

Learn The Signs. Act Early. **Acting Early Changes Lives – It’s an ECEC Superpower!**



Learn the Signs. Act Early is a campaign to help teach about early childhood development from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

The CDC’s “Learn the Signs. Act Early” (LTSAE) program encourages parents and providers to learn the signs of healthy development, monitor every child’s early development, and act early when there is a concern. The program offers [free books, checklists, and other tools](#) to make developmental monitoring practical and easy for all parents and caregivers.

The “Learn the Signs. Act Early” materials are for ALL families to learn about their child’s growth and development - *not just families that have concerns about development.*

Use the Milestone Checklists or the *Milestone Tracker* app to start a regular practice at birth or start of service of checking in with families about their child’s development. Regular discussions and check-ins can help identify and discuss concerns more easily.

Did You Know?

- ❖ Many children may need an extra “boost” to support their growth and development. Getting needed support early is especially important because the brain is growing and changing the fastest before age 3.

Learn the Signs. Act Early Materials Help You Meet Your ECEC Goals

As an ECEC provider, you are an important resource to all families. *Families look to you for information about how their child is growing and playing with other children.*

Meet your ECEC goals with *Learn the Signs, Act Early!*

- Help track and celebrate each child’s developmental milestones
- Help identify children with signs of developmental delay
- Help communicate with parents about development
- Complement and support developmental screening
- Provide guidance on discussing developmental concerns
- Better support children

Learn the Signs. Act Early Will Help You:

- Give information and resources on developmental monitoring for parent education and engagement with [CDC’s “Learn the Signs. Act Early!”](#) materials.
- Discuss a child’s development regularly with parents & caregivers and helping parents & caregivers identify any concerns about growth and development
- Refer child for further support if needed.

Acting Early Changes Lives – It’s An ECEC Superpower!

Did you know? 1 in 6 children has a developmental delay or disability.

Helping children with a delay get early support can fundamentally change their lives and help them reach their full potential. Getting support before age 3 is especially important because the brain is growing and changing the fastest before age 3.

ACTING EARLIER IS BETTER!

- ❖ Evidence shows that starting supports as early as possible is best
- ❖ The earlier a child is identified, the sooner targeted intervention and family supports can start
 - It is never “too late” to start services and supports
- ❖ Intervention can improve skills, abilities, future school performance, long-term self-care skills, and quality of life
- ❖ Other benefits of early identification & intervention
 - Families understand their child’s strengths, and areas they may need support
 - Family wellness

The Importance of Educating Families About Their Child’s Development & Developmental Monitoring

When families learn about development, they are better able to recognize if their child needs extra support and to advocate for their child.

- When parents notice their child’s development, this is called **Developmental Monitoring**.
- When doctors and medical providers screen for developmental concerns, it is called **Developmental Screening**.
- Research shows that when parents and caregivers engage in developmental monitoring, more children are referred to get the helpful resources they need than when only doctors do developmental screening alone.

DEVELOPMENTAL MONITORING

- ❖ Helps with early identification
- ❖ Adds different information than screening alone
 - Longitudinal
 - More than milestones
- ❖ Education/protective
 - i.e., Strengthening Families
- ❖ Developmental promotion
- ❖ Family engagement- trusting relationships

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends both developmental monitoring and developmental screening for **all** children. You can share this fact sheet with families that provides information in English and Spanish on the importance of both.

Learn More About Your Child's Development: Developmental Monitoring and Screening

Developmental milestones (how a child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves) are things most children can do by a certain age. All young children need both developmental monitoring and developmental screening to help you and your child's doctor, teachers, and other providers know if your child's development is on track.

Developmental Monitoring	Developmental Screening
WHO: You – parents, grandparents, or other caregivers WHAT: Look for developmental milestones WHEN: From birth to 5 years WHY: To help you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • celebrate your child's development • talk about your child's progress with doctors and child care providers • learn what to expect next • identify any concerns early HOW: With easy, free checklists – get yours at www.cdc.gov/milestones	WHO: Healthcare provider, early childhood teacher, or other trained provider WHAT: Look for developmental milestones WHEN: Developmental Screening at 9, 18, and 30 months of age Autism Screening at 18 and 24 months of age WHY: To find out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if your child needs more help with development, because it's not always obvious to doctors, child care providers, or parents • if more developmental evaluations are recommended HOW: With a formal, validated screening tool – learn more at www.cdc.gov/actearly

* All young children need both developmental monitoring and developmental screening.
 ** The best person to track your child's development is you! Share your child's milestones checklist and any related information from your child's teachers or other providers with the doctor at every well-child visit. Complete a milestone checklist by using CDC's free **Milestones Tracker** app from the App Store or Google Play, or by printing a paper checklist from www.cdc.gov/milestones.
 *** What if your child is not reaching milestones as expected? You know your child best. If you are concerned about your child's development, talk with your child's doctor about your concerns and ask about developmental screening. For more information, go to www.cdc.gov/actearly. Don't wait! Acting early can make a real difference.

