



## A Vital Message about Alabama's Early Intervention System

Congress established the Early Intervention (EI) program in 1986 as part of The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part C, in recognition of "an urgent and substantial need" to enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities; reduce educational costs by minimizing the need for special education through EI; minimize the likelihood of institutionalization, and maximize independent living, and enhance the capacity of families to meet their child's needs.

**Alabama's EI System** is committed to providing quality services for eligible children, birth to three, and their families. The focus of EI is to train, equip and support parents/caregivers in being the first and best teachers for their child.

### Eight Core Values of Alabama's Early Intervention System (AEIS)



#### **Family Centered**

Services and supports are aimed at helping your family support and care for your child. Research indicates that a child's most effective teachers are those with whom they have a nurturing relationship and spend the most time, such as their mother, father, grandparent, childcare provider, or primary caregiver. How these individuals interact with your child while feeding, diapering, playing, and cuddling will impact how your child develops and learns.

#### **Developmentally Appropriate**

A team of professionals will assist you with understanding typical development and how your child is likely to develop based on factors that may include a medical diagnosis or delay. Services and home activities are designed to support your child's development. Your EI team will assist your family with the functional and developmental needs of your child and family "today."

#### **Individualized**

If your child is eligible for services, your Service Coordinator will assist you and your family in developing an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), which will include individualized outcomes based on needs and priorities. From this plan, you and your Service Coordinator will identify a team of professionals, other family members, caregivers, and/or friends to help reach the outcomes included in the IFSP. This plan can and should change as your child grows and develops and is based on your child's progress toward meeting these outcomes.



#### **Provided in the natural environment**

EI services are provided in a location where your child and family typically would be at home, in childcare, playgrounds, etc. Natural environments also include the daily activities and routines of your family.

#### **Trains/Equips the Parent/Caregiver**

AEIS is a program that supports and trains families and caregivers. EI will aid and support your family while teaching you skills to meet your child's developmental needs. With your team of professionals' support, we will work to carry out these activities daily so that your child and your family will meet your outcomes.

#### **Collaborative**

Your EI team will work closely with each other and with you and your child to reach outcomes. The team can also work with other service providers, including your child's physician(s), therapists from other agencies, childcare providers, community partners, and other specialists. Suppose you or your physician feel more services are needed that are determined to be outside the scope of EI. In that case, your Service Coordinator will assist you in identifying resources that might supplement EI services, using either your public or private insurance.

#### **Routines-Based**

Routines-based intervention assists with routines identified by a family that are considered a concern/priority. Routines (or times of the day) are activities that happen naturally. They are how families organize themselves to get things done, spend time together and have fun. Every family has its unique routines or times of day. They help family members know who should do what, when, in what order, and how often.

#### **Evidence-Based Practices**

Evidence-based practice in the field of early childhood is the process that pulls together the best available research, knowledge from professional experts, and data and input from children and their caregivers to identify and provide services, evaluated and proven to achieve positive outcomes for children and families.

*AEIS is a division of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services.*  
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<u><b>Early Intervention is...</b></u>	<u><b>Early Intervention is not...</b></u>
<p>provided from birth to three years of age.</p> <p>eligibility based on a 25% or more significant delay in one of the five developmental areas or a qualifying diagnosis.</p> <p>parent or caregiver training.</p> <p>provided in the natural environment (i.e., home, daycare).</p> <p>individualized based on the specific needs of each child and family.</p> <p>family driven and based on family routines.</p> <p>frequencies are determined by the IFSP team.</p> <p>no cost to the family, use of public/private insurance or public benefits is voluntary.</p> <p>collaborative with the medical community.</p>	<p>provided to serve children after their third birthday.</p> <p>therapeutic intervention provided for medical conditions that do not lead to a delay.</p> <p>a clinical therapy program.</p> <p>provided in a center-based segregated environment.</p> <p>based solely on diagnosis or delay.</p> <p>medically based goals set by providers.</p> <p>frequencies set by a physician or therapist.</p> <p>families are responsible for out-of-pocket expenses.</p> <p>the only service a child may need.</p>

Many professional groups and organizations support the delivery of EI services and include EI in their standards. The links below demonstrate each organization's support of EI.

- [www.aota.org](http://www.aota.org) – American Occupational Therapy Association
- [www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org) – American Speech, Language, Hearing Association
- [www.apta.org](http://www.apta.org) – American Physical Therapy Association
- [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org) – Council for Exceptional Children, particularly the Division of Early Childhood
- <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/104/1/124> - Article on the role of the pediatrician in EI
- <http://www.medicalhomeinfo.org/health/EI.html> - American Academy of Pediatrics web page on EI

**For more information and additional resources, contact:**

**Child Find**

**1-800-543-3098**

**or visit us at**

**rehab.alabama.gov**

