



[This page prints out on 4 sheets]

## **Your Child's Learning and Education - Birth to 3 Years Old Laws That Can Help You**

**Read this page to learn about how to help you child learn and not fall behind.**

**Children who are deaf need extra special attention to keep up.**

All parents want the best for their children.

Children who are deaf can do very well.

But they need extra help to keep them from falling behind as they learn and develop.

Without extra help, children who are deaf can fall farther behind, and have more problems with things like:

- Understanding what other people say
- Learning
- Talking
- Playing
- Making friends



**The best way to keep your child from falling behind is to start early.**

- When you start doing special things right away to keep your child from falling behind, it is called **early intervention**.

### **Find out about Early Intervention: a special kind of education for your child.**

- There are special ways of teaching called [Early Intervention](http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/information/options/educational/ei/) (<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/information/options/educational/ei/>).
- Early Intervention includes any help with learning that your child needs. Examples of this help are:
  - Help learning to speak or sign
  - Visits to an audiologist
  - Home visits to teach you how to take care of your child
  - Therapy to help your child grow strong
  - Tests [and check-ups] of your child's development
  - Hearing aids and other things that help your child hear more
  - Getting taken to and from the place where you can get help
- You can get help in the place that is best for you and your baby. This could be in your home, at a day care center, or in a special program.

### **You can arrange for Early Intervention yourself or be referred by a professional.**

- You can refer your own child to an Early Intervention Program.
- Or a doctor or other professionals may refer your child for early intervention services. But nothing can happen unless you give your permission in writing.

### **The Early Intervention Program staff will teach you and your child.**

- People who test or work with your child should have special training (in working with deaf and hard of hearing children, for example).
- In some states they may need a special certification or license to work with your child.

### **The Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) will set clear goals for your child.**

- The IFSP is a plan that lists the skills that your child needs to learn over the next year.
- If your child has a disability or delay, professionals and a service coordinator will help you write the IFSP.
- YOU ARE AN IMPORTANT MEMBER OF THE IFSP TEAM. You can even invite other people to be on the team.
- Here's what the IFSP includes:
  - How your child is doing.  
This could be in communication, in growing, and other areas.
  - What you're able to do for your child.
  - What you want your baby to be able to do.  
The IFSP should list ways to see if your baby is improving, and when your child should be doing what.
  - Who will give your baby help.  
This includes when that help will start, and how long it lasts.
  - Where you will get help.  
This could be at your home or at a day care center.
  - Who will make sure that you're getting the help written into your IFSP.

**As time goes on, pay attention to the plan (the ISFP) and make changes if you need to.**

- After you get the IFSP, you should meet with your IFSP team to review it every 6 months. Are the services helping your child?  
If not, you can make the changes you need.
- You must also meet with your IFSP team at least once a year to see how your child is doing with the services.
- You can accept or reject any of the services suggested. If you accept services and then change your mind, you can reject them later on.
  - If you agree with everything in the IFSP, you should sign that you agree and services will begin.
  - If you don't agree, ask for a form to sign where you can disagree.  
**NOT SIGNING THIS FORM MEANS THAT YOU AGREE.**
  - You should get a copy of your rights that tell you who to talk with about why you don't agree.

**When your child turns 3, the plan will change from an ISFP to an IEP**

- Your child will "transition" to preschool special education services if she still needs help with learning.  
You may be working with a different group of people once your child turns 3.  
The early intervention program and the preschool program should work with you to make the transition smooth.
- By the time of your child's third birthday, you should have a new plan for preschool called an Individualized Education Program or IEP.  
This will be written by a new group of people, including you.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): A Law that Can Help Your Child**

- If you've just found out that your child is deaf, you can get help.
- This is because being deaf is considered a disability, in the special education law.
- The IDEA (Part C) protects your right to get help for your baby who is younger than 3 years

## Find out what your state does to provide early intervention for children

- **IDEA sets rules for all states.**  
**But each state decides how it follows those rules.**
- **To learn more about your state's early intervention program,** go to this list from the [National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center](http://www.nectac.org/contact/ptccoord.asp) (<http://www.nectac.org/contact/ptccoord.asp>).  
It has links to websites about each state's early intervention program.
- **Find out how your state follows Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**
  1. **Find out who give families help.**  
States make their own rules about who gives families help.  
Each state decides who is in charge of Early Intervention.
  2. **Find out how children enter the system.**  
States make their own systems for finding children with disabilities.
  3. **Find out who is considered "disabled" or "delayed."**
    - States decide who has a problem bad enough that they are "disabled" or "delayed."
    - Each state decides how far behind a child must be in learning to get services. For example:
      - In some states, a child who is 1 year old will get early intervention services only if she is 3 months behind.
      - In some states, children get early intervention services to prevent a delay from happening.
  4. **Find out how much you would pay.**
    - Early Intervention is free in some states.
    - In other states, families may have to pay something, depending on how much money they make.

*This page was last edited on May 27, 2003.*

*You can find this page online at:*

<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/information/rights/school/ei.jsp>