

- Early Intervention
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C
- Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)
- Deaf Education Early Intervention Services
- Service Coordinator
- Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)
- Parent Advisor

Questions

- What is early intervention?
- How are early intervention services provided in Texas?
- How do I contact someone for ECI services?
- What happens after I call or I am referred for services?
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• What is early intervention?

Early intervention is a term that describes a wide range of services available to children, ages birth to 3, who have disabilities or developmental delays. A federal law, the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C**, mandates early intervention services and establishes the guidelines for eligibility and service delivery. Early intervention services may include home visits, family training, counseling, special instruction and therapy. These “early intervention” services are designed to help families help their infant or toddler to reach his or her potential.

• How are early intervention services provided in Texas?

Texas provides a comprehensive system of services for families of infants and toddlers who have a hearing loss. Two state agencies, the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services Early Childhood Intervention (DARS-ECI) and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) have outlined a plan to ensure that a full range of services is available throughout all areas of Texas. DARS-ECI is the state’s lead agency for **early childhood intervention (ECI)** services and provides oversight to the local ECI programs that assist families. Local ECI programs work with local education agencies (school districts), Regional Day School Programs for the Deaf (RDSPDs) and the Texas School for the Deaf (TSD) so that specialized services, specific to children with hearing loss, are made available. These specialized services, as defined by state guidelines, are known as auditorially impaired (AI) services. AI services for infants and toddlers ages birth to 3 are often referred to as deaf education early intervention or parent-infant services. Where you live determines which local ECI and which deaf education early intervention service delivery programs provide services in your area. Local ECIs and local RDSPDs all have different names that may be reflective of a geographic area or a host agency/school district such as Central Plains Center ECI or Abilene RDSPD.

• How do I contact someone for ECI services?

Your pediatrician or audiologist will refer you to ECI or you can call the DARS Inquiries Line (1-800-628-5115).



- **What happens after I call or after I am referred for services?**

A **Service Coordinator** from your local ECI program will contact you and arrange a home visit. With your permission, your professionals from your local ECI program and your local deaf education early intervention services provider will work in partnership with you and your family to assess your child's strengths and needs. Since you know your child better than anyone, you are an important part of this assessment process.

- **How will we decide what services are provided?**

After the assessment, an **Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)** will be developed. Together you and your team of professionals (usually the same people who assessed your child) review all of the information gathered about your child. If deaf education early intervention services are being considered, a teacher of the deaf/hard-of-hearing is always part of the IFSP team. The plan is based on the outcomes that you want most for your child's development. You and your team of early intervention professionals then decide on strategies and services that will help your child achieve these outcomes.

- **Are deaf education early intervention services only for infants and toddlers who are deaf?**

The term "deaf education" services is often used generically by school districts to refer to a wide range of services, birth through high school, that are appropriate for children with hearing losses ranging from mild through profound. Since service strategies for infants and toddlers are based on IFSP outcomes, the educational program will be different for each child and family.

- **Who provides the services?**

The IFSP states who is responsible for providing each service. Your Service Coordinator will work with your family to support your child's development and to arrange for services in and outside of the local ECI program. If the IFSP team decides that deaf education early intervention services will be provided, then a Parent Advisor, who is a certified teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing, with experience in providing services to families of infants and toddlers with hearing loss, will be one of the service providers.

- **What does the Parent Advisor do?**

The Parent Advisor implements the IFSP strategies that will help your child develop communication and language. He or she offers information and support to families. Assistance may include providing resources to answer your questions about early childhood hearing loss and communication, showing you how to care for your child's hearing aid(s) or cochlear implant, and helping you develop successful communication strategies to encourage your baby's language development. Most services are provided in your home or within other natural settings.

- **Where can I find more information about early intervention services in Texas?**

Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services Early Childhood Intervention (DARS-ECI)
800-628-5115, <http://www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis>

Texas Education Agency, Services for the Deaf
512-463-9414, <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/deaf/>

Educational Resource Center on Deafness at Texas School for the Deaf
512-462-5329, <https://www.tsd.state.tx.us>

Region 10 Education Service Center, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Program
972-348-1594, <http://www.region10.org/specialeducation/DeafHHearAlicia.html>