



Alabama's  
Early  
Intervention  
System



**Alabama's Early Intervention System  
Public Awareness Campaign  
OUTREACH & PUBLIC RELATIONS  
TOOLKIT**

Accessible version available upon request

**You know best.  
Know EARLY.**

**[nevertooearlyAL.org](http://nevertooearlyAL.org)**

Alabama's Early Intervention System is a division of the



Alabama Department of  
**REHABILITATION SERVICES**



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## About the Toolkit

This toolkit is designed for Alabama's Early Intervention System (AEIS) staff and EI provider agencies, partners, advocates, and volunteers as a coordinated guide for implementing a successful public awareness campaign. This toolkit includes crafted messaging for target audiences, sample assets, and resources for consistent messaging and brand recognition to reach more families and referral sources in Alabama, especially in rural, economically disadvantaged, and underserved populations.

This toolkit is organized into three sections:

- I. The Message
- II. The Brand
- III. The Resources

### INCLUDED IN THIS TOOLKIT

- Key campaign message
- Supporting and audience-specific messages
- Campaign branding guide
- Sample social media content and graphics (can also be used as digital & print ads)
- Awareness Events and Opportunities
- Sample News Release
- Sample Letter to the Editor (can also be used as a blog post or publication article)
- Sample Letters/Email Messages for Referral Sources
- Additional outreach ideas

### RESOURCES

This toolkit and downloadable assets are located on the AEIS campaign website:

<https://nevertotoearlyal.org>



Contact the ADRS Office of Communications and Information for more information regarding this toolkit: [oci@rehab.alabama.gov](mailto:oci@rehab.alabama.gov)

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## About the Campaign

### CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES:

- To increase awareness in rural and historically underserved communities in Alabama of the services available to qualifying infants and toddlers who may require or benefit from early intervention for their healthy development.
- To increase awareness in Alabama's rural and historically underserved communities of the support services available to the families of qualifying children.
- To increase referrals to EI from the hard-to-reach populations in rural and historically underserved Alabama communities.
- To increase awareness and interest in EI careers.

### TARGET AREA AND AUDIENCES:

- According to Alabama Possible's 2022 Data Sheet, there are seven counties where 15% or more families live below the poverty line: Barbour, Bullock, Dallas, Greene, Macon, Perry, and Sumter. These counties stretch from the Mississippi to the Georgia borders across central/south-central regions of Alabama and are primarily rural communities. This would be the campaign's primary target area for:
  - Parents and families of young children under three years of age
  - Community referral sources
  - The pediatric and medical community
  - College students and others interested in finding a career

### CAMPAIGN GOALS:

- Increase AEIS name and brand recognition across Alabama. (Qualitative)
  - Increase the number of referrals from the targeted, underserved communities to AEIS services. (Quantitative)
  - Educate and empower families and early learning caregivers/providers to increase self-referrals. (Quantitative)
  - Increase physicians' and other medical professionals' knowledge of the value of AEIS for their patients and their families to increase healthcare provider referrals. (Qualitative)
  - Increase recruitment efforts/new hires for AEIS staff and professionals to include job fairs and other similar events. (Quantitative)
  - Leverage local and regional partnerships to help disseminate information about AEIS. (Qualitative)
  - Increase advocacy for Alabama families in need of AEIS services across the state. (Qualitative)
-

## RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES:

- *Unique Campaign Website:* A website specifically designed for the awareness campaign, central to communicating the key message and providing connections to resources: [nevertotooearlyAL.org](http://nevertotooearlyAL.org). Translatable into five non-English languages.
  - *Multi-media assets:* A series of short videos targeted to educate specific audiences and regional areas of the state to share and use in outreach, e.g., speaking engagements, online communications, and training events.
  - *Expert blog or editorial series:* Professional, staff, and consumer-generated content for a blogs, articles and editorials on topics targeted to appropriate audiences and with a strategic dissemination strategy.
  - *Promotional media campaign:* News releases targeted to specific local audiences and regional areas of the state and scripts for local television and radio stations, scheduled to release throughout the campaign. Also, scheduled interviews with local EI staff, leaders, etc., with news media and local talk shows to cover each targeted region.
  - *Social media campaign:* Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram posts and branded graphics with key messaging to post and share over the campaign period.
  - *Event planning:* In-person, virtual events, and speaking engagements in local communities to engage with staff and consumers and to educate, promote, and encourage referrals to EI programs., e.g., families, community leaders/public officials, healthcare, education professionals, and AEIS partnering agencies.
  - *Branded materials:* AEIS-branded educational materials, appropriate marketing items, billboards, and other items (to be decided), each targeted to specific audiences with deliberate dissemination strategies.
  - *Educational outreach and trainings* by regional representatives and AEIS staff.
  - *Referral source visits* by regional representatives and AEIS staff.
  - *Advisory groups* to build/strengthen a network of partners for outreach, education, and advocacy.
-

