's name, your name, address, date of birth, and Medicaid number).

Your written consent is needed to use your or your child's Medicaid or CHP+ to pay for EI services if that use would potentially:

- Decrease available lifetime coverage or any other insured benefit for you or your child under that program;
- Result in you or your child paying for services that would otherwise be covered by the Medicaid or CHP+ program;
- Result in any increase in premiums or discontinuation of Medicaid or CHP+ benefits for you or your child; or,
- Risk loss of eligibility for one of the state Medicaid waivers based on aggregate health-related expenditures (You may not be eligible for a Medicaid waiver if you do not have enough health-related expenses to qualify).

If you do not provide consent to access Medicaid or CHP+ benefits to pay for EI services due to one of the reasons listed above, the EI Colorado program shall still make available EI services documented on your child's IFSP to which you have provided consent (If you do not agree to let EI Colorado use your benefits to pay for services, you will still receive the services you agreed to that are listed on your child's IFSP).

Before using your or your child's Medicaid or CHP+ to pay for EI services on the IFSP, your child's service coordinator will provide this Family Guide document which explains the following important information to make sure you are fully informed about how your information will be shared and how your benefits will be used:

- Your consent must be obtained under confidentiality protections, before the EI provider discloses, for billing purposes, your child's PII to the State public agency responsible for the administration of the State's Medicaid or CHP+ program;
- The no-cost protection provisions in this document and that if you do not provide consent to bill Medicaid or CHP+, the EI Colorado program must still make available those EI services on the IFSP for which you have provided consent;
- That you, as the parent, have the right under confidentiality protections to withdraw your consent to the disclosure of PII to the State public agency responsible for the administration of the State's Medicaid or CHP+ program at any time;
- You will not incur any costs as a result of participating in the Medicaid or CHP+ program (such as co-payments or deductibles, or the required use of private insurance as the primary insurance if covered under Medicaid).
- If private insurance has to be accessed first before billing Medicaid, the EI Colorado program will pay co-pays and deductibles up to the cost of the EI service(s) for you;
- You have the right to refuse to allow providers to bill Medicaid if you are concerned about the potential impact on your private health insurance coverage if you are dually insured; and
- Your consent is required if the level of services increases during the duration of your child's IFSP.

If you do not have health insurance…

Your service coordinator can provide information about resources for public or private health insurance, but you are not required to apply for public or private health insurance in order to receive EI services.

For additional information, contact 1-888-777-4041 or visit www.eicolorado.org

Early Intervention Program
Office of Early Childhood, Division of Community and Family Support
Colorado Department of Human Services
1575 Sherman Street, 1st Floor
Denver, CO 80203

COLORADO
Office of Early Childhood
Division of Community & Family Support

Early Intervention Colorado
for Infants, Toddlers & Families

A Family Guidebook

Supporting Development of Newborns and Infants

Early Intervention Colorado
for Infants, Toddlers & Families

This guidebook and others are available at www.eicolorado.org

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Introduction

This guidebook is provided to you by Early Intervention Colorado, a program for infants and toddlers birth through two years of age who have special developmental needs. If you or someone who cares about your child has concerns about his or her development, Early Intervention Colorado is here to help. You can request a free evaluation at any time to answer questions about your child's development and determine whether your child may benefit from early intervention supports and services. To get connected to your local early intervention program, call 1-888-777-4041 or visit www.eicolorado.org.

If you are already connected to Early Intervention Colorado, the information in this guidebook may be particularly helpful as your family works to develop your child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). To learn more about the IFSP development process as well as to obtain additional information about the early intervention system in Colorado, there are multiple family guidebooks available. You can download these guidebooks at the Early Intervention Colorado website (www.eicolorado.org) or you can request pre-printed copies of the guidebooks by contacting the Early Intervention Colorado program in your community (1-888-777-4041).

The purpose of this guidebook is to help you understand how babies grow and how important you are in helping your baby's development. The information in this guidebook can be used for all babies, including those who are in a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU).

The Building Blocks of Infant Development

In the months following the birth of your baby, you will see amazing changes happen right before your eyes. You will see more skills develop during the first three years than at any other time in your baby's life. Even if your baby was born early or with medical concerns, you will see how much he wants to learn about the world when he looks at, listens to, and touches you and things around him. He will also begin to tell you what he needs through his activity, will show delight getting to know you, and will begin to get around on his own.

Many of these skills will develop over the first year, when babies are working hard at laying the important building blocks for later development. Building blocks for newborns and young BABIES include becoming steady and organized in their:

- **B**ody function organization
- **A**wake and sleep times
- **B**ody movement
- **I**nteractions with people
- **E**ating
- **S**elf soothing

You play the most important role in helping your baby to have a solid and secure start. Your baby will tell you both what is easy and what is hard for him as he tries to handle each developmental building block. You can help him become steady in his growth by understanding how he communicates with you and then providing what he needs.

Body Function Organization

A young baby works on keeping his breathing, skin color, and temperature steady when he is touched and held. Even when sound, light, or activity levels around him change, he is able to keep his body steady. Other signs of organization are:

- Having regular breathing and a regular heart rate
- Digesting food
- Urinating and defecating

During pregnancy the mother's body controls all of her baby's body functions. After the baby is born, those functions need time to adjust and become steady. If your baby started out in a hospital NICU (a special nursery for infants born early or who need extra medical care), medicine and machines may have kept these body functions regular. It takes weeks and sometimes months for babies to keep those body functions steady, especially when they are born early or have medical complications.

Many babies are sensitive to loud sounds, bright lights, being handled, or activity around them. You may see these babies react by a change in their breathing or skin color. Gagging, hiccoughing, or bowel movement straining might also show that babies are sensitive to what happens around them.

Here are some examples of how you might expect a typical infant to show body function organization:

- Keeps a stable pink skin color except when crying
- Breathes evenly, regularly, and without too much effort (about 40–60 times a minute)
- Does not have long pauses (more than 10–15 seconds) between breaths
- Has several wet diapers every day
- Has a dirty diaper at least once a day
- Recovers quickly after getting the hiccoughs

When babies have steady body functions, it provides solid building blocks for:

- Adjusting to new experiences
- Being with sisters and brothers
- Living in a house with a busy family
- Being touched, moved, and handled
- Adjusting to change
- Listening, looking, and following

Awake and Sleep Times

Being awake to look at parents' faces, listen to voices, and take in the world are parts of baby activity that help build the foundation for later learning. Throughout the first year, a baby's sleeping and waking times are still developing, and she may not have predictable times, or cycles, when she is awake and asleep. Sleeping for longer times and sleeping through the night also take time to mature and may take a few weeks to many months to become regular.

Medical complications in the newborn period and early birth can further disrupt the development of regular sleep cycles. Babies may not sleep through the night until they are well into their first year, and when they do sleep it may be for only short periods of time. For these babies, it can be hard work to wake up and look at people's faces and listen to their voices, especially when there is a lot going on around them. Babies might be overwhelmed with too much to look at and listen to and may instead close their eyes and stay asleep, turn away, or become fussy.

Here are some examples of how you might expect a typical baby to manage sleeping and awakening:

- Has times when you can count on her being awake and times when she will sleep
- Sleeps 3–4 hours at a time, especially at night
- Wakes up gradually, not by crying suddenly
- When she cries, can be helped to wake up with some support like talking to her or picking her up
- Goes to sleep on her own when she is sleepy and can be put into her bed and stay asleep
- Wakes up when it is time to eat
- Wakes up to sudden noises but is able to "tune out" or ignore other sounds that happen over and over

When babies have steady waking and sleeping patterns, it provides solid building blocks for:

- Sleeping through the night
- Having stable sleep cycles, which means having sleeping and waking times that are similar day in and day out
- Storing energy for play
- Looking and listening
- Paying attention
- Learning about the world
- Being able to pay attention to important things in the environment and ignore things that aren't as important
- Being a social partner with a caregiver

Babies work hard in the first months after birth to sleep, wake up, and stay awake both at the same time and for the same amount of time. They manage to go from drowsiness to light sleep and deep sleep; they also manage to wake up and become alert, although they may be fussy at first. Eventually, they do all of this smoothly. They show that their sleeping and waking times are maturing by waking up for eating as well as by staying asleep even when it is noisy. When they are awake they begin to learn by looking at their parents' and other people's faces, listening to voices, and taking in the world.

Remember, when babies are put down for sleep, they need to be on their backs, not on their tummies even if that's how they slept in the hospital.

Other body movements you might have heard about that babies do are called reflexes. Reflexes are responses of the baby when they are touched or stroked on a part of their body. For example, when the baby's cheek is touched or stroked, the baby's mouth moves in that direction. Another example is when either the palm of the hand or under the toes is touched, the baby will grasp with their fingers or toes. There are other terms or definitions you may have heard that describe movement. Tone is a word that refers to the body's being either limp or floppy, stiff or relaxed. Words like "**hypotonic**" (limp) or "**hypertonic**" (stiff) are sometimes used to describe a baby's tone. Posture is another term used to talk about body movement. Posture is how the baby's body is when at rest and when handled. Words like "**flexed**" (bent) or "**extended**" (stretched out) are sometimes used to describe a baby's posture. Sometimes babies also have movements that are described as tremors, startles, and twitches. Tremors are quick repeating movements and can be seen in the face, tongue, arms, hands, legs, or feet. Twitches are usually just one or two sudden fast movements of each of the body parts, as well as the body. Startles are sudden whole body responses that typically occur with handling or sound but can sometimes happen without any clear reason.

Body Movement

Babies come out of their mother's body, where they were surrounded by fluids, into a world that takes some time to get used to. Over time, babies gradually get better at moving smoothly and without too many supports like being swaddled in a blanket. They become better at snuggling their bodies into the bodies of their parents and caregivers and adjusting themselves to be comfortable.

Babies who are born early, or who spend their first days, weeks, or months in a hospital may move differently or get themselves into body positions that are different from those of typical babies. Sometimes this happens because these babies have not been carried or held as much as babies who were born on time and went home right away. They may have been in bed for long periods of time, or may have had medicines or treatments that affect their movement. These babies may also be especially sensitive to touch and to being moved.

Here are some examples of how you might expect a typical infant to move:

- Stays in a softly bent position most of the time
- Brings his hands together in front of his body
- Keeps his arms and legs tucked into his body most of the time
- Has less jerky movements and more smooth movements
- Begins to reach toward caregivers
- Touches his own head, body, hands, and arms—later feet and legs
- Molds or snuggles into a caregiver's body when held
- Is able to move both sides of his body equally well

When babies have steady body movements, it provides solid building blocks for:

- Snuggling up to mom and dad and other caregivers
- Holding their head steady
- Reaching for parents' faces and then later for objects
- Rolling over
- Sitting

Interactions with People

Being with people is a basic building block for social and emotional development and starts when a baby begins learning her mother's voice and movement patterns before being born. Even the mother's smell and taste of skin and breast milk are known to the baby and help lay a foundation for early attachment. Babies come ready at birth to listen to their parents' voices and look at their faces. They can even imitate their parents' frowns and smiles as if they were having a conversation. Early and regular close and private times between a mother and her baby are important. Through intimate experiences, babies learn to trust that their parents will protect, care for, and love them.

Babies born with medical and developmental concerns may be so sick and not developed enough that they have few good times for interacting with their parents. Their parents, in turn, may not know how to talk to, touch, and hold their baby or feel comfortable doing so. At first, simple touching, holding, and providing mother's smells and tastes of breast milk can help an infant begin to interact. Later, when the baby opens her eyes and can stay awake, her parents can help her build skills and trust by just looking at her quietly. For quite a while after birth some babies are easily overwhelmed by sound and light or when they are moved. In these cases, caregivers need to match their interactions to the baby's energy level, how tired or awake they are, and need for "time-outs."

Here are some examples of how you might expect a typical baby to interact:

- Becomes alert for short periods of time
- Turns her head toward the sound of her parents' voices
- Follows her parents' faces from side to side with eyes and then head
- Changes her facial expression during interactions
- Decreases her arm, leg, and body movement when her parent comes close and talks softly
- Begins to smile at her parents' faces at about 6–8 weeks after due date
- Starts making sounds in her throat and then with her mouth
- Copies facial expressions
- Starts simple turn taking by "talking" to caregivers and then waiting for the caregivers to respond

When babies have steady interactions, it provides solid building blocks for:

- Looking and listening to people
- Paying attention
- Finding sounds and voices by turning their head or following a caregiver with their eyes
- Tracking or following faces and toys with their head and eyes
- Learning cause and effect
- Trusting in people
- Reacting to things that look or sound different from what they expected
- Learning object permanence—that things that disappear from sight still exist
- Having stranger anxiety—they notice the difference between people who take care of them all the time and people they don't know (strangers) and may get upset when strangers try to hold them
- Communicating
- Feeling secure and comfortable
- Developing language

Credit: Joy V. Browne, UCDHSC

Eating

Eating is one of the most complex skills that a baby must master. It develops during the first few weeks and months after birth and requires that babies not only wake up and stay awake but also get milk from the breast or bottle to their tummy (sucking and swallowing) while continuing to breathe. They must also handle being moved and held while interacting with the person who feeds them. When a baby is fed, all of his senses are stimulated in an organized way. Taste, smell, touch, hearing, and vision are all important for successful eating. Feeding also provides a time for the baby to feel close to the person feeding him while his stomach is getting full. That is why it is important for eating times to be enjoyable and predictable.

How feedings go early on may affect how feedings go in the future. Babies who begin their lives in the hospital sometimes don't have typical pleasurable eating experiences. They might have been fed before they were able to manage sucking, swallowing, and breathing, making the eating experience feel overwhelming. Many have had painful things happen to their faces which make them try to avoid anything coming near their mouths. Also, they may have had medical conditions that made eating a hurtful rather than a nurturing experience. Many of the babies who are born early or who have medical complications at birth struggle to develop pleasurable feeding and go home from the hospital still having eating difficulties.

Here are some examples of how you might expect a typical baby to manage feeding:

- Wakes up to eat at regular times
- Turns head toward a bottle or breast touching his face, opens his mouth, and grasps the nipple
- Shows excitement before eating begins and becomes less excited as he becomes satisfied
- Has steady breathing and color during eating times
- Grasps and explores with his hands while eating
- Has a steady pattern of sucking, swallowing, and breathing while eating
- Looks at his caregiver's face while eating, especially as the feeding progresses into a relaxed interaction
- Becomes relaxed as his tummy fills and may drift off to sleep

When babies have steady early eating experiences, it provides solid building blocks for:

- Growing and gaining weight
- Feeling secure, satisfied, and nurtured
- Eating other foods like strained foods, soft solids when he is older
- Using a spoon and drinking from a cup and sipping from a straw
- Feeding himself
- Having table manners
- Having social interactions while eating

Eating is complex and might help us understand how the baby is developing. Babies gradually develop more sophisticated eating skills over time, but it takes a sensitive caregiver to help them, especially if they were born early or had medical complications around the time of their birth.

Self Soothing

Self soothing is the ability of babies to calm themselves down with less and less help from their caregivers. Other words for this are self regulation. At first, babies need help from their caregiver to both calm down and wake up. Some also need their parents to protect them from loud sounds, bright lights, too much handling, and other activities that overwhelm them. Over time most babies become better able to manage all of this stimulation and soothe themselves. Babies who can calm themselves can also better manage stress when they are uncomfortable, which helps them become steady. Babies show that they are self soothing in many ways, for example when they suck on their hand, brace a foot on the side of the bed, or grasp a blanket.

Babies who are born early or have medical complications at birth may be more sensitive to the environment and may react in many ways. For instance they may become fussy or withdraw. For very sensitive infants, even looking at people's faces and listening to their voices may cause them to look away, change their breathing, go limp, or extend their arms and legs. When babies become overwhelmed, they need their parents or caregivers to step in and help them with their regulation. Many times it will be hard even for caregivers to soothe them. Gradually, over time, caregivers need to help a baby learn to become calm using her own self soothing skills.

Here are some examples of how you might expect a typical infant to self soothe:

- Calms when talked to or given a pacifier
- Brings her hands to her face, head, or mouth
- Braces her feet on the bed, bedding, or the caregiver's hands
- Looks at her parent's face to help herself calm down
- Looks away from faces or objects that are too overwhelming
- Settles herself to sleep on her own when put into her bed

When babies have become good at self soothing, it provides solid building blocks for:

- Looking and listening
- Becoming emotionally steady
- Coping with stressful events and places
- Controlling their own behavior
- Sitting still
- Paying attention
- Learning

Credit: Joy V. Browne, UCDHSC

In order for a baby to be available for learning about her parents, family, and world, she needs to begin to learn to calm herself and be alert for interactions that are typical for infants. The ability to signal what she needs, like being hungry, wet or sleepy, and gradually calming down from crying or fussing, begins to lay the building blocks for adjusting to many situations, places, and people. Caregivers who recognize when their baby is becoming overwhelmed, and know how to begin to help them to use their self soothing skills, can lead their infants to learning to manage the world around them.