Your child's development is a journey. Monitoring and screening show you the way.

www.cdc.gov/actearly
 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)

Download CDC's free Milestones Tracker app

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

[Click here for Developmental Monitoring & Screening Fact Sheet](#)

Materials for Families to Learn More About Their Child’s Growth

How a child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. The “Learn the Signs. Act Early” developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age. “Learn the Signs. Act Early” helps parents track if their child is meeting the milestones with the Milestone Tracker App and Milestone Checklists.

CDC’s Milestone Tracker App

CDC’s Milestone Tracker app, available in English and Spanish, provides a fun and easy way for parents and caregivers to track and support their child’s early development from ages 2 months to 5 years.

Encourage parents to use the Milestone Tracker app & review My Child’s Summary page with you to facilitate communication about developmental progress



[Click here to learn more](#)

Milestone Moments Booklet

The Milestones Moments Booklet is used as a developmental milestone checklist with tips for parents for ages 2 months to 5 years.



[Click here to download](#)

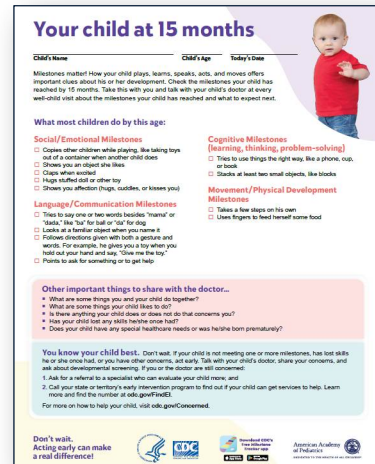
[Available in English, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, and Korean](#)

Milestone Checklists

Families can use these checklists to track and celebrate their child’s development and learn what to do if they have concerns.

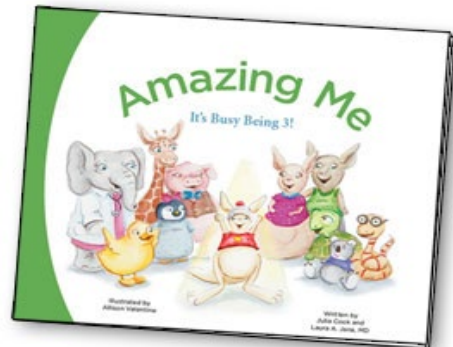
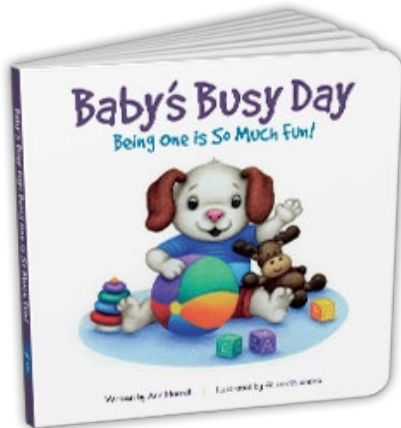
[Click here to download
www.cdc.gov/ActEarly/Materials](http://www.cdc.gov/ActEarly/Materials)

[Available in English, Spanish, Arabic, Brazilian Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Simplified Chinese, Somali, and Vietnamese](#)



Free Children’s Books

Children’s books *Baby’s Busy Day*, *Amazing Me* and *Where is Bear?* help parents learn about developmental milestones while reading with their child.



Look What I Can Do Growth Chart



Share the [Look What I Can Do Developmental Chart](#) as a guide for families through their child's growth and development during his/hers most important years. And it will let them know what to expect as their child grows older.

Take Action and Act Early!

A child's brain is growing most quickly before the age of 3, and therefore acting early is important!

Step 1: Talk to Parents & Caregivers about your concerns

This [CDC tip sheet](#) offers great *Tips for Talking with Parents about Developmental Concerns*. Messaging and communication with families about developmental screening and screening results should be clear, consistent, and direct. ***What you say to families is as much about style as it is about the specific words.***

Talk to parents about the importance of early action when a concern is identified.

- ***Act Early - Do not take a wait and see approach!***
- When intervention starts before age 3, it can have an even bigger positive impact on the child's development.

Let parents know!

- ❖ Getting extra support is normal.
- ❖ 1 in 6 kids has a delay that would benefit from extra support.
- ❖ A doctor referral is **NOT** required for an Early Intervention or an Early Childhood Special Education and Related Services Evaluation.