## The MESSAGE

### KEY MESSAGE OVERVIEW

*Purpose:* The key message and audience-specific messages are designed to ensure consistency and continuity around how to communicate what EI is, its benefits, and how to refer a child.

*Intended Audience:* All messaging is designed for EI providers and advocates to use for three primary audiences: 1) parents/families, 2) early learning caregivers/providers, and 3) physicians and medical professionals. These materials can also be modified for staff recruitment efforts.

*Suggested Uses:* The messaging can be integrated into all of your communications related to early intervention services, including but not limited to your website, e-newsletters, blog posts, social media, event promotions, and presentations.

### KEY MESSAGING:

*Tagline:* You know best. Know EARLY.

*Sub-tagline:* It's never too early for early intervention.

#### *Key Message or "Elevator Speech" for General Public:*

Early Intervention works with families of children under three who may have developmental delays or disabilities so that they have the best possible start in life. It's never too early; the earlier the intervention, the better the outcome.

#### *Key Message to Parents/Families:*

You know your child. If you're concerned that your child may not be growing as they should, it's important to talk to your doctor and contact Early Intervention as soon as possible. Caring experts will determine if your child is eligible for services and will support the whole family in addressing the child's specific developmental, physical, social, and emotional needs.

#### *Key Message to Early Learning Caregivers/Providers:*

Anyone can refer a family to Early Intervention if they have concerns that a child is experiencing a possible developmental delay or disability. Services are provided where families live, play, and spend their day, at no cost to them. It's never too early to refer a child to EI.

#### *Key Message to Early Learning Physicians/Medical Professionals:*

If there are any concerns that a child has a possible developmental delay or disability, it's never too early to refer a family to EI. Service coordinators will determine if the child is eligible for services and will support the family in addressing the child's specific developmental needs at no cost to them.

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## SUPPORTING MESSAGES:

*Providing EI services that are individualized for each child and family is critical to the child's life-long success:*

- Research shows that starting EI services early gives a child the best chance to learn, grow, and reach their full potential.
- Early support can reduce the need for services later in life. In fact, it is more cost-effective to provide EI than to wait until the child is older.
- Every child is unique, and EI services are designed based on his or her specific needs.
- Parents and families are their child's first teachers. That's why service coordinators and providers work closely with the family to help build their skills and confidence in supporting their child while helping them navigate the journey with their child.
- EI can address all types of concerns including their physical development like crawling or walking, speech delays, or social interaction like playing with other children.
- EI is available in every part of the state and to any eligible child, regardless of the family's income.
- Because children learn best with familiar people and in familiar places, EI services are usually provided in the home or where they spend a lot of their time. Virtual options may also be available.

*It's never too early to refer a child to EI:*

- It's never too early to refer a child for Early Intervention services, and anyone can make a referral. Screening and eligibility determination are free.
- 80% of a child's brain is developed by age 3. So the first three years of a child's life are the most important. Because this is a critical time, parents, families, doctors, and others concerned about a child's development should refer a child to EI as EARLY as possible.

*The referral process is simple:*

- Anyone can refer a child to EI, and families can self-refer their child if they have concerns. You do not need to be a doctor or teacher to refer a child. All it takes is a simple phone call or filling out a short form.
- After the referral is made, an EI provider closest to the family will contact them, to do an assessment and determine the child's eligibility.
- If the child is eligible for EI services, the family and their service coordinator will develop a plan to support the family on their journey to help their child get the best possible start in life.

## AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC MESSAGES:

### **Families**

- You know your child best. Talk to your child's doctor if you are worried and ask for a referral to EI to determine if your child needs services or not.
- Early Intervention supports you and your child as your partner in the EI journey.
- Children learn best through everyday activities and routines in places they know. You don't have to travel for services. Your EI service coordinator and the local EI program support your child where you live, play, and spend your day.