What Parents and Caregivers Do and How Early Relationships Develop (PreSTEPS)

- **Pre**dictability and Continuity
- **S**upport of Self Soothing
- **T**iming and Pacing
- **E**nvironmental Support
- Supportive **P**ositioning, Handling, and Movement
- **S**leeping, Awake Time, and Social Relationships

Babies develop best when they are nurtured by their parents, family members, and close friends. Having a close relationship with your baby means that you are aware of her needs and can respond to them. Each time you are with your baby, you pay attention to her and respond to her special signals. Her behavior gives you clues to how you can change the environment, slow things down or speed things up (change your rhythm), or give her different amounts of support. You also are flexible in how you respond since different things may work at different times. When you respond to your baby each time she needs you, it lets her know that you are always there to support her development. Parents sometimes worry that if they respond to their baby each time she cries or fusses it might spoil her but that's not true. Babies count on the adults who take care of them to respond each and every time. Responding to babies, holding them a lot, and paying close attention to them does not spoil them—instead, it helps them grow up trusting others to help them become better at soothing themselves.

Through daily contact with the same close circle of caregivers, babies learn to trust others. They also learn what to expect next, how people respond when they signal that they need something, and how good they are at getting their needs met. Over the first few weeks and months after birth you will respond to your baby thousands of times. The interaction you have with your baby will include paying attention to her and responding to her signals. This process will help create the special and highly important relationship you have with your baby.

You can show your baby that you are there to respond to her unique needs in many ways. PreSTEPS stands for the ways that parents and close caregivers help babies and include: Predictability and Continuity (Pre), Support of Self-Soothing (S), Timing and Pacing (T), Environmental Support (E), Positioning, Handling, Supportive Movement (P), and Sleeping, Awake Time and Social Relationships (S). Thinking about PreSTEPS will help remind you of the things you can do each day to support your baby's development.

Predictability and Continuity

Predictability and Continuity describes all of the ways that you keep things the same for your baby and how you create routines that help your baby develop a sense of trust in others. Babies develop best when they have a world that is safe, organized, and consistent. When you create such an environment you teach your baby about what happens next, what to expect, and how to respond to what happens around them.

Things that you can do to create predictability and continuity:

- Prepare your baby for what will happen next by using your voice, your touch, and the way you move. You might tell her with words or use a familiar signal—for example holding the pacifier up for her to see before giving it to her.
- Before you start to do something that is new for your baby you might touch her gently to let her know about the change or simply that you are there.
- Having the same things happen at the same time of day and in the same place also creates a predictable and safe environment for babies. For example, feeding your baby in the same chair, in the same room, at the same times each day helps her know what to expect so that she feels safe and comfortable.
- When you do the same things in the same way over and over again, your baby learns to trust that you will come when she needs you and that you will take care of the things that she needs.
- Letting other people know how to take care of your baby and encouraging them to do it the way you do also helps keep things familiar for your baby.

Dear Family:

Thank you for taking such good care of me. You let me know that something will happen by telling me about it or touching me gently before you start. Even though I'm little, having things happen at the same time each day helps me learn what will happen next. I like my routines and the schedule you have for me. You also make sure that the same few people are with me almost every day. You know what I like and what I don't like, and you tell my likes and dislikes to other people who take care of me and what I might to do in different situations. I like it when everyone who takes care of me does things in the same way.

Dear Family:

Thank you for helping me learn how to keep myself steady. You tell me and other people around me all about the things that I do to keep myself calm. You give me extra support during times when I'm tired or feeling over-whelmed. And you always know what position to put me in to help me use my own skills to stay calm and steady. I love how you offer me your own body, voice, and face so that I know I can do it by myself when I listen to you or look at you and feel the support of your body.

Credit: Joy V. Browne, UCDHSC

Support of Self Soothing

Support of Self Soothing describes how you would help a baby keep himself steady and learn how to calm himself and quiet down, even after being upset. When you help your baby stay calm and steady, he can pay attention to the world around him, learn, and interact with people. At first babies need grown-ups to help them calm down. Eventually, they learn how to calm with less help and how to keep themselves steady.

Things that you can do to support self soothing in your baby:

- Notice the things that your baby already does to keep himself calm and steady. For example, he might be getting his fingers to his mouth, grasping your finger, or looking at your face.
- Think about how good your baby is at keeping himself self calm and steady.
- Know how your baby tries to keep himself calm and steady in situations that are different or overwhelming for him, especially when he is tired.
- Put your baby in positions that will help him to use his own skills to stay calm and steady. For example, swaddle him in blankets with his hands near his face so that he can get his hands to his mouth, or lay him on your lap so that he can push against your body with his feet.
- Use your body, bedding, or other supports to help your baby have successful efforts at calming himself. For example, offer your finger or blanket for him to grasp or give him a pacifier to suck on.
- Use your body, face, and voice to help your baby stay calm and steady. For example, talk softly so that he can hear your voice, or let him look at your face to help him calm down.

Timing and Pacing

Timing and Pacing describes how you pay attention to your baby's reactions and give her a chance to respond to what's happening around her. When the timing of your actions matches what your baby needs, you help to keep your baby's body functions, movement, sleep patterns, and interactions steady. You also help your baby feel more in control when you let her make a response to something that happens around her, notice her response, and then you decide what to do next based on her signals. Your baby has more energy to be involved in what is happening to her when these things happen during awake time. For babies with special health care needs, having too many things happen at once or having things happen when babies aren't expecting them can be especially overwhelming.

Things that you can do to time and pace interactions with your baby:

- Notice how your baby reacts in different situations, like going to the grocery store or being in a noisy room, and see when your baby needs a break. For example, your baby may let you know that she needs a break when her breathing or movements become less steady, or when her color changes. She may also need a break when she yawns, hiccoughs, fusses, cries, looks away, or suddenly falls asleep.
- Do things when your baby is ready for them to be done, like feeding your baby only when she is fully awake, or letting her sleep even if it is her usual bath time.
- Slow things down if your baby shows you that she is having a hard time, for example, by breathing harder, looking away, starting to fuss—or go a little faster if your baby is ready for it. For example, if she looks away when you talk to her, stop talking until she looks back at your face, or if she starts to look at you, talk softly to see how she responds.
- Give your baby a chance to respond to the changes you make before making other changes. For example, let her breathing even out and become more steady after a diaper change before picking her up, or pause a feeding if she starts to go limp.

Dear Family:

Thank you for being there for me. You interact with me when I am fully awake and ready to play. When we are together, you watch me carefully and give me a chance to respond to you before doing something else. You pay attention to how I act and slow things down when I get overwhelmed. You give me a chance to catch my breath. If I don't need to have something done right away, you let me sleep when I'm tired and wait to do it until I wake up. You also figure out when the best times are to do things like eating, playing, and taking baths. When you are getting ready to leave me, you do it slowly and carefully so that I stay steady and calm. And even when you are finished with what you need to do, you stay with me until you are sure that I am ready for whatever is next.

Dear Family:

Thank you for creating an environment that is dim, quiet, and soothing, and not busy for me to rest in. You always make changes when I need you to, like when a bright light is shining at my face or when the television is too loud. When I am awake and ready to play, you give me wonderful things to look at. I especially love looking at your faces. If I am sleepy, you quiet yourself down and let me get some rest. You also notice and help other people notice how I am affected by things around me. And, you try really hard not to take me around to too many busy places or be cared for by too many other people.

Environmental Support

Environmental Support describes how a baby's surroundings can affect him whether he is sleeping, playing, or interacting with people, or during any other activity. When you pay attention to how sound, light, and activity affect your baby, you can tell what kinds of situations your baby will do best in. You have probably noticed that your baby likes quiet, soothing environments. Depending on how the surroundings affect your baby, you can make changes to help keep your baby steady and safe.

Things that you can do to provide environmental support for your baby:

- Notice how your baby responds to things around him. He may react to loud noises, bright light, or get overwhelmed with too much activity around him. You might notice that he startles, pauses in his breathing, becomes fussy or goes to sleep when the environment is too overwhelming for him.
- Notice how your baby responds when you make changes to his surroundings. Your baby may open his eyes if you dim the lights or he may eat really well when you find a quieter place to feed him.
- Prepare ahead of time—get things ready for the activities that you have planned so that you and your baby have everything that you need nearby.
- When your baby shows signs of being overwhelmed, help create a calm and soothing environment by decreasing noise, light, and activity levels.
- Going to loud, bright or very "busy" places like grocery stores or amusement parks might be too much for your baby to manage. Think about how he might be cared for at home by a familiar caregiver when these trips are planned.

Supportive Positioning, Handling, and Movement

Supportive Positioning, Handling, and Movement helps caregivers understand how babies respond to being touched and having their bodies moved around. When you know how your baby likes to be touched, you can make changes that help support her development of steady body movement. When babies are moved, they can sometimes become unsteady. They might change the way they breathe, wake up or fall asleep suddenly, or react with stiffness or limpness. Providing your baby with support during movement or touch helps keep your baby steady in many of those basic building block areas.

Things that you do to support positioning, handling, and movement for your baby:

- Keep your baby in a tucked, softly bent position with her arms and legs close to her body, especially when she is being moved and when you are settling her in.
- Move your baby when she shows that she is steady and ready to be moved. Move her slowly and give her a chance to react to the movement before continuing.
- Take turns with your baby, wait for her response and support her to stay steady while you are moving or touching her.
- Use blankets or your body to help keep your baby in a softly bent position. Before your baby goes to sleep, remove any blankets, toys, or other objects from her bed*.
- Be sure to use an approved car seat that is right for your baby's size. Place the car seat in the back seat of your car when taking your baby out for a ride and be sure to follow the manufacturer's directions for installing and using the carseat. Ask your doctor or home healthcare provider if you have questions about how to transport your baby.
- When your baby is awake, offer a variety of positions. For example, place her in your arms, up on your shoulder, or on her back, sides, or tummy. Being in a different position promotes body movement and posture development.

***Be sure that when you put your baby down for naps or at night that you position her on her back for sleep.**

Credit: Joy V. Browne, UCDHSC

Dear Family:

I love when you hold and touch me. Your gentle hands and your supportive body help me feel safe and steady. When you keep me tucked in I feel really cozy. You take the time to move me slowly and carefully, moving my head and my body at the same time and using your own body to support me. Whether you hold me up against your skin or wrap me in a blanket and hold me close, your touch means so much to me. You wait for me to let you know how things feel before going on. And when you can't hold me anymore, you tuck me in so that my body feels really comfortable. When you put me down to sleep you make sure that I'm on my back so that I'm safe and can sleep soundly. You also make sure that I'm safely tucked in my car seat when we go out for a ride.

Dear Family:

I love opening my eyes and seeing your smiling faces looking at me. Thank you for noticing when I am awake and being ready to play with me. You give me breaks when I need them and don't do too many things at once so that I don't get overwhelmed. I like it that you protect my sleep and wait until I'm awake to do things like changing my diaper. When I am awake, you talk to me, smile, laugh, and play. If I start getting upset, you let me know everything is going to be okay and help me get calm again.

Sleeping, Awake Time, and Social Relationships

Sleeping, Awake Time, and Social Relationships describes how and when babies are available to interact with their environment. Babies learn by interacting with people and the world around them. For weeks after they are born they are still developing good sleep habits and smooth transitions from sleep to waking. How do you know when your baby is ready to play? Ready to sleep? What happens when your baby looks at you and smiles, or makes little noises and responds when you make them too? What signals does your baby use to tell you that he isn't ready for interaction? All of these questions have to do with your baby's daily cycles including when he wakes up, when he sleeps, how much energy he has for interacting with people, and how he learns by looking and listening.

Things that you do to support your baby's sleep and awake times and encourage interacting with people:

- Notice if your baby is asleep or awake, tired or ready to play.
- Notice how your baby's behavior changes between asleep and awake. Is it gradual or very sudden? Does it take your baby a long time to wake up? Does he wake up in time for important activities like eating? When you know your baby's patterns and routines, you can find the right time to interact with your baby.
- Provide a quiet, dimly lit space for your baby to sleep in. Keep noise and activity levels down.
- Interact with your baby when he is awake and comfortable, including doing things like changing his diaper and giving him a bath.
- Give your baby things to look at and listen to—the best thing for your baby to see and hear is your face and voice.
- Be patient with how long it takes for your baby's sleep and awake times to become predictable. Babies can take weeks and months to sleep through the night or have longer periods of awake times for play, especially if they were born early or had lots of medical complications.

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Credit: Joy V. Browne, UCDHSC

Resources for Caregivers

Books/Booklets

- *Early Arrivals* by ZERO TO THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and their Families
- *The Magic of Everyday Moments* by ZERO TO THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and their Families
- *Your Premature Baby and Child* by Amy Tracy and Dianne Maroney
- *Parenting Your Premature Baby and Child: The Emotional Journey* by Deborah Davis and Mara Tesler Stein
- *The Scientist in the Crib* by Allison Gopnik and Andrew Meltzoff
- *Touchpoints* by Berry Brazelton

Web Sites

- Early Intervention Colorado
  http://www.eicolorado.org
- *Getting to Know Your Baby* by Kathleen VandenBerg, Joy Browne, Linda Perez, and Amanda Newstetter. Available at
  http://specialstart.ucsf.edu/sstp/download/getting_to_know.pdf
- March of Dimes
  http://www.marchofdimes.com
- National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center
  http://www.nectac.org
- Zero to Three
  http://www.zerotothree.org

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Early Intervention Colorado
for Infants, Toddlers & Families

For more information about
Colorado's early intervention system, call

1-888-777-4041

or visit

www.eicolorado.org

Colorado Department of Human Services
people who help people

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Family Guidebook I

Referral and Eligibility for Colorado Early Intervention Services

Second Edition

Early Intervention Colorado
for Infants, Toddlers & Families

This guidebook and others are available at www.eicolorado.org

Dear Family,

Since 1964, Colorado has been helping families and their children with developmental delays and disabilities. Through the years, the Early Intervention (EI) Colorado program has guided families along the way, in order to support infants and toddlers, who need extra help developing and learning to reach their fullest potential.

This guidebook is the first of three family guidebooks and explains the referral and eligibility determination process. If your child is eligible, you will receive other guidebooks that describe the planning process, help your family determine what services may be needed and provide information about transitioning out of the EI Colorado program no later than your child's third birthday.

You are the most important person in your child's life. We encourage you and your family to participate in each step of the process. Welcome!

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Introduction

You have received this guidebook because you or someone who cares about your child has concerns about his or her development. This guidebook will describe the referral process and how your child's eligibility is determined.

Referral for Early Intervention Services

An introduction to the Early Intervention (EI) Colorado program

The EI Colorado program is all about helping parents and families meet the developmental needs of their infants and toddlers. The words "parents" and "families" are used to mean anyone who is in charge of the care and well-being of a child. These can be legal guardians, single parents, grandparents, surrogate parents, foster parents, or other family members.

The EI Colorado program provides EI services, such as occupational, speech, or physical therapy, to help infants and toddlers develop and learn. It can also help you and your family learn ways to support and promote your child's development, within your family activities and community life. It is a voluntary program and does not discriminate based on race, culture, religion, income level, or disability.

The Colorado Department of Human Services administers the EI Colorado program. There are local agencies known as Community Centered Boards (CCBs) throughout Colorado who are responsible for implementing the local EI Colorado program. To be connected to the CCB in your county, you can call 1-888-777-4041 or visit www.eicolorado.org, click on the "Local Early Intervention Contacts" icon and choose the appropriate city, county or zip code for your family.

If a doctor or other professional involved in your child's life, such as child care provider, or a home visiting nurse has screened your child's development, it is important for the EI Colorado program to have a copy of this information at the time of referral.

Meeting Your Service Coordinator

A service coordinator is a person who works with you during your child's involvement with the EI Colorado program to assist you in accessing services and supports and to inform you of your legal rights. Federal and state laws require that all children and families served by the EI Colorado program have a service coordinator. A service coordinator is your main contact and is assigned to each infant or toddler and their family within three business days of the referral being received.

Service Coordinators:

- Help families identify their strengths and needs, find resources, think about decisions the family needs to make, coordinate all the services specified on the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), and
- Make sure that the rights of the family are protected.

Your family may choose to carry out the first of these on your own. However, the early intervention system is required by law to provide someone to protect your legal rights.

