



Family Guide to Early Intervention

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Why Should I Enroll My Child in the Infant Toddler Program (ITP)?	4
What is a Service Coordinator?	4
Screening Your Child’s Development	5
Completing an Evaluation	5
Determining Program Eligibility	6
Early Intervention Services	7
Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)	8
Transition Planning	9
Keeping Up with Program Information	10



Introduction



Welcome to the Idaho Infant Toddler Program!

This handbook will introduce you to the Idaho Infant Toddler Program (ITP) and be a guide and helpful resource throughout your time with us. ITP provides developmental supports and services to children birth to three years of age who have special developmental needs and meet eligibility criteria. Participation in the program can increase your child's ability to develop and learn. It can also help you and your family learn ways to support and promote your child's development within the structure of your everyday family activities and community life. ITP provides what are known as "early intervention services" to help infants and toddlers grow and develop, and to help their family do the same. The Infant Toddler Program is a voluntary program and is provided at no cost to families.

The term "early" in early intervention is important because research shows that the first three years of life are the most important time for development and learning. The goal of the Infant Toddler Program is to "open a window of opportunity" for families to help their children develop to their full potential.

The Idaho Infant Toddler Program may look different from what you or your medical providers expect. It may also look very different from early intervention programs in other states. The ITP is not an outpatient rehabilitation service. Professionals will not work with your child while you watch or are in a nearby room. You are a very important part of your child's team. The professionals working with your child will include you in every visit and will coach you in ways to include their interventions in your child's daily routines. Research shows that very young children learn best with this method.

Our goal is to work closely with you to provide the kinds of supports that best meet your family's priorities and your child's needs. We will be talking about these supports throughout your time with the Infant Toddler Program. As your child grows and changes, the kinds of supports your family will need may change as well.

Children learn best with their families

Parents are the most important people in a child's life. Children grow and change rapidly during their first three years. Think of your child and how he or she is growing! You know your child best. Notice things like how and when your child smiles, sits up, walks, talks, or holds a cup. What you are seeing is how your child is growing through the different developmental stages. When a child has a delay in development, early intervention services are available and effective.

Why Should I Enroll My Child in ITP?

The first few years of your child's life are extremely important for brain growth and learning new skills. If your child is not developing as expected, early intervention offers:

- ✚ A valuable way for you to learn how to best help your child grow and develop.
- ✚ Visits in your home from trained experts at predictable times; no traveling, no waiting rooms.
- ✚ A multidisciplinary team that works together to support you in making daily routines a time for your baby to learn new skills.
- ✚ A source of information about other valuable resources in your community.

Research shows that children and families benefit from effective early intervention, and enrolling as soon as a need is identified leads to better outcomes. Children who receive early intervention are less likely to need special education in the future. Getting supports and services now will continue to help you and your child later.

What Is a Service Coordinator?



A service coordinator is a person who works with you during your child's involvement with the Infant Toddler Program. He/she assists you with accessing services, identifying resources, and informs you of your legal rights. Federal law requires that all children and families served by the ITP have a service coordinator. The service coordinator is responsible for coordinating the different people, information, and resources with which your child and family may work. The service coordinator is there to answer any questions you might have and to make more manageable things that might seem confusing at first.

Your service coordinator will guide you in setting the following priorities for your child and family:

- Identifying strengths and needs.
- Coordinating services and information from different sources.
- Finding answers to questions you have about your child.
- Find opportunities for you to connect with other families.
- Help coordinate services on the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).
- Provide information on helpful state and community resources.
- Help ensure your rights are protected.
- Help with transition from the Infant Toddler Program.

Screening Your Child's Development

Depending on the reason for referral and whether or not your child's development has already been screened, a request for developmental screening may be made. A developmental screening provides a quick look at how your child is developing and learning. A screen can only occur with your written permission and you will receive the results of this screening to help you plan next steps.

Completing an Evaluation



An evaluation provides an in-depth look at your child's development and assists in determining eligibility for the Infant Toddler Program. The evaluation visit is done with you, your child, and early intervention professionals. It usually takes place in your home—if that is where you and your child feel most comfortable. The evaluation will occur with your written permission and at no cost to you.

Evaluation looks at the following five areas of development:

- ✚ Cognitive – such as thinking, learning, and reasoning
- ✚ Adaptive or self-help skills – such as feeding, dressing, and taking care of himself or herself
- ✚ Communication skills – such as understanding and using sounds, gestures, and words, pointing, understanding your words, expressing thoughts and needs
- ✚ Physical development – such as vision, hearing, movement, and health
- ✚ Social-emotional development – such as getting along with others, expressing feeling, developing relationships, ability to relate to others

Tips for evaluation planning:

- Ask your service coordinator for help.
- Bring any questions or concerns you might have about your child's development.
- Share information that you think is important: medical records, a baby book, growth chart, or other reports.
- Decide what times or locations work for you and your family.
- Invite other family members, a friend, or support person if you wish.
- Inform your service coordinator if you need any interpreters or other assistance.

