



EI & ECE: Myths vs. Facts

When working together to support young children, it is important to foster responsive relationships and mutual understanding. This fact sheet aims to promote understanding between families, EI professionals, and ECE professionals.



Myths about Early Intervention

Myth: Early intervention can “cure” a child’s delays or disability.

Fact: Early Intervention aims to build parent and caregiver capacity in supporting a child’s unique developmental needs. EI is designed to be a collaborative process that provides tools, resources, strategies, and coaching to parents and caregivers.

Myth: EI sessions don’t feel long enough or frequent enough for change to happen.

Fact: When EI is provided in the home or at child care, sessions are typically up to 60 minutes in length. Sessions use a coaching model of service delivery to support parent/caregiver carryover, consistency, and repeated practice outside of the EI session—all of which help young children learn. Children who benefit from more intensive supports may qualify for a dedicated preschool EI classroom. Families can talk to their preschool EI team or local Intermediate Unit for more information.

Myth: EI providers should be working directly with the child one-on-one during their full session. They should not be talking to the teacher or completing paperwork during the session.

Fact: EI providers should balance between modeling strategies, engaging with the child, and coaching the caregiver. EI providers may also be required to collect data, document progress, and complete session notes during the session to promote caregiver involvement in these aspects of EI.

Myth: If a child has EI, they’ll automatically be in special education for the rest of their schooling.

Fact: A child who receives EI may stop receiving services at any time if the parent/guardian chooses to do so. Children receiving EI are also regularly reevaluated and may stop receiving services when they meet developmental milestones. Research suggests that EI can actually be linked to a lower need for special education support in the future.



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Myths about Early Care and Education

Myth: Child care is the same as babysitting.

Fact: There are many differences between licensed child care and babysitting. Babysitting is typically a private arrangement made between a parent and a caregiver. Licensed child care is regulated by the Department of Human Services, Regional Child Development Office. In child care programs, there are regulations in place to protect the health and safety of young children. There are also quality standards guided by [Keystone STARS](#). Many child care programs follow a curriculum aligned with [PA Early Learning Standards](#) to promote positive interactions, developmentally appropriate practice, and social-emotional development.

Myth: Child care providers and early childhood educators should be able to provide one-on-one support to children who need it.

Fact: Child care is a group care setting. While child care teachers provide some individualized attention throughout the day, they are responsible for the safety and education of the full group. Child Care providers in PA are required by [PA code](#) to maintain the following adult-to-child ratios:

- Infants (birth–12 months): 1 adult to 4 infants
- Young Toddler (1–2 years old): 1 adult to 5 young toddlers
- Older Toddler (2–3 years old): 1 adult to 6 older toddlers
- Preschool (3 years old–beginning K): 1 adult to 10 preschoolers

Myth: Most child care providers and early educators do not have child development training, credentials, or degrees.

Fact: The minimum required education for a teacher's assistant or aide in a licensed child care program in PA is a high school diploma plus 15 hours of new staff orientation training. Assistant Group Supervisors must have a high school diploma with credit hours in an early childhood related field or two years of experience with children. Lead teachers or group supervisors must have a minimum of an Associate's Degree in ECE or related field plus two years of experience with children, but many have a bachelor's degree or higher. Pre-K Counts teachers are required to have a PA teaching certification. Learn more about [ECE Career Lattice](#).

Myth: It doesn't matter if you call it "child care" or "day care."

Fact: Words matter! In June of 2018, the Pennsylvania state legislature passed House Bill 1677 to update Pennsylvania's regulations and code to use the term "child care," rather than "day care," to reflect the work of early learning programs more accurately. The impacts of child care are multifaceted and lifelong—much longer than a day. Learn more about why it's important to [Call it Child Care](#).

