

Parent Connections

FIRST CONNECTIONS – EARLY INTERVENTION IN ARKANSAS

(800) 643-8258

<http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/ddds/Pages/FirstConnectionsProgram.aspx>

Spring 2016 April, May, June

Volume 3 / Issue 2

Inside this issue:

-  The Terrific Twos . . . front page
-  Early Intervention under IDEA, Part C . . . p. 2
-  Early Intervention under IDEA, Part C . . . p. 3 sidebar
-  Parent Question of the Quarter & Grandparents . . . p.4



The Terrific Twos

Sources: BabyCenter.com and AmericanBaby.com

Get Moving: Those first wobbly steps set toddlers on course to walk independently, go up and down stairs, stand on tiptoes, kick a ball, and maybe even run by the 2nd birthday. Your toddler may be able to bend over and pick up a toy off the floor without falling over. Toddlers like to climb, scrambling onto sofas and chairs. **TIP:** Make sure play areas are safe and provide plenty of supervision.



Include trips to safe outdoor play areas like parks or playgrounds to practice climbing and to walk, run, and freely explore.

Short Attention Span: Active toddlers may become less occupied with toys and more distracted at story time. It's not your imagination--their attention spans are shorter because toddlers are eager to be moving! **TIP:** Include activities at story time to engage your active toddler. Have him point at objects you name.

Growing Language Skills: Your toddler will understand more words than he or she can say and may point to what he wants. By 18 months, toddlers can say at least several single words. By 2, they use words in short phrases. Toddlers pick up new words from books you read aloud and from hearing conversations. As year 2 progresses, your toddler will be able to follow simple two-step directions, such as "Pick up your book and bring it to me." **TIP:** When your toddler uses words incorrectly, simply rephrase what he said correctly. When he points to something he wants, prompt him to ask for it. Practice identifying the parts of his body and naming familiar objects.

Loves to Play Games: A fun learning game to play with your toddler is a simplified "Simon Says." She'll also have fun imitating you by talking on a play phone, "feeding" a doll, or pretending to drive a car. Your toddler is also beginning to identify shapes and colors and can scribble with a crayon, throw a ball, and fill and empty containers. **TIP:** Encourage pretend play with dolls and play food. Ask your child to help sort toys by putting them in similar categories, such as red toys, cars, or soft toys.

Gets Attached to Lovey: Separation anxiety peaks midyear and many toddlers develop a strong attachment to a stuffed animal, item, or blanket. The connection offers a comforting sense of security. By 24 months your toddler will become more comfortable spending time with other caregivers and playing alongside other children. Meanwhile, he'll grow increasingly independent – which often looks like defiance.

"Me do it!": Toddlers strive for independence and may want to do everything themselves. As they become more coordinated, taking off and putting on clothes gets easier, although he/she may not be able to get dressed without help. Utensils are tricky for small hands with underdeveloped coordination--eating with fingers is a natural, healthy development, but keep giving opportunities to practice using a spoon and a fork. Toddlers are notorious for being "picky eaters." Your child may have previously gobbled down a variety of foods and now refuses to eat things he/she used to like. **TIP:** Ask her to hold her arms out while you're slipping a shirt on. Set your child's spoon on the high-chair tray and watch--does she pick it up with the same hand each time? Your child will begin favoring one hand over the other. Provide small portions of a variety of foods and keep offering new foods.

Early Intervention (EI) under IDEA, Part C

Taken from the *AEIS PAR Handbook* (revised: October 1, 2015) www.rehab.alabama.gov/ei

Congress established the Early Intervention (EI) program in 1986, as part of The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Part C) in recognition of "an urgent and substantial need" to:

- ☀ enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities
- ☀ reduce educational costs by minimizing the need for special education (when the child reaches school age)
- ☀ minimize the likelihood of institutionalization and maximize independent living
- ☀ **enhance the capacity of families to meet their child's needs**

One focus of early intervention has always been to *train, equip and support parents/caregivers* in being the first and best teachers for their child.

Core Values of Early Intervention under IDEA, Part C

- ☀ **Family Centered:** Research shows early learning is “relational” – meaning children’s best teachers are the people they spend the most time with and the people they have a nurturing relationship with. How these people interact with a child while feeding, diapering, playing, and cuddling has the greatest impact on how the child develops and learns. Early intervention is
- ☀ **Developmentally Appropriate:** EI professionals are here to help your family and other caregivers understand your child’s special learning needs and how to support your child’s early learning. The EI team assists families with the functional developmental needs they are experiencing “today.” Intervention strategies on the IFSP are activities designed to support the child’s development through active participation in

“everyday” activities -- typical family routine activities – this is how young children learn!

- ☀ **Individualized:** For eligible children, a service coordinator assists your family in developing an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), with goals (called *outcomes*) based on your priorities for your child’s participation and learning. Your service coordinator helps your family identify what early intervention service (or services) can help your family assist your child to develop new skills to be able to participate in activities you’re already doing to reach IFSP goals. These people (and your family) make up your IFSP team. As children learn, grow, and progress toward meeting functional goals (outcomes), the IFSP is updated quarterly and services on the IFSP will change as your child makes progress and his/her goals change.

- ☀ **Provided in natural environments:** Early intervention is provided in locations where an infant or toddler would be if he or she did not have a delay or disability. *Natural environment* is more than a place; it includes your child’s and family’s typical daily activities. Intervention is only provided outside of the natural environment when a child cannot make progress in reaching functional IFSP goals in his/her natural environment. Then, the service aligned with those goals is provided in a clinic for a limited time (just until the child meets the goal(s) linked to that service) and there’s a plan to transition the child back to his/her natural activities and locations. Family members should still be present and participate in clinic-based therapy so that they can learn the strategies to practice them at home to promote learning and development between service sessions.