Determining Program Eligibility

Information from the evaluation process is used to determine whether or not your child meets the Infant Toddler Program eligibility criteria. Your child and family may receive early intervention services if:

- Your child and family live in Idaho;
- Your child is younger than three years of age; and
- Your child is eligible to participate in the Infant Toddler Program, based on either of the following:

1. Developmental Delay

Your child may be determined eligible if he or she has a delay in one or more of the following areas:

- ✚ Adaptive or self-help skills (such as feeding, dressing, and taking care of himself or herself)
- ✚ Cognitive (such as thinking, learning, and reasoning)
- ✚ Communication skills (such as understanding and using sounds, gestures, and words, pointing, understanding your words, expressing thoughts and needs)
- ✚ Physical development (such as vision, hearing, movement, and health)
- ✚ Social-emotional development (such as getting along with others, expressing feeling, developing relationships, ability to relate to others)

2. Confirmed Medical Diagnosis

Your child may be determined eligible because he or she has been diagnosed with a condition that could result in a delay. If your child has a condition that establishes their eligibility, he or she will still need an assessment to help plan which services may be needed.

The results of your child's evaluation will be explained to you to highlight your child's strengths and assets, as well as areas of potential focus and next steps.

If it is determined that your child is not eligible to participate in the Infant Toddler Program, your service coordinator will help you find other appropriate supports and services in your community. If your child is determined eligible, your service coordinator will work with you to plan for the next stage: developing your family's Individualized Family Service Plan or IFSP (a written plan for early intervention services).



Early Intervention Services

Early intervention services provided through the Infant Toddler Program are designed around your child's and family's needs, concerns, and priorities. Services are provided in the child's natural learning environments (e.g., home, child care setting, grandma's house, infant class, etc.) to ensure maximum learning opportunities occur throughout the day.

The following early intervention services may be available based on the evaluation results and your child's and family's needs:

- ✚ Assistive technology (tools/equipment to promote learning)
- ✚ Audiology (hearing) services
- ✚ Family education (special instruction)
- ✚ Family training, counseling, and home visits
- ✚ Health services
- ✚ Medical services (only for diagnostic or evaluation purposes)
- ✚ Nursing services
- ✚ Nutrition services
- ✚ Occupational therapy services (daily living skills)
- ✚ Physical therapy services
- ✚ Psychological services
- ✚ Service Coordination
- ✚ Sign language and cued language services
- ✚ Social work services
- ✚ Speech language pathology therapy services
- ✚ Transportation services
- ✚ Vision services



Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

The Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is your family's written plan for Early Intervention services. Your plan is designed to help everyone on your team understand what is going to happen, who is going to be involved, when and where supports and services will take place and for how long. With your consent, your child, if eligible, will have an initial IFSP developed within 45 days of referral. You and your team will review the IFSP every six months to make sure it still fits your priorities and your child's and family's needs.

However, your needs and resources may change more often, so more frequent reviews can be held to make changes. Your IFSP is also rewritten at least once a year.





Transition Planning

It is good to think about a plan for the future at every stage of your family's experience.

Just as supports and services are adjusted when your child makes developmental gains, these early intervention activities will be replaced with other community activities at some point. You may wish to transition out of the Infant Toddler Program at any point or if your child no longer needs early intervention. By law, the Infant Toddler Program's supports and services will end when your child turns three years of age. New partners will enter your life as you plan to say good-bye to ITP.

When your child is between the ages of two years three months and two years nine months, the following activities will occur as part of the transition planning process:

- If your child is considered potentially eligible for preschool special education services, his or her information will be shared with the school district as part of the Lead Educational Agency notification process.
- Your child's IFSP will include a transition plan to outline steps and services to ensure a successful transition out of the Infant Toddler Program.
- With your approval, a transition conference will be held.



Keeping Up With Program Information

Families will receive large amounts of information (documents, brochures, etc.) while enrolled in the Infant Toddler Program. As a result, please make sure you get copies of all written information about your child (records, reports, etc.). This will help you keep track of services and advocate for your child. Remember, as time goes on, you'll probably have even more information to keep track of, so it's a good idea to keep copies from the beginning and to keep them all in one designated place.

Your family may find it helpful to put all the information about your child in a notebook or binder. Your service coordinator can give you ideas for organizing the information. You might want to include this guide, along with other information received about the Infant Toddler Program, in your notebook or binder.

The following includes examples of information, brochures, documents, etc. you may want to keep in your notebook or binder:

- Letters and notes (from doctors, specialist, etc.)
- Medical records
- Results of evaluations and/or assessments
- Individualized Family Service Plan
- Procedural Safeguards brochure
- Notes from meetings about your child
- Reports from specialists
- Family medical histories
- Your child's developmental history, including your personal notes
- Records of shots and immunizations
- Notices of meetings



We hope that the Infant Toddler Program gives you new ways of shaping your child's life, and that this guide makes it easier. Best wishes as we move forward to start our work together.