A service coordinator should offer the type and amount of help that you want or need. He or she should respect your decisions and help you carry them out. The person serving as your service coordinator may change if your child's or family's needs and desires change. If you want to have a different service coordinator, you may make a request directly to your service coordinator or his or her supervisor.

Credits: Joy V. Browne, UCDHSC

What can you expect from your service coordinator during the referral and evaluation and/or assessment process?

Your service coordinator will help set up the multidisciplinary evaluation and/or assessment and can answer questions you might have about the process. Evaluations and/or assessments can be done in a variety of places and ways. It will most likely involve talking with you about your child, learning about your child by watching him or her play, and interacting with your child. Because you know your child best, you will be a very important part of the evaluation and/or assessment process. Your service coordinator is responsible for making sure that your wishes and concerns guide this process.

If it is determined that your child is not eligible at this time, the evaluation team and/or your service coordinator will refer your child and family to other appropriate supports

and services outside of the EI Colorado program, if needed. You can always contact the CCB serving your community in the future if you have renewed concerns about your child's development. If you do not agree with the results of the evaluation, you have the right to object to the decision and to file a complaint. Your service coordinator will assist you with this process.

If your child is eligible, your service coordinator will work with you and the other members of the IFSP team to develop your child's IFSP. This plan is discussed in detail in the second family guidebook, "Individualized Family Service Plan and Orientation to Early Intervention Services".

Screening Your Child's Development

Depending on the reason of referral and if your child's development has not already been screened, a request may be made to screen your child's development. A screening is a quick look at how your child is developing and learning. People trained to determine how your child is developing conduct screenings to:

- Find out what areas of development, if any, are behind what would be expected for your child.
- Help an evaluation team decide what type of evaluation may be best for your child and who should be involved.
- Find out if your child's development is "on target" even though a problem was suspected.

A screening can only occur with your written permission and you will receive the results of this screening to help you plan next steps. If the screening shows your child's development is "on target," it is unlikely that your child will be eligible for the EI Colorado program. Even if the screening suggests your child is developing on target, you have the right to ask for, and get, a full multidisciplinary evaluation and/or assessment for your child.

Five Areas of Development

- Adaptive or self-help skills—such as feeding and dressing;
- Cognitive skills—such as thinking, learning, and reasoning;
- Communication skills—such as understanding and using sounds, gestures, and words, pointing, understanding your words, expressing thoughts;
- Physical development—such as vision, hearing, movement and health; and
- Social emotional development—such as getting along with others, expressing feelings, developing relationships.

Having an Evaluation and/or Assessment Done

All infants and toddlers referred to the El Colorado program have the right to a free multidisciplinary evaluation and/or assessment. Multidisciplinary means a group that is made up of qualified people who have different areas of training and experience. Information from the multidisciplinary evaluation and/or assessment is used to determine your child's eligibility and will look at all five areas of your child's development. It is a process that will help you to better understand your child's developmental strengths and needs and how the El Colorado program can help. Unless you request otherwise, the multidisciplinary evaluation and/or assessment must be completed within 45 days of the referral date. You must sign a written permission form before any evaluation and/or assessment of your child occurs.

How is eligibility decided?

Your child and family may receive early intervention services if:

- Your child and family live in Colorado;
- Your child is between birth through two years of age; and
- Your child is eligible based on either of the following:

I. Developmental Delay

A child may be determined eligible because he or she has a significant delay in one or more of the following areas:

- Adaptive development (taking care of one's self when doing things like feeding or dressing)
- Cognitive development (thinking and learning skills)
- Communication development (understanding and using sounds, gestures, and words)
- Physical development (moving, seeing, and hearing)
- Social emotional development (responding to and developing relationships with other people)

II. Based on a Diagnosis

A child may be determined eligible because he or she has been diagnosed with a condition that will likely result in a significant delay in development, and who may or may not currently have an observable delay. A list of diagnoses that will qualify a child for the El Colorado program is available at www.eicolorado.org within the Family Members Section; the Established Condition Database icon is located on the right side of the webpage. If your child has a condition that establishes their eligibility, your child will still need an assessment to help plan for what services may be needed.

What is a multidisciplinary evaluation and/or assessment?

A multidisciplinary evaluation and/or assessment is a process that is completed with you and your child by specialists from a variety of backgrounds such as medicine, teaching, and specialized developmental areas, such as communication or movement. The number and types of specialists involved in the evaluation will depend on your concerns and the needs of your child. However, at least two different specialty areas must be a part of the eval-

uation and/or assessment team, along with your service coordinator. The evaluation and/or assessment will consider information your family reports and your child's:

- Medical history and current health status;
- Adaptive or self-help skills, such as feeding and dressing;
- Cognitive skills, such as thinking, learning, and reasoning;
- Communication skills, such as understanding and using sounds, gestures, and words, pointing, understanding your words, expressing thoughts;
- Physical development, such as vision, hearing, movement and health; and
- Social and emotional development, such as getting along with others, expressing feelings, developing relationships.

The multidisciplinary evaluation and/or assessment not only helps determine your child's eligibility for EI services, it provides information to help determine which services are most appropriate, should your child be eligible. The evaluation and/or assessment also describes your child's strengths and needs. Your family's concerns, resources, and priorities are important. You can share as much or as little information as you wish. Keep in mind, an evaluation and/or assessment is not a test that your child either passes or fails. It is a way of letting you know what your child does well and where he or she needs some help. The results of your child's evaluation and/or assessment will be explained to you to highlight your child's strengths and assets, as well as areas of difficulty and next steps.

The evaluation and/or assessment team and your service coordinator will review with you the results, the information you provide about your child's history and development, and any reports received from medical providers to arrive at an eligibility decision.

You can and should participate in the evaluation and/or assessment by:

- Helping your child feel comfortable;
- Helping with activities that explore your child's abilities;
- Telling the team whether or not what they are seeing is what is typical for your child;
- Helping the team see your child's unique strengths and needs;
- Asking questions and offering your opinions about how your child's evaluation and/or assessment is going; and
- Telling the team about the types of circumstances they would most likely be able to observe the things you are most concerned about.

Remember, you are the expert on your child.

It may be helpful to share other information during your child's evaluation and/or assessment, such as:

- Your child's prenatal history;
- Your child's health and developmental history;
- When you were first concerned that something might not be quite right;
- What you may have done to learn more about your concerns; and
- What your child does or does not do that you are concerned about now.

What if your child is eligible?

Although eligibility is based on information about your child, once your child is found eligible for the EI Colorado program, the focus of supports and services opens up to include your whole family. This works best because your child and family are closely linked and affect each other in many ways. Your service coordinator is responsible for explaining the IFSP process to you. He or she will make sure the IFSP is written and will answer any questions you have.

The IFSP describes the real-life outcomes you want for your child and family. The IFSP lists how, where, and when your family will work with the EI staff to reach those outcomes. Your service coordinator will offer you more details about the IFSP and many other topics throughout your work together.

What can the EI Colorado Program offer your family?

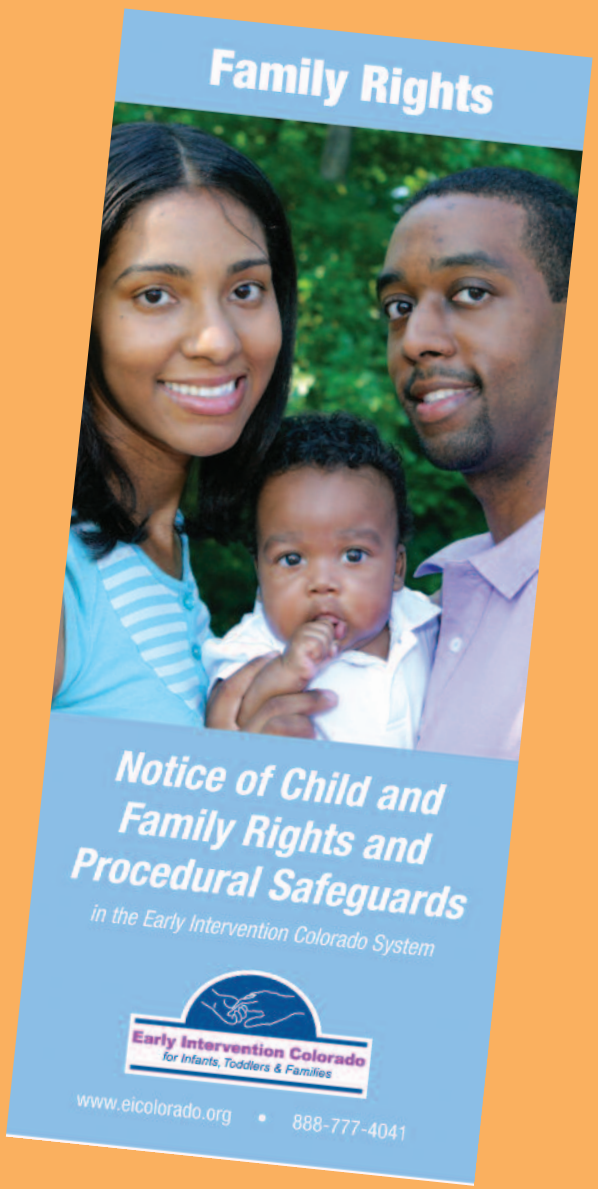
Your service coordinator is employed by the CCB that is contracted by the state to provide EI services in your area of residence. Each CCB employs or contracts with qualified professional staff who are licensed or certified in different specialties, including early childhood education, physical therapy, occupational therapy, social work, speech therapy, and other areas of expertise. The staff will work with you and in some cases with each other as a team to reach the outcomes you choose for your child and family.

Each CCB EI program offers:

- Free eligibility evaluation by trained, qualified professionals;
- Services that will assist you to help your child during activities that are part of your family's regular routine in your home or in the places where you and your child spend time in your community (for example, a child care center);
- Supports that respect your family's culture, values, and priorities;
- Trained, qualified staff, all of whom will help you to work on goals related to your child's and family's needs;

Your Family Rights.

Child and family rights are described in the brochure *Family Rights: Notice of Child and Family Rights and Procedural Safeguards in the Early Intervention Colorado System*. Your family will receive a copy of this brochure multiple times during your involvement with the EI Colorado program. If you do not have a copy, contact your service coordinator. You can view and download a copy of the brochure at www.eicolorado.org.



- Service coordination to help bring together the different people, information, and resources that will support your child and family; and
- Some flexibility in the scheduling of visits for service delivery.

All CCBs meet the standards for excellence set by the Colorado Department of Human Services.

What EI services can be provided?

Services are designed around your family's needs, concerns, and priorities. Natural learning opportunities that happen throughout your day are used for practicing new skills with your child.

Allowable Early Intervention Services…

- Assistive Technology Services
- Audiology Services
- Developmental Intervention Services
- Health Services
- Medical Services
- Nursing Services
- Nutrition Services
- Occupational Therapy Services
- Physical Therapy Services
- Psychological Services
- Sign Language and Cued Language Services
- Social Emotional Services
- Speech Language Pathology Services
- Transportation Services
- Vision Services

The EI services you receive are considered with the following in mind:

- Focus—should be on your whole family, not just your eligible child
- Outcomes—you choose which skill-building outcomes you want to work on with your child so that he or she may become successful in family and community activities
- Providers—should work with you and your family in a close partnership
- Length of Service—your participation continues until the outcomes you have identified have been reached and no one on the IFSP team has any concerns about your child's development; or until your child's third birthday, whichever comes first. Your child's transition to community resources upon exit (for example, child care, Head Start, preschool special education) is assisted by your service coordinator
- Where—EI services should be in places in your home and community that you usually visit
- Intensity—the frequency of EI services is designed to support you and your child in making progress toward the outcomes you have identified and reflect EI practices that are supported by research
- Measures of Success—your child learns new skills; your family gains confidence in meeting your child's needs and in connecting with community resources and activities

What if your child is not eligible?

If your child has not been diagnosed with an established condition and shows no delays, or only a mild or moderate delay, he or she will likely not be eligible for EI services in Colorado. If your child is not eligible, your evaluation and/or assessment team or service coordinator will offer you information about other services in your community, if needed, as well as a way to keep track of your child's development. If at any time you have renewed concerns about your child's development, you can call the CCB that serves your county of residence to schedule another evaluation and/or assessment for your child.

If you disagree with the results of the eligibility evaluation and this cannot be resolved by talking with the Early Intervention Coordinator at the CCB that serves you, state and federal law provides ways for you to resolve your concern.

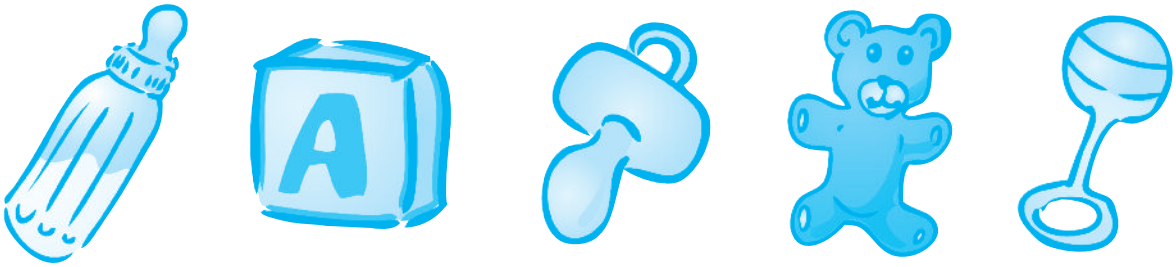
How will you keep up with information?

Make sure you get copies of all written information about your child (records, reports, etc.). This will help you keep track of services and advocate for your child. Remember, as time goes on, you'll probably have more information to keep track of, so it's a good idea to keep copies from the beginning and to keep it all together in one place.

Your family may find it helpful to put all the information about your child in a notebook. Your service coordinator can give you ideas for organizing the information. You might want to include this guidebook, along with other information received about the El Colorado program in your notebook.

The sample contact form on the next page can help you start a file of information about your child. As you contact different people and places, it's a good idea to keep records of people you've talked with and what was said. You may want to add other information to your notebook or file folder, such as:

- letters and notes (from doctors, specialists, etc.)
- medical records
- results of evaluations and/or assessments
- notes from meetings about your child
- reports from specialists
- family medical histories
- your child's developmental history, including your personal notes
- records of shots and immunizations
- notices of meetings


A

Appendix A: Family Contact Form

Early Intervention Colorado
for Infants, Toddlers & Families

Topic _____

Date Called _____ Person You Talked To _____

Phone Number _____ Agency _____

What We Talked About: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What Needs To Be Done: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix B:
Other People Who Can Help

Early Intervention Colorado
for Infants, Toddlers & Families

Name	Program Or Agency	Phone Number

Early Intervention Colorado
for Infants, Toddlers & Families

For more information
about the EI Colorado program, call

1-888-777-4041

or visit

www.eicolorado.org

COLORADO
Department of Human Services

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Family Guidebook II

Individualized Family Service Plan and Orientation to Early Intervention Services

Second Edition

Early Intervention Colorado
for Infants, Toddlers & Families

This guidebook and others are available at www.eicolorado.org

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Introduction

Research has shown that a child's first three years are a very important time for development and learning. Getting early intervention (EI) services now will help improve your child's ability to develop, learn and play, and will assist you to help your child and family in ways that are important to you. This guidebook will introduce you to the planning process for developmental services for your child and orient you to the supports and services available to your family through the EI Colorado program.

The EI Colorado program ensures that all families have equal access to a coordinated program of comprehensive supports and services. This means that the staff within the system will work closely with you to provide the kinds of supports that make the most sense based on your family's priorities and your child's needs.

Your child can best be supported within your family, and your family is best supported within your community. Activities that fit within your daily routine and use current techniques are most likely to give the outcomes you want for your child and family.

This guidebook will explain the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and orient you to EI services.

You are the most important person in your child's life and you will play a key role in planning your child's EI services. It is important that you and your family participate in each step of the process.

Supports and Services…

- develop collaborative partnerships.
- are family-centered.
- occur in the natural settings where your child and family typically spend time.
- are provided using current best practices.

Children learn best within their families.

Why should you enroll your child in the EI Colorado program?

The first three years of your child's life are the most important when setting the foundation for their ongoing development. This is the time when the development of your child's brain is most rapid. Starting supports and services early improves your child's ability to develop and learn. Also, getting help now may eliminate or decrease the need for special help later during your child's school years.

Your service coordinator is employed by an agency, known as a Community Centered Board (CCB) that is contracted by the state to provide EI services. Each CCB employs or contracts with qualified professional staff who are licensed or certified in different specialties, including early childhood education, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and other areas of expertise. The staff will work with you and in some cases with each other as a team to reach the outcomes you choose for your child and family.

