Introducing Early Childhood Intervention

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) is a division within the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). ECI programs provide services to families with children birth to 36 months of age with developmental delays or disabilities. For more information about DARS/ECI, call 1-800-628-5115 or visit www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis.

Texas Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) and the Texas Child Care Quarterly are working together to inform child care providers, professionals, and parents about ECI services. Every quarter we highlight ECI topics, list helpful resources with tips and links, and also answer your questions about ECI. We believe this is a great way to share information and update you about ECI.

We want to kick off 2013 with an introduction to ECI, sharing who we are, what we do and how we do it.

Who we are
Over the past 32 years, ECI has served thousands of Texas families with children birth to 36 months with developmental delays or disabilities. The ECI website features two brief videos: “About Texas ECI,” an overview of who we are and what we do, and the “Texas ECI: Family to Family” video, which explains how we provide our services. Watch the videos at www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis/videos/index.shtml.

What we do
When a child is referred to an ECI program, an evaluation team determines if the child is eligible for services and identifies the child’s special needs. The team may include credentialed early intervention specialists, speech and language pathologists, physical and occupational therapists, psychologists, registered nurses, dietitians, social workers, and counselors.

A child may be eligible for ECI services based on a qualifying developmental delay, a medically diagnosed condition that may result in a developmental delay, or a qualifying auditory or visual impairment. To learn more about eligibility and services, visit www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis/eligibility.shtml.

If a child is determined to be eligible, families and ECI professionals work together to plan services for the child. ECI values parents as a child’s first and best teachers, and they are an integral part of the team.

How we do it
Though most ECI services are provided at home, they also can be provided in other familiar places where the child and family go regularly. With parental consent, ECI services may be provided in a child care setting. In addition to supporting parents, ECI can help staff promote the development of children with special needs in the classroom with a variety of services:
- A dietician might help a child care provider in the infant room address feeding issues.

WITH PARENTAL CONSENT, ECI SERVICES MAY BE PROVIDED IN A CHILD CARE SETTING.

- A physical or occupational therapist might help with gross motor skills for walking and climbing in the toddler class.
- A speech language pathologist may assist with communication issues for a child in a class of 2-year-olds.
- An early intervention specialist could provide classroom services that address any of these issues, as well as others.

You play an important role
We want to continue cultivating the relationship between ECI and the early care and education com-
munity. We recognize the important role you play in the lives of the children you care for every day.

In future issues of Texas Child Care Quarterly, we’ll provide information you can use if you have an infant or toddler in your classroom who may be experiencing a developmental delay or disability in the following areas:

- Gross-motor development, such as walking or crawling
- Fine-motor development, such as using hands to play with toys
- Communication, such as gestures, talking, and eye contact
- Social and emotional development, such as giving and receiving affection
- Cognitive development, such as problem solving
- Adaptive skills, such as self-feeding

Find out more

The state agency responsible for Texas Early Childhood Intervention is the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). Through DARS, ECI contracts with local agencies that serve all Texas counties. Contractors include community centers, school districts, education service centers, and private non-profit organizations. The ECI state office is in Austin.

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