

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 their 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, such as occupational, speech or physical therapy, to help infants and toddlers grow and develop, and to help their family in this process. It 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

Meeting your **Service Coordinator**

Developmental Screening (when appropriate)

Evaluation and/or Assessment
completed within 45 days
of referral date

*Your family has rights within
each area of the process.*

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 child'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 renewed 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 a free evaluation and/or assessment at any time 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 the "Local Early Intervention Contacts" icon 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 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 an observable delay. A list of diagnoses that will qualify a child for the EI 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.

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 assets, 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 IFSP

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. Very often, the date of the evaluation and/or assessment is the same date that the initial IFSP meeting occurs. The IFSP meeting 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. 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 written 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 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 show 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 guidebooks and brochures are available to you that provide more in depth information about the EI Colorado program. You can download these materials at the EI Colorado website or you can request a pre-printed copy of the guidebooks by contacting the CCB in your community.

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. Family advocates 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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COLORADO
Department of Human Services