### **For Medical Professionals**

- Early Intervention services help address a child's physical, social, emotional, and other developmental delays in the setting where the child lives, plays, and spends their days.
- EI services support parents and caregivers in understanding a child's delay or disability.
- The earlier you refer a child, the better. You can take this step as soon as you suspect a delay or disability. You can help the family ensure their child has services that support the best start in life.
- Early Intervention services are not the same as traditional clinical therapy. EI provides services in the child's home or childcare setting, in the context of everyday routines, based on the family's priorities.
- "Wait and see" does not provide peace of mind and is not an answer to a family's concerns. The earlier you refer, the better the outcome for the child.

### **Childcare Early Learning Caregivers/Providers**

- You spend hours every day with children – and you are an expert. You're in the best position to identify possible delays in a child's development and refer the family to EI.
- In your daily work, when you have concerns about a child's development, it's best to discuss those concerns with your supervisor and the child's family and refer them to EI.
- It's never too early to refer a child to EI. You should take this step as soon as you have concerns about a child's development.
- By referring a family, you give them support and peace of mind that their child has the best start in life.
- It can be a hard conversation, but it is the best thing to do for the child and the family.
- Parents often see their childcare providers as an expert or resource. This means you are in the unique position of being able to see the child and help the family understand the benefits of Early Intervention.

## The BRAND

### ALABAMA'S EARLY INTERVENTION SYSTEM (AEIS)

#### ADRS POLICY:

The Alabama Early Intervention System (AEIS) is a division of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS). In accordance with ADRS policy, contact the Office of Communications and Information (OCI) before ordering or creating any new materials for public distribution using the AEIS logo and/or the ADRS logo.

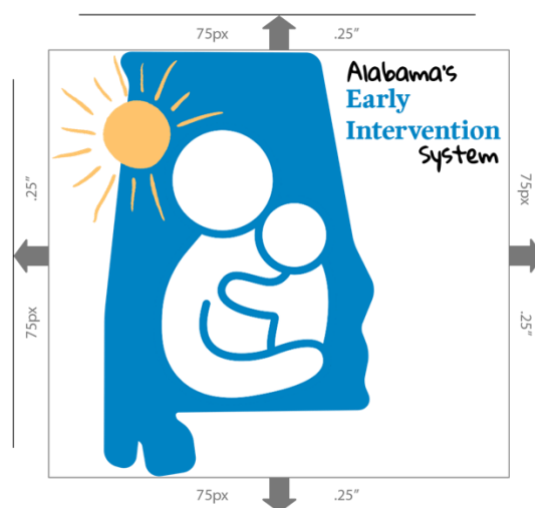
OCI is responsible for ensuring appropriate and authorized use of the official department and program-identifying logos and maintaining a uniform and consistent appearance on all print and electronic materials. To meet high-quality reproduction and graphic standards, it is the policy of ADRS that OCI must review all materials created for public distribution containing the logos: [oci@rehab.alabama.gov](mailto:oci@rehab.alabama.gov)

#### THE LOGO GUIDE:

\*The following statement must be visible on the same page where the AEIS logo is displayed:

*AEIS is a division of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services.*

In all applications, the logo must retain the graphic proportions as created. The logo should never be stretched, skewed, cropped, replicated with different colors or graphic elements, or so small that the text is illegible. There should be at least 0.25" (75px) of space from the logo and other text or graphics placed near it (see example below).



*Approved versions of the AEIS logo:*

In all applications, the logo color must be consistent; the approved color codes for printing and reproductions are listed at the bottom of this page.



