



Allegheny County Early Intervention Toolkit

Tools, strategies, and resources for Early Care and Education Programs in Allegheny County





They say “It takes a village.”

The African proverb “It takes a village to raise a child” originated from the idea that it takes many people in different roles to collectively create an environment where a young child can grow, learn, develop, and thrive.

Early Intervention (EI) partners with parents, families, caregivers, and early childhood educators to provide services and support to young children with, or at risk of, developmental delays and/or disabilities. EI is collaborative and involves listening, discussing, sharing information, modeling strategies, building relationships, and coaching. EI engages and serves not only the young child, but also their village—**including you.**

Trying Together developed the Early Intervention Toolkit specifically for Early Care and Education (ECE) programs in Allegheny County—and the children and families they serve. The two main goals of this toolkit are to:

1. Increase mutual understanding between ECE programs and EI services.
2. Strengthen the collaborative relationship between ECE professionals, EI professionals, and families.

Trying Together believes that in order to meet the unique needs of all young children, the important adults in a child’s life must partner together.

In the Early Intervention Toolkit, ECE professionals will have an opportunity to explore:

- An Introduction to Early Intervention
- How to Connect Families with Early Intervention
- ECE and EI Collaboration
- Inclusive ECE Environments
- Additional Resources





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Introduction to Early Intervention



All young children grow and develop in their own unique ways.

Some young children may experience developmental delays, disabilities, or other risk factors that may impact their development. Early Intervention (EI) partners with caregivers to provide services and support to young children with, or at risk of, developmental delays and/or disabilities and their families.

Eligible children are entitled to EI services under the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA). Infants and toddlers (birth–age 3) receive EI services under IDEA Part C and preschool-aged children (ages 3–5/age of beginners) receive EI services under IDEA Part B.

To find out if a child qualifies for services, a child's caregiver can contact the CONNECT Helpline: 1-800-692-7288, email help@connectpa.net, or submit a form [online](#).

What are EI Services?

- EI is provided at no cost to eligible young children and their families.
- **Eligibility** is determined through a multidisciplinary evaluation of the child's development.
- Services may include developmental therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, social work, vision, hearing services and more.
- Services are individualized, family focused, and built on everyday learning opportunities throughout daily routines, activities, and interactions.
- Infant/toddler EI takes place in the child's natural environment, including the home, child care or early learning program, or other community setting familiar to the family.
- Preschool EI takes place in the child's educational environment but may also occur in an alternate location as agreed upon on a case-by-case basis.
- EI is collaborative. EI providers listen, share information, model strategies, and offer coaching as they partner with the important adults in a child's life.
- EI services are voluntary, and families have the right to decline or discontinue services and/or explore other privately funded services.
- If a child is not eligible for EI services, families are given information on other relevant community resources.





EI Timelines & Eligibility



Infant/Toddler Early Intervention Eligibility

Based on the multidisciplinary evaluation, infants and toddlers who meet the following criteria are eligible for EI services:

- 25% delay in one or more areas of development (cognitive, communication, physical development, social-emotional, and adaptive)
- OR a specialist's determination that there is a delay even though it doesn't show up on the evaluation (this is called "informed clinical opinion")
- OR a known physical or mental condition that is likely to contribute to developmental delays

Infant/Toddler Early Intervention Timeline



For children ages birth–3 in Allegheny County, a **referral** is made and/or the family requests an evaluation by contacting The Alliance for Infants at Toddlers at 412-885-6000. While others may refer a child, the referral will not move forward until the parent/guardian provides permission.



A service coordinator (SC) is assigned to and meets with the family. The SC may do an observation or complete a screening tool to determine if an evaluation is recommended or if the child should be monitored by developmental tracking.



The parent/guardian must provide written consent before a screening or multidisciplinary evaluation is completed. If recommended, **an evaluation must be scheduled within 45 calendar days of the initial referral.**



Eligibility is determined at the multidisciplinary evaluation, which typically occurs in a single **2-3 hour evaluation appointment** in the child's natural environment.

- If the child is eligible for services, an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is developed after the evaluation to outline the child's strengths, services, and outcomes/goals.
- The parent/guardian can choose an EI **provider agency** if they have a preference.
- Services **must start within 14 calendar days after the IFSP is created.**
- If a child is eligible for developmental tracking, the SC will discuss periodic monitoring of developmental milestones.
- If a child is not eligible for services, an evaluation report is written and information on community resources is offered.



Once services begin, they are reviewed by the team (service coordinator, EI providers, and family) quarterly. A re-evaluation is done annually to see if the child is still eligible for services.

Transition from Infant/Toddler EI to Preschool EI

If a child already receives Infant/Toddler EI services, a transition planning meeting is held six months to 90 days before the child's third birthday to discuss how to best support the child and family. If the child is transitioning to Preschool EI, the team will consider a variety of factors to decide if a review of the previous evaluation/records is appropriate or if a new evaluation needs to be completed. The goal of transition is to have a smooth switch from Infant/Toddler EI to Preschool EI if continued services are needed.

Preschool EI Eligibility

Children ages 3–5 (age of beginners) who meet the following criteria are eligible for early intervention services:

- A 25% delay in one or more areas of development
- OR any of the following physical or mental disabilities: autism, visual impairments (including blindness), hearing impairments, deafness, intellectual disability, traumatic brain injury, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, serious emotional disturbance, specific learning disability, speech or language impairments, deaf-blindness, and multiple disabilities
- AND are in need of special education and related services

Preschool EI Timeline

1



A **referral** is made and/or the family requests an evaluation from their Intermediate Unit. Families who reside in the city of Pittsburgh can contact Pittsburgh Public Schools at 412-529-4000. Families who reside anywhere else within Allegheny County can contact the Allegheny Intermediate Unit at 412-394-5904.

2



A screening may be done to see if an evaluation is needed. Before an evaluation or screening is completed, the parent must provide written consent (called "permission to evaluate").

3



An **evaluation must occur within 60 calendar days** of the parent signing the permission to evaluate and typically occurs across multiple days.

4



If the child is eligible for EI, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) **must be developed within 30 calendar days** of the completion date of the evaluation. The IEP outlines the child's current development as well as their services, supports, and goals.

5



An IEP meeting is held with the IEP team (including parents/guardians, teachers, educational administrators, and related service providers). Services **must start within 14 days of the IEP meeting**.



Scan the QR Code for sources and additional information!



Who Does What in EI?

