

TIP SHEET:



Early Intervention

3 to 5 years



Parent Education & Advocacy Leadership Center

Promoting inclusion and access
in education and healthcare

Empowering families and
young adults across PA



What is Preschool Early Intervention?

Children grow and develop many skills from ages 3 – 5. Sometimes a child needs special help to make sure they are developing and learning new skills.

If you or someone else are concerned about your child's growth and/or skill development, help is available! For children ages 3 – 5, this is called **Preschool Early Intervention**.

Preschool Early Intervention (EI) Services:

- Meet the needs and priorities of your family and child
- Are provided at no cost to families
- Are provided in the **least restrictive environment** with typical peers
- Help the family understand and enhance your child's development in many areas:
 - Cognitive
 - Communication
 - Social and Emotional
 - Physical, including vision and hearing

Timeline



The timeline starts once you sign the consent form to evaluate.

↓ **60 DAYS** ↓



Within 60 calendar days an evaluation must be completed and an evaluation report written.

↓ **30 DAYS** ↓



Within 30 days after the evaluation is complete, a meeting to write the Individual Education Program (IEP) must be held.

↓ **14 DAYS** ↓



Within 14 days after an IEP is written and approved by the parent/guardian, services must be provided.

Who is eligible?

Children ages 3–5 who:

- Have developmental delay
- OR, one of 13 disabilities listed below
- AND, need specially designed instruction

QUALIFYING DISABILITIES

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Autism | 9. Other Health Impaired |
| 2. Blindness | 10. Specific Learning Disability |
| 3. Deafness | 11. Speech or Language Impairment |
| 4. Emotional Disturbance | 12. Traumatic Brain Injury |
| 5. Hearing Impairment | 13. Visual Impairment |
| 6. Intellectual Disability | |
| 7. Multiple Disabilities | |
| 8. Orthopedic Impairment | |



What is next for the family? What should be expected?

- 1. Referral**—To access preschool early intervention services (EI), your child needs to be referred. A referral can be made by a family member, daycare/preschool teacher, doctor or other EI professional.
- 2. Service Coordinator**—A person called a Service Coordinator is assigned as your single point of contact to help your family understand and navigate the early intervention system.
- 3. Evaluation**—If your child has been referred, they need to be evaluated. The agency should explain the process, get your written consent for an evaluation, and schedule it. The evaluation will determine if your child qualifies for preschool early intervention services.
- 4. Individualized Education Program (IEP)**—If your child is eligible, a team, including parents, develops a written plan for individualized services.

If your child is not found eligible, you may want to consider other options or dispute the finding. Review your **Procedural Safeguards**.



TIPS:



Be actively involved!

Keep records of your child's paperwork and information about team members.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): What is next for the family? What should you expect?

An **Individualized Education Program** is a written plan that contains:

- Your child's current skills and needs
- Special education and related services
- Settings where special education and related services will be provided
- Measurable goals and timelines to meet goals
- Plan of transition, if needed
- Date the plan will be reviewed (must be within one year)

Services are highly individualized. Examples are:

- assistive technology,
- nursing services,
- audiology/hearing,
- nutrition services,
- speech and language,
- occupational therapy,
- counseling and training,
- physical therapy, and
- medical services,
- psychological services

Services to be provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Children are to be educated in regular education classes with other children without disabilities, as much as is appropriate.

Supplementary Aids and Services support the education of a child with disability in regular classroom and participation in other school activities.

Develop and share your vision for your child. Learn how to write a vision statement. Consider using the Student Snapshot Tool listed in resources below.

You can request a meeting to discuss any **concerns or disagreements** with the IEP.

School will issue a **Notice of Recommended Educational Placement/Prior Written Notice (NOREP/PWN)** for you to agree or disagree with the proposed program. You have ten calendar days to sign it. Have your **Procedural Safeguard Notice** on hand.

RESOURCES

CONNECT Helpline: 1-800-692-7288, www.connectpa.net
Family Introduction to Early Intervention in PA: <https://bit.ly/2RYx8dK>
NOREP/PWN: <https://bit.ly/2wCx7UD>
Procedural Safeguards Early Intervention: <https://bit.ly/398LRbG>
Student Snapshot: <https://bit.ly/2Upr1AP>
Supplementary Aids and Services, SAS: <https://bit.ly/2T3MpJB>
Transition to School Age Programs: <https://bit.ly/32feHoA>

Important Steps for Families

- ☑ Share your concerns about your child's development and supports that are already in place, like community group/agency supports, parent groups, extended family, etc.
- ☑ You will be receiving calls and documents related to this process. Develop a way to keep your documents and contact information organized. This is very important!
- ☑ Inform providers whether you prefer email or phone communications and if you need accommodations or an interpreter and documentation in your native language.
- ☑ **Your participation is important**—communication is the key!

Transition into School Age Programs

Children in Preschool Early Intervention can transition to school: **when they are eligible for Kindergarten OR when they are eligible for First Grade.**

A formal transition planning process must begin **one year** before your child is planning to move into kindergarten or first grade. This process is needed so that the family can understand and participate as informed decision-makers. **On or before February 1st** of the year in which your child will transition to school age programming, you should receive a formal notice about the transition process. All of the documents about this process should be in your native language.

If you have a child getting ready to transition to school age programming, there is a separate Toolkit with detailed information that is very important for families to understand.