*Full-color logo, vertical and horizontal versions*



*Grayscale*



*Reverse – color*



*Reverse – grayscale*



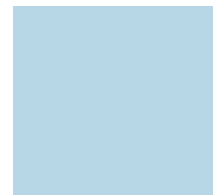
*Primary = Blue*

CMYK = 83 / 39 / 2 / 0  
RGB = 0 / 131 / 195  
Hex# = 0083c3  
Pantone Process = 299 U / Blue C



*Accent = Gold*

CMYK = 0 / 25 / 66 / 0  
RGB = 254 / 195 / 108  
HEX# = FEC36C  
Pantone Process = P14-6 U / P14-6 C



*Background = Light Blue*

CMYK = 27 / 6 / 5 / 0  
RGB = 183 / 215 / 231  
HEX# = b7d7e7  
Pantone Process = 545 U / 544 C

*Font characters information for printers:*

Script font: Adobe Gloria Hallelujah

Serif font: Adobe Harfang ExtraBold

## The RESOURCES

### PUBLICATIONS:

*All print publications will be available in English and Spanish for electronic distribution and download. They can also be provided via audio files and text-only versions for accessibility.*

**Brochure** – Alabama’s Early Intervention System: *You know Best. Know EARLY.*

This is an 8.5” x 14” quad-folded publication, printed in full color. It contains general “satellite” information about the EI system of services. It contains a QR code leading to the AEIS campaign website.

Primary target audiences:

- General public
- Referral sources

Recommended uses:

- Leave-behind information at local churches, community centers, childcare facilities, doctor’s offices, etc.
- Distribution in letters to physicians and other referral sources.
- Distribution at appropriate conferences, exhibits, public meetings, events, etc.

**Poster** – You know best. Know EARLY. Alabama’s Early Intervention System

This poster is printed in full color on quality paper. It contains a QR code linking to the AEIS campaign website.

Primary audience:

- Parents and families of children 0 – 3
- Expectant mothers
- Childcare workers

Recommended uses:

- Personal visits with families and childcare centers.
- Distribution at appropriate conferences, exhibits, public meetings, events, etc.
- Mailouts to local families with the brochure.
- Request to be included in hospital new-parent packets with the brochure.

**Referral Postcard** – a card for referral sources or families to return to the child’s doctor or send directly to AEIS to request a call from a local EI provider. It includes a QR code linking to the AEIS campaign website.

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Primary target audience:

- Referral sources including pediatricians, family doctors, and other healthcare and early-education professionals, or families for self-referral.

Recommended uses:

- Personal visits with healthcare professionals, early childhood education professionals, church leaders, staff, and other local audiences that serve or have regular contact with local families.
- Distribution at appropriate conferences, exhibits, public meetings, events, etc.

## PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS:

**Table runners with new AEIS logo:** Runner for existing exhibit/displays to be placed over the provided blue tablecloth. There will be one for every ADRS Early Intervention office to replace the ones with the old logo. Purchasing information will be available to local EI providers for their offices and staff upon request.

*Other promotional items are developed upon request from local programs. Some recommendations include the following:*

- Baby items – bibs, spoons, wipe carrying case, beanie hat, etc.
- Baby toys – age-appropriate developmental toys
- Journals for parents – a small journal where baby milestones, first words, favorite toys, etc., can be recorded at each stage.

## ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The ADRS Office of Communications and Information (OCI) will manage statewide and geographically targeted advertising using the following platforms:

- Facebook ads and sponsored posts
- Instagram sponsored posts
- Google Ads and AdWords
- Nextdoor app posts
- AL.com sponsored content
  
- [Under development] A series of short videos to be aired on social and TV networks.

Local EI providers can use graphics and content included in this toolkit to share on social media or to purchase additional local advertising. Contact OCI for assistance: [oci@rehab.alabama.gov](mailto:oci@rehab.alabama.gov)

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## SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT:

OCI will share regular posts on the ADRS social networks with a statewide audience and will boost select posts to targeted audiences.

The following are samples of social media content. The content can be edited to localize or personalize messaging for a target audience or geographic area. Social media graphics are also in a separate digital file accompanying this toolkit.

**ADRS asks that the following hashtags – which identify posts relating to this campaign – be used in ALL social content posted** (especially on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn):

**#AlabamaEarlyIntervention**

**#nevertotooearlyAL**

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### *SAMPLE POSTS FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES*

