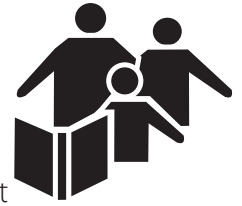


# The Family's Role in EI Services: How You Can Help Your Child



Did you know that you are the most important person in your child's life? Research has shown that young children who have a strong attachment with an important adult (that's you!) are most likely to grow up secure and happy. You know your child better than anyone else, so your input and participation in your child's early intervention (EI) service plan is critical. In fact, you can greatly influence and support your child's learning and development by working closely with your child's EI providers.

 Here are some ways you can help.

- Notice what your child is interested in. What are her favorite toys, games, and songs? Who are his favorite people to play with? Share your child's likes and dislikes with your EI provider.
- Tell your EI provider about any concerns you have about your child. For example, do you worry that he isn't crawling or that he is having trouble eating or sleeping? Let your provider know.
- Take an active role in developing a plan for your child's EI services with your child's team. Tell the team members what you and your family think is most important for your child. Agree on outcomes that are meaningful for your child and family.
- Actively take part in your child's home visits and appointments. Active involvement will help you learn strategies and skills that will enhance your child's development.
- Ask your EI providers to explain the activities they are doing with you and your child. Ask for the reasons behind the activities. Knowing these things will help you work with your child in between visits.
- Provide lots of opportunities for your child to play and practice new skills during everyday routines—dressing, mealtimes, diaper changes.
- Ask questions if you are unsure about your rights within the EI system. Check the Early Intervention Clearinghouse Web site for more information: <http://eiclearinghouse.org/getting-started.html>.
- Provide an environment where it is safe for your child to explore and learn about the world.
- Learn about activities in your community that your child and family might enjoy doing.
- Identify your family's formal and informal supports and resources. Who can you count on for help? What do you have that you can use to help your child?
- Ask for help when needed. Let friends, family, and providers know how they can help during challenging times.
- Let your child know that he or she is special and loved!

 For more information on the family's role in EI services, see the Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse Web site at <http://eiclearinghouse.org>.

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