Each CCB EI program provides:

- Services that will assist you to help your child during activities that are part of your family's regular routine in your home or in the places where you and your child spend time in your community (for example, your child's child care setting);
- Supports that respect your family's culture, values, and priorities;
- Trained, qualified staff, who will help you to work on goals related to your child's and family's needs; and
- Service coordination to help bring together the different people, information, and resources that will support your child and family.

All CCBs meet the standards for excellence set by the Colorado Department of Human Services.

What can you expect now that your child is eligible?

Once eligibility is established, a plan needs to be developed. This plan is called the Individualized Family Service Plan, or IFSP.

I-F-S-P means…

Individualized—your plan will be specially designed for you, your child, and your family.

Family—your plan will focus on your family and the outcomes you hope to reach for your child and your family through EI services.

Service—your plan will include all the details about the EI services in which your child and family will participate in, including when, where, and how often services will be delivered. Your IFSP can also include other services that your child and family needs that will not be paid for by the EI Colorado program, but that you want make sure are coordinated with your EI services.

Plan—your plan is written to guide EI services and helps to provide you and your service providers with a common understanding of what is important to you and what is expected of them.

Making a Plan for Services—Your IFSP

What is an IFSP?

The IFSP, is your family's written plan for EI services. It shows how you and other members of your EI team will work together to address the needs you identify for your child and family. The IFSP is family-centered. This means that you will be an active team member and a key decision- maker throughout the IFSP process.

The IFSP is based on information from your child's evaluation and/or assessment and from the concerns, resources, and priorities that you identify. It will list the services your family needs to help your child develop and learn. Also, it will list the duties of everyone involved. Some of the help you receive may come from your own family and friends, while specialists may provide other services.

Your service coordinator is responsible for explaining the IFSP process to you. He or she will make sure the IFSP is written accurately and clearly and will answer any questions you have.

Your signature on the IFSP shows your participation and your agreement with the plan. However, if you disagree with all or part of the IFSP, you have the right to share your concerns and ask for changes. You may accept or refuse any or all services recommended to you. Once a service begins, you may stop that service any time you wish. A copy of the IFSP must be given to you after it is completed and signed.

The written IFSP is reviewed at least every six months. It is also updated at least once a year. However, your needs and resources may change, so more frequent reviews can be held to make changes, as needed.

What is an IFSP meeting and who will be involved?

An IFSP meeting is designed to give you and those who have evaluated or assessed your child an opportunity to discuss your child's strengths and challenges in order to develop a plan for EI services. The outcome of this meeting is the written IFSP.

The people who must be included in your IFSP meeting are:

- you and any other family members you choose;
- an advocate or person outside of the family, if you choose;
- your service coordinator;
- a person or persons directly involved in conducting the evaluations and assessments; and
- as appropriate, persons who will be providing services to your child or family.

Another important person is your child's physician, who will be contacted (with your permission) for his or her input. If a person listed above is unable to attend a meeting, arrangements must be made for the person's involvement through other means, including participating in a telephone conference call, having a knowledgeable authorized representative attend the meeting, or making pertinent records available at the meeting. However, an IFSP meeting can never be held without a parent or legal guardian in attendance. You and the other people who develop your IFSP and help carry out the steps of the plan are the IFSP team.

The more involved you and your family members are in developing the IFSP, the more meaningful your plan will be. Share honestly about what is important to you and what your child needs. Read the information gathered through evaluations and assessments about your child

and family and ask any questions you have. Your service coordinator will ask you to share information about your child and family to make sure that your plan is individualized. Here are some sample questions to think about before the IFSP meeting:

- What does your child like? Dislike?
- What frustrates your child?
- What does your child do during the day?
- What things do you like to do as a family? With friends?
- Which people and agencies do you find helpful?
- What are your family's strengths in meeting your child's needs?
- What else do you want the other members of the IFSP team to know about your child or family?
- What change do you want EI services to support you or your child with?

Tips for a successful IFSP meeting:

- Be prepared. Make a list of questions or matters you want to discuss. Have paper and a pen or pencil ready to take notes.
- Listen to what other team members have to say.
- Be clear about what you want for your child.
- Share and ask for information as an equal team member.
- Ask questions if you don't understand something.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help.

What does an IFSP include?

The written IFSP includes:

- Your child's strengths and needs
- Your family's concerns, resources, and priorities, if you choose

- Written outcomes (or expectations) and the steps, or strategies, to meet the outcomes
- The services that will be provided
- Where services will be provided
- How often services will be provided and the length of each contact (for example, one hour each week)
- When services will begin and when they will end
- The funding source for services
- The name of your service coordinator
- Transition steps and services for leaving EI services no later than your child's third birthday, known as the Transition Plan. The Transition Plan will be completed between the time your child is two years three months and two years nine months of age.

What EI services can be provided for your child and family?

EI services are designed around your family's needs, concerns, and priorities. Natural learning opportunities that happen throughout your day are used for practicing new skills with your child.

The EI services you receive are decided with the following in mind:

- Focus—should be on your whole family, not just your child
- Outcomes—you choose which skill-building outcomes you want to work on with your child so that he or she may become more successful in family and community activities
- Providers—should work with you and your family in a close partnership
- Length of Service—your participation continues until the outcomes you have identified have been reached or until your child's third birthday, whichever comes first
- Where—EI services should be provided in places in your home and community that you usually go
- Intensity—the frequency of EI services is designed to support you and your child in making progress toward the outcomes you have identified and reflect EI practices that are supported by research
- Measures of Success—your child learns new skills and your family gains confidence in meeting your child's needs and in connecting with community resources and activities

Other services that are necessary to help your child meet his or her outcome, but are not one of the EI services offered through the EI Colorado program, are also included in your child's plan. "Other services" typically describe services that your child could benefit from and are related to the outcomes on your IFSP, but are not expected to be paid for as an EI service. Some possible other services are:

- Surgery
- Other medical services or equipment
- Non-traditional therapies

Allowable Early Intervention Services…

- Assistive Technology Services
- Audiology Services
- Developmental Intervention Services
- Health Services
- Medical Services
- Nursing Services
- Nutrition Services
- Occupational Therapy Services
- Physical Therapy Services
- Psychological Services
- Sign Language and Cued Language Services
- Social Emotional Services
- Speech Language Pathology Services
- Transportation Services
- Vision Services

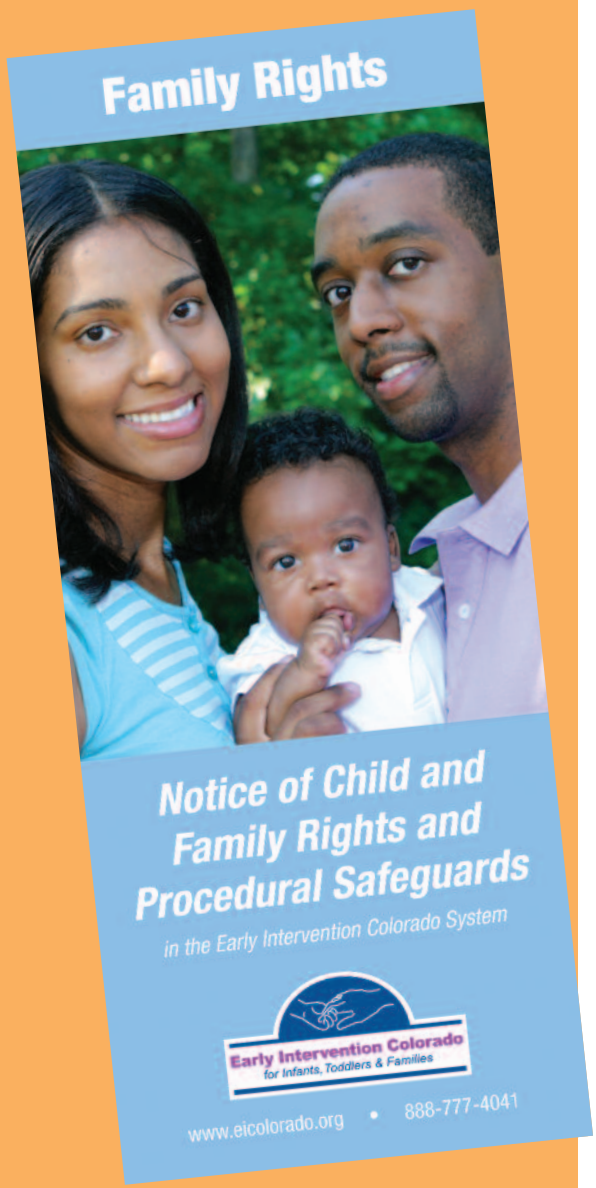
By including these services, your child's IFSP will represent a complete picture of your child. This will be helpful to both your service coordinator and other EI providers working with your child and family.

How will you know what services are needed for your child and family?

Developing your IFSP is a team effort. It is important that you have good information available to you before you make a decision about an appropriate plan for your child and family. Ask your service coordinator for information and materials to help you make good decisions. Tell your IFSP team if you want more time to think about the information before you make your decisions. By sharing information, the EI staff can help you make plans that are best for your child and family.

Your Family Rights.

Child and family rights are described in the brochure *Family Rights: Notice of Child and Family Rights and Procedural Safeguards in the Early Intervention Colorado System*. Your family will receive a copy of this brochure multiple times during your involvement with the EI Colorado program. If you do not have a copy, contact your service coordinator. You can view and download a copy of the brochure at www.eicolorado.org.



Putting Your IFSP Into Action

Where will the services for your child and family be provided?

Typically, EI services are provided within your family's natural environment. The term natural environment refers to those settings that your family has identified as typical or normal for your family, meaning home and community settings where your family's everyday routines and activities occur. These settings reflect your family's lifestyle, interests, culture and schedule. Natural environments are those places that are routinely used by your family and typically developing children and represent a wide variety of locations such as your home, neighborhood, child care settings, parks, recreation centers, stores, buses, malls, museums, libraries, places of worship, etc.

Services are to be provided in natural environments unless your child's needs cannot be met there. In choosing services, it is important to think about the places, activities and times of the day where your child learns best. When deciding about the location of services, you and the rest of your child's IFSP team should consider all of the natural environments in your community.

If a service cannot be provided in a natural environment, the IFSP team must describe the reasons for choosing a setting that is not a natural environment and the steps to help your child receive the support to succeed in his or her everyday activities and routines.

Natural environments do not only refer to a "place". Although location is important, it is only one part of quality EI practices. Other essential characteristics include; why the service is being provided, what the service is, when it is being provided, how it is being provided and how you can help support your child's learning throughout the day. All of these elements are critical in supporting your child's development and learning.

Who provides the services for your child and family?

Many times more than one person is needed to meet all of your child's and family's needs. Your EI team may include different types of EI providers or specialists. These specialists may change as your concerns and your child's needs change.

Early Intervention Services…

- are family-centered.
- occur in natural settings.
- recognize current best practices in the EI field.
- are built upon mutual respect and choice.
- build partnerships among family members and EI staff.

Children learn best within their families.

Your service coordinator will help you to coordinate your team of EI specialists and the services they are providing. Always remember, you and your family are the most important members of your IFSP team. You, your family and your service coordinator are always members of the IFSP team.

If a provider does not speak the primary language of your family or child, an interpreter may be provided.

How will your child and family services be delivered?

Services are usually delivered to your child in two ways:

- Directly to your child by a therapist or other EI specialist. This person will also consult with the family and, if appropriate, with other people like child care staff or other service providers about how to support your child's development and learning in daily routines.
- Indirectly to your child through consultation with the important people already in your child's life. This consultation occurs by specialists working with family members and others involved in your child's life (for example, child care providers, friends, etc.) and instructing them how to support your child's development and learning throughout the day.

How can you change your services?

I. Review Outcomes:

As your child and family changes, you will also want to change the outcomes you are working toward. Your service coordinator may suggest an IFSP review, or you may request a review at any time, even if your IFSP was recently completed. You and your service coordinator will look at your current IFSP, discuss what has changed and how this affects your child's and family's outcomes. Progress toward current outcomes and any new outcomes are recorded on the IFSP.

II. Review Services

Sometimes new outcomes are likely to be achieved by changing the specific techniques your EI service provider uses or that you learn to teach your child, without any change to your IFSP team members, or the type, frequency, or location of services. At times, you may add or delete a service, or decide to have your current service(s) more or less often. This review of services is recorded on the IFSP. Your consent must be given before any services change.

How can you help your child?

You know your child best. EI specialist(s) will enjoy learning from you about your child's interests, what helps him or her learn, and what he or she would rather avoid. Together, you will develop ways to help your child. You will learn from, as well as teach, the EI specialist(s) working with your child.

Parenting is not always easy, especially when you may need some unique skills to help support your child's development and learning. You are your child's first and best teacher and advocate. As a parent and an advocate for your child, you will have to understand and tell professionals, relatives, and friends about your family's priorities and concerns. Communicating with others about your child can sometimes be frustrating, especially when they have a different point of view or do not seem to understand you. Be open with your service coordinator and EI specialist(s) if you feel that you are not being understood or listened to. Remember that your service coordinator is always your first point of contact for anything regarding your IFSP.

What are your responsibilities?

Your most important responsibility is to be an active member of your IFSP team. This means sharing information, actively taking part in developing the IFSP, and getting involved when the EI specialist is with you and your child.

Active participation is easier if you work with the EI provider during their visits. Hold or sit close to your child and practice new teaching techniques and ways of learning together. Even though days are busy, it is important for you and child to block out this time so you can focus on learning more about supporting your child's development. EI services are like coaching sessions where you learn new ways of teaching and supporting your child's development. You can then use what you have learned to support your child during playtime, meals, bath time, and other daily activities when the EI provider is not with you. Try to make learning fun for you and your child!

EI services are flexible and adjustable. If your child is not making the progress you expect and have planned for, discuss this with your service coordinator. You are the expert on your child so talk with your IFSP team and service coordinator about new things you see your child doing, or things you expected to see that he is not yet doing, so that you can plan together for changes.

How can you get the most out of your Early Intervention visit?

I. Before Your Visit

- Be prepared. Make sure you schedule your visit when you can take part in the visit and not have a lot of distractions. Decide how brothers and sisters will be involved or plan an activity for them.
- Plan the agenda. Let the EI staff know what you want to discuss at your visit. Remember or write down any questions that you may have since your last visit.
- Be ready to share what has happened since your last visit. Think about or make a list of anything you think is important to share such as a trip to the doctor or changes in routine. Think about what suggestions or strategies have worked well and those that have not worked so well.

II. During Your Visit

- Ask questions. Make sure you understand what is being said. If you are not sure why something is being done, just ask. If it helps, ask for things in writing.
- Ask for a demonstration and be shown anything you don't understand. Practice strategies together during the visit. Hands-on instruction is the best way to learn.
- Discuss ideas for supporting your child's development and learning between visits. Practice time between visits is just as important as the visit itself. Be sure to talk about ways to use the strategies and activities during everyday family activities.

III. After Your Visit

- Try things out. Try out the suggested activities. What is working? What isn't?
- Make a note of it. Consider keeping a notebook for observations or questions that may come up between visits.
- Have fun. The best teaching and learning occurs when you and your child are having fun.

Ways to Help People Understand Your Point of View

- Talk about your priorities and those of your family.
- Have a clear idea about what you want for your child.
- Know what your child likes and dislikes.
- Share what makes you proud of him or her.
- Be aware of, and understand, your own feelings and those of others.
- Help others understand what you know about how your child best learns new things.

To find out more about these and other possibilities, contact the CCB in your county of residence. To find out more about family leadership and family engagement opportunities visit www.eicolorado.org and click on the "Family Members Section".

Join an LICC

Each CCB has a Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC). These councils work on behalf of your child and family to:

- Promote communication and collaboration among agencies within the CCB service area;
- Share ideas and solutions in their communities; and
- Advise the CCB that supports your child and family in your community.

To learn more about being a parent representative on the LICC in your community, call your CCB and talk to the EI Coordinator.

How do you get more involved?

There are many ways that you and your family can get involved with EI services beyond the activities specifically designed for you and your child. EI Colorado depends on your ideas and information to keep services family-centered.

Think about the things that are important to you, the time you have available, and the kinds of activities that interest you. Here are some examples:

- Serving on committees or task forces created to address a specific topic
- Reviewing written materials
- Responding to surveys or phone interviews about EI services
- Participating with your State or Local Interagency Coordinating Council

Transition Planning

When is it time to leave Early Intervention?

It is good to think about and plan for the future during the entire time of your family's experience with the EI Colorado program. Just as services are adjusted when your child makes developmental gains, EI services will be replaced by other community activities as your child grows and learns. You may notify your service coordinator that you wish to transition out of the EI Colorado program at any point. However, by law, EI services must end when your child turns three years of age.

