
Autism Across the Lifespan

EARLY INTERVENTION

Why Early Intervention?

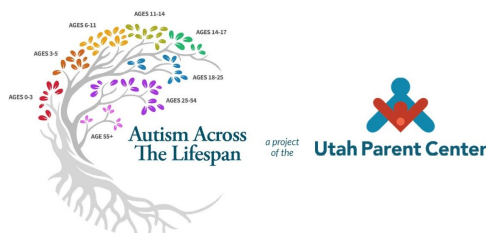
There are three primary reasons for intervening early with a child showing developmental delays:


1. To enhance the child's development
2. To provide support and assistance to the family
3. To maximize the child's and family's benefit to society

Early Intervention is a family-centered teaching program where staff and families of eligible children, birth to three years old, work together to help children grow and develop. Teaching a child and helping him or her to learn at this age will create later success with life, school readiness, and self-sufficiency. If a parent is taught how to help the child and how to work with the child, then the parent will be more involved with the child's learning and growth.

The purpose of Early Intervention programs is to provide help early on for babies and toddlers who exhibit significant developmental delays. Babies and Toddlers ages 0-3 are at a critical age of development. The rate of human learning and development is most rapid in the preschool years.

Early Intervention provides parent education, therapies, motor and speech specialists, and developmental specialists as well as other services. These specialists along with services from nurses and social workers provide intervention programs that may be center-based, home-based, hospital-based, or a combination. The goal is to provide services in the child's natural environment, which will be determined by the family and the Early Intervention team.





Early intervention services have a significant impact on parents and siblings of a developmentally delayed infant or young child. The family of the young child often feels disappointment, social isolation, added stress, frustration, and helplessness. Families of children with special needs are found to experience increased instances of divorce. Early Intervention provides a way for families to set goals that are accomplished and to network with other families. Having the opportunity to be successful with goals and to see and work with other families will help parents not feel alone and allow them to talk with other families experiencing similar challenges. Early intervention goals and networking can result in parents having improved attitudes about themselves and their children, improved information and skills for teaching their children, more time for leisure and employment, decreased stress, and better family relationships.

Research has shown that early intervention helps children build progress over time. This helps them towards future success as they grow. It connects parents with other parents with similar concerns. It helps parents understand their child's needs so that they can better communicate them to others, assisting them as they build their circle of support. It gives parents answers to questions they may not have known to ask, and help them be their child's best advocate.

As parents, we need to realize that the interventions we are doing now are likely to make a big difference in our child's future. Take a minute to picture your child. Think of the greatest dream you have for the child. Visualize it. Now DOUBLE it and you will be getting close to the child's potential. Know about your child's disability but focus on the abilities!

References

- [Kids on the Move](#) Early Intervention DVD
- [Davis School District](#) website Early Intervention page
- <https://www.handsandvoices.org/fl3/resources/pdfs/SayYestoEI.pdf>
- [KidSource Online](#)