



Early Intervention

<http://eiclearinghouse.org>

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New Books and DVDs for Families

Most families receiving early intervention (EI) services are involved for just a few years—at most, from their child’s birth to his or her 3rd birthday. The EI Clearinghouse has materials and resources that can support families during these early years and into preschool.

We have purchased more than 200 new books and DVDs in the past few months to help you through the early years and provide you with the most current—and most reliable—information. We know that you may want materials for yourself, your child, or other family members. Our books and DVDs feature children with special needs involved in everyday activities. They focus on children’s strengths and abilities, not just on their needs or supports. We also have books and DVDs you can share with friends and family to help explain and describe developmental delays or specific conditions (autism, asthma, Down syndrome).

Many of our materials are practical and address the issues so important to the families of very young children: sleeping, feeding, playing, talking, as well as physical and mental health and safety. Other materials explain EI services, including the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and the transition from EI to preschool or other services. We have also increased our resources in Spanish.

IN THIS ISSUE:

New Books and DVDs for Families	1
.....	
Director’s Corner	2
.....	
How Can I Work with My EI Service Provider to Help My Child?	2
.....	
IllinoisParents.org	2
.....	
Resources on Family-Professional Partnerships in EI	3
.....	
Illinois Calendar	4
.....	



Browse the library collection at <http://eiclearinghouse.org/library.html>. You can borrow and return materials through your local public library. You can also request that materials be mailed directly to you. Directions for borrowing materials are on the Web site, or you can call us at 877-275-3227.

Director's Corner

This issue contains the third article on the key principles for providing early intervention services in natural environments. In the fall 2009 newsletter, we talked about the first principle of natural environments—*Infants and toddlers learn best through everyday experiences and interactions with familiar people in familiar contexts*. In spring 2010, we presented the second principle—*All families, with the necessary supports and resources, can enhance their children's learning and development*. In this issue, we share the third principle—*The primary role of a service provider in early intervention is to work with and support family members and caregivers in children's lives*. I hope that you will talk with your provider about the principles and how your provider can help you to help your child.

Susan Fowler



How Can I Work with My EI Service Provider to Help My Child?

Entering the Illinois Early Intervention (EI) Program means acknowledging that your child has special needs. It may also mean that some of your dreams may be dying. But your EI service provider can help you deal with your sense of loss and build new dreams for your child and your family.

How can you build a strong partnership with your EI provider that supports you, your child, and your family? Here are some questions you may want to ask yourself.

- Do I feel that my service provider knows my family and what is important to me? Can I communicate these things to her? Can we agree on what outcomes are important for my child and family?
- Do I feel like my provider is joining my world, or am I joining hers? Janice Fialka describes the relationship between provider and parent as a “dance.” Is our relationship like a dance in which we try to move well together, even if it's not always easy? For instance, is the distance between my service provider and me comfortable? Do I want her closer (knowing more, involved more) or farther away? Can I communicate these concerns?
- Can I lead the dance sometimes? That is, can I show my EI provider ways that make sure our sessions match our everyday activities (e.g., meeting at the park, including siblings, working on skills through play)? Can I let her take the lead when I'm not sure what strategies or information I need?
- Do I feel more skilled and capable or more dependent because of our partnership? Am I an important partner in this dance, or am I watching the service provider and my child dance more than I would wish? Can I talk about this concern with my service provider? Or, if I am not quite ready to dance, am I comfortable saying so—and asking for help.

IllinoisParents.org

Have you checked out the IllinoisParents Web site? IllinoisParents links families to local programs, services, and community agencies.

IllinoisParents also helps parents find information on raising and educating their children. Visit today!

<http://illinoisparents.org>

A child's parents are the most important people in her life. You are your child's first teacher and the constant in her journey through childhood. It's important that you become an active partner with your service provider and join forces to build satisfying relationships for the benefit of your child, yourself, and your family.

For more information, please see the enclosed parent handout—*Developing Family-Centered Outcomes with Your EI Team*—and the article “The Dance of Partnership: Why Do My Feet Hurt?” by Janice Fialka in *Young Exceptional Children* (2001, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 21-27).

Developing Family-Centered Outcomes with Your EI Team

Families are an important part of the early intervention (EI) team. That's because warm family relationships set the stage for children's later growth. Your service providers are there to support you in ways that really work, or *function*, for you and your child. The words *functional outcomes* or *family-centered outcomes* describe the ways that EI services can benefit families and children. The EI team chooses outcomes that relate to your family's main concerns, or *priorities*.



👉 What Are Family-Centered Outcomes?

Family-centered outcomes are statements describing changes and benefits that you and your family want to see for your child or yourselves. Your team can measure progress toward meeting these outcomes to see if the changes and benefits have occurred. Keep in mind that your priorities and outcomes may change over time as your child grows and learns.

👉 Why Are Family-Centered Outcomes Important?