New partners may enter your life as you plan to move beyond the EI Colorado program. If your child leaves before age three or if your child will not be receiving preschool special education, your service coordinator will work with you to identify other available supports in your community, if needed.

Be sure to ask your service coordinator for a copy of *Family Guidebook III: Transition Planning* for more detailed information.

A

Appendix A: My Important Information

Early Intervention Colorado
for Infants, Toddlers & Families

This form helps you to organize and track important contact information, IFSP dates, and other important information during your child's involvement with the EI Colorado program.

Name of Community Centered Board _____

Phone Number _____

Name of Service Coordinator _____

Phone Number _____

Email Address _____

IFSP Dates

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

Name of Service Provider(s)

_____ Phone Number _____

_____ Phone Number _____

_____ Phone Number _____

_____ Phone Number _____

Other Important Information

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Early Intervention Colorado

for Infants, Toddlers & Families

For more information about
Colorado's early intervention system, call

1-888-777-4041

or visit

www.eicolorado.org

COLORADO
Department of Human Services

Funded under federal grant #H181A160097 from the Office of Special Education Programs. (7/2016)

Family Guidebook III

Transition Planning

Second Edition

Early Intervention Colorado
for Infants, Toddlers & Families

This guidebook and others are available at www.eicolorado.org

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The Early Intervention (EI) Colorado program has developed a series of family guidebooks to guide you through the EI system. This guidebook describes the transition planning process. It is the third in the series of family guidebooks for parents and caregivers. Other materials can be downloaded from the EI Colorado website (www.eicolorado.org) or you can request a pre-printed copy from the Community Centered Board (CCB) that serves your area of residence.

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Introduction

The EI Colorado program serves eligible children from birth through two years of age. Eventually, all families end their partnership with EI Colorado. Many families and their children move on to other community programs. Moving from one program to another is often referred to as a transition. By law, your involvement with the EI Colorado program must end no later than your child's third birthday.

New people will enter your life as you plan to move beyond the EI Colorado program. Before your child reaches the age of three, you and your service coordinator need to plan for the move from the EI Colorado program to other programs your family may choose to participate in.

Transition is different for every family. There are several ways your child may make the transition from the EI Colorado program to the next step in his or her growth and learning:

- Your child may leave the EI Colorado program before age three.
- Your child may be eligible for preschool special education services through your local school district at age three.
- Your child may transition to other available supports in your community at age three.

Your child's service coordinator will assist you and your child as you move to the next place or setting smoothly and at the right time.

This guidebook has been created to help prepare you for your child's transition from EI Colorado and will:

- Introduce you to the transition process;
- Describe the transition conference; and
- Provide ideas and resources that can help you during the transition process.

Since you know your child's and family's needs better than anyone else, you and your family are an important part of each step of the process.

An Overview of the Transition Process

As early as your child's second birthday…

- Your service coordinator will begin to discuss potential transition options.

Between the ages of 2 years 3 months and 2 years 9 months…

- If your child has not met all of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) outcomes and is demonstrating a developmental delay in the areas of thinking, moving, communicating, relating to others, or seeing or hearing, he or she is considered potentially eligible for preschool special education services and his or her information will be shared with the school district unless you have chosen to opt out of this notification.
- An IFSP meeting will be held to develop a Transition Plan to outline steps and services to ensure a smooth transition out of the El Colorado program. Your service coordinator will work with you to make sure that people you would like to attend the meeting are included.
- With your approval a transition conference will be held.
- With your consent, your child's current IFSP and evaluation information will be sent to the school district.

By your child's third birthday…

- If your child is potentially eligible your school district will evaluate your child to determine whether your child is eligible for preschool special education services.
- If your child is eligible for preschool special education services, you will work with your school district to develop a plan to meet your child's needs.
- If your child is not eligible for preschool special education services, your service coordinator will help you find other resources and opportunities for young children in your community.

No later than your child's third birthday…

- Your child will transition out of the El Colorado program.

Planning Ahead: The Transition Process

Transitions are natural events for all of us, and you will continue to support your child through many types of life transitions. When a toddler enrolled in the El Colorado program approaches three years of age, several steps will take place that will help create a smooth transition into other supportive opportunities. These steps are what we mean when we refer to the transition process.

Your service coordinator and other service providers will help you learn about options that will be available when your child turns three. Some of those options might include:

- School district preschool programs, which could include special education services, or the Colorado Preschool program;
- Home or center-based early care and education centers;
- Community preschools, or other toddler programs;
- Faith-based preschools;
- Head Start and Early Head Start; and
- Recreation programs.

Credit: Young Family

Transition Planning

Beginning Your Child's Transition Plan

At or around your child's second birthday, your service coordinator will begin to discuss the transition process with you. Between the time your child turns two years three months and two years nine months, an IFSP meeting will be held during which you and other members of your IFSP team will develop the Transition Plan as a part of your child's IFSP. Be sure that everyone you wish to be invited, such as your child care provider(s), service provider(s) or a relative(s) or friend(s), is included. The Transition Plan will document the steps and services to support a smooth transition when your child reaches three years of age.

The Transition Plan is a part of your child's IFSP and is developed with your input. This plan may be updated over time and will include a description of transition steps and services the IFSP team, including you, determines necessary to support a smooth transition for your child.

These include:

- How your child and family will exit from the El Colorado program;
- How you will be informed of, and included in, the transition process, including a review of your child's program options from the third birthday through the end of the school year;
- Procedures to prepare your child for changes in service delivery and strategies to help your child adjust to, and function in, a new setting; and
- Any transition services and other activities that the IFSP team identifies as needed by your child or family to support the transition.

It helps if you begin transition planning early so that you have enough time to explore options for your child and family, determine the best placement for your child, and put in place other supports that will make the transition easier.

Involving Your Child's Doctor in the Transition Process.

Doctors are interested, and want to be involved, in the transition planning process. However, busy schedules can keep them from taking an active role. Attending a scheduled meeting is not the only way your child's doctor can participate as a member of the IFSP team. Input can be provided by phone or report as well.

Talk to your child's doctor to learn how he or she would like to provide input into your child's Transition Plan. Also, talk to your service coordinator to make sure a current consent to share information form is on file in your child's EI record. This will allow the EI Colorado program and your child's physician to discuss and share information that might help to ensure a smooth and meaningful transition process.

During the year before your child turns three, it will be helpful for you to:

- Think of three or four goals you might have for your child in the next year.
- Discuss your questions and concerns about your child's transition with your service coordinator.
- Reflect on ways you would like to update your IFSP.
- Consider visiting the various program options in your community as a part of making your decisions.
- If you are considering preschool special education services, take time to learn about this program. Details are found in Appendix A of this guidebook.

Notifying the School District if Your Child May be Potentially Eligible for Preschool Special Education Services

At the IFSP meeting closest to your child's second birthday, your IFSP team will discuss whether your child may be potentially eligible for preschool special education services. If the team agrees that he or she is potentially eligible, your service coordinator will talk to you about sending basic information about your child to the school district. Sharing this information will begin the transition process from the EI Colorado program to potential preschool special education services. At this time, the option for you to not have your child's information sent to the school district will be given to you and if you choose to opt out of this notification, your signature will be required. If you decide not to have your child's information sent to the school district, they will not be able to determine if your child is eligible for preschool special education services. You can change your decision to opt out of notification at any time by notifying your service coordinator in writing.

The Transition Conference

With your consent, a transition conference will be arranged by your service coordinator. This meeting must occur between the time your child is two years three months and two years nine months.

This meeting will help to identify all possible transition options for your child and prepare you for his or her transition from the EI Colorado program.

A transition conference meeting can **never** be held without a parent or legal guardian in attendance. Other people who must be included in your transition conference meeting are:

- Your service coordinator; and
- If your child may be eligible for preschool special education services, a representative from your school district.

If your child may be eligible for preschool special education services and the representative from the school district is unable to attend, your service coordinator will still conduct the transition conference as scheduled, unless you prefer to reschedule the meeting.

Your transition conference may be scheduled to occur at the same time as the IFSP meeting in which the Transition Plan will be developed. If this is the case, in addition to a representative from the school district, all of the required participants for the IFSP meeting must attend.

If someone is unable to attend that you feel is **vital** to a successful transition conference for your child, you can ask your service coordinator to reschedule the meeting to a time that works for that person's schedule.

During the transition conference, you will continue to develop a plan to prepare your child for new experiences. Focus on ways to help your child experience success. Ask as many questions as you have, or can think of, and feel free to write some down before the meeting. During the transition conference, the representative from the school district will discuss any services that your child will receive if he or she is eligible for preschool special education services.

The plan will include steps and timelines to help you and your child transition to a new setting or program. If needed evaluations are not completed by the time of your transition conference, then the necessary steps and timelines to complete the evaluations will be documented in your Transition Plan. Be sure you receive contact information for people attending your child's transition conference so that you can call with any questions you have after the meeting.

Preparing Your Child for a Smooth Transition

Here are some ways you can help your child during the transition process:

- Learn about what will be the same and what will be different in your child's daily experiences.
- Identify what strengths your child has that you think will be important to consider when your child transitions to another setting and share those with the people who will be involved.

Helpful Activity

With your EI service provider, think about how the strengths of your child will help him or her when he or she moves on to a new setting. For example, if your child is very outgoing, those skills will help him or her with getting used to a new place and meeting new people. If your child is shy, but loves to sing, including musical activities could help him or her move to the next setting or program. Focus on what your child likes and does well as you plan.

- Identify areas where your child may need additional support and share your ideas for what might help your child to succeed.

Skills that are important to transition have a lot to do with your child's unique personality:

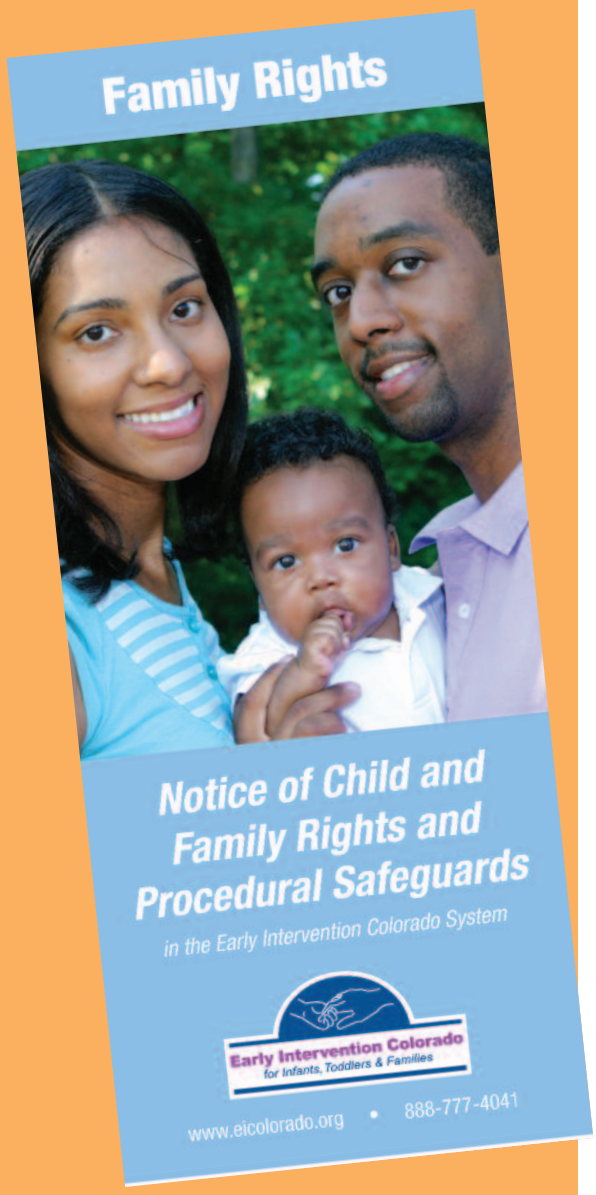
- How easily your child warms up to new people, places, and things.
- How easily your child adapts to change, including shifting from one activity or setting to another.
- How sensitive your child is to sights, sounds, and other sensory input.
- Your child's general mood (happy, sad).
- Whether your child is easy going or gets frustrated easily.
- Your child's activity level (very busy, or not).
- How persistent your child is at getting what he or she wants, or avoiding tasks and activities they don't like.
- Your child's attention to different activities, people, and places.

In addition, your child's transition will be influenced by his or her developmental abilities or skills. Think about these areas and share what you see as your child's strengths and areas of need with your service coordinator as a part of the transition planning process:

- **Communication skills:** How does your child understand and use words, signs, and/or pictures or other means to communicate?
- **Social skills:** How does your child interact and get along with others; how comfortable is your child in larger groups of children?
- **Self-care skills:** How does your child take care of his or her own daily living needs, such as eating, toileting, washing, and dressing?

Your Family Rights.

Child and family rights are described in the brochure *Family Rights: Notice of Child and Family Rights and Procedural Safeguards in the Early Intervention Colorado System*. Your family will receive a copy of this brochure multiple times during your involvement with the EI Colorado program. If you do not have a copy, contact your service coordinator. You can view and download a copy of the brochure at www.eicolorado.org.



- **Motor skills:** How can your child get around the classroom, playground, etc.; how well can your child use his or her hands to do things?
- **Learning skills:** How easily does your child learn; does your child learn by watching others, trying things on his or her own, listening to directions, etc.?

Considering some of your child's characteristics outlined above can help you identify areas where additional support may be needed. These may include:

- Being in a group social setting with children of different ages;
- Using a new form of transportation such as a van or bus;
- Getting used to new friends, new teachers, or a new building;
- Taking a nap in a new place;
- Being away from home for a longer period of time or for more days each week;
- Doing more things independently; and
- Being separated from you.

Any ideas you have about these areas of change can be included in your Transition Plan so that the process is as smooth as possible.

Preparing Your Family for a Smooth Transition

When your child moves from the EI Colorado program, there will also be some changes for you and your family. The transition period is the perfect opportunity to ask questions and get information about how the new program or setting will be different from what you and your child have experienced up until now. Remember, you are leaving the EI Colorado program because your child has achieved a milestone.

You may have mixed feelings about your child's transition, and feel both anxious and hopeful. You may have questions, such as: "Will my child fit in?", or "Will my child be able to do what everyone else is doing?" These are questions that you should talk about with your service coordinator, EI providers, and others that are helping you and your child during the transition process. While it is not uncommon for change to be a challenge, it is helpful to remember that this is a normal and exciting part of childhood. Take time to celebrate this next step in your child's journey!

Before the Transition…

Parents, other family members, and service providers can all help to prepare young children for the change that is coming. To prepare your child for transition:

- Begin early.
- If possible, visit the new program with your child.
- Talk about the new setting in positive ways.
- Encourage your child to participate in experiences that will help him or her prepare for the new setting.
- Teach your child specific skills and routines that will be useful in the new program.
- Communicate and share information between programs in advance (See Appendix B for a list).

Where to Get More Information

The best source for additional information about anything in this guidebook is your service coordinator. For more details about topics covered in this booklet visit the EI Colorado website: www.eicolorado.org.

You may also contact the state EI Colorado office by calling 303-866-7263 or 1-888-777-4041. The state office is located at the Colorado Department of Human Services.

Other Helpful Resources

ARC of Colorado provides advocacy services for people with developmental disabilities and their families:

- 303-864-9334 or 1-800-333-7690
- www.thearcofco.org

Autism Society of Colorado provides information, support and education for families who have a child diagnosed with autism.

- 720-214-0794 or 877-COLOASD
- www.autismcolorado.org

Colorado Department of Education Early Childhood Initiatives collectively work together to prevent the achievement gap and promote student success by ensuring that all of Colorado's youngest children are physically, emotionally, socially, and academically ready for school. This initiative includes programs such as Child Find, Colorado Preschool program, and preschool special education services.

- www.cde.state.co.us/early

Credit: Phipps Family

Questions to Keep in Mind When Visiting an Early Childhood Classroom.

- Are the children happy?
- Are the children interacting with teachers, using classroom materials, and playing with other children?
- Would this be a safe, comfortable place for my child?
- How many children are in this classroom each day? How many adults?
- What is the toileting policy?
- Does the preschool allow and encourage full participation by children with different personalities, backgrounds, and abilities?
- Will my child receive the support needed to be successful in this preschool?
- How are families involved?
- Is the room set up so that all children can play and explore?
- How are the staff trained and supervised?
- Will my child like it here?
- Can I picture my child in this classroom?
- What is the discipline policy?
- How do teachers let parent(s) know about child progress and activities? How often does this occur?
- What is the schedule for the day?
- Are there quiet areas for children who may need a break?