- Your child was born to be great! But to reach their maximum potential, they must first reach several important steps during the early days of their development. Find out today if your baby is on the right track as they begin their journey to greatness! Visit [nevertotooearlyal.org](https://nevertotooearlyal.org) now. #AlabamaEarlyIntervention #nevertotooearlyAL
  - Before your baby can begin their journey to greatness, they must reach important developmental milestones before they're 3. Find out if your baby is on the right track; visit [nevertotooearlyal.org](https://nevertotooearlyal.org) #nevertotooearlyAL #AlabamaEarlyIntervention #nevertotooearlyAL
  - You know your baby; it's best to know EARLY if they're not reaching developmental milestones that get them on the right path to their full potential. Visit [nevertotooearlyal.org](https://nevertotooearlyal.org) to learn about Early Intervention in Alabama. #AlabamaEarlyIntervention #nevertotooearlyAL
  - It's never too early to find out if our child can benefit from Early Intervention. Visit [nevertotooearlyal.org](https://nevertotooearlyal.org) to find out if your baby is eligible for a free screening and referral to EI services. #AlabamaEarlyIntervention #nevertotooearlyAL
  - You know your baby best - it's best to know EARLY if your child is not reaching important developmental milestones. If you're worried, Early Intervention can help. Find out more at [nevertotooearlyal.org](https://nevertotooearlyal.org) #AlabamaEarlyIntervention #nevertotooearlyAL
  - Alabama's Early Intervention System is a network of EI programs throughout the state for babies 0 - 3 and their families. Visit [nevertotooearlyal.org](https://nevertotooearlyal.org) today to learn more and see if your child is eligible. #AlabamaEarlyIntervention #nevertotooearlyAL
  - Your baby's journey to greatness begins today, but it may be at risk if they're not reaching developmental goals in their first three years. You know your child. You know best. Know early. [nevertotooearlyal.org](https://nevertotooearlyal.org) #AlabamaEarlyIntervention #nevertotooearlyAL
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## SAMPLE POSTS FOR REFERRAL SOURCES

- #AlabamaEarlyIntervention (EI) works with families with children birth to age 3 who have developmental delays or disabilities so that they have the best possible start in life. Find out how to make a referral. [NeverTooEarlyAL.org](http://NeverTooEarlyAL.org) #AlabamaEarlyIntervention #nevertooearlyAL
- Did you know that anyone can refer a family to #AlabamaEarlyIntervention (EI) if they have concerns about a child's development? There is no need to "wait and see." Learn how to refer a family. [NeverTooEarlyAL.org](http://NeverTooEarlyAL.org) #AlabamaEarlyIntervention #nevertooearlyAL
- Anyone can refer a child to #AlabamaEarlyIntervention, and families can self-refer their child if they have concerns. You do not need to be a doctor or teacher to refer a child. Learn more. [NeverTooEarlyAL.org](http://NeverTooEarlyAL.org) #AlabamaEarlyIntervention #nevertooearlyAL
- 80% of a child's brain is developed by age 3. So, the first three years of a child's life are critical in their development. Parents, families, doctors, and others concerned about a child's development should refer a child to #AlabamaEarlyIntervention as EARLY as possible. Learn more. [NeverTooEarlyAL.org](http://NeverTooEarlyAL.org) #AlabamaEarlyIntervention #nevertooearlyAL
- Because children learn best with familiar people and in familiar places, #AlabamaEarlyIntervention (EI) services are usually provided in the home or a community setting. Virtual options may also be available. [NeverTooEarlyAL.org](http://NeverTooEarlyAL.org) #AlabamaEarlyIntervention #nevertooearlyAL
- Research shows that starting #AlabamaEarlyIntervention services EARLY gives a child the best chance to learn, grow, and reach their full potential. And early support can reduce the need for services later in life. Learn more. [NeverTooEarlyAL.org](http://NeverTooEarlyAL.org) #AlabamaEarlyIntervention #nevertooearlyAL

[Under Development] Reels / Stories: Short videos (under 30 seconds) formatted for social video platforms like Facebook Stories, Instagram Reels, and TikTok.

## SAMPLE GRAPHICS (available for download):



**You know best.  
Know EARLY.**

You know your baby. But if you're not sure your child is reaching important milestones, don't wait to find out. **Know EARLY.**

Alabama's Early Intervention System has caring professionals who will assess your child from 0 – 3 years old. They will come alongside you to help your child reach those milestones.

**800.543.3098**  
[nevertooearlyAL.org](http://nevertooearlyAL.org)



**You know best.  
Know EARLY.**

All babies are uniquely and wonderfully made and change so much in the first three years.

If you're not sure your child is reaching those important milestones, don't wait to find out. **Know EARLY.**

It's never too early to call Alabama's Early Intervention System.

