



Help us help our children.

Early Childhood Intervention: Making a Difference

- ★ Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) serves babies and toddlers with developmental delays or atypical development as well as those with medically diagnosed conditions such as autism, spina bifida, cerebral palsy and Down syndrome.
- ★ ECI providers create customized therapy programs for each child, using specialized teams of physical, occupational and speech therapists, social workers, dieticians and early intervention specialists.
- ★ ECI services are designed to enhance children's long term development and ensure they reach their full potential.
- ★ ECI services are delivered in children's natural environments, such as their homes or daycares. This allows services and therapies to be a part of the daily life of the child and family.
- ★ Families are integrated into ECI therapy programs; because of this, parents learn how to address their children's unique needs and help their children develop and learn.
- ★ ECI is available for children from birth to age three. After their third birthday, children may be eligible to receive services through their local school district.

Early Childhood Intervention in Texas

- ★ In 2007, nearly 50,000 Texas children received ECI services.
- ★ The Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) estimates as many as 5 percent of Texas children under the age of three need intervention services due to developmental disabilities or delays.
- ★ For every \$1 invested in ECI, up to \$16 is returned to the community in reduced social services needs and increased productivity as children who received ECI services develop and become adults.
- ★ DARS contracts with 58 local providers across the state to deliver ECI services. Every Texas county is served by a local provider and each provider delivers the same services.
- ★ DARS has requested an increase in funding for ECI. An increase will expand the number of children who receive services, allow more services for each child and more adequately fund services.
- ★ We ask your support for the DARS funding request. With the population growth in Texas and the increased number of children diagnosed with disabilities the demand for ECI services is growing dramatically.

By the time Ellie was two years old her parents could not manage her behavior. She threw severe temper tantrums, lashed out at family members and could not play with other children. Ellie communicated with hissing and growling sounds. Life at home was unbearable—and then her parents found the local ECI provider. With four months of home-based speech and developmental services, Ellie has learned appropriate ways to communicate and her parents have learned to effectively support her development at home. She rarely has tantrums and her Mother reports that for the first time they can actually play together! Ellie turns three this June—and likely will not need additional services after ECI.

At 2 ½ years, Louis did not interact with family members, feed himself, or even respond to his own name. His doctor recommended ECI services and the local provider arranged for developmental services and speech therapy. Less than six months later, Louis was quick to respond to his own name, able to sit down in a restaurant and eat on his own! During his last month of ECI services Louis was diagnosed with autism—and as he turned three the ECI provider connected his family with the local school district and their specialized team for children with autism. Louis's Mother credits his early diagnosis and significant progress to the intervention by ECI staff.

John was born with spina bifida, a disability that occurs when a baby's spine fails to close during the first months of pregnancy. When John was two months old the hospital referred the family to ECI which arranged for therapeutic services—including developmental and speech therapy along with nutritional services necessary to monitor his diet and keep him healthy and nourished as he must be fed by a surgically implanted tube. At his first birthday, with the additional benefit of physical therapy, John is learning to sit independently and is headed toward using a standing wheelchair and greater mobility—like other children his age!

When Hannah was seven months old, Child Protective Services removed her from home because of severe abuse and placed her in foster care. Due to the abuse, Hannah had a skull fracture and thirteen fractures in her arms and legs—all at various stages of healing. Although Hannah was not diagnosed with a specific disability, the abuse had slowed her development. CPS referred her to the local ECI program which provided developmental services and physical therapy in her foster home—by fifteen months of age, Hannah was walking, saying a few words and was emotionally connecting with her foster parents. Hannah made such great strides in all areas of development that she no longer needs ECI services!