

MOST

(Mothers of Supertwins)



P.O. Box 306 ♥ East Islip, New York 11730 ♥ (631) 859-1110 ♥ www.MOSTonline.org

MOST's Early Intervention FAQ's

The Complete Early Intervention and the Multiple Birth Family Booklet
is available through
MOST's General Store
www.MOSTonline.org

What is Early Intervention?

Early Intervention is a state and county funded program for children birth to 3 years old. There is no charge to the family. A child will receive a full evaluation and treatment or services for a diagnosed delay.

Who would want an Early Intervention evaluation?

Any parent of a child born preterm (before 36 weeks gestation or below 5 lbs. 5 oz.) and any parent who has a concern regarding how their child is walking, talking, playing, learning and behaving. Each child is entitled to a no-cost full developmental evaluation. The evaluation will determine if your child is eligible for services. It is strongly recommended that all multiples and babies born preterm be evaluated for developmental milestones periodically during the first few years of life such as at 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, 1 year, 18 months, 2 years and 3 years. Even if your child(ren) have reached the developmental milestones at one of the visits it is still extremely important to have them reevaluated at the suggested ages above since every age and stage presents it's own set of developmental challenges.

What are services?

Services can include special education, behavioral intervention, developmental, speech/language/feeding therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, nutrition services, social work and psychological services.

Where do Early Intervention services take place?

There are many options available. Options include one-to-one treatment, as well as group treatments, at home, at the agency, community site or special education pre-school.

Who do I contact first for help?

Each state decides which of its agencies will be the lead agency in charge of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with special needs. In your state, the first contact person may be an Early Interventionist (an early childhood specialist working

Copyright MOST (Mothers of Supertwins), Inc. 2004

Reprint with prior permission only.

www.MOSTonline.org

with infants and toddlers), someone with the lead agency, or someone in your state's Child Find office.

To find out who can help you in your area, contact the person listed on your State Resource Sheet under "Programs for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities." If you don't have a State Resource Sheet, call NICHCY at 1-800-695-0285 (Voice/TT). Explain that you want to find out about early intervention services for your child and ask for a name in your area.

Important: Write down the names and phone numbers of everyone you talk to. (You can use the Sample Record-Keeping Worksheet provided in *The Complete Early Intervention and the Multiple Birth Family* booklet available from MOST as a guide.) Having this information available may be helpful to you later on.

What should a parent know when making a decision?

Each child who qualifies for treatment is entitled to an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP). This plan is developed with the family and an on-going county service coordinator. Parents should realize they are an important member of the team decision-making process.

Federal Law requires that referrals be made to the Early Intervention Program (EIP) no more than 2 working days after a child has been identified. So the health care provider is legally required to make referral.

What should you know when having your multiples evaluated for services?

- Each child should be assessed individually, one at a time. Ask for completely separate visits, if necessary.
- Do not compare development in same age siblings.
- Realize that higher order multiples may reach milestones later, but should still fall within the norm.
- Low birth weight and prematurity may contribute to concerns. There are adjustments made for prematurity, usually up until age two.

Description of Early Intervention Service Providers

Special Education Teacher

The certified special education teacher assesses your child's functional abilities and learning style. The curriculum outlines developmental sequences and suggests activities to teach task oriented skills. Individualized goals address both child and family needs.

Speech-Language Pathologist

The speech-language pathologist helps your child with oral-motor/feeding skills, and receptive and expressive language abilities. The development of oral-motor/feeding skills is necessary to promote active movements of the lips, tongue and jaw. Receptive language refers to the understanding of language while expressive language refers to the use of sign language or speech. In addition, the speech-language pathologist may explore

new ways to stimulate cognitive/linguistic growth. (There is a link at the end of this piece to a source for reviewing your children's developmental (speech) milestones that will be helpful in learning more about age and milestones.)

Occupational and Physical Therapist

The occupational and/or physical therapist addresses the child's neuro-musculo-skeletal development (such as sitting, standing, grasping objects, walking). Their goal is to build endurance for the child and to help normalize body tone and body movement. Therapists strive to educate parents or caregivers, and work with other team members on how to modify treatment or positioning, according to the child's needs or technical devices. (There is a link at the end of this piece to a source for reviewing your children's developmental milestones that will be helpful in learning more about this.)

Social Worker

The social worker provides information and emotional support for family members. At times the social worker helps to coordinate communication between parents and staff. In addition, the social worker helps families access community resources and empowers them to advocate for outside services including respite, psychotherapy, and financial entitlements.

Psychologist

The psychologist provides psychological and emotional support to children with special needs and their families. A psychologist helps parents to encourage age-appropriate and socially appropriate behaviors, acts as a resource for other team members, and evaluates the developmental strengths and needs of the children enrolled in the program.

Nutritionist

The nutritionist conducts individual assessments in nutritional history and dietary intake. The nutritionist also develops and monitors appropriate plans to address the nutritional needs of children.

Ongoing Service Coordinator

At your child's IFSP meeting, you may have selected (or your state assigned) an ongoing service coordinator. You may have chosen to remain with the initial service coordinator assigned to you by the Department of Health or you may have selected one of several individuals available to serve an ongoing service coordinator from a local agency. The person you selected is responsible for assisting you in all aspects of planning and coordinating your child's services, implementing IFSP goals, making changes in your child's IFSP, if necessary, and assisting with transition plans.

Prepare for transition

Transition is the process in which your child's services are transferred from the county or state to the school district. Once your child reaches 3 years old, your local school district will manage your child's services. You will want to contact your local school district to learn about the transition process.

Developmental Milestones: http://www.liidp.org/growth_milestones.html

Additional resources:

<http://www.earlyintervention.com/>

<http://www.sri.com/neils/reports.html>

<http://www.nichcy.org/pubs1.htm>

http://www.naeyc.org/parent_resources/brochures.asp

<http://www.zerotothree.org/>

<http://www.nectac.org/contact/ptccoord.asp>

<http://www.childdevelopmentweb.com/Services/AccessSvcs.asp> - Eistate
(click on any state, it will go to another page which lists all the states but jumps to a bookmark with the state you requested).

<http://www.childdevelopmentweb.com/InfoTopics/EIprograms.asp> - programs
(lists an EI Process step by step)

<http://ericec.org/faq/ec-family.html>

Compiled by:

Kristin Smith

Lenore Stamm, MA, SDA

Maureen A. Doolan Boyle

Cheryl Clifford