**800.543.3098**  
[nevertooearlyAL.org](http://nevertooearlyAL.org)





# You know best. Know EARLY.



Take cues from your baby and get answers about their development as **EARLY** as possible.

800.543.3098

[nevertoearlyAL.org](http://nevertoearlyAL.org)



# You know best. Know EARLY.



While all babies are different, they should all reach certain milestones in their development to be sure they are growing up healthy.

You know babies. But if you're not sure a child is reaching those important milestones, don't wait to find out.

**Know EARLY.**



800.543.3098

[nevertoearlyAL.org](http://nevertoearlyAL.org)



# nevertoearlyAL.org

# You know best. Know EARLY.



All babies are uniquely and wonderfully made and change so much in the first three years.

You know your baby. But if you're not sure your child is reaching those important milestones, don't wait to find out. **Know EARLY.**

Take cues from your baby and get answers about their development as **EARLY** as possible.



800.543.3098

[nevertoearlyAL.org](http://nevertoearlyAL.org)



## AWARENESS EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES:

Local community events often gather larger groups of people and provide great opportunities for service coordination agencies to share information. Events should be planned with a specific audience as the focus. For example: parents/families/caregivers, or referral sources/community/medical, or recruitment/schools/job fairs.

*Below are some event ideas:*

- Hosting special events to celebrate parents and caregivers
- Offering special classes or learning events at local libraries, hospitals, community centers, etc.
- Hosting a booth and distributing information at various community events, including fairs, festivals, baby/child events, women's expos, etc.
- Participating in community-based baby/child events, such as car seat fitting events, etc., and being on hand to talk with families and distribute information

*Below are some upcoming awareness opportunities:*

|                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>January</b><br>National Mentoring Month<br>National Reading Day                                                            | <b>June</b><br>National Parent's Day<br>Helen Keller Day                                                           |
| <b>February</b><br>National Children's Dental Health Month<br>Black History Month                                             | <b>August</b><br>National Immunization Awareness Month                                                             |
| <b>March</b><br>Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month<br>National Nutrition Month<br>Read Across America / Dr. Seuss Day | <b>September</b><br>National Infant Mortality Awareness Month                                                      |
| <b>Alabama's Early Intervention Public Awareness Week</b>                                                                     | <b>October</b><br>Hispanic Heritage Month<br>Child Health Day                                                      |
| <b>April</b><br>National Week of the Young Child<br>National Siblings Day                                                     | <b>November</b><br>Early Childhood Mental Health Awareness Month<br>World Prematurity Day<br>National Adoption Day |
| <b>May</b><br>National Teacher Day<br>Mother's Day                                                                            | <b>December</b><br>Safe Toys and Gifts Month                                                                       |

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SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE:

Date of release: XX-XX-XX

## **You know best. Know EARLY.**

*For parents and caregivers of children birth to three  
worried about their child's development, it's never too early for Early Intervention*

**(Local city/town, AL)** Parents love watching their babies grow. Every moment they do something new is like a miracle; baby's first smile, lifting their head, rolling over and kicking those little legs are all exciting moments.

Parents also worry when their child isn't doing something they think he should be doing by a certain age. When parents have concerns, it's critical that they find out if there is a developmental delay as early as possible. It's never too early for Early Intervention.

*You know best. Know EARLY.* is a public awareness campaign intended to get important information about early intervention to more Alabama families, especially those in rural and underserved areas of our state. It's critical that parents and caregivers know EARLY if their child has a developmental delay and that early intervention services are available to them at no cost.

Alabama's Early Intervention System (AEIS) is a network of services and supports for families whose children under the age of three have a delay in their physical, social-emotional, cognitive (brain), and language development. In [insert city/town], [insert name of local AEIS provider] helps families of eligible children develop a plan and learn ways to help their child overcome these delays.

[QUOTE from local consumer or staff member recommended here]

[EXAMPLE] "Throughout this entire process, they've been able to give me tons of different information and a lot of support," said June Wilson. She, her husband Antony, and their son Lorde reside in Huntsville and have been working with EI. "They're there to support us, and that makes me really happy. I feel safe. They're our family."

