

Assessing Your Child



Frequent assessments help you and the rest of the Early Intervention (EI) team to understand your child's changing strengths, needs, interests, and skills. The Illinois EI Program promotes a team approach, with an equal partnership between families and providers. You know your child better than anyone else! You and the rest of your team will assess your child's development over time. Frequent assessments help your team plan and develop EI services that respect your culture and values.

Did You Know That You Assess Your Child All the Time?

You notice what he is trying to do and what he does easily. You know what he likes and doesn't like. You probably know how your child learns best and when he may need help. You observe and respond to your child's interests, needs, and abilities all the time—at home, at the park, and at the grocery store! And because your baby or toddler is growing rapidly, the other team members need to hear from you on a regular basis. Have your child's routines changed? What do you think is important for your child to learn now?

Assessments Can Be Informal or Formal.

- Assessments can be informal. The EI team relies on your observations of your child during family routines such as play time, bath time, and dinner time. You may be asked to describe what you see. Or you may use a checklist to track your child's strengths and new skills.
- Assessments can be formal as well. Your team may use assessment tools or instruments to measure your child's abilities and compare them against what most children do at your child's age.

Your Point of View Is Very Important.

The other team members need to know your concerns about your child's development. Is it time for your baby to crawl? Do you think it's time for your toddler to use a spoon? Do you think it is time to start potty training?

Assessment Is Ongoing.

Families have differing goals for their children. They also have differing expectations about when milestones should be met. By being an active partner in the team that observes and assesses your child, you assure that the team focuses on important outcomes that are meaningful to your family. Frequent assessments help everyone see how well the services are helping your child.

 For more information on assessing your child, see the Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse Web site at <http://eiclearinghouse.org>.

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