

Early childhood intervention: The power of family ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Video online [7:33] ^[2]

Description:

Ninety percent of a child's brain develops in the first three years. Brain development depends on the quality of relationships and interactions in a child's life and the learning environment that surrounds them.

What happens to children with developmental delays or disabilities during that period? What about children whose families simply lack the resources or skills to know how to help their child during this period? Early Childhood Intervention offers help to these children and their families.

Early Childhood Intervention is a system of professional services for young children with developmental delays, disabilities, atypical behaviors, social and emotional difficulties, or young children who are very likely to develop a delay before school entry.

Services are based on the family's priorities and the child's needs, and are delivered in the child's natural environment including the home, inclusive childcare center, kindergarten, community center, play-groups, and other settings where children without disabilities can be found. Intervention turns everyday interactions into opportunities for children to learn, grow and develop while helping alleviate family stress.

Early Childhood Intervention is important in an open society because it allows children with delays or disabilities to become full and active members of their societies. Intervention helps avoid socially and financially costly alternatives still common in some countries, such as life in an institution.

Early Childhood Intervention supports child rights. This means that every child has the right to grow up in a family, to develop and participate to the maximum extent possible, and to receive support when a delay or disability is present. Intervention prevents abandonment; without support parents are much more likely to abandon a child with a disability. It's also cost effective; at least one out of three children who receive early childhood intervention do not need special education when they reach school age, three out of four make greater than expected progress.

There are different scenarios where a child should be referred for early intervention services. These include the following circumstances:

- a child is not meeting expected developmental milestones;
- parents are concerned about their child's development or behavior;
- children are diagnosed with a specific disability at birth that will likely result in delays;
- children experience malnutrition, trauma, very low birth weight, and certain medical or surgical procedures; physicians, teachers, or other professionals are concerned about a child's development.

Intervention services help children develop different skills including physical (rolling over, crawling, walking, holding objects), communication (gestures, talking, understanding), and cognitive (solving problems, learning). It also includes support in self-help, social and emotional development, and behavioral development.

Early Childhood Intervention services make sense for the child, the family, and the community. They help children achieve better outcomes, protect human rights, support families, and save precious resources for the community.

Region: United States ^[3]

Tags: special needs ^[4]

integration ^[5]

parent involvement ^[6]

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