All babies are uniquely and wonderfully made, and they change a lot in the first three years. If you're concerned that your child is not reaching certain milestones in their development, it's never too early for early intervention. *You know best. Know EARLY.*

Families can contact [insert local EI provider] or the AEIS state office to find out if their child qualifies for early intervention services and receive guidance on enrolling. Contact [local phone number] or visit [nevertotoearlyAL.org](http://nevertotoearlyAL.org) for more information.

Alabama's Early Intervention System is a division of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, which provides services to Alabamians with disabilities at any age and in all 67 Alabama counties. Eight core values guide AEIS: 1) Family-centered, 2) Developmentally appropriate, 3) Individualized, 4) In the child's natural environment, 5) Trains/equips parents and caregivers, 6) Collaborative, 7) Routines-based intervention and 8) Evidence-based practices. More about ADRS can be found at [rehab.alabama.gov](http://rehab.alabama.gov).

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SAMPLE OP-ED / BLOG POST:

## **You know best. Know EARLY.**

All babies are uniquely and wonderfully made, and they change a lot in the first three years. While all babies are different, they should all reach certain milestones in their development to be sure they are growing up healthy and prepared for success in school and life.

*You know best. Know EARLY.* is a public awareness campaign intended to get important information about early intervention to more Alabama families, especially those in rural and underserved areas of our state. It's critical that parents and caregivers know EARLY if their child has a developmental delay and that early intervention services are available to them at no cost.

Alabama's Early Intervention System (AEIS) is a network of services and supports for families whose children under the age of three have a delay in their physical, social-emotional, cognitive (brain), and language development. In [insert city/town], [insert name of local AEIS provider] helps families of eligible children develop a plan and learn ways to help their child overcome these delays.

Early Intervention (EI) can lead not only to positive outcomes for children and families but also for the community. Research over the past two decades has shown that adults who participated in programs like early intervention as children were more likely to graduate high school, less likely to commit a crime, more likely to be employed, and more likely to go to college, get better jobs and earn higher incomes. In a state working to grow its skilled workforce to meet tomorrow's employment needs, early intervention can be a catalyst to that growth.

Every child from birth to age three is entitled under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (IDEA Part C) "to support in reaching developmental milestones if they have a developmental delay." But too many Alabama families are unaware of how EI services can have an enormous impact on their child's ability to learn and grow. AEIS supports the family by empowering and equipping them to integrate developmentally appropriate activities into their everyday routines that strengthen their child's physical, cognitive, language, and social-emotional skills and enable them to reach their full potential.

Parents love watching their babies grow; every moment they do something new is like a miracle. But when there are concerns, it's critical that they find out if there is a developmental delay as early as possible. It's never too early for Early Intervention.

For more information or to refer a child, visit [nevertotoearlyAL.org](http://nevertotoearlyAL.org) or call 800-543-3098.

Alabama's Early Intervention System is a division of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, which provides services to Alabamians with disabilities at any age and in all 67 Alabama counties. Eight core values guide AEIS: 1) Family-centered, 2) Developmentally appropriate, 3) Individualized, 4) In the child's natural environment, 5) Trains/equips parents and caregivers, 6) Collaborative, 7) Routines-based intervention and 8) Evidence-based practices. More about ADRS can be found at [rehab.alabama.gov](http://rehab.alabama.gov).

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## SAMPLE EMAIL / LETTER TO COMMUNITY REFERRAL SOURCES:

Dear [NAME],

As someone who regularly works and engages with children, you know that every child is uniquely and wonderfully made. While all babies grow at their own pace, they all should reach certain milestones in their development to be sure they are growing up healthy and prepared for success in school and in life.

If you suspect that a child in your care has a delay or disability, the best thing you can do is discuss those concerns with the child's family and refer them to Early Intervention (EI).

EI is for families whose children under the age of three have a delay in their physical, social-emotional, cognitive (brain), adaptive (self-care), and language development. [Insert name of local AEIS provider] helps families of eligible children develop a plan and learn ways to help their child overcome these delays.

Many families in our area are not aware that these services are available to them at no cost. We need your help getting this important information to families in your community, especially those in rural areas that often have little access to many healthcare options. You are an important part of the lives of children in your care, and you can be a vital connector to these needed services.

It's critical that parents and caregivers know EARLY if their child has a developmental delay, and that they get connected with EI services as soon as possible so their child has the best chance to reach his or her full potential.

