



Information for families about Child Development Watch, Delaware's early intervention program



Each child is special, growing and learning at his or her own pace.

You are your child's first and most important teacher. You know your child. You guide and nurture your child throughout each day as your child grows. Child Development Watch is here to support your family's strengths, and to assist you in helping your child increase his or her capacities to enjoy a meaningful life.

My child seems to be developing differently than other children. Would he/she be eligible for early intervention services?

It is possible that your child may be eligible for early intervention, but more investigation is necessary to determine that. Some children develop more slowly than others or develop in ways that seem different from other children. This can cause parents to worry. If you think that your child is not developing at the same pace or in the same way as most children his or her age, it is often a good idea to talk first to your child's pediatrician. Your doctor may recommend that you have your child evaluated to find out if he or she is delayed and is eligible for early intervention services. This evaluation is provided at no cost to you.

My child has been found eligible for early intervention. What's next?

If your child is found eligible, you and a team will meet to develop a written plan called the *Individualized Family Service Plan*, or IFSP. The IFSP puts in writing your child's strengths and needs, family priorities, and the goals you would like to achieve.

What are early intervention services?

Early intervention services are designed to identify and meet children's needs in five developmental areas. Early Intervention services can help you and your family:

- Learn the best ways to care for your child.
- Support and promote your child's development.
- Include your child in your family and community life.

Where will early intervention be provided?

As much as possible, early intervention is provided in settings where infants and toddlers without delays or disabilities are found. For example, early intervention is available in your home, child care, or other community programs with other children.

What are the costs?

Child Development Watch provides screening, evaluation, assessments, service coordination and IFSP development at no cost to you.

There are some additional services that may incur a charge. Medicaid may pay for some of the Child Development Watch services if your child is Medicaid-eligible; however, if your child is covered by other health insurance, that coverage is typically billed first. Also, your family may be responsible for a co-pay or you may be billed based on a sliding fee scale, depending on your family size and income. Your service coordinator will work with you closely if you have questions about payment for early intervention services. No family is denied service based on inability to pay.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do we decide how often my child will need services?

It is very important to involve your child's pediatric clinician in the development of an IFSP. Through open communication and efforts to collaborate on service delivery and coordination of care, the child and family have a plan that all providers are working on together to support the child and family. How often your child receives services depends on a number of things:

- Your child's individual needs
- How long your child can practice new skills before getting tired
- How quickly your child learns new things, since some children need more practice than others before fully mastering a new skill
- The visit schedule may change over time. You and your IFSP team will measure your child's progress and make changes to your IFSP when needed.

Would my child improve faster if he got services five times a week instead of once a week?

Imagine that you are learning to play a musical instrument. You would quickly learn the importance of practicing between your lessons. Taking three or even five lessons each week would not speed up your learning process without practice.

Children also develop by using new skills over and over during their daily lives. Time between visits is the most important time for learning. During visits, you and your early intervention provider choose the skills you will work on and figure out how you can practice them during mealtimes, bath times, and other daily activities. This helps your child work on new skills many times each day. It is this practice that counts!

If my child doesn't seem to be making progress, does that mean that he needs more services?

Sometimes children seem to pause in their development in one area while they focus on growth in another. When your child's progress appears to have slowed it is time for your team to talk about what is happening, and:

- Look at the strategies that are being used
- Consider what is working and what is not
- Talk with your team about how progress toward achieving the outcomes is being measured.
- This is often more effective than increasing the frequency of services.

Who Me? How can I be expected to practice physical therapy (for example) if I am not trained as a physical therapist?

Everyone who works in early intervention, including physical therapists, has expertise in their specialty, but you are the expert on your child and his life. The therapist's role is to teach you ways to help your child grow and develop. The practicing you do with your child during your time together is more important than the brief therapist's visit for helping your child learn new skills.

For more information call Child Development Watch at:

New Castle County:

Referrals call Central Intake: (302) 995-8590

NCC toll free: (800) 671-0050

Kent and Sussex Counties

Child Development Watch: (302) 424-7300

Statewide toll free to CDW KC/SC: (800) 752-9393