

# Therapy Across the Continuum: The Young Child

Therapy services through Early Intervention are available in most areas. It is a convenient therapy model for many families as therapy and other services are provided for children wherever they spend their time. Early Intervention programs are tailored toward children with developmental disabilities, but also serve children with complex medical needs.

## Early Intervention Explained.

### Who is appropriate for Early Intervention?

Children aged birth - 3 years, and 3-5 years (in some programs) who meet eligibility requirements.

### What is Early Intervention?

Therapy Services which may include: Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Special Education/ Developmental Instruction, Feeding/Nutrition, Weight/Growth Monitoring, and Psychology/Social Work services. Program guidelines vary by area. Services are provided with a strong emphasis on family teaching and caregiver involvement.

### Where and when will services occur?

Therapy is provided wherever the child spends his/her day. Sessions may happen at home, daycare, preschool, a park, grocery store, etc. Appointments may be scheduled weekly, monthly, or as needed. Most visits are 30-60 minutes in length and providers schedule appointments when it is convenient for the family/caregivers/child. A service coordinator may also help navigate the system.

### What is the family/caregiver's role in Early Intervention?

Families, caregivers, and therapists work together as a team. Education is provided so that therapeutic activities are carried over at home to help the child progress and improve. Families and caregivers are encouraged to be involved, ask questions, and provide input because they know their child best.

### Why does this service exist?

Therapy is provided for children and their caregivers to address delays in development or regain loss of skills and function.

### How is it funded?

Early Intervention is paid for by state/county funds. Some programs include a cost share where families/caregivers contribute to the costs.



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## What if my child's needs cannot be met through Early Intervention alone?



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Your child may be eligible for Outpatient or Home Care therapy services in addition to Early Intervention.

## Know Your Options.

### What is Outpatient Therapy?

Outpatient therapy is typically provided in a clinic setting. Different types of clinics exist (sensory based, sports medicine, medically based) and in some areas, outpatient services can even be provided at home.

Therapists and families/caregivers work together to establish a plan of care including goals for therapy and how often it should occur. Children may receive therapy for a while and then “graduate” or take a break. If a medical change occurs or the child is ready to work toward a new functional goal, a new evaluation or re-evaluation is completed to restart services. Outpatient therapy is funded through health insurance and families/caregivers may have a co-pay. Visit limits vary based on each health plan.

### What is Home Care Therapy?

Therapy services may be provided at home for children who require complex medical care or have a diagnosis that prevents them from accessing or receiving therapy in the community.

The availability of and criteria to qualify for home care services may vary by program. Documentation of a medical condition that prevents the child from attending therapy in a setting outside of the home is typically necessary in order for homecare therapy to be approved and paid for by medical insurance.