When a child qualifies for Early Intervention (EI), an individualized plan is created that outlines the child's strengths and identifies goals, strategies, and services. Every child's EI services can look different and may involve multiple EI professionals depending on the child's unique development. Learn more about who does what in EI:



Scan the QR Code for sources and additional information!



Service Coordinator (SC)

Introduces, monitors, and coordinates EI services. Partners with families, supports transitions, and connects families to community resources.



Physical Therapy (PT)

Addresses gross motor skills or activities that involve large muscles, such as crawling, walking, and using stairs.



Occupational Therapy (OT)

Focuses on fine motor skills or activities that involve the small muscles, such as reaching, grasping, and eating. OT may also work on daily self-help skills, sensory processing, and regulation.



Speech Language Therapy (SLT)

Supports pre-speech, speech, and communication skills, such as pointing, imitating sounds, using words or signs, and/or using Alternative Augmentative Communication (AAC) devices.



Developmental Therapy / Special Instruction (DV)

Helps children achieve developmental skills, such as attention, play, and social skills, as well as emotional regulation.



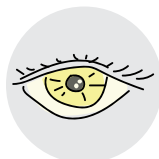
Social Work Services

Provides caregivers with resources and skills to support their child's development. Social workers provide linkages to crisis services and long-term mental health support as needed.



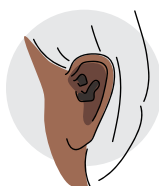
Nutrition Therapy

Monitors growth and nutritional intake, develops modified diets, and supports overall health and wellness.



Vision Services/Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI)

Helps caregivers understand the impact of a child's visual impairment and suggests adaptations to the environment to support vision and development.



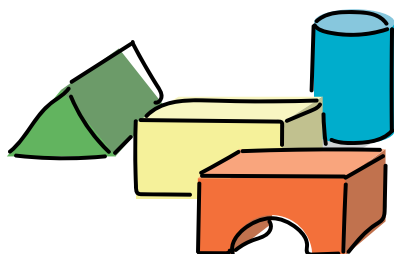
Hearing Services

Helps caregivers understand the impact of a child's hearing loss/impairment and explores communication approaches and devices with the family.



Who, What, & Where? The Differences Between EI, RRT, IECMH, and IBHS

Early Intervention (EI), Rapid Response Team (RRT), Infant Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH), and Intensive Behavioral Health Services (IBHS) are different services that may support young children in early care and education programs. Young children and families may utilize all, some, or none of these services.



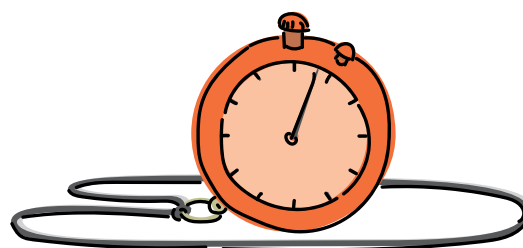
Early Intervention (EI)

WHO: Eligible children ages 0–5 (age of beginners or age of beginning K-12 school). Eligibility is determined by a multidisciplinary evaluation.

WHAT:

- Parent/guardian must provide written permission.
- Services are no cost to the family under IDEA Part B and Part C.
- An Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP for Infant/Toddler EI) or Individualized Education Program (IEP for Preschool EI) is created to outline the child's goals and services.
- The amount, frequency, and type of services (Developmental Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Physical Therapy, etc.) varies based on each child's individual situation.
- Services are delivered using a coaching model in partnership with families, caregivers, and teachers.

WHERE: Home, early learning program, child care, preschool, and/or familiar community setting.



Rapid Response Team (RRT)

WHO: Children enrolled in licensed early care and education programs in Allegheny County. Additional regions across the state are also developing their own Rapid Response Teams.

WHAT:

- Services are no cost and are facilitated by the Early Learning Resource Center Region 5 (ELRC 5) in Allegheny County.
- Support is provided to child care programs on developmentally appropriate practices and classroom-wide positive behavior support.
- Child-specific support may be provided when a child is at risk of suspension or expulsion. The parent/guardian must provide consent for a child-specific referral.
- RRT can provide consultation and coaching to programs with the goal of phasing out support as programs build their capacity. RRT is not intended to be a long-term service.

WHERE: RRT works within licensed early care and education programs and responds within 48 hours.



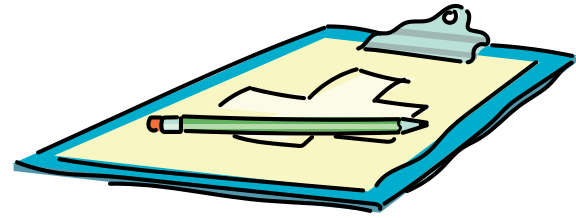
Infant Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH)

WHO: Children ages birth–5 who attend licensed early care and education programs in PA.

WHAT:

- The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) funds IECMH statewide.
- IECMH consultation is a no-cost resource for licensed programs.
- IECMH supports social-emotional development from birth through age 5.
- IECMH strengthens the capacity of the early learning workforce. Services can include the creation of an action plan as well as professional development training.
- A parent/guardian release form is required for child-specific referrals.

WHERE: IECMH works within licensed early care and education programs in PA.



Intensive Behavioral Health Services (IBHS)

Note: formerly known as BHRS and/or wraparound services (TSS, BSC)

WHO: For children and youth under age 21 with mental, emotional, or behavioral health needs, as documented by a licensed professional with a Promise ID.

WHAT:

- IBHS requires a written order from a qualified licensed professional, such as physician or psychologist with a Promise ID.
- IBHS services are billed under Medical Assistance (MA).
- IBHS may include individual services (1:1) such as behavior consultation, Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services, and/or group services.
- Written orders are valid for 12 months and include the number of hours for the services (sometimes up to 30 hours per week).
- IBHS completes an assessment of the child to understand strengths and needs before developing an individual treatment plan. Services are then provided by a professional who is at minimum a Master's-level clinician. The service team may also include a Behavioral Health Technician (BHT) for individual services or a Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) for ABA services.

WHERE: The written order must include the location(s) where services can be provided, such as home, school, or community setting.





Supporting Families with Early Intervention Services

We surveyed Early Care and Education (ECE) providers across Allegheny County and asked them to share the strengths they bring to the process of supporting families with early intervention (EI) services.

Recognizing that families may be nervous about the stigma of receiving services, ECE providers are in a position to listen, guide, and support. The quotes that follow are words of wisdom directly from the ECE field.