Identifying priorities for your family as well as your child helps you know what you want and need out of EI. Before you and the other members of your child's team prepare or revise an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), ask yourself two things: "What benefits do I want my child to receive from EI?" and "What will be different or better for my child and family when these changes occur?" You and your IFSP team may want to review these questions every few months.

👉 What Do Family-Centered Outcomes Look Like?

Here's an example. The Tyler family is concerned that Sasha, who has a diagnosis of autism, is unable to express her needs in ways they can understand. She has frequent tantrums, especially during meals, snacks, and play. A family priority is to help Sasha express her needs and to reduce her tears and crying. To achieve this family-centered outcome, the EI provider and family will teach and support her in signing to communicate her needs. The team identified several strategies to do this—some for Sasha and some for other family members. They wrote: "We want Sasha to use gestures, signs, or words during her daily routines to communicate her needs and reduce the number of tantrums."

The provider and family can measure several things to see if they are making progress in meeting their outcomes. For example:

- Is Sasha using the signs she has learned during daily routines? (Does she sign for "more" milk or to say "done" at mealtimes?)
- Do family members respond to her signs or gestures (by providing help)?
- Does the number of Sasha's tantrums decrease during routines when she signs?

👉 For more information on developing family-centered outcomes with EI service providers, see the Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse Web site at <http://eiclearinghouse.org>.

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois Department of Human Services, Bureau of Early Intervention.

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Resources on Family-Professional Partnerships in EI

The following books, articles, and videos are available from the Early Intervention Clearinghouse. Request them through your local public library, email us through the Clearinghouse Web site at <http://eiclearinghouse.org>, or call us at 877-275-3227. Visit our Web site to find an in-depth guide to resources on the importance of families in EI.

Books

The Early Intervention Guidebook for Families and Professionals: Partnering for Success. Bonnie Keilty. New York: Teachers College Press, 2010. (Call # WS 350.6 K27e 2010)

Keilty explains what early intervention looks like and how families can collaborate with professionals so that their young children can learn, grow, and thrive.

Road Map to Holland: How I Found My Way through My Son's First Two Years with Down Syndrome. Jennifer Graf Groneberg. New York: New American Library, 2008. (Call # WS 107 G876 2008)

Groneberg's memoir of raising a child with Down syndrome provides emotional support for parents as well as practical advice on partnering with service providers and advocating for children.

Videos

A Child with Special Needs. 30-minute DVD. Parents Action for Children, 2005. (Call # WS 350.6 .C536dvd 2004)

In this DVD, families of children with special needs share their stories to help other parents understand what to do when they find out that their child has special needs, how



to find answers to their questions, how to advocate for their child, and how to focus on their child's unique strengths.

Precious Lives, Meaningful Choices. 41-minute DVD. Fanlight Productions, 2006. (Call # WS 200 P923 2006)

In this DVD, four families discuss their journey of raising and caring for children who have progressive, life-limiting illnesses. Parents share their reflections on care assistants, medical staff, and embracing their children's lives with courage and hope.

Articles

Early intervention services: A family-professional partnership. Carolyn Cantu. (2002). *Exceptional Parent*, 32(12), 47-50.

In addition to providing an overview and brief history of early intervention, this article explains family-centered services and the ways in which service providers support and partner with families.

The dance of partnership: Why do my feet hurt? Janice Fialka. (2001). *Young Exceptional Children*, 4(2), 21-27.

In this article, the author writes from her own experience as a mother of a child with special needs and discusses the complications of parent-professional partnerships. She identifies five distinct features, or dimensions, that both entangle and enhance the partnership dance: choice, forced intimacy, identification of partners, role expectations, and differing priorities.

Web Resources

Against All Odds: Tianna, Early Intervention and Family Support. In this family story, Katie relates the early years in the life of her daughter, Tianna, who was born with hydrocephalus. Katie discusses the professionals who were involved in her daughter's early intervention and how their support put Tianna down the path to eventually exceeding her developmental milestones.

http://www.beachcenter.org/resource_library/real_story.aspx?Type=story&intResourceID=2465

PACER Center. The mission of the PACER Center (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights) is to expand opportunities and enhance the quality of life of children with special needs and their families based on the concept of parents helping parents. The Web site contains information and free resources, including materials on parent-professional partnerships in early intervention.

<http://www.pacer.org>

Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse

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Illinois Calendar

June 25-26, 2010

Oakbrook

Project Choices Summer Institute—Kids: Our Future

Contact: Sandy, Telephone: 630-629-0551

<http://www.projectchoices.org>

August 11, 2010

Springfield

Creating a Fresh Start with a Life-Time Focus This School Year

Contact: STARNET Region I & III

<http://www.starnet.org/training/workshops/listing.php>

September 22, 2010

Quincy

Transitioning Children from Early Intervention to Early Childhood

Contact: STARNET Region I & III

<http://www.starnet.org/training/workshops/listing.php>

September 30-October 2, 2010

Springfield

Growing Futures Statewide Early Childhood Conference

Contact: Illinois Association for the Education of Young Children

<http://illinoisaeyc.org>

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