Article continued on p. 3 sidebar

Professional organizations support the delivery of EI services in the natural environment (and typical routines). For more information, see the cross-walk for each organization related to key principles of early intervention:



http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/topics/eiservices/KeyPrinciplesMatrix_01_30_15.pdf
http://ectacenter.org/topics/eiservices/natenv_position.asp

Parent Connection / Spring 2016



The Importance of Play

Source: BabyCenter.com

Reviewed by the [BabyCenter Medical Advisory Board](#). Updated: November 2015

Play is important for your baby's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive (thinking, learning) growth. Very young children don't read a textbook or go to a workshop to learn new things, they learn when they're doing something that they enjoy (they're "actively engaged"). Play is a baby's way of learning about him or herself and the world. Infants and toddlers use all five senses to learn (especially in the first year).

"Exploration is the heart of play, and in your child's mind any experiment counts, even hurling a bowl of cereal off the highchair tray. Development experts are fond of saying that play is the work of children (and cleaning up after play seems to be the work of parents)."

Play becomes more imaginative and complex in the toddler years. Through play, toddlers practice skills and practice independence, creativity, curiosity, and problem-solving. But play and "make believe" for young children can also be an important place to explore feelings and values and develop social skills. A toddler's first unprompted "please" or "thank you" may slip out at an imaginary tea party. Long before a child feels comfortable sharing a favorite toy with a brother or sister, he may practice this concept by offering the favorite toy to a doll or stuffed animal.

What types of play are best?

Since play is the tool your child uses to learn about the world, the skills he or she is working on right now are your biggest clues to choosing the best activities.

Social play Interacting with you and others is important throughout the first year. Infants like to smile, look, and laugh. Older babies enjoy games such as peekaboo and itsy-bitsy spider.

Object play Touching, banging, mouthing, throwing, pushing, and otherwise experimenting with things is fascinating from 4-10 months.

Functional and representational play Pretending to use familiar objects – pushing a toy lawn mower over the grass, or calling Grandma with a hairbrush, for instance – is fun from 12-21 months.

Early symbolic play This type of play, common around the age of 2, creates something out of nothing. Your child might play with a shoebox as if it were a school bus, complete with motor noises, for example.

Role play Around 30-36 months toddlers will begin taking on new roles. Playing doctor, teacher, mommy, or daddy is common now.

Early Intervention (EI) under IDEA, Part C

- continued from p. 2

 **Trains/Equips the Parent/Caregiver:** EI under Part C is a program that supports, trains, and coaches families and other caregivers to implement intervention strategies to meet their child's learning and developmental needs. With support from EI professionals, the adults in your child's life practice these strategies on a daily basis so that your child meets IFSP goals and makes rapid progress learning in context!

 **Collaborative:** The EI professionals on your IFSP team should work closely with each other and your family to reach IFSP goals. But, they may also work with your child's physician(s), therapists from other agencies, child care providers and community partners. When a family or the child's doctor feels more services outside the scope of EI are needed, your service coordinator assists in identifying resources to supplement EI services, using either public or private insurance or through other state organizations, programs, or agencies.

For more information, see:

Article:

<http://www.rollercoaster.ie/Article/Special-Needs/Parents-Role-In-Early-Intervention>

NY Parent Publication:

<http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/0532.pdf>



GRANDPARENTS

According to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), more than 5.8 million children across the United States are living in their grandparents' homes—and more than 2.5 million grandparents have taken on the responsibility for raising these children.

To support grandparents as important teachers in a young child's life, Zero to Three provides free grandparenting resources to support healthy child development and tools for addressing common challenging situations. Other topics available in both English and in Spanish include:

- ❁ Play With Me!: Fun Activities that Support Early Learning
- ❁ When the Answer is No: Setting Limits With Love for Toddlers
- ❁ Watching and Wondering: How to Identify Challenges in Your Grandchild's Development
- ❁ Rock-a-bye Right: Safe Sleep Recommendations for Babies and Toddlers
- ❁ Sharing the Caring: Partnering With Your Adult Child to Care for Your Grandchild
- ❁ Talking It Out: A Tool for Establishing Good Communication Between Parents and Grandparents

<http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/grandparents/>

Parent Question of the Quarter:

Q: How do I help my 9-month-old be more motivated to explore? He prefers to sit and watch, and doesn't often seek out new toys or show much interest in crawling all around like my friends' babies do.

A: Just as adults have their own approach to the world, so do babies. Some are outgoing and eager for new experiences while others need more time to get used to new situations. Some are very action-oriented and love to explore their environment through movement. Others are content to observe and explore in less active ways. Your baby may be just as curious about the world as his peers, but his style of learning right now may be by watching, rather than doing. (If you have questions about his physical development, it is important to discuss this with your child's doctor.)

Being sensitive to your baby's cues and respecting his temperament is important for fostering positive self-esteem. You can nurture your son's curiosity and motivation to learn about the world by following his lead—seeing what he is interested in and building on that.

Children learn by engaging in activities that capture their attention and natural interests. For example, if your son likes music, play it for him often, make and play instruments together, dance together. If he is fascinated by colors and patterns, put colorful pictures at his level, give him books to look at with beautifully drawn illustrations, and let him experiment with finger paints when he gets older.

Last but not least, don't forget to be curious yourself. Take a walk outside and wonder aloud with your baby about the trees, the sky, the stars.

source: <http://www.zerotothree.org>

