



Facts for Families

North Dakota Early Intervention

Birth to Three



All families of young children receiving North Dakota Early Intervention will have quality evidence based supports and services. The purpose of Early Intervention (EI) is to provide parents, family members, and other caregivers with supports and resources so they can enhance the children's learning and development. At times it may seem that Early Intervention staff is spending more time with you or the other caregivers than with your child. That is because Early Intervention services and supports are guided by the following principles:

Children learn from everyday activities with familiar people, places, experiences, and routines.

- Young children learn best when they are taught everyday life skills like sharing, playing, moving, and communication during daily activities. *(Katie "talks" when she calls out to her mom each morning that she is awake, chooses her clothes as she gets dressed for child care, has breakfast with her big sister Kendra, and helps her mom pack favorite toys and snacks in the diaper bag.)*
- These everyday routines provide many opportunities for learning to name favorite (and a few not so favorite) actions, objects, and emotions. *(Katie's mom plays "What's that?" or "I see..." games in the car-ride home, picking places and objects that are familiar and important for Katie and Kendra. When going to bed at night, Katie and Kendra tell their mom stories or find pictures in their books.)*
- Research shows that learning is most effective when it has a purpose and is meaningful to you and your child. *(When using her words Katie gets more juice or a favorite book, or makes her mom laugh. She is learning how powerful talking can be.)*
- Teaching in everyday routines offers more opportunities for practice than 'traditional' therapy. Research has proven that with support you are more successful helping your child learn and grow during every day activities. Teaching and learning in daily routines encourages participation, negotiating, problem solving, exploring, and describing concepts such as colors, sizes and shapes. *(Katie can talk to her mom, sister, and caregivers throughout the day. In addition to talking she is also learning to make choices and follow directions.)*

Early Intervention supports and services are individualized for each child and family.

- The Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP) developed for your child and family will reflect your values and unique activities in your home and community. *(Services and supports should match your family's priorities and concerns, will vary from family to family, and should change as priorities and concerns change.)*
- The outcomes identified by your family and your IFSP team will guide the choices of services and supports necessary to accomplish them. The type, amount and frequency of supports that you receive

will be decided by you and the rest of your IFSP team. The EI supports you receive will not be based on your child's diagnosis or your geographic location. *(Friends, neighbors, childcare providers, play groups, churches, libraries, and other community supports enhance the quality of every family's life. Services that consider a child's day-to-day activities support and encourage families to find and strengthen natural supports outside the Early Intervention system.)*

Outcomes and intervention plans reflect the family's priorities for their child, and the interests of their child.

- Early Intervention supports are flexible and can change as needed. Supports can be provided in many different places - home, childcare, grocery store, park, Early Head Start, or combinations of these that the family and the team determine are the most appropriate for the child's progress. *(When Katie's mom returned to work and Katie enrolled in Early Head Start, they began meeting twice a week instead of once a week. They met at the childcare center. This allowed the Early Intervention team members to problem-solve with Katie's childcare provider and her mom about routines, strategies and goals, and to develop a coordinated program.)*
- Providing learning throughout the day within routines (natural learning opportunities) increases the child's opportunities for engagement, independence, and participation with family and friends. *(Katie's parents know how much she enjoys playing with her friends. Her favorite activities on the playground are the sand box and swings. Katie will try anything her friends try, and she never lets her cerebral palsy slow her down. Her Early Intervention Team will show her childcare provider how to help her stretch, flex, and strengthen her muscles during her favorite activities. Katie also helps pass out treats and clean up after snack time to get extra practice carrying objects and letting go of them without spilling.)*
- The outcomes on your IFSP should reflect your priorities and interests. We care about what is important to you. *(When Katie's mom and dad take her to the YMCA for gymnastics in the winter and swimming in the summer they work on developing many skills.)*

Your Early Intervention team consults with your family and identified caregivers to make sure

- Families have many different needs and you may have a variety of individuals that you are working with to help support your child. Early Intervention is designed to partner with your family to develop an IFSP that can address the issues that will support your family so you can promote the development of your child. Early Intervention can assist your family in locating medical, financial, emotional, informational, and community resources. *(Katie's mom has just learned that Katie will require surgery in an out-of-state major medical facility. She is concerned about locating supports in that area and the related expenses such as lodging, travel, and meals. Her Early Intervention team will work with her to locate resources for financial supports, travel arrangements, connecting with another parent that has been in the same situation, and plan for Katie's needs once she returns home after surgery. These and other types of supports can be coordinated by the Early Intervention team.)*
- It may be important for your family to have other caregivers (grandparents, childcare) involved in planning and working off a similar set of outcomes that will help your child learn and grow. It may take you and your team time to identify natural times for learning that fits with your family's schedule, what's important to you, and what your child likes to do. They can help you identify what you are already

doing that is helping your child learn. *(Katie's Early Interventionist spends time brainstorming with Katie's mom and dad about meaningful words for Katie to practice during the day. Katie's mom and the Early Interventionist show the child care provider how to involve Katie during play time. Katie attends childcare every day and her Early Interventionist comes there each week to check Katie's equipment and consults with her childcare provider about ways to encourage Katie to participate while showing her how to adapt to activities.)*