"It's extremely important to support families receiving or looking to receive EI services for their children. We connect families with resources, and teachers love getting information from EI providers to use with other children in their care."

- ECE Program Director

"I work with children and families and make referrals for EI. We work together to schedule an evaluation and to make sure the necessary information is available. We do the ASQ (screening tool) regularly to help identify needs."

- ECE Classroom Teacher

"Through parent-teacher conferences, we provide families with feedback on their child's development and provide resources for EI services. These resources are also available at our front entrance."

- ECE Classroom Teacher



"The greatest strength I bring is the patience I have when working with families who are having a hard time accepting that their child may need additional support."

- ECE Program Director

"I bring understanding and a listening ear. It can sometimes be scary for parents when they are told their child might need some help."

- ECE Program Director

"Sometimes testing or screening tools don't catch everything. So, as a provider and as an advocate, voicing my concerns and making sure that not only am I heard, but my families are also heard, is extremely important."

- ECE Program Director

"I believe in building relationships before any learning happens within a preschool classroom... so that we can all work together."

- ECE Classroom Teacher



Supporting Families with Early Intervention Services

Talking to families about EI or other early childhood supports can be hard. Having tools integrated into your ECE program can support program directors and teachers during these conversations. Here are some of the best practices that programs across Allegheny County are using to talk to families about early intervention:



Include families in your program from the start.

During enrollment:

- Ask if the child receives early intervention or other services.
 - If so, ask for permission to talk to any service providers in relation to the child's development.
- Ask families if they have any developmental concerns about their child's play, communication, motor skills, eating, social skills, and/or behavior.
- Tell families that your program monitors child development.
- Make families aware of any relevant policies, including parent-teacher conferences.

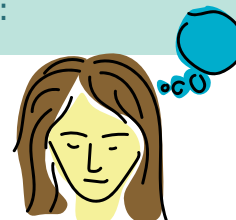
Once families enroll, regularly engage with families and respect that they are the expert on their child.



Know your developmental milestones.

Many ECE programs complete developmental screenings regularly and use these as an opportunity to talk to families about their child's development at parent-teacher conferences. Many programs recommend using the ASQ-3 (Ages and Stages Questionnaires). Trying Together regularly offers Intro to ASQ [professional development courses](#).

If your program does not use a screening tool, you may choose to refer to developmental checklists. One recommended resource is the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC).



If you notice developmental concerns:

- Monitor and document how often the concern is happening and in what environment or setting.
- Discuss concerns with your program leadership and ask for additional support.
- Talk to the family early; the family is always an important part of the team.
- When possible, give the family time to process your discussion, but remember to follow up.



Be prepared with resources.

- Have EI referral information available to ALL families in your facility's lobby or at your front entrance.
- If recommending EI, give the family the correct referral information based on the child's age and location of the family's home.
- Share recommendations about specific service providers and highlight success stories. It can be helpful for parents to know that other families have utilized EI.



Additional EI talking points:

- EI is collaborative, family focused, and embedded into everyday routines and activities.
- EI can help caregivers and families better understand how to support their child.
- Know that you're not alone. We can help reduce stigma by talking openly about services.
- Receiving services early can support kindergarten readiness.
- EI is voluntary; families can choose to decline or discontinue services.
- EI is provided at no cost to families.



How to Make Early Intervention Referrals in Allegheny County

Parents and caregivers can refer their child for Early Intervention (EI) with a simple phone call.

Other individuals in a child's life, such as a child care provider, social worker, or pediatrician, may also recommend that a child receive early intervention. However, a child's legal guardian must provide consent before a screening or evaluation occurs.



All families living in Allegheny County with a child ages birth–3 years old:

- Call [The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers](#) at 412-885-6000 and ask to speak with the Intake Department.
- Or, guardians can complete an electronic referral form [online](#) (please read all instructions before submitting).
- Physicians, medical professionals, community agencies, and other family members can call The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers at 412-885-6000 to make a referral with parental permission.
- If a child is turning age 3 in 45 days or fewer, then the referral should be made to the appropriate preschool EI program.



Families who reside within the city of Pittsburgh with a child at least 2 years, 9 months old but not yet 5 years old:

- Call the [Pittsburgh Public Schools Early Intervention Program](#) at 412-529-4000 to schedule a developmental screening and/or evaluation. You may call this number year-round.

Families who are unsure if they reside within the Pittsburgh Public School District can visit <https://bit.ly/PPS-Search>.

1. Enter your home address under "Find your address"
2. Click "find on map"
 - If a family lives in Pittsburgh Public, their neighborhood schools will display.
 - If a family does NOT live in Pittsburgh Public, a message will display stating that the address is not in the district.



Families who live outside of the city of Pittsburgh, but within Allegheny County, with a child at least 2 years, 9 months old but not yet 5 years old:

- Contact the [Allegheny Intermediate Unit \(AIU\) Preschool Early Intervention](#) at 412-394-5904 to schedule a screening and/or evaluation. You may call this number year-round.

Additional Resources

If you're not sure where to start, families may also contact the CONNECT Helpline: 1-800-692-7288 or email help@connectpa.net, or submit a form [online](#).

If you're in need of special education services or support for a child who has already begun kindergarten, contact the child's elementary school or principal, or the district's special education department to learn more or request an evaluation in writing.



Scan the QR Code for sources and additional information!



Helping Families Prepare for Their EI Evaluation

"There is always some difference in a child's behavior when at home vs. at school. Being able to give parents and therapists a little synopsis of what a child is like here [in an early care and education setting] is something only we can provide."

- ECE Program Director

Early Care and Education programs have a unique perspective on each child's development in a group learning environment. Many programs complete developmental checklists or screening tools to share with families prior to an EI evaluation. Programs that do not have access to developmental checklists or screening tools can choose to use this worksheet to provide feedback about a child's development in the early learning setting.

Directions: Complete this worksheet and share it with the family as they prepare for their child's EI evaluation.



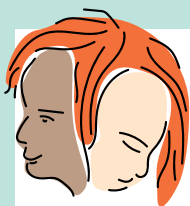
Physical Development - How does the child physically interact with the environment? Consider both gross motor movements (large muscle movements such as crawling or walking) and fine motor movements (small muscle movements such as use of fingers and hands). You can also consider the child's health, vision, and hearing.



Cognitive Development - How does the child process information and respond to objects? Consider things like how the child learns, plays with toys, and attends to classroom activities.



Communication Development - How does the child understand language and communicate? Consider how the child responds to being spoken to and uses eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, sounds, and/or words.