Colorado Head Start Association supports the work of Head Start programs and their partners with information sharing and advocacy, within the context of the early childhood system in Colorado.

- www.coloheadstart.org

El Grupo Vida is a network of Spanish speaking families who have children with disabilities or special needs.

- 303-904-6073 or info@elgrupovida.org
- www.elgrupovida.org

Empower Colorado offers support, education, advocacy and resources to families with children and youth who have social, emotional or mental health challenges.

- 1-866-213-4631 or info@empowercolorado.org
- www.empowercolorado.org

Family Voices of Colorado is an organization that helps families navigate their health insurance plans.

- 1-800-881-8272
- www.familyvoicesco.org

Health Care Program for Children with Special Needs (HCP) provides information, referral to services, and support to help families who have children with special health needs get what they need and grow to be their healthiest, as well as reach the full potential of their independence.

- www.HCPColorado.org

Parent to Parent of Colorado provides parent-to-parent connections to support families on the journey of parenting a child with special needs.

- 1-877-472-7201 or mail@p2p-co.org
- www.p2p-co.org

PEAK Parent Center provides information, support, workshops, and technical assistance for parents of children with disabilities and to professionals who work with children with disabilities. Family advocates are available to assist families with the IFSP or IEP processes. PEAK Parent Center disseminates many printed materials including a monthly calendar of activities around the state.

- 1-800-284-0251 or info@peakparent.org
- www.peakparent.org

Qualistar Early Learning works with child care providers, parents, and communities to improve the quality of early childhood education in Colorado.

- 303-339-6800
- www.qualistar.org

Disability Law Colorado protects and promotes the rights of people, including children, with disabilities and older people through direct legal representation, advocacy, education, and legal analysis. Questions are answered and limited advice provided free of charge.

- 303-722-0300 or 1-800-288-1376
- www.disabilitylawco.org

Names and Contact Information

Name and Title	Address	Phone Number/Email
Service Coordinator:		*Phone:*
		Email:
School District Contact Person:		*Phone:*
		Email:
Community Programs:		*Phone:*
		Email:
		Phone:
		Email:
		Phone:
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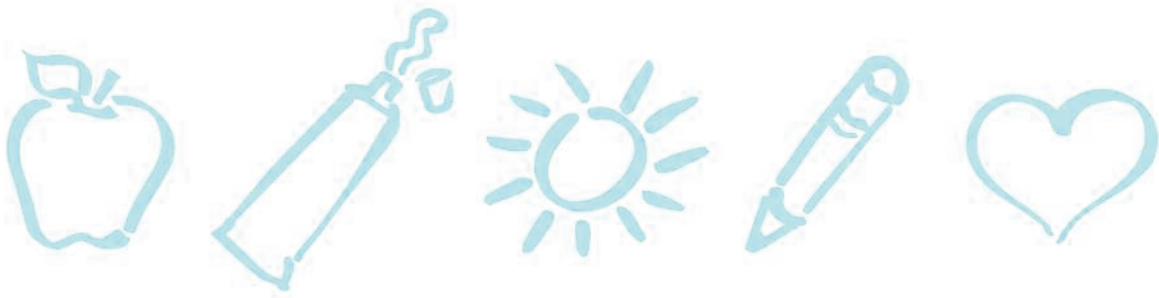

Appendix A: A Comparison of EI (Part C of IDEA) and Preschool Special Education Services (Part B of IDEA)

The following "side-by-side comparison" is intended to assist families and others in understanding the similarities, as well as some of the differences, between the EI services offered through the EI Colorado program and preschool special education services.

	Early Intervention Colorado	Preschool Special Education
Governing Federal Laws	**Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA)**	**Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA)**
Ages Served	Birth through age 2	3–5 year-olds
Goal of the Program	Supports the family to meet the developmental needs of their child with a delay or disability.	Focuses on the child's educational needs.
Evaluation	A multidisciplinary team completes a developmental evaluation of all five areas of development (adaptive, cognitive, communication, physical (including vision and hearing) and social emotional development).	Appropriately licensed professionals review current information about the child and conduct a comprehensive evaluation by using a variety of tools and strategies in order to determine if the child is eligible for preschool special education.
Eligibility	A child must have a diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in a significant delay in development **OR** demonstrate a significant level of developmental delay in one or more areas of development.	A child is found eligible based on the determination of a disability or condition, which prevents the child from receiving reasonable benefit from general education without additional supports.
Family Involvement	Parent(s) must be involved in the development of the IFSP and are members of the IFSP team.	Parent(s) must be members of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team which includes the evaluation and eligibility determination processes, as well as making decisions about the education of their child.
Service Coordination	Each eligible infant or toddler and their family is provided a service coordinator who coordinates services and assists the family throughout their involvement in the EI system.	Although service coordination is not required under special education law, a case manager is assigned to each child with an IEP.
Type of Plan	An IFSP documents the family's desired outcomes for their child, as well as the supports and services to be provided. IFSPs are reviewed at least every six months with the family, service coordinator, and EI provider(s) and rewritten annually.	An IEP documents the child's educational goals, services and placement; the IEP also describes how progress will be measured. IEPs are revised periodically, but not less than annually.

continued on next page

	Early Intervention Colorado	Preschool Special Education
Governing Federal Laws	**Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA)**	**Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA)**
Services	The EI Colorado program provides EI services to support the family's ability to help their child learn and develop; all services are coordinated through the local CCB.	Special education is an educational service that is instructional in nature. Related services (for example OT, PT, transportation) are provided when they are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from the special education; all services listed in an IEP are the responsibility of the local school district.
Delivery of Services	Natural Environments EI services are provided in places where infants and toddlers without disabilities participate, such as the child's home, child care setting or in other areas in the community). The family and child's normal routines of the day are used as natural opportunities for learning.	Least Restrictive Environments (LRE) To the maximum extent appropriate children with disabilities and/or special learning needs are educated with children who are nondisabled. Special classes, schooling, or other removal of the child from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature and severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.
Costs of Services	EI services included in a child's IFSP are provided at no cost to families. See *A Family Guide: Funding EI Services* for more information.	Special education and related services are provided at no cost to the child and within a "Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)."
Recipient of Services	Recipients of supports and services may be the infant/toddler and/or the child's family.	Special education and related services are provided to the child or on behalf of the child.
Procedural Safeguards and Dispute Resolution	Described in *Notice of Child and Family Rights and Procedural Safeguards in the EI Colorado System*. A copy of the brochure is available from your service coordinator or by going to www.eicolorado.org.	Described in *Parent and Child Rights in Special Education: Procedural Safeguards Notice*. A copy of this document will be provided to families by the local administrative unit prior to the evaluation to determine eligibility for preschool special education services or can be obtained by going to http://www.cde.state.co.us/spedlaw/2011proceduralsafeguards.
Transition	An IFSP meeting is held to develop a Transition Plan for every child between the time the child turns two years three months and two years nine months. The local school district will be notified if the child is potentially eligible for preschool special education services, unless the parent opts out of this notification. A transition conference is held for each child at least 90 days before the child's third birthday, and as early as nine months before the child's third birthday. The transition conference will include a representative from the child's school district.	Prior to the child's third birthday an evaluation will be completed to determine if the child is eligible for preschool special education services. If the child is determined eligible for preschool special education services, an IEP will be developed by the child's third birthday.

Appendix B: Documents and Information

The documents and information listed below are intended to help prepare you for your child's transition. It is a good idea to keep this information in one place. This may seem difficult, but once you begin to develop the habit, you will save time in trying to find documents or needed information. It is a good idea to keep this information in a notebook or binder.

- ❑ A copy of your child's most recent IFSP.
- ❑ Developmental evaluations or assessment information.
- ❑ Name and contact information of your child's Primary Care Physician as well as any other doctor/therapists your child currently sees.
- ❑ Immunization records.
- ❑ If your child has any allergies, copies of a notice to give to service providers.
- ❑ List of medications, dosage and frequency for your child, if applicable.
- ❑ A copy of identification such as social security card, passport or birth certificate.
- ❑ Information about programs and resources in your community.
- ❑ A recent photograph of your child and/or family.
- ❑ A summary of information about your child, such as words or signs your child uses, activities your child enjoys, likes and dislikes, ways to soothe and calm your child. Think about including information about your hopes and vision for your child—think about the future as well as today's needs.
- ❑ Any other information about your child you are often asked for.

Early Intervention Colorado
for Infants, Toddlers & Families

For more information, call

1-888-777-4041

or visit

www.eicolorado.org

COLORADO
Department of Human Services

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A Family Overview

The Early Intervention Colorado Program at a Glance

Early Intervention Colorado
for Infants, Toddlers & Families

www.eicolorado.org

All children are unique with individual strengths and talents. The presence of a developmental delay or special need is not the defining characteristic of any child.

The purpose of this brochure is to provide the basic information needed to understand the Early Intervention (EI) Colorado program.

What is the EI Colorado Program?

The EI Colorado program provides developmental supports and services to children birth through two years of age who have special developmental needs. It can help improve your child's ability to develop and learn. It can also help you and your family learn ways to support and promote your child's development within your family activities and community life.

The EI Colorado program provides EI services to help infants and toddlers grow and develop, and to help their family support them in this process. EI services help children in developing positive social relationships, being able to acquire and use knowledge and skills, and using their behaviors and skills to get their needs met. EI is a voluntary program and does not discriminate based on race, culture, religion, income level, or disability.

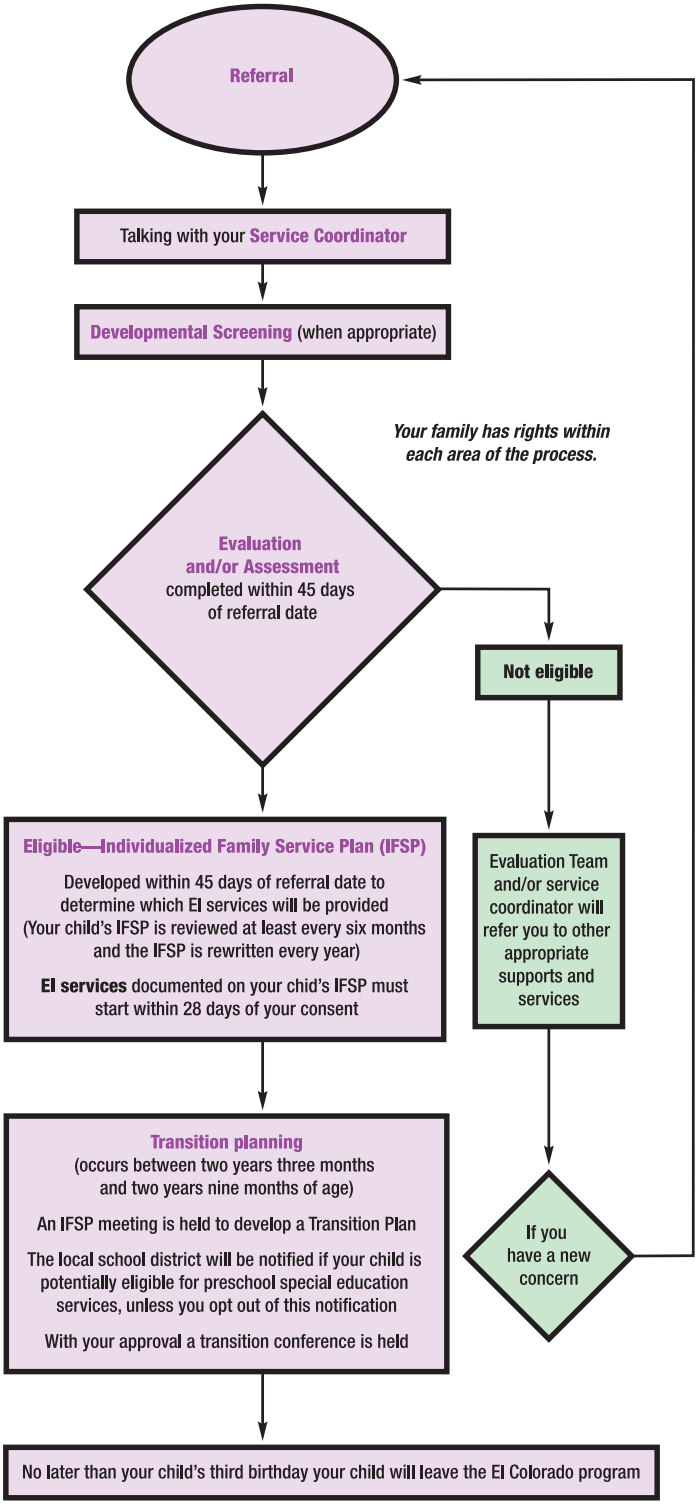
Why EI Services Work for Infants and Toddlers

The term "early" is important because research shows that the first three years are the most important time for developing and learning in a child's life. The goal of the EI Colorado program is to open a window of opportunity for families to help their children with special needs develop to their full potential. It may also prevent or decrease the need for special help later during the school age years.

How Does a Family Access the EI Colorado Program?

The flowchart on the following page explains all the steps within the EI Colorado program, from the initial referral and determining eligibility through planning the transition out of the EI Colorado program. Each step of this flow chart is described in more detail in the remainder of this brochure.

Families know their children best, and must be respected and valued members in decision-making about what their child needs.


Referral
Talking with your Service Coordinator
Developmental Screening (when appropriate)
Your family has rights within each area of the process.
Evaluation and/or Assessment completed within 45 days of referral date
Not eligible
Eligible—Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)
Developed within 45 days of referral date to determine which EI services will be provided (Your child's IFSP is reviewed at least every six months and the IFSP is rewritten every year)
EI services documented on your chid's IFSP must start within 28 days of your consent
Evaluation Team and/or service coordinator will refer you to other appropriate supports and services
Transition planning
(occurs between two years three months and two years nine months of age)
An IFSP meeting is held to develop a Transition Plan
The local school district will be notified if your child is potentially eligible for preschool special education services, unless you opt out of this notification
With your approval a transition conference is held
If you have a new concern
No later than your child's third birthday your child will leave the EI Colorado program

Children grow and develop in the context of relationships with their families and communities.

Step 1: Referral to the EI Colorado Program

If you or someone who cares about your child has concerns about his or her development, EI services may help. You can request an evaluation and/or assessment at no cost to you to answer questions about your child's development and determine whether your child may benefit from the EI services and supports offered through the EI Colorado program. If a doctor or other professional involved in your child's life, such as child care provider or a home visiting nurse has screened your child's development, it is important for the EI Colorado program to have a copy of this information at the time of referral.

There are local agencies known as Community Centered Boards (CCBs) throughout Colorado who are responsible for implementing the local EI Colorado program. To be connected to the CCB in your county, you can call 1-888-777-4041 or visit www.eicolorado.org, click on "Make a Referral" and then "Find Your Local Community Centered Board" and choose the appropriate city, county or zip code for your family.

Other people may also contact the CCB in your county on behalf of your family, such as a doctor, child care provider, neighbor, or family member. However, no evaluation and/or assessment of your child, or development of an individualized plan, or provision of EI services, will be provided without your consent.

Step 2: Meeting Your Service Coordinator

A service coordinator is a person who works with you during your child's involvement with the EI Colorado program to assist you in accessing services and to inform you of your legal rights. Federal and state laws require that all children and families served by the EI Colorado program have a service coordinator. A service coordinator is your main contact and is assigned to each infant or toddler and their family within three business days of the referral being received.

Service Coordinators:

- Help families identify their strengths and needs, find resources, think about decisions the family needs to make, coordinate all the services specified on the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), and
- Make sure that the rights of the family are protected.

Step 3: Screening Your Child's Development

Depending on the reason of referral and if your child's development has not already been screened, a request may be made to screen your child's development. A developmental screening is a quick look at how your child is developing and learning. A screening can only occur with your written permission and you will receive the results of this screening to help you plan next steps.

Step 4: Having an Evaluation and/or Assessment

Your service coordinator will work with you to schedule an evaluation and/or assessment for your child. All infants and toddlers referred to the EI Colorado program have the right to a free evaluation and/or assessment. Information

All children have the right to belong, to be welcomed, and to participate fully in the typical places and activities of their communities.

from the evaluation and/or assessment is used to determine your child's eligibility and will look at all areas of your child's development. It is a process that will help you to better understand your child's developmental strengths and needs and how EI services can help. Unless you request otherwise, the evaluation and/or assessment must be completed within 45 days of the referral date. You must sign a written permission form before any evaluation and/or assessment of your child occurs.

