

Explaining Early Intervention

The Issue: Local system managers requested a short statement that could be used to concisely and consistently explain to families, physicians and others what early intervention is, what it looks like and why we do it the way we do. Local system managers, early intervention providers, families and physicians provided input during development of the statement.

The Statement: *Early Intervention supports families of infants and toddlers, ages birth to three years, with developmental delays and disabilities. Children learn best with people they know and in the places they spend most of their time. Early Intervention professionals help families build on the things they do every day to support their child's learning and development in order to reach their goals for their child.*

A Bonus: In addition to the statement, a video, "What Is Early Intervention in Virginia" (http://youtu.be/y-M_P6HrZdA), has been developed to help explain early intervention. The video includes wording from each sentence of the statement followed by additional comments, video and photos that further explain the concepts of what early intervention is, what it looks like and why it works. The statement and video have been posted on the VEIPD homepage (<http://www.veipd.org/main/index.html>) and "Early Intervention: What It Is and Why It Works" page (http://www.veipd.org/main/ei_what_why.html).

Ways to Use the Statement: Since a short statement can never fully explain early intervention, if used, the statement must be used in the context of other explanatory information and resources.

- With families ...
 - Incorporate the statement with the other talking points in Chapter 3 of the Practice Manual when sharing basic information after referral
 - Revisit the statement when covering the intake topics listed in Chapter 4 of the Practice Manual
 - Direct families to the *Strengthening Partnerships* booklet as a resource that further explains early intervention
 - Share the video with families who are newly referred to early intervention {add url}
 - Use the statement or parts of it when responding to questions that come to the single point of entry and direct the caller to the video for further information
 - Include the statement in local public awareness and informational materials
- With referral sources ...
 - Share the video, http://youtu.be/y-M_P6HrZdA, (for their own knowledge and to share with families, perhaps by running it on the waiting room television)
 - Include the statement and video url in a letter of introduction to a new physician
 - Use the statement in a verbal explanation of EI when delivering brochures to the referral source
- Other/General
 - Add the statement on the home page of the local system or program website. Include a link to the video.
 - Run the video during public awareness and child find events/activities