



FAQs *about* Alabama's **Early Intervention** System



What is Alabama's Early Intervention System?

Alabama's Early Intervention System (AEIS) is a coordinated, family-focused system of resources, supports and services for eligible infants and toddlers birth to 3 years who have developmental delays. AEIS is supported by federal, state, and private funding sources. It is a system of service delivery that is voluntary on behalf of the family, meaning even if the child is eligible for services, the parent must consent to participation in AEIS.



What is "developmental delay"?

The term "developmental delay" means that a child is not growing as expected physically and/or mentally. For example, infants and toddlers may be delayed in walking, talking, speaking, learning, or understanding. In Alabama, a child with a delay of 25 percent in one of the five developmental areas (physical [to include vision and hearing], communication, adaptive, cognitive, social or emotional) is eligible for early intervention. A child may also be eligible based on a diagnosed physical or mental condition that is likely to lead to a developmental delay.

When a child has a developmental delay, it can affect the whole family, and parents may face uncertainty about their child's future. AEIS helps families learn about resources, supports, and services that are available and how to care for a child who has developmental delays.



What is AEIS Child Find?

Child Find is Alabama's statewide effort to locate, identify, and evaluate children who may have developmental delays. Anyone may submit referral information or learn about available resources for infants and toddlers ages birth to 3 years by calling the AEIS Child Find number, 1-800-543-3098. For children 3 and older, contact your local school system or the State Department of Education.

To begin the process, anyone who contacts AEIS Child Find will be asked a few simple questions:

- What is the child's name, birthdate, and Social Security number?
- What is the name, phone number, and address of the parent?
- What is your name (if you are not the parent), phone number, and address?
- What is the reason for calling Child Find?



What happens after a referral is made?

Alabama's Early Intervention System provides evaluation and assessment to determine if the child meets the state's eligibility definition. Once the child has been evaluated and found to be eligible, the family, the service coordinator, and the service providers work together to develop an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). The IFSP describes the supports and services necessary to meet the outcomes for the child and family.

Early intervention services are defined by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). They may include:

- assistive devices and technology
- audiology
- family training/counseling/home visits
- health services
- medical services
- nursing
- nutrition
- occupational therapy (OT)
- physical therapy (PT)
- psychological services
- sign language and cued language speech services
- service coordination
- special instruction
- social work
- speech language pathology (SLP)
- transportation
- vision services

Services that are outlined on the IFSP can be provided to the child and family in the family's home, at a daycare center, or in other natural environments within the family's community.

How does Alabama's Early Intervention System work?

State agencies in Alabama that are directly involved in AEIS include the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, Children's Rehabilitation Service, the Department of Mental Health, Head Start, the Alabama Medicaid Agency, the Department of Public Health, the Department of Insurance, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Human Resources, and the State Department of Education.

All of these agencies work together with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services - the lead agency - and with other service providers and families to establish and coordinate the statewide system. The agency heads, their support personnel, and others meet quarterly to advise and assist the lead agency through the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC). This council meets in Montgomery, and all who are interested are welcome to attend.

How does the early intervention system work in your community?

In Alabama, parents and other family members of infants and toddlers with developmental delays are directly involved with the service providers in the provision of services to their young child. Parents and family members may also become involved with groups called "district coordinating councils," where interested individuals meet to get to know each other, share information about resources and specific services within the community, and learn more about the statewide early intervention system. Coordination within the council and community can help families and providers understand what resources are available and meet others who may have similar interests.

For more information, contact:

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
Division of Early Intervention
602 S. Lawrence St.
Montgomery, AL 36104
1-800-543-3098
www.rehab.alabama.gov/ei