Social-Emotional Development - How does the child express and regulate their behaviors and emotions, and/or respond to social interactions? Consider things such as the child's ability to calm down when upset and interact with others.



Adaptive Development - How does the child engage in self-help activities? Consider things like how the child participates in everyday routines, such as feeding, diapering/toileting, and dressing.

Check out [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Milestones](#) for more information on early childhood development.



Scan the QR Code for sources and additional information!



Early Intervention Transition Q&A

Facts for Early Care and Education Programs

In the special education continuum, “transition” occurs multiple times, including from Infant/Toddler EI to Preschool EI and from Preschool EI to K-12 school-age special education. This Q&A summarizes facts about the EI transition processes to support Early Care and Education programs so they can be informed partners alongside families and EI providers.

Question: Why does transition occur?

Answer:

Infant/Toddler EI, Preschool EI, and K-12 education are administered (or managed) differently. In Pennsylvania, the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) administers early intervention in collaboration with both the PA Department of Human Services (DHS) and the PA Department of Education (PDE).

- **Infant/Toddler EI in Allegheny County** - The Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) Office of Behavioral Health contracts with The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers to provide evaluations, service coordination, and developmental monitoring. Early Intervention services are provided by one or more of 12 contracted provider agencies.
- **Preschool EI in Allegheny County** - Depending on where you live in Allegheny County, two different Intermediate Units administer preschool EI—Mt. Oliver Intermediate Unit 2/Pittsburgh Public School District (PPS) and the Allegheny Intermediate Unit 3 (AIU).
- **School-Age Special Education in Allegheny County** School-age (K-12) special education services are administered by the PA Department of Education (PDE) and Bureau of Special Education. Special Education services are provided by the Local Education Agency (LEA), which includes both public school districts and charter schools.

Question: When does transition occur?

Answer:

- In Infant/Toddler EI, a transition planning meeting is held with the family six months to 90 days before the child’s third birthday to discuss and plan for transition.
- Some children may exit EI before or at age 3 if they’ve met all of their developmental goals and/or are no longer eligible for services.
- For children interested in transitioning from Infant/Toddler EI to Preschool EI, a new evaluation may be completed.
- If a child is eligible to transition to Preschool EI, an IEP will be developed before their third birthday and services should begin no later than 14 days after the child’s third birthday.
- In Preschool EI, transition planning starts the year before a child is old enough to enroll in kindergarten or first grade.
- In February of the child’s transition year, kindergarten transition meetings occur between the Preschool EI program, the school district, and the family.
- The family will complete an “intent to register” form and will work with the school district through the school-age evaluation process.
- If the child continues to remain eligible for special education services, an IEP should be developed so that services are in place on the first day of kindergarten.



Question: If a child received Infant/Toddler EI, will they automatically receive Preschool EI? If a child received Preschool EI, will they automatically receive special education in Kindergarten?

Answer:

No, a child who received Infant/Toddler EI will not automatically receive Preschool EI and a child who received Preschool EI will not automatically receive school-age services. This is because:

- A child may exit early intervention because they have met their developmental milestones and no longer qualify.
- The eligibility criteria changes with each transition.
 - From Infant/Toddler EI to Preschool EI, children are no longer able to qualify on the eligibility criteria of "informed clinical opinion" (qualifying based on the professional opinion of the evaluator, even if the child did not qualify based on assessment).
 - From Preschool EI to K-12, children can no longer qualify for services based on having a "developmental delay."
- During all transitions, the legal guardian must provide consent/permission. Guardians must be an active participant during the transition process.

Question: What if a child is no longer eligible for services after a transition?

Answer:

- If a child who was eligible for Infant/Toddler EI does not qualify for Preschool EI, the family may pursue private non-special education services through insurance or private pay (for example, outpatient speech therapy). The family may also request further screening or an evaluation at a later point if developmental concerns continue.
- School-age children who do not qualify for special education may also pursue private non-special education services (for example, outpatient therapy). School-age children with a documented disability who are not eligible for special education may qualify for accommodations in the general classroom under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- If a child did not previously qualify for EI but concerns arise in the K-12 setting, the guardian can request a special education evaluation by contacting the school in writing.

Question: How can Early Care and Education (ECE) programs support transition?

Answer:

- ECE programs can be open to inviting evaluators to come into their program, especially during the transition process. This allows evaluators to conduct observations or evaluations of a child in their current early learning environment, and also allows the child's current program to provide input.
- ECE programs can also offer to participate in planning meetings at the parent's request. Parents are entitled to invite other relevant individuals to meetings pertaining to their child's services.
- ECE programs can be aware of approaching transitions ahead of the child's third birthday and when they're preparing to enter kindergarten. Programs can ask families if they've had a transition meeting and discuss any achievements or areas that need additional support.





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.



EI & ECE: Myths vs. Facts

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](#).





All About IFSPs & IEPs

It is important for ECE programs to understand the basics of Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

IFSP

- Infant/Toddler Early Intervention (for children ages birth–third birthday)
- Facilitated by Infant/Toddler Service Coordinator (in Allegheny County, the Service Coordinator is from The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers)
- Includes IFSP outcomes or statements of what the family wants to achieve with their child as well as the method, timeline, and plans to measure progress
- Includes support strategies to help the child, family, and caregivers achieve the outcome
- Provides services to both the family and the young child
- Reviewed quarterly (once every 3 months) and updated at least every six months

IFSP and IEP Similarities

- Multidisciplinary approach to provide individualized services
- Team must include the parents/legal guardians and requires their signature of consent
- Team may include advocate or person outside of the family if requested by the parent
- Provides summary of current development
- Includes individualized outcomes or goals to guide services
- Documents the child's services, including which services will be provided, location of services, and frequency of services
- Legally binding document
- Provides families with a formal process to review their rights, disagree, or file a complaint

IEP

- Preschool Early Intervention and transitions into K-12 school
- Overseen by the child's Local Education Agency (LEA). For preschool EI in Allegheny County, this is the Intermediate Unit (AIU or PPS)
- The IEP team must include the parent(s)/legal guardian(s), special education teacher, general education teacher, a professional for each related service if warranted (example: Speech Therapist), and a representative from the Local Education Agency (LEA)
- Provides services to the individual child
- Updated at least annually





What to Expect During an EI Visit in an Early Care and Education Program

Because EI is individualized, no two EI sessions are exactly the same. Below are some general practices that you can expect to see during an EI session at an Early Care and Education Program:



Coaching

The EI provider will use coaching to partner with early childhood educators and interact with the child. In PA, EI providers across the state are currently being trained in one of the following EI service delivery models:

- Infant/Toddler Early Intervention providers are using [Family Guided Routines Based Intervention](#) (FGRBI) to coach caregivers on how to promote learning and engagement through everyday routines.
- Preschool Early Intervention providers are using [Embedded Instruction](#) to coach caregivers on how to provide developmentally appropriate, intentional learning opportunities during everyday activities.