Your child and family may receive EI services if:

- your family and child live in Colorado;
- your child is birth through two years of age; and
- your child is eligible based on either of the following:

I. Developmental Delay

A child may be determined eligible because he or she has a significant delay in one or more of the following areas:

- **Adaptive development** (taking care of one's self when doing things like feeding or dressing)
- **Cognitive development** (thinking and learning skills)
- **Communication development** (understanding and using sounds, gestures, and words)
- **Physical development** (moving, seeing, and hearing)
- **Social emotional development** (responding to and developing relationships with other people)

II. Based on a Diagnosis

A child may be determined eligible because he or she has been diagnosed with a condition that will likely result in a significant delay in development, and who may or may not currently have a delay. A list of diagnoses that will qualify a child for the EI Colorado program is available at www.eicolorado.org. The Established Condition Database is located in the "Make a Referral" tab and it is called "Database of All Diagnosed Conditions." If your child has a condition that establishes their eligibility, your child will still need an assessment to help plan for what services may be needed.

Your concerns and the needs of your child will determine which specialists will be involved in your child's evaluation and/or assessment. This will be scheduled at times and locations that are convenient for your family. You will receive prior written notice about when and where your child's evaluation and/or assessment will be held.

The results of your child's evaluation and/or assessment will be explained to you to highlight your child's strengths and skills, as well as areas of difficulty and next steps.

If it is determined that your child is not eligible, the evaluation team and/or your service coordinator will help you find other appropriate supports and services in your community. If you do not agree with the results, you have the right to object to the decision and to file a complaint. If you agree with the decision, you may always re-contact the CCB in the future if you have renewed concerns about your child's development.

Children with and without special needs learn important things from each other.

Step 5: Making a Plan for Services— Your Individualized Family Service Plan

The IFSP is your family's written plan for EI services. With your consent, your child, if eligible, will have an initial IFSP developed within 45 days of the referral date. The IFSP meeting, which is usually a 2nd meeting held after the evaluation and/or assessment, must be held at times and locations that are convenient for your family and is family-centered. This means that you will be an active team member and the key decision maker throughout the planning process.

The IFSP is based on information from your child's evaluation and/or assessment and from the concerns, resources, and priorities that you identify through a conversational interview about your day. It will list the EI services your child needs to develop and learn, and the services your family needs to support your child's development. In addition, it will list the duties of everyone involved. Some of the help you receive may come from your own family and friends. Medical and other services that your child needs that are provided by specialists outside of the EI Colorado program, will be documented on the IFSP, but are not an EI service provided by your CCB.

EI Services offered through the EI Colorado program…

- Assistive Technology Services
- Audiology Services
- Developmental Intervention Services
- Health Services
- Medical Services
- Nursing Services
- Nutrition Services
- Occupational Therapy Services
- Physical Therapy Services
- Psychological Services
- Sign Language and Cued Language Services
- Social and Emotional Services
- Speech Language Pathology Services
- Transportation Services
- Vision Services

Your service coordinator is responsible for explaining the IFSP process to you. He or she will make sure the IFSP is written and will answer any questions you have. Your signature on the IFSP shows your participation and your agreement with the plan. However, if you disagree with all or part of the IFSP, you have the right to share your concerns and ask for changes. You may accept some services and refuse others, or refuse all of the services suggested to you. You may stop a service any time you wish. A copy of the IFSP must be given to you within ten (10) days after it is completed and signed.

Step 6: Putting Your IFSP Into Action

You must give written permission or consent before any EI services can begin, end, or change. EI services specified on your child's IFSP are required to begin within 28 days of your consent for services.

Your child's IFSP is reviewed at least every six months. However, your needs and resources may change sooner, so more frequent reviews can be held to make changes. It is also rewritten at least once a year. Once completed, the

Everyday routines, activities and places that are defined by the family offer countless opportunities for children to learn and develop.

IFSP becomes a part of your child's EI record that is kept confidential by the specialists working with you and your child. It cannot be shared with anyone without your written permission. Your family has the right to review and, if necessary, correct or comment on EI records related to your child's IFSP.

Step 7: Transition Planning

Between the time your child is two years three months and two years nine months, the following are activities will occur as part of the transition planning process:

- If your child has not met all of the IFSP outcomes and is demonstrating a developmental delay in the areas of thinking, moving, communicating, relating to others, or seeing or hearing, he or she is considered potentially eligible for preschool special education services and his or her information will be shared with the school district unless you have chosen to opt out of this notification.
- An IFSP meeting will be held to develop a Transition Plan to outline steps and services to ensure a successful transition out of the EI Colorado program.
- With your approval a transition conference will be held.

No later than your child's third birthday your child will leave the EI Colorado program.

Where To Get More Information

The best source of additional information about anything in this booklet is the CCB in your community. Additional information is available on the website or from your local Community Centered Board.

You may also contact the state EI Colorado office at the Colorado Department of Human Services by calling 303-866-5916 or 1-888-777-4041.

Other Organizations That You May Find Helpful Include:

The **ARC of Colorado** advocacy services for persons with developmental disabilities and their families.

- 303-864-9334 or toll-free 1-800-333-7690
- www.thearcofco.org

Autism Society of Colorado provides information, support and education for families who have a child diagnosed with autism.

- 720-214-0794 or 877-COLOASD
- www.autismcolorado.org

El Grupo Vida is a network of Spanish speaking families who have children with disabilities or special needs

- 303-904-6073 or info@elgrupovida.org
- www.elgrupovida.org

All family members benefit when they are supported to maintain their everyday lives and relationships.

Family Voices of Colorado is a chapter of the national, grassroots organization made up of families and friends who care for and about children with special health care needs. The primary goal of Family Voices is to ensure that children's health is addressed amidst change in public and private health care systems.

- Toll-free 1-800-881-8272
- www.familyvoicesco.org

Parent to Parent of Colorado provides parent-to-parent connections to support families on the journey of parenting a child with special needs. Parent to Parent of Colorado provides the following supports and services for families:

- One-on-one matching of parents to other parents
- Listserv of parents sharing resources and offering support
- Toll-free number for information (1-877-472-7201) or e-mail at mail@p2p-co.org.
- Website full of resources (www.p2p-co.org)

PEAK Parent Center provides information, support, workshops, and technical assistance for parents of children with disabilities and to professionals who work with children with disabilities. Parent advisors are available to assist families with the IFSP and Individualized Education Program (IEP) processes. PEAK Parent Center disseminates many printed materials including a monthly calendar of activities around the state.

- 1-800-284-0251
- www.peakparent.org
- info@peakparent.org

Disability Law Colorado protects and promotes the rights of people with disabilities and older people through direct legal representation, advocacy, education, and legal analysis. Questions are answered and limited technical advice provided free of charge.

- 303-722-0300 or 1-800-288-1376
- www.disabilitylawcolorado.org

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the EI Colorado program, call

1-888-777-4041

or visit

www.eicolorado.org

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Family Rights

Notice of Child and Family Rights and Procedural Safeguards

in the Early Intervention Colorado System

Early Intervention Colorado
for Infants, Toddlers & Families

www.eicolorado.org • 888-777-4041

Introduction

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) is a federal law which includes provisions for Early Intervention (EI) Services for eligible infants and toddlers, birth through two years of age, with disabilities and their families. These provisions form Part C of the IDEA and can be found in federal regulations at 34 CFR Part 303.

The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) is the lead agency that administers the early intervention program in Colorado known as Early Intervention Colorado (EI Colorado). The CDHS contracts with twenty local agencies statewide that are designated as Community Centered Boards (CCBs) to provide services to infants, toddlers and their families. The EI Colorado Program is designed to maximize family involvement and ensure parental consent during each step of the early intervention process, beginning with referral and determination of eligibility and continuing through service delivery and transition at three years of age.

Families involved with the EI Colorado Program have special rights and procedural safeguards under the federal law to protect parents and children. Families must be informed about these rights and procedural safeguards throughout their time in the EI Colorado Program so that they can have an active role in the EI services[1] provided to their family.

The "Notice of Child and Family Rights and Procedural Safeguards" brochure is an official notice of the rights and safeguards of children and families as defined under Part C of the IDEA federal regulations. Information about child and family rights and procedural safeguards are provided to families by the local EI Colorado Program at a CCB or other appointed participating agency or EI service provider.

Service coordinators working with families can suggest additional materials to help families understand their rights and procedural safeguards.

Within the EI Colorado Program you, as a parent, have the following family rights and procedural safeguards:

- The opportunity for a multidisciplinary evaluation and assessment and the development of an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) within forty-five (45) calendar days from the date of referral to the EI Colorado Program;
- If eligible, the opportunity to receive appropriate EI services within twenty-eight (28) calendar days from the date of consent for your child and family as documented in an IFSP;
- The opportunity to receive evaluation, assessment, IFSP development, service coordination and assurance of procedural safeguards at no cost;

1 Part C of the IDEA regulations define EI services as services that "are designed to meet the developmental needs of an infant or toddler with a disability and the needs of the family to assist appropriately in the infant or toddler's development as identified by the IFSP Team, in any one or more of the following areas including: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, and adaptive development".

- The right to refuse evaluations, assessments and EI services, including a refusal of some portion of the services documented on the IFSP;
- The right to be invited to, and participate in, all meetings in which a decision is expected to be made regarding a proposal to change the identification, evaluation or placement of your child, or the provision of EI services to your child or family;
- The right to receive timely written notice before a change is proposed or refused in the identification, evaluation or placement of your child, or in the provision of EI services to your child or family;
- The opportunity to receive EI services in natural environments within your family's routines, to the maximum extent appropriate, to meet your child's developmental needs;
- The right to maintenance of the confidentiality of personally identifiable information;
- The right to inspect and review and, if appropriate, amend records;
- The opportunity to file a state complaint; and
- The right to request mediation and/or due process procedures to resolve disagreements between you and the EI Colorado Program or EI service provider.

Procedural Safeguards

Throughout your involvement with the EI Colorado Program you are assured of certain procedural safeguards and entitled to be notified of them. These are described below.

A. Prior Written Notice

Prior written notice must be given to you within a reasonable time before a CCB or EI service provider proposes or refuses to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, placement of your child, or the provision of appropriate EI services to your child and your family.

The notice must be sufficiently detailed to inform you about:

- The action that is being proposed or refused;
- The reason(s) for taking the action;
- All procedural safeguards that are available under the EI Colorado Program; including a description of mediation; and
- The EI Colorado Program's complaint procedures, including a description of how to file a state complaint or a due process complaint, and the timelines for those procedures.

The written notice must be:

- Written in language understandable to the general public and provided in your native language unless clearly not feasible to do so;
- If your native language or other mode of communication is not a written language, the CCB or EI service provider participating in the EI Colorado Program shall take steps to ensure that:

- The notice is translated orally or by other means to you in your native language or other mode of communication;
- You understand the notice;
- There is written evidence that the requirements of this section have been met; and
- If you are deaf, blind, unable to read or have no written language, the mode of communication must be that normally used by you (such as sign language, Braille or oral communication).

B. Informed Parental Consent

Consent means that:

- You are fully informed of all information about the activity(ies) for which consent is sought. This information is provided in your native language unless clearly not feasible to do so, or other appropriate mode of communication;

Native Language, where used with reference to persons of limited English proficiency, means the language or mode of communication normally used by the parent of an eligible child, except for evaluations and assessments in which native language means the language normally used by the child, if developmentally appropriate.

- You understand and agree in writing to the carrying out of the activity(ies) for which your consent is sought, and the consent describes the activity(ies) and lists the EI records (if any) that will be released and to whom; and
- You understand that the granting of consent is voluntary on your part and may be revoked at any time. If you revoke consent, it does not apply to an action that occurred before the consent was revoked.

Your written consent must be obtained before a developmental screening and/or the initial evaluation and assessment of your child is conducted. Your written consent must also be obtained before EI services are provided. If you do not consent, the CCB or service coordinator shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that you:

- Are fully aware of the nature of the evaluation and assessment and the EI services that would be available; and
- Understand that your child will not be able to receive a developmental screening, evaluation, assessment or EI services unless consent is given.

In addition, as the parent of a child eligible for the EI Colorado Program, you may determine whether your child or other family members will accept or refuse any EI service(s) under this program. You may also refuse such a service after first accepting it without jeopardizing other EI services your child receives under this program.

Finally, you have the right to receive written notice of, and give written consent to, the exchange of any personally identifiable information

collected, maintained or used, by the El Colorado Program consistent with federal and state law.

C. Records

The following definitions are used in this section: (1) "Destruction/destroy" means physical destruction of the record or ensuring that the personal identifiers are removed from a record so the record is no longer personally identifiable; (2) "Early intervention records" or "record(s)" mean all records regarding a child that are required to be collected, maintained, or used under Part C of the IDEA and (3) "Participating agency" means any individual, agency or institution which collects, maintains or uses personally identifiable information, or from which information is obtained, under Part C of the IDEA.

I. Access to Records

Your CCB must give you the opportunity to inspect and review all EI records relating to developmental screening, evaluation and assessment, eligibility determination, development and implementation of IFSPs, provision of EI services, complaints pertaining to your child and any other portion of the El Colorado Program involving records about your child and your family, unless restricted under authority of applicable state law over such matters as guardianship, separation, or divorce.

The right to access EI records includes:

- The CCB must provide, at no cost to you, a copy of each developmental screening, evaluation, child and/or family assessment and IFSP as soon as possible after each IFSP meeting, and, in no case more than ten (10) calendar days after the request has been made.
- The CCB or EI service provider must comply with a request for records without unnecessary delay and before any meeting regarding an IFSP or hearing relating to identification, developmental screening, evaluation, placement or provision of EI services for your child and family and, in no case more than ten (10) calendar days after the request has been made.
- The CCB will give you an initial copy of your child's EI record, at no cost to you.
- A CCB or EI service provider may charge a fee for additional copies of records which are made for you if the fee does not effectively prevent you from exercising your right to inspect and review those records; however, you cannot be charged a fee to search for or retrieve information.
- If any record includes information on more than one child, you may inspect and review, or be informed of, only the information relating to your child.
- A response from the CCB or EI service provider to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of the record.
- Having someone who is representing you inspect and review the record.

- A CCB or EI service provider will assume that you have the authority to inspect and review records relating to your child unless the agency or provider has been advised that you do not have the authority under applicable Colorado law.
- Each CCB or EI service provider shall keep a written record of parties obtaining access to records collected, maintained or used by the program, except access by parents and authorized employees of the CCB or EI service provider, including the name of the party, the date access was given and the purpose for which the party is authorized to use the child's EI record.
- Each CCB or EI service provider shall provide you, upon request, a list of the types and locations of records collected, maintained or used by the agency or provider.

If you believe that information in records collected, maintained or used by the EI Colorado Program is inaccurate or misleading, or violates the privacy or other rights of your child or family, you may request that the CCB or EI service provider amend the information.

- The CCB or EI service provider must decide whether to amend the information in accordance with the request within a reasonable period of time of receiving the request.
- If the CCB or EI service provider refuses to amend the information as you request, you must be informed of the refusal and be advised of the right to a hearing.

The CCB or EI service provider, on request, must provide an opportunity for a hearing to challenge information in EI records to ensure that it is not inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the child.

- If, as a result of the hearing, the CCB determines that the information is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the child, it must amend the information accordingly and inform you in writing.
- If as a result of the hearing the CCB decides that the information is not inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the child, you must be informed of your right to place in the records of your child a written statement commenting on the information, and any reasons for disagreeing with the decision of the CCB.

Any statement of explanation placed in the records of your child under this section must:

- Be maintained by the CCB or EI service provider as part of the records of your child as long as the record or contested portion (that part of the record with which you disagree) is maintained by the CCB or EI service provider; and
- If the records of your child or the contested portion are disclosed by the CCB or EI service provider to any party, the statement must also be disclosed to the party.

A hearing held under this section must be conducted according to the procedures under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which is found in statute at 20 U.S.C. §1232g, and in federal regulations at 34 CFR Part 99.22.

II. Confidentiality of Information

Parental consent must be obtained before personally identifiable information is:

- Disclosed to anyone other than authorized representatives, officials or employees of participating agencies collecting maintaining or using information by the EI Colorado Program, unless authorized to do so under FERPA (34 CFR 99.31); or
- Used for any purpose other than meeting a requirement under the EI Colorado Program's policies and procedures.

The following safeguards must be in place to ensure confidentiality of records:

- Each CCB or EI service provider must protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information during collection, storage, disclosure and destruction;
- One official from each CCB or the EI service provider must be responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information;
- All persons collecting or using personally identifiable information must receive training or instruction regarding EI Colorado Program policies and procedures which comply with Part C of the IDEA and FERPA;
- Each CCB or EI service provider must maintain for public inspection a current listing of the names and positions of those employees within the agency who have access to personally identifiable information and;
- The CCB or EI service provider must inform you when personally identifiable information collected, maintained or used by the EI Colorado Program is no longer needed to provide services to your child and the information must be destroyed, at your request. The CCB must keep your child's records for six (6) years. Permanent records of your child's name, address, phone number, attendance and year completed may be maintained without time limitations.

