



Welcome to
Early On[®]



1800EarlyOn.org

Early On[®]

Early On is Michigan's system to help infants and toddlers who may be delayed in their development. The system also helps the children's families. This help is called "early intervention."

Early intervention includes:

- Supports—can be direct help, or places where you can learn more about helping your child
- Services—provided by a trained professional who will help you learn ways to help your child



Early On is for eligible children who need supports and services from birth to age 3. Children, and their families, may need this help because they have what is called a “developmental delay.”

- Having a developmental delay means it takes a child a little longer to learn basic skills. A developmental delay may be in one of the following areas:
 - › Thinking
 - › Talking
 - › Hearing
 - › Seeing
 - › Moving
 - › Taking care of basic needs (such as eating and/or dressing)
 - › Responding to others
- Some health conditions may result in a developmental delay, such as cleft palate, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, hearing and/or vision loss.

What can *Early On* do for my child and family?

We know it isn't easy to raise a child who needs help. *Early On* listens to families. You know your child best. *Early On* will help you build on your child's strengths. You will learn how to work through the hardest parts of your child's day, such as meal time.

Early On helps your family do these things:

- Know your family's rights (in case you don't agree with the actions of *Early On* or with the services you receive)
- Talk about your child's needs
- Help your child develop and learn

For more information about your family's rights, please read “Your Family has Rights!” at 1800EarlyOn.org.

What happens next?

Early On will ask you to agree in writing before we take any actions with your child. You must agree in writing before we screen, evaluate, or provide services.

- “Screening” means taking a quick look at your child’s development to see if your child should have what’s called an “evaluation for eligibility.” The evaluation takes a closer look at your child’s development to see if *Early On* can help. Even if the screening does not show that an evaluation is needed, you can still ask for an evaluation for your child.
- The evaluation is a way to learn about your child’s growth and learning. This is how you will find out if *Early On* can help your child (In other words, it tells you if your child is eligible for *Early On*). It is also used to develop a plan of support for your child and family. The information gathered from the evaluation is included in an *Early On* record.

After you agree to these actions, your service coordinator will be in charge of setting up the evaluation and helping your family while you’re in *Early On*. She or he is your main contact and will make sure your family understands the *Early On* process.



What happens when the evaluation is finished?

The evaluation may find that your child does not need *Early On*. *Early On* can still help with ideas about next steps to take.

- One step may be to contact *Early On* at a later time. If you still are not sure about your child's growth and learning, *Early On* could evaluate your child again.
- Another possible step could be helping you find other activities or programs (such as Early Head Start). There may be other suggestions, depending on where you live.

If your child is eligible for *Early On*, the *Early On* staff will begin an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). This is the plan that guides everything that will be done while your child and family receive support and services from *Early On*.

“Our daughter just wasn’t talking and making sounds like other kids her age. After talking with our family and our doctor, we decided to call Early On to see how they could help us.”

—Parents of a 16-month-old

What is the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)?

The term “IFSP” is used a lot as your child and family work with *Early On*. It is important to remember the meaning behind these letters. They play a vital role for children and families.

Individualized:

The plan is developed based on your child’s and your family’s needs. No one else will have the same plan.

Family:

The plan will focus on changes you want to see for your child and family after using *Early On* services. These changes are called “outcomes.”

Service:

The plan will include details of the early intervention services your child and family will receive – including how, when, where, and how often services will be delivered.

Plan:

The plan is in writing and can be changed as your child’s and family’s needs change.

“One of the things I like about our IFSP is that it is a plan which can change. Also, it feels like the IFSP belongs to our family and not to the providers working with us. I like that.”

—Mother of a 15-month-old

What if I decide I don't want to use *Early On*?

It is your choice to use *Early On*. If you are not ready for *Early On*, you may call back when you are ready. If you are not sure about the way your child is developing, don't worry, but don't wait. Call *Early On*.

What if I have questions?

- There are many people and places you can call to learn more.
- Call 1-800-*EARLY ON* (1-800-327-5966) to locate contact information for your local *Early On*.
- Visit 1800EarlyOn.org.





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