Inclusion

EI should take place in the child's natural environment—including the early care and education setting. EI providers cannot take children out of the classroom. To support collaboration, coaching, and inclusion, it is important for EI to take place in the child's everyday environment and during classroom routines.



Reflection

The EI provider and teacher should briefly check in and reflect on any progress, updates, or challenges since the last visit. This is a good opportunity for the teacher to express any concerns.



Observation and Feedback

The EI provider may observe the child engaging with peers, teachers, and/or classroom activities. The EI provider may ask teachers for feedback or provide teachers with feedback.



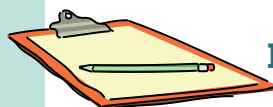
Direct Teaching and Demonstration

The EI provider may offer direct information, resources, and strategies. They will also often demonstrate or model specific strategies, sometimes through facilitated social interactions with classroom peers. The EI provider may also ask teachers to practice a strategy to make sure that they're comfortable with the strategy.



Problem-Solving

The early childhood educator should be prepared to discuss any questions or concerns related to the child's development, classroom engagement, or participation in routines and activities to begin problem-solving during the session.



Documentation and Planning

At the end of the visit, the EI provider may complete their session note to document and review the strategies. They will develop a plan with the teacher for how to support learning between visits. EI providers will also communicate with parents so that parents can practice at home too.



Scan the QR Code for sources and additional information!



Tips for ECE & EI Collaboration

Why Does Collaboration Matter?

Nurturing and responsive relationships are key to how young children of all abilities learn, grow, and develop. In order to support young children receiving EI in Early Care and Education programs, it is vital for the adults in the lives of the child to have collaborative relationships.

"No one person, field, or resource is sufficient to address the array of needs presented by infants, toddlers, and preschool aged children and their families."

- Bricker, et. al. (2022)¹

We asked ECE and EI professionals across Allegheny County to share tips that support collaboration. Below are some tools you can try implementing to promote collaboration and connection:



Scheduling

... because everyone is busy!

- The EI provider, family, and child care provider should discuss scheduling and compromise on a day/time that works best for all involved—most importantly, the child. It is important to consider which classroom routines and activities best align with the child's EI goals.
- ECE programs can have a calendar hanging in their classroom and ask EI providers to write their name and the initials of the child that they're seeing on the calendar. Note: Initials will help protect the confidentiality of children.



Communicating

... because it is HARD to have a conversation with another adult while teaching a full classroom of young children!

- Consider using a communication notebook or group text with the child's family and EI team to share updates or ask questions. This can be helpful for children who are receiving multiple therapies. *Note: Ask the parent for permission before doing this.*
- Work with program leadership to prioritize opportunities for you to touch base with EI providers.
- Work with the parent and EI provider to ask for a copy of the session note for the classroom's record.



Collaborating

... because working together is in the best interest of the children!

- Ask the family and EI provider for a copy of the full IFSP or IEP, or the individual goals/outcomes.
- Have realistic expectations. EI providers are not a 1:1 aide for the child. Parents, early childhood educators, and EI providers must all put in collective effort.
- Welcome EI into your classroom—you are now a team.
- Understand your own beliefs, values, experiences, ethics, and biases.
- Recognize and respect each team member's skills, knowledge, and strengths.
- Provide reciprocal feedback to one another and be willing to problem-solve together.
- Read the [Division for Early Childhood \(DEC\) Council for Exceptional Children's recommended practices for inclusion](#).

¹ [A Proposed Framework for Enhancing Collaboration in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education](#) (2022)





The Role of ECE Programs in EI Services

Before EI Starts:

Talk to the parents/guardians about ...

- The child's developmental milestones.
- Observations of the child, highlighting both areas of strength and areas that need additional support.

Encourage the child's family to talk to their pediatrician about any developmental concerns or reach out to Early Intervention for a no-cost developmental screening.

Have local EI resources available to all families in your program.



After EI Starts:

Share information about ...

- The child's interests and preferences (toys, friends, games, songs, etc).
- The child's dislikes or non-preferred activities.
- Your classroom schedule, transitions, and routines.

Partner with the EI providers:

- Welcome EI into your classroom with the assumption that they want to make your day easier—not harder!
- You likely aren't able to spend the full session engaging with the EI provider and child. Try to take a few minutes to check in with the EI provider at the beginning and end of the session.
- Intentionally observe the EI provider's interactions with the child.
- Be open to new suggestions and give yourself time to try new strategies. You may need to try a new strategy for a few weeks before you notice a difference.

Advocate for yourself and your classroom:

- Ask the EI providers to write a few bullet points of practice strategies on a sticky note, or text you a quick summary of strategies.
- If you find a strategy is too difficult to implement given your program's policies and procedures, ask the EI provider to brainstorm ways to incorporate the strategy into routines and activities that you're already doing.
- Provide honest feedback to the EI provider as well as the parent.





Behavior is Communication: Understanding the Basics of Behavior

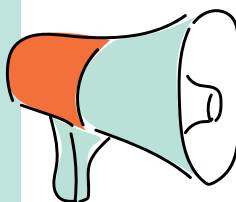
The study of behavior teaches us that behavior is a form of **communication**.

A young child's behavior is often to communicate and achieve one or more of the following purposes:



Get access to tangibles

Gain access to desired objects, items, activities, people, etc. Example: Pushing another child to gain access to the toy they were using.



Gain attention

Gain positive or negative attention from peers or adults. Positive attention example: Blowing a raspberry to make a peer laugh. Negative attention example: Standing up at circle time and getting verbally redirected by the teacher.



Avoid or escape

Avoid, delay, or escape from non-preferred tasks, activities, routines, transitions, etc. Example: Falling to the ground and kicking feet when it is time to transition to the bathroom.



Access sensory input or experiences

Gain sensations or experiences that feel good, calming, or help the body feel balanced and regulated. Example: Jumping up and down to create a soothing feeling.