III. Administrative Unit Opt-Out Policy

The EI Colorado Program at the CDHS is responsible for ensuring that all CCBs notify the school district and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) when a child receiving EI services may be eligible for preschool special education services under Part B of the IDEA. This notification only includes the following personally identifiable information for your child and family:

- Child's name
- Date of birth
- Parent(s) contact information, including name(s), address(es) and phone number(s)

Prior to sending your information, your service coordinator will explain your choice to opt out of the school district notification. The process is described below:

- Between the time your child turns two years, three months of age and two years, nine months of age, or as soon as possible if your child entered the EI Colorado Program at a later age, personally identifi-

able information will be sent to the school district to initiate a smooth transition process to potential preschool special education services using an "AU/School District Notification" form.

- This information will be sent after ten (10) calendar days from the date entered on the "AU/School District Notification" form unless you indicate your preference to opt out of this notification in writing on the form.
- You may change your decision at any time by providing notice in writing to your service coordinator.
- If you decide to opt out of the school district notification, your local school district will not be able to determine if your child is eligible for preschool special education services.

D. State Dispute Resolution Options

The EI Colorado Program at the CDHS offers three (3) options for resolving disputes that are available at no cost to families: mediation; state complaint procedures; and due process hearings.

I. Mediation

A statewide mediation system is available to ensure that you may voluntarily access a non-adversarial process for the resolution of individual disputes regarding the EI Colorado Program. Mediation is available for any type of dispute at any time, including prior to the filing of a due process complaint. Mediation is voluntary on the part of all parties. The EI Colorado Program at the CDHS identifies individual mediators to provide EI mediation services. Mediators are required to undergo training as a condition of serving as mediators. The EI Colorado Program at the CDHS maintains a list of qualified and impartial mediators who are trained in effective mediation techniques and are knowledgeable in laws, regulations, policies and procedures related to the provision of EI services.

About Mediators and Hearing Officers…

Mediators used in mediation (and hearing officers used in due process hearings, as described in the next section) must be "impartial." Impartial means that the person appointed to serve as a mediator or hearing officer of the due process proceeding:

- **Is not an employee of any agency or program involved in providing EI services or care of the child;**
- **Does not have a personal or professional interest that would conflict with his or her objectivity in implementing the process;**
- **Is not an employee of an agency or program solely because the person is paid by the EI Colorado Program to implement the disagreement resolution process; and**
- **Is selected on a random basis.**

Mediation cannot be used to deny or delay your right to a due process hearing or any other rights. You can request mediation alone when filing a complaint or simultaneously with a request for a due process hearing and may refuse or withdraw from the mediation process at any time.

A request for mediation shall be in writing, signed and dated by you or, with your consent, your representative. If you wish to file a request for mediation, it is the responsibility of the service coordinator and/or the CCB to assist you in your native language or other mode of communication to the maximum extent possible, to prepare the request in written form. If your primary mode of communication is sign language or Braille, the request can be made utilizing your primary mode of communication.

If any party other than you requests mediation on your behalf, it may only be initiated with your consent. Once your written consent has been obtained to engage in mediation, evidence of that written consent will be attached to the request for mediation. The CCB or EI service provider's request that you agree to participate in mediation will be made in writing in your native language, to the maximum extent possible, and in a manner understandable to you.

The mediation process, including a written mediation agreement, will be completed within thirty (30) calendar days of the receipt of the request for mediation unless the mediation was requested at the same time as a due process hearing or complaint investigation. In that case, the mediation must be completed within fifteen (15) calendar days to ensure enough time for completion of the due process proceeding or complaint investigation by the EI Colorado Program at the CDHS.

Each session in the mediation process must be scheduled in a timely manner and must be held in a location that is convenient to the parties (parent and CCB or EI service provider) to the dispute.

If the parties resolve a dispute through the mediation process, the parties must execute a legally binding agreement that sets forth the resolution of the dispute and:

- States that all discussions that occurred during the mediation process shall remain confidential and may not be used as evidence in any subsequent due process hearing or civil proceeding; and
- Is signed by both the parent and a representative of the EI Colorado Program at the CDHS who has the authority to bind the agency to what has been agreed upon.

A written, signed mediation agreement is enforceable in any state court of competent jurisdiction or in a district court of the United States.

The EI Colorado Program at the CDHS must bear the cost of the mediation process, including the costs of meetings or sessions described above.

II. State Complaint Procedures

If you disagree with your CCB or EI service provider participating in the EI Colorado Program on the identification, evaluation, placement of your child in EI services, or provision of appropriate EI services to your child or family, you may request a timely resolution of your concerns.

An individual or organization, including those from another state, may file a written, signed complaint that any CCB or EI service provider is violat-

ing a requirement of the Part C of the IDEA legislation. The EI Colorado Program at the CDHS widely disseminates complaint procedures included in this brochure, to parents and other interested individuals, including parent training centers, protection and advocacy agencies, and other appropriate entities. The complaint must include:

- A statement that the CCB, EI Colorado Program at the CDHS, public agency or EI service provider has violated a requirement of Part C of the IDEA;
- The facts on which the statement is based;
- The signature and contact information for the individual filing the complaint; and
- The name of the child, address where the child resides, a description of the nature of the problem, facts relating to the problem and a proposed resolution of the problem, if alleging violations with respect to a specific child.

The individual or organization filing the complaint must forward a copy of the complaint to the CCB or EI service provider serving the child at the same time the party files the complaint with the EI Colorado Program complaint officer at the CDHS.

Complaints must be filed and received by the EI Colorado Program at the CDHS within one (1) year of the alleged violation.

Once the EI Colorado Program at the CDHS has received the complaint, the complaint officer has sixty (60) calendar days, unless exceptional circumstances exist to:

- Investigate the complaint, including conducting an independent, on-site investigation, if necessary;
- Make an independent determination as to whether or not a violation of Part C of the IDEA has occurred after reviewing all relevant information; and
- Issue a written decision to the complainant that addresses each allegation in the complaint and that contains related facts and conclusions as well as the reasons for the final decision.

The individual or organization filing the complaint has the opportunity to submit additional information, either orally or in writing, about the complaint.

The CCB, EI Colorado Program at the CDHS, or the EI service provider must be given an opportunity to respond to the complaint and there must be an opportunity for the person who filed a complaint and the CCB or EI service provider to voluntarily engage in mediation.

If the final decision indicates that appropriate services were/are not being provided, the EI Colorado Program at the CDHS must ensure that the CCB will address how to remediate the denial of the services including, as appropriate, the awarding of monetary reimbursement or other corrective action appropriate to the needs of the child and the child's family. This must include procedures for effective implementation of the decision, if needed, including technical assistance activities, negotiations and corrective actions to achieve compliance.

The EI Colorado Program at the CDHS must also ensure the CCB will

address appropriate future provision of EI services for all infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

If a written complaint is received that is also the subject of a due process hearing or contains multiple issues, of which one or more are part of that hearing, the EI Colorado Program at the CDHS must set aside any part of the complaint that is being addressed in the due process hearing until the conclusion of the hearing. However, any issue in the complaint that is not part of the due process action must be resolved within the sixty (60) calendar day timeline using the complaint procedures described above.

If an issue is raised in a complaint filed under this section that has previously been decided in a due process hearing involving the same parties:

- The hearing decision is binding; and
- The EI Colorado Program at the CDHS must inform the complainant to that effect.

Any complaint alleging a CCB's or EI service provider(s) failure to implement a due process decision must be resolved through the EI Colorado Program at the CDHS.

III. Due Process Hearings

A due process hearing is a formal procedure conducted by an impartial hearing officer and is another alternative for families seeking to file a complaint. Families seeking a due process hearing must submit their request in writing directly to the EI Colorado Program at the CDHS. The due process hearing must be completed, and a written decision mailed to each of the parties within thirty (30) calendar days of the receipt of the request. Mediation, if attempted, must occur within the same thirty (30) days. A hearing officer may grant specific extensions of time beyond the period set at the request of either party.

Hearing officers must:

- Have knowledge about the provisions of Part C of the IDEA and the needs of, and EI services available for, children and their families; and
- Perform the following duties:
  - Listen to the presentation of relevant viewpoints about the due process complaint, examine all information relevant to the issues, and seek to reach a timely resolution of the due process complaint.
  - Provide a record of the proceedings at the cost of the EI Colorado Program at the CDHS, including a written decision (hearing only).

You have the rights listed below in any due process hearing carried out under this section:

- To be accompanied and advised by a lawyer (at your expense) and/or by individuals with special knowledge or training about EI services for children;
- To present evidence and confront, cross examine, and compel the attendance of witnesses;
- To prohibit the introduction of any evidence at the hearing that has not been disclosed to you at least five (5) calendar days before the hearing;
- To obtain a written or electronic verbatim (word-by-word) transcription of the proceeding at no cost to you; and

- To obtain written findings of fact and decisions at no cost to you.

The due process hearing described in this section must be carried out at a time and place that is reasonably convenient to you.

Any party not satisfied with the findings and decision of the impartial due process hearing has the right to bring a civil action in state or federal court. During the time period (pendency) of any proceeding involving a parent or EI service provider complaint, unless the CCB or EI service provider participating in the EI Colorado Program and you otherwise agree, your child and family will continue to receive the appropriate EI services in the setting identified on the IFSP to which you have consented.

If the complaint between you and the CCB or EI service provider involves the implementation of initial EI services, your child and family must be provided those services that are not in dispute.

E. Surrogate Parents

In the following circumstances a surrogate parent that meets requirements will be designated by the CCB to ensure that the rights of a child are protected.

The rights of children in an EI Colorado Program are protected when:

- No parent can be identified;
- The CCB or other public agency after reasonable efforts:
  - Cannot locate a parent; or
  - The child is a ward of the State under the laws of Colorado.

The EI Colorado Program at CDHS must make reasonable efforts to ensure the CCB makes an assignment of a surrogate parent not more than thirty (30) days after it is determined a child needs a surrogate parent.

An individual is assigned to act as a "surrogate" for the parent according to the procedures that follow and has the same rights as a parent once assigned:

- Surrogate parents are selected by the CCB in the manner allowable under Colorado law; and
- A person selected as a surrogate parent should:
  - Have no interest that conflicts with the interest of the child he or she represents;
  - Have knowledge and skills that ensure adequate representation of the child including training offered by the EI Colorado Program;
  - Not be an employee of the EI Colorado Program or any other public agency that provides EI services, education, care or other services to the child or to any family member of the child.
  - Not be an employee solely because he or she is paid by a CCB or EI service provider to serve as a surrogate parent; and
  - Reside in the same general geographic area as the child, whenever possible.

A surrogate parent may represent the child in all matters relating to:

- The evaluation and assessment of the child;
- The development and implementation of the child's IFSP, including annual evaluations and periodic reviews;
- The ongoing provision of EI Services to the child; and
- Any other rights established under the EI Colorado Program policies and procedures.

F. Contact Information

You are encouraged to work with your CCB and/or EI service provider to resolve any disagreements before filing a complaint, however, you have the right to file a complaint, request mediation, or a due process hearing at any time. To find out more information about complaint procedures in Colorado, you may either contact your local EI Colorado Program at:

Community Centered Board Label (with phone number)

or, receive further information from the state lead agency for the EI Colorado Program at the CDHS using the contact information below.

Direct phone: 303-866-5916
Toll free: 1-888-777-4041
Fax: 303-866-5200

G. Glossary

Assessment—The ongoing procedures used by qualified personnel to identify:

- The child's unique strengths and needs and the services appropriate to meet those needs throughout the period of a child's eligibility; and
- The resources, priorities and concerns of the family and the supports and services necessary to enhance the family's capacity to meet the developmental needs of their infant or toddler with a disability.

Consent—The parent has been fully informed of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought in the parent's native language, the parent understands and agrees in writing to the carrying out of the activity, it is voluntary and can be revoked at any time and if revoked, the revocation does not apply to an action that occurred before the consent was revoked.

Disclosure—Permits access to, or the release, transfer or other communication of, early intervention records, or the personally identifiable information contained in those records, to any party, by any means, including oral, written or electronic means.

Evaluation—The procedures used by qualified personnel to determine a child's initial and continuing eligibility for EI services in the EI Colorado Program, consistent with the definition of "an infant or toddler with a disability", including determining the status of the child in each of the developmental areas. Developmental areas include: Adaptive development, Cognitive development, Communication development, Physical development (including fine motor, gross motor, vision and hearing), and Social and emotional development. An initial evaluation refers to the child's evaluation to determine his or her initial eligibility.

Early Intervention Service Provider—An EI service provider means anyone (whether public, private or nonprofit) that provides EI services under the EI Colorado Program

Family Assessment—Family-directed assessment designed to identify and describe, in the words of the family, the resources, priorities, and concerns of the family and the identification of the supports and services necessary to enhance the family's capacity to meet the developmental needs of the child. Must be conducted in the native language of the family unless clearly not feasible to do so. Must be voluntary and based on information obtained through an assessment tool and also through a personal interview with the family using a family assessment tool.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)—A written plan for providing EI Services to eligible children and their families that:

- Is developed jointly by the family and appropriate, qualified personnel providing EI Services;
- Is based on the multidisciplinary evaluation and assessment of the child and the assessment of the strengths and needs of the child's family, as required, and includes services necessary to enhance the development of the child and the capacity of the family to meet the special needs of the child.

Mediation—A voluntary process freely agreed to by parents and providers to attempt to resolve disagreements. Neither party is required to participate in the mediation process and both parties must approve any agreement reached. Mediation may not be used to deny or delay a family's right to a due process hearing or any other rights.

Multidisciplinary—An evaluation group that is made up of qualified people who have different areas of training and experience.

Natural Environment—Settings that are natural or typical for a same-aged peer who does not have a disability. May include the home or community settings.

Opt Out—Procedural safeguard to provide the parent with a choice to prevent the sharing of personally identifiable information with the school district for children that are potentially eligible for preschool special education services.

Parent—

- A biological or adoptive parent of a child;
- A foster parent, unless state law, regulations, or contractual obligations with a state or local entity prohibit a foster parent from acting as a parent;

- A guardian generally authorized to act as the child's parent, or authorized to make EI, educational, health or developmental decisions for the child, but not the state if the child is a ward of the state;
- An individual acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent, including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative, with whom the child lives, or an individual who is legally responsible for the child's welfare; or
- A surrogate parent who has been appointed in accordance with the EI Colorado Program requirements.

Except as provided below, the biological or adoptive parent when attempting to act as the parent, and when more than one party is qualified to act as a parent, must be presumed to be the parent unless the biological or adoptive parent does not have legal authority to make EI decisions for the child.

If a judicial decree or order identifies a specific person or persons listed above to act as the parent of a child or to make educational or EI decisions on behalf of a child, then such person or persons shall be determined to be the parent for purposes of EI. An EI service provider or public agency, however, may not act as a parent to the child in cases where services are being provided to the child or family member by that provider or public agency.

Early Intervention Colorado

for Infants, Toddlers & Families

For more information about
Colorado's early intervention system, call

1-888-777-4041

or visit

www.eicolorado.org

COLORADO
Department of Human Services

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Join us online!

Please like/follow **Developmental Pathways** on Facebook, and stay connected to important updates, family stories, staff spotlights, community events, etc.

(Link: https://www.facebook.com/DevelopmentalPathways)

Early Intervention Parent Group

Additionally, we have a separate **EI Parent Group** which is open to families/caretakers of the children we serve. We post about all things specific to early intervention: upcoming events and activities, articles, tips, and other various resources that may be helpful to our EI families. We encourage families to share as well!

To join, simply click the "Join" button at the top of the page and answer 2 simple questions to be approved for membership.

(Link: https://www.facebook.com/groups/DPearlyintervention)

EI Parent Group Guidelines

- This online parent community is a resource for families, and is monitored by Developmental Pathways Early Intervention Department in partnership with the Communications Department.
- We expect all families/parents to be courteous, respectful, and open minded.
- We expect all families/parents to maintain confidentiality when others share information about their child(ren).
- There will be absolutely no bashing, insulting, cursing, inappropriate content, or attacks towards one another. Such behavior will result in a warning. If it continues after the warning, the user will be permanently removed from the group.
- We expect to be notified by message when someone is inappropriate. We will conduct an investigation on the content and take appropriate steps to resolve the problem.
- We want families to have discussions and share opinions, helpful tips, and resources with one another. This Online Community is to allow families to learn about community resources and also build friendships along the way.