Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Infant and Toddler Program of Virginia Beach! Many of you have come to early   
intervention through your doctor’s referral. We are delighted that so many Tidewater physicians are a   
part of our system and take such an interest in your child’s development. This letter is meant to help you transition between the medical care provided by your doctor and the developmental model you will be receiving through early intervention.

Often parents referred to early intervention by their doctor come with a prescription or expectation of services. Sometimes physicians use what is called a “medical model” when recommending treatment for   
their patients. What do we mean by medical model? It is easy to understand medical treatment for a   
broken arm, cut finger, etc. We mean that doctors or nurses use their special skills to set an arm, bandage   
a cut, etc. Care is determined and carried out by a medical professional. When therapy is needed to help mend the arm, a doctor will decide the type, amount, and duration of that therapy, based on the physical needs of the child. The medical model is used in hospitals and post surgical procedures.

While early intervention is clearly done in partnership with the medical community, its model of service delivery is very different. The early intervention model is called the developmental model. This model emphasizes parental involvement in setting goals and objectives, and bases the decision on services from input by therapist, educators and you, the parent. All of you form a “team” that will develop the plan of services for your child.

What does this mean to you? It may mean that you have entered early intervention services with a recommendation for a specific therapy and/or a specific number of therapy treatments per week.   
However, as you entered the IFSP process, you found that outcomes you and the team created involved   
skills that could be taught to you and that you could incorporate into your daily routine. It is far more   
helpful to a child to have a caregiver who has been trained to provide support throughout the day than to have three intense hours with a professional and no carryover.

While a therapist may work with your child for one hour a week, there are many hours left when   
opportunities for working on movement, speech, etc. can occur. Our approach is to help you know how   
to help your child. As a result, you may see a difference between what your physician has recommended   
and the plan that the IFSP “team” (parents, evaluators, and service coordinators) develops. If there is a difference, it does not necessarily mean we have different goals for your child, only a different approach   
to achieving them. If you have any questions, your service coordinator can help you understand how the developmental model applies specifically to your child.

Sincerely,

The Virginia Beach Infant and Toddler Connection