In the study of Applied Behavior Analysis, these are called the "functions of behavior" (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2019). To find the function of a particular behavior, behavior analysts may conduct a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA). An FBA is a systematic way to discover which situations make a behavior more likely to continue to occur. FBAs often include a narrative report and behavior plan. FBAs are based on a combination of direct observation, data, and interviews with parents, caregivers, and teachers. After an FBA is completed, behavior analysts may consult and coach teachers on how to implement positive behavior support strategies in the classroom.



Are you working with a young child who might benefit from an FBA?

If the child is receiving Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) or Behavioral Health services, you could ask the parent if they've had an FBA completed. If the child is not currently receiving ABA services, reach out to the Allegheny County Rapid Response Team at rapidresponse@tryingtogether.org to learn about additional resources.

Source: Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2019). Applied Behavior Analysis (3rd Edition). Hoboken, NJ: Pearson Education.

In an ECE setting, how can you better understand the function or purpose of a behavior?

After identifying a concerning behavior, a reliable next step is tracking the antecedent, behavior, and consequence (or

immediate reaction or outcome following the behavior). Commonly called ABC data, the antecedent, behavior, and consequence can help teachers begin to see patterns of a behavior. When we understand the circumstances that are more likely to make the behavior occur, we can start focusing on the classroom environment, interactions, and teaching new skills to help replace the concerning behavior.

How to Collect ABC Data:

Antecedent

A

An antecedent is what happens directly before the behavior. This can be external or internal.

Example of antecedent: Children are sitting next to each other at morning snack and "Child A" finishes their snack.

Behavior

B

Behavior is anything observable that the child does.

Example of behavior: "Child A" hits the child sitting next to them.

Consequence

C

A consequence is whatever happens immediately after the behavior. Consequences can increase or decrease the likelihood of a behavior happening again in the future.

Example of consequence: The teacher tells "Child A" to get up from the table and go sit in the book corner while the other children finish snacks at the table.

To know if a consequence is helping decrease, maintain, or increase a concerning behavior, teachers can keep multiple days of ABC data to help see patterns. If the concerning behavior is increasing or staying the same, then the consequence is reinforcing or maintaining the behavior. In the example above, the teacher telling "Child A" to get up from the table after they hit a peer might actually be reinforcing (or increasing/maintaining) the behavior of hitting. "Child A" might be learning, "If I hit my friend when I'm done with a snack, I can get up from the table early."

Now what? By noting patterns of a concerning behavior, you can start to work with your classroom team and EI providers to address environment, interactions, developmentally appropriate practices, etc.

Remember: You can't control someone's behavior. What you can control are environmental antecedents and your reaction (the consequence).

Additional Behavior Support Resources

- [OCDEL Behavioral Help for Early Childhood Programs](#)
- [Allegheny County Rapid Response Team](#)
- [System 1-2-3](#)
- [National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations](#)



Scan the QR Code for sources and additional information!



Tips for Creating an Inclusive ECE Environment

"Each and every child, birth through age 8, has the right to equitable learning opportunities—in centers, family child care homes, or schools—that fully support their optimal development and learning across all domains and content areas." [NAEYC DAP Statement](#)¹

Below are tips, practices, and tools that support an inclusive and equitable learning environment for ALL children.

Inclusion Benefits All of Us!

- Children with disabilities or delays benefit from: social interactions, peer models, access to both adapted and age-appropriate materials, and more!
- Neurotypical children benefit from: exposure to diversity, increased acceptance, understanding of all individuals, and more!
- Teachers benefit from: expanding their skills, connecting meaningfully with all children, and more!



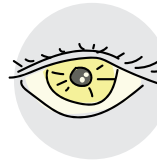
Scan the QR Code for sources and additional information!



Universal design - Teachers should consider if all children in their classroom can access all materials and/or activities in a meaningful way.



Antecedent strategies - Teachers can implement strategies to prevent concerning behaviors from occurring and set up children for success. Example: A verbal cue and timer can be used to help prepare children for an upcoming transition.



Visual supports - Teachers can use visuals such as picture schedules, picture labels, and common signs to remind young children of classroom expectations and routines.



Calming corner - As space allows, teachers can create an area in the classroom with developmentally appropriate calming and mindfulness tools, such as a bean bag chair, yoga ball, or sensory bottles.



Clear and simple instructions - Instead of telling children what NOT to do, teachers can practice giving clear, simple instructions about what children are expected TO do.



Routines and structure - Teachers can implement consistent daily routines and structure to help young children learn what to expect each day.



Wait time & wait activities - Teachers can do their best to limit wait time, but in a group setting, waiting occurs! When you can't avoid waiting, be prepared with a waiting activity, such as fidget toys, interactive songs, I spy with my little eye, etc.



Incorporate movement breaks - Teachers can limit sit-down time by providing movement breaks throughout the day, such as having children stretch or do a few jumping jacks.



Utilize music - Some young children respond better to musical cues rather than verbal directions. Teachers can use music or songs to signal common routines such as cleaning up or washing hands. Music can also be incorporated with dance and movement activities, such as the "freeze dance" or "the floor is lava."

1. National Association for the Education of Young Children. (April 2020). Position Developmentally Appropriate Practice [Position statement]. https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/dap-statement_o.pdf



What to Do if Families Have Concerns About a Child's EI Services



If the child is birth to age 3:

- 1 Families should discuss concerns with their service coordinator at The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers.
- 2 If concerns continue, families can contact the service coordinator supervisor at The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers by calling 412-885-6000.
- 3 If concerns persist, families can contact the local EI program supervisor at the Allegheny County Office of Behavioral Health/Early Intervention Services by calling 412-350-4456.
- 4 If concerns are not resolved, families can contact the PA Office for Dispute Resolution (ODR) at 800-222-3353 to receive assistance from a trained mediator to help solve disagreements. Or, families can contact the Office of Child Development and Early Learning at 717-346-9320 to discuss issues and/or file a complaint.

If the child is age 3–age of beginning school:

- 1 Families should discuss concerns with their preschool EI interventionist/teacher and/or preschool service coordinator from Pittsburgh Public Schools or the Allegheny Intermediate Unit.
- 2 If concerns continue, families can contact the local Preschool EI supervisor or LEA at Pittsburgh Public Schools by calling 412-529-4000 or the Allegheny Intermediate Unit by calling 412-394-5904.
- 3 If concerns are not resolved, families can contact the PA Office for Dispute Resolution (ODR) at 800-222-3353 to receive assistance from a trained mediator to help solve disagreements. Or, families can contact the Office of Child Development and Early Learning at 717-346-9320 to discuss issues and/or file a complaint.