It's never too early for Early Intervention.

Contact [local office phone number], or simply reply to this message.

[Insert name of local AEIS provider] is a part of Alabama's Early Intervention System (AEIS), a division of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. This network of state and local programs reaches all 67 Alabama counties. Contact AEIS at 1-800-543-3098 or visit [nevertotooearlyAL.org](http://nevertotooearlyAL.org).

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## SAMPLE EMAIL / LETTER TO PEDIATRICIANS:

Dear [healthcare provider],

As you know, it's critical that parents and caregivers know EARLY if their child has a developmental delay, and that they get connected with Early Intervention (EI) services as soon as possible so their child has the best chance to reach his or her full potential.

[Insert name of local AEIS provider] is part of Alabama's Early Intervention System, a network of services and supports for families in your area whose children under the age of three have a delay in their physical, social-emotional, cognitive, adaptive, and language development. EI helps families of eligible children develop a plan and learn ways to help their child overcome these delays.

If there are any concerns that a child is experiencing a possible developmental delay or disability, there is no need to wait. Refer the family to EI as soon as possible. Service coordinators will determine if a child is eligible for services. Once the family is enrolled, we will work collaboratively with you, the child's family, and others involved in the child's care to set goals and develop an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) to ensure the best possible outcomes for the child.

You are an important connector to these needed services. We ask for your help getting this important information to the families of children in your care and in your community, especially those in rural areas who may not be aware of the services available to them.

It's never too early for Early Intervention.

Contact [local office phone number], or simply reply to this message.

[Insert name of local AEIS provider] is a part of Alabama's Early Intervention System (AEIS), a division of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. This network of state and local programs reaches all 67 Alabama counties. Contact AEIS at 1-800-543-3098 or visit [nevertotooearlyAL.org](http://nevertotooearlyAL.org).

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## MORE IDEAS TO CONSIDER:

- Write a compelling and relevant news release. The release should include the ‘who, what, when, where, and why’ and be explained in the first two paragraphs. The audience for the news release is the reporter/journalist, so it’s important to think about the content from their perspective, why it’s relevant to their audience and why they should care.
- Know the media. Who are the reporters and key media outlets in your community? If you don’t know them, get to know them and develop a relationship. Knowing their ‘beat’ (the subjects/topics/areas in the community that they primarily cover) and the types of stories they cover is also important. Establishing a relationship with them will help you when you have something important to share and want to see covered. Develop a media list and update it regularly.
- Pitch and sell your story. Sending the news release is the first step. Following up with reporters is important to pitch and sell your story. What’s in a pitch? Highlight the most important points and share why this story is relevant and why people should care. Also, offer an interview opportunity with your organization’s spokesperson, and don’t forget to include your contact information.
- Be proactive and reach out to various community organizations to offer your agency as a possible speaker or exhibitor.
- Seek community/school fairs/events to display a booth and distribute information and promotional products.
- Information and updates with your referral sources are a great way to keep them up to date on the latest information. If you’re not already sending regular updates, consider doing so on a regular basis.
- Collaborating with other programs is a great way to get new ideas on what’s working well or what’s not, and how you might adapt an idea to best meet your community’s needs. If you’re not already connecting with other EI programs, we encourage you to reach out to learn and share. The following are a few ideas of how you can connect with local families and referral sources:
  - Hosting playgroups
  - Organizing support groups for parents or other caregivers
  - Engaging with their local schools to distribute information and partner with parent mentors
  - Encouraging the concept of ‘refer a friend’ to spread the word between other families
  - Hosting lunch-n-learn sessions
  - Organizing professional learning events
  - Sharing information with local committees
  - Presenting at local conferences
  - Sharing materials and hosting events at community centers/organizations where your audience often gathers, such as the YMCA, community centers, WIC, local job and family Service agencies, etc.
  - Healthcare entities, such as hospitals, clinics, local health departments, etc.
  - Faith-based organizations, including churches, cultural centers, etc.



## ALABAMA'S EARLY INTERVENTION SYSTEM

A division of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services

602 S. Lawrence Street

Montgomery, AL 36103

334.293.7500

*Questions about this toolkit:*

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION

[info@rehab.alabama.gov](mailto:info@rehab.alabama.gov)

334.293.7131



Alabama Department of  
REHABILITATION SERVICES