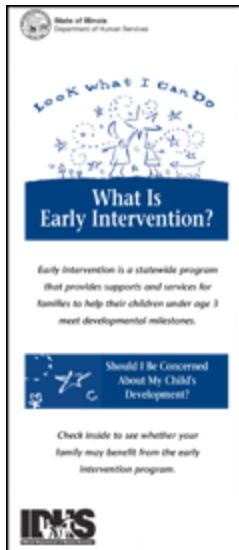
Step 2: Refer Child to Get Support

How to Get Support –

- ❖ Parents can talk to their child’s doctor about their concerns or contact **Early Intervention** or their **local school** directly.
 - ❖ **For kids under the age of 3 – Refer to Early Intervention – Referral Info Below**
 - Early Intervention is a state program that evaluates and provides needed support for children ages 0-3. Supports include things like speech therapy, physical therapy, or social work case coordination.
 - ❖ **For kids 3 and older – Refer to the local school district for Early Childhood Special Education and Related Services - Referral Info Below**
 - Early Childhood Special Education and Related Services for children are provided through local school districts and special education cooperatives.
- ❖ Check in with the family regularly to see how process is going. What barriers to getting care or other concerns are coming up?
 - ❖ If a child qualifies for Early Intervention services, these services can be provided in a variety of settings, such as at home, in child care settings, and in Live Video Visits.

Early Intervention – Support for Children Ages 0-3

What is Early Intervention?



The "[What Is Early Intervention?](#)" brochure answers questions such as:

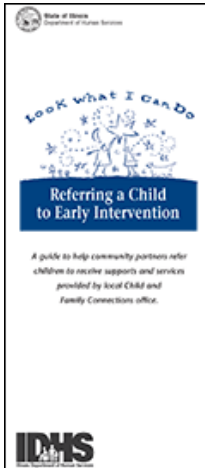
What is the EI Program? Why is EI important? How does EI work? What does EI cost? What happens when your child turns 3? Do you have a cause for concern? How do I learn more?

To learn more about services provided by Early Intervention [Click here- Services Provided.](#)

How to Refer to Early Intervention:

1. There are 2 ways to be referred to Early Intervention:
 - Parents/Caregivers may talk to their child's doctor who may refer the child to Early Intervention after discussing concerns with the family; or
 - Parents/Caregivers may call Early Intervention directly if they are concerned about their child's development. *A doctor referral is NOT required for an Early Intervention Evaluation.*
2. Learn more about eligibility criteria at the Illinois Early Intervention (EI) Clearinghouse page [here](#). More details can be found at the IDHS page [here](#).
3. Referral Forms and Phone Numbers listed below.

Helpful Referral Resources:



The [Referring a Child to Early Intervention](#) guide helps community partners refer children to receive supports and services provided by local Child and Family Connections office.



The [Look What I Can Do Magnet](#) has the Illinois Early Intervention help line toll-free telephone number on it.

Early Intervention Referral Contact Information and Referral Forms

[Click Here for the Early Intervention Referral Website](#)

[Early Intervention - Local Child & Family Connections Office Finder](#)

[Standardized Illinois Early Intervention Referral Form \(HFS 650\) - R03-2018](#)

[Illinois Early Intervention Referral Fax Back Form \(HFS 652\)- R03-2018](#)

EI Resources and Training on the Referral Process

Early Child Care Providers – Free Trainings on Early Intervention Referral

[Referral to Illinois Early Intervention](#) (EI Credit, 1 WWF)

This presentation provides a brief, interactive overview of the Illinois Early Intervention (IL EI) referral process and the 3 pathways for children and families to become eligible for IL EI services. The importance of ensuring strong communication with referral sources and primary care providers throughout the referral process is a key factor emphasized during this presentation.

[Referral to Illinois Early Intervention](#) (no registration or credit attached)



This presentation provides an overview of the EI referral process and explains the purpose and procedure for the 2 referral forms: [Standardized EI Referral Form](#) and [Illinois EI Program Referral Fax Back Form](#).

Early Childhood Special Education and Related Services – For Children 3 – 5 Years Old

How to Refer to Early Childhood Special Education

Parents should call their local school district directly and request an evaluation for their child for special education services.

***It is important for the parent to specifically request the Special Education Evaluation. If the request is not honored, parents should submit a request in writing.*

- [Standardized Request for Early Childhood Special Education Evaluation](#) 
- [Early Childhood Special Education Referral Fax Back Form](#) 

- ❖ Local School Districts evaluate and provide needed support for children ages 3-5. Supports include things like speech therapy, physical therapy, or social work case coordination.
- ❖ A doctor referral is **NOT** required for an Evaluation.
- ❖ It is important for the parent to specifically request the Special Education Evaluation. If the request is not honored, parents should submit a request in writing.

All materials referenced in this toolkit can be ordered for free. The CDC materials can be located [here](#), and the Child Find materials can be located [here](#).