Source: [A Family's Introduction to Early Intervention in PA](#) (PATTAN, revised April 2021)



Scan the QR Code for sources and additional information!



Early Intervention Advocacy Resources



What is an EI Advocate?

An EI advocate is someone who raises awareness about the benefits of EI, promotes equitable access to EI, and supports the advancement of the field. Some of the ways that you can be an EI advocate include:

- Connecting families with EI services
- Sharing information about EI with families or coworkers
- Supporting families who are navigating EI
- Engaging and educating community professionals, such as nurses and pediatricians
- Expressing and elevating the needs of young children
- Helping families know and understand their rights
- Staying up to date on relevant local and statewide EI policies

Advocacy Resources

Early Learning PA (ELPA) is a broad-based statewide coalition that advocates for access to voluntary, high-quality early care and education and healthy development opportunities for all Pennsylvania children. Trying Together is a principal partner of the coalition and can support interested SWPA educators and families.

Thriving PA is a campaign of ELPA that focuses specifically on perinatal and child health—including Infant/Toddler Early Intervention. Families, educators, and advocates can follow Thriving PA for updates and resources to support high-quality and equitable EI opportunities for infants and toddlers. Explore the resources:

- [Thriving PA Early Intervention Fact Sheet](#)
- [Statewide Advocacy Agenda Part C \(Infant/Toddler\) EI Services for Pennsylvania](#)

Early Intervention Technical Assistance Portal (EITA) is a training resource for professionals. EITA also has a “family resources” section with information on how families can connect with one another and become involved with opportunities to help shape EI services.

The Education Law Center (ELC) works to ensure all children have access to quality public education. ELC can provide legal advice, and advocacy to families, youth, community members, etc. Its website also has numerous free resources. With questions, call 412-258-2120.

The Parent Education and Advocacy Leadership (PEAL) Center works with families, children, and youth with disabilities to help them understand their rights. The PEAL Center also offers trainings to educate and empower families. Families can call 412-281-4404 to learn more.





Early Intervention Careers

Is a career in EI right for you?

Are you passionate about supporting the strengths and needs of all young children and their families? Learn more about career opportunities in Early Intervention.

Infant/Toddler Service Coordinator (SC)

Basic Qualifications

- A bachelor's degree, including 12 credits in EI, early childhood special education, early childhood education, child development, family studies, psychology, or related field AND one year of experience working with children, families, or individuals with disabilities.

OR

- An associate's degree, or 60 credits in EI, early childhood special education, early childhood education, child development, family studies, psychology, or related field AND three years of experience working with children, families, or individuals with disabilities.

Is it a good fit for you?

SCs partner with families to connect them to services, supports, and resources. It is important for SCs to have general knowledge of child development and a desire to make a difference in the lives of young children and their families. It is also helpful to have strong communication and organizational skills. SC positions may be full-time or part-time and require a reliable motor vehicle, valid PA drivers license, and the ability to travel throughout Allegheny County.

Where to find current opportunities:

Visit the [Alliance for Infants and Toddlers website](#).

Infant/Toddler Special Instructors/ Developmental Therapists (DV)

Basic Qualifications:

- A bachelor's degree in EI, early childhood special education, early childhood education, child development, special education or family studies, AND one year of working with young children with disabilities.

OR

- A bachelor's degree that includes at least 15 credits in EI, early childhood special education, early childhood education, child development, special education or family studies AND one year of working with young children with disabilities.

Is it a good fit for you?

DVs work with young children and their caregivers to grow, build, and teach skills. It is important for DVs to have a range of child development knowledge with a focus on cognitive development, play, and social-emotional skills. It is also helpful to have strong organizational skills, flexibility, and cultural competency. DV jobs may be full-time, part-time, or casual and may include evening work hours.

Where to find current opportunities:

Allegheny County's contracted infant/toddler EI providers regularly post job openings.

Preschool Early Intervention Paraprofessional

Basic Qualifications:

- Associate degree or 60 college credits or a Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PAT TAN) Paraeducator Certificate required.
- 1-2 years experience working with children with special needs is preferred.

Is it a good fit for you?

Preschool EI Paraprofessionals work in Preschool EI classrooms. They assist with overall classroom management, including helping students throughout daily routines, and preparing classroom materials. Paraprofessionals also assist with the supervision of children and may participate in data collection and IEP implementation.

Where to find current opportunities:

Visit the [Allegheny Intermediate Unit](#) and [Pittsburgh Public Schools](#) websites.

Preschool Early Intervention Teacher

Basic Qualifications:

- A bachelor's degree in education and valid PA certification required (Special Education PK-8/PK-12 or Early Childhood PK-4).
- Experience working with the preschool population in early childhood education environments.

Is it a good fit for you?

Preschool EI Teachers evaluate and deliver special education services in preschool settings, including Intermediate Unit classrooms, local child care programs, and/or community preschool programs. Preschool EI teachers develop, implement, and monitor students' IEPs while collaborating with parents/guardians, early educators, and support professionals.

Where to find current opportunities:

Visit the [Allegheny Intermediate Unit](#) and [Pittsburgh Public Schools](#) websites.

Other Early Intervention Career Opportunities:

Infant/Toddler and Preschool Early Intervention teams also include licensed Speech/Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, and other specialty practitioners. The basic qualifications for these positions include a master's degree or higher and profession-specific state licensure and registration requirements.

Please note that the information above is intended to be a summary of basic qualifications. Individual job requirements may vary and are subject to change.





Acknowledgments and Additional Resources

Thank you to our partners

When Trying Together embarked on the creation of the Early Intervention Toolkit, we immediately turned to the experts—professionals who provide Early Intervention or Early Care and Education in Allegheny County.

Thank you to everyone who completed surveys, participated in focus groups, engaged in conversation, and shared stories. We are also especially grateful for our partners who took the time to preview the EI Toolkit and provide feedback. We hope that you can see your imprint on the pages of this toolkit. The partnership between Early Intervention and Early Care and Education holds so many possibilities, and we thank you for being a part of this journey with us!



For additional resources

Please visit:

- Trying Together, www.tryingtogether.org
- The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers, www.aftt.org
- Pittsburgh Public School District, www.pghschools.org
- Allegheny Intermediate Unit, www.aiu3.net
- Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network, www.pattan.net
- Early Intervention Technical Assistance Portal, www.eita-pa.org
- Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) Region 5, elrc5.alleghenycounty.us
- The Pennsylvania Key, www.pakeys.org





Glossary

Term	Definition
Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)	A developmental screening tool that pinpoints developmental progress in children between the ages of one month and 5 ½ years. Designed to be used by early childhood educators and physicians, ASQ is a family-friendly tool that recognizes when children meet milestones and also helps identify developmental delays.
Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU)	A regional public education agency that provides specialized services to Allegheny County's suburban school districts as well as non-public, charter, and vocational-technical schools. The AIU is a provider of preschool Early Intervention services to families who reside in Allegheny County but outside the city of Pittsburgh.
The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers	In 1996, The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers was chosen by Allegheny County as the Early Intervention Service Coordination Agency for families of children from birth to three years of age who have developmental concerns. The Alliance is the first point of contact for Allegheny County families who are interested in Early Intervention for their infant or toddler.
Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)	A research-based behavior therapy for individuals with autism and other developmental disorders. ABA's goal is to see an increase in positive behaviors and a decrease in behaviors of concern. ABA can be used to help young children learn new skills, including communication, play, and social skills.
coaching	A relationship-based process led by a professional with specialized and adult learning knowledge and skills. Coaching is designed to promote sustainable growth in knowledge, skills, and behaviors for an individual or group.
developmental screening	A brief assessment tool that helps identify if a child is on track with their development. A screening maybe a questionnaire, checklist, or brief test of the child's abilities.
developmental therapy (DV)	Also referred to as Special Instruction (SI), developmental therapy helps children achieve developmental skills, such as attention, play, and social skills as well as emotional regulation.



developmental tracking	Regularly assesses the development of a child who is at risk for developing a delay. An infant or toddler may be eligible for tracking services through Pennsylvania's Early Intervention program if they are at risk for a developmental delay based on one of the following categories: low birth weight, cared for in a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), prenatal substance/alcohol exposure, referred by a county children and youth agency, lead exposure, and/or experiencing homelessness.
Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC)	Provides a single point of contact for families, early learning service providers, and communities to gain information and access services that support high-quality child care and early learning programs.
evaluation report (ER)	Documents information on a child and their family, including strengths and needs, and eligibility determinations. An ER provides recommendations for supports that can assist the young child to develop, learn, and grow.
hearing services	Help caregivers understand the impact of a child's hearing loss/impairment and explore communication approaches and devices with the family.
Individualized Education Program (IEP)	A legal document that is written by the IEP team (including but not limited to the Intermediate Unit and the parents). An IEP outlines the preschool early intervention services that the child will receive based on their identified developmental delay or disability. The IEP documents the child's goals, services (including frequency and location), specially designed instruction, and progress monitoring requirements.
Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)	A legal document in Infant/Toddler (Part C) Early Intervention created to meet the individual needs, concerns, and priorities of eligible children—ages birth to 3—and their families. An IFSP includes the family's goals and lists the early intervention services and supports that will help meet those goals. It also describes when, where, and how the services will be delivered.
Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA)	A federal law that makes free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) available to eligible children with disabilities. IDEA ensures access to special education and related services and protects the rights of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and their families.
informed clinical opinion	In Infant/Toddler (Part C) Early Intervention, can be used in the evaluation process to make a recommendation as to initial and continuing eligibility for services. Informed clinical opinion uses qualitative and quantitative information to assist in forming an eligibility determination for difficult-to-measure aspects of current developmental status and the potential need for early intervention.



Intermediate Units (IUs)	Operate as regional educational service agencies providing services and support to PA's public school districts, charter schools, and private schools. IUs also serve as liaison agents between the school districts and the Pennsylvania Department of Education. There are 29 IUs across Pennsylvania.
Medical Assistance (MA)	Health insurance coverage for children with disabilities up to age 18 whose family income is more than the Medicaid limit Learn more .
multidisciplinary evaluation (MDE)	An assessment(s) used to examine a child's abilities in all five areas of development (physical, cognitive, communication, social-emotional, and adaptive). An MDE is typically performed by more than one professional. During the evaluation, the family and evaluation team will talk about the child's and family's strengths and needs.
natural environment	In Infant/Toddler (Part C) Early Intervention, includes settings that are natural or typical for a same-aged infant or toddler without a disability; may include the home, community, or child care settings.
occupational therapy (OT)	Focuses on fine motor skills or activities that involve the small muscles, such as reaching, grasping, and eating. OT may also work on daily self-help skills, sensory processing, and regulation.
Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL)	A partnership between the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services that aims to support the growth and learning of the state's youngest children. OCDEL works to create a high-quality early childhood education system with strong standards for programs and professionals.
Permission to Evaluate (PTE)	A form that the intermediate unit will issue to gain a parent's written consent prior to an evaluation. If a parent requests an evaluation, the PTE must be issued within 10 days.
physical therapy	Addresses gross motor skills or activities that involve large muscles, such as crawling, walking, and using stairs.
Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS)	The public school district that serves the city of Pittsburgh, including city residents who are eligible for Preschool Early Intervention. Pittsburgh Public Schools is part of the Mount Oliver Intermediate Unit 2, which serves PPS as well as private and charter schools within the city of Pittsburgh.
Rapid Response Team (RRT)	Provides short-term support in the event that a child is in danger of suspension or expulsion from an early care and education program. The goal of the RRT is to provide assistance to the child care program and to help families identify additional resources that may supplement the child's care and education.



service coordinator (SC)	When a family starts the early intervention process, they are connected with a service coordinator who introduces, monitors, and coordinates early intervention services. Partners with families, supports transitions, and connects families to community resources.
social work	Provides caregivers with resources and skills to support their child's development. Social workers provide linkages to crisis services, and long-term mental health support as needed.
speech therapy	Supports pre-speech, speech, and communication skills, such as pointing, imitating sounds, using words, signs, and/or using Alternative Augmentative Communication (AAC) devices.
transition	Children receiving infant/toddler early intervention who will continue to receive services in preschool early intervention will participate in the transition process. The goal of transition is to have a smooth and seamless switch from infant/toddler early intervention to preschool early intervention. Transition may also occur when a child exits preschool early intervention and enters kindergarten.
vision services	Help caregivers understand the impact of a child's visual impairment and suggest adaptations to the environment to support vision and development.
written consent	The parent agrees in writing to the activity for which the parent's consent is sought. The parent has been fully informed of all information relevant to the activity in the parent's native language. Consent is voluntary and may be revoked at anytime. Written consent is also referred to as "permission to evaluate."

