



Child Find...



Alabama's Early Intervention System for Infants and Toddlers With Disabilities

Child Find is the process used in Alabama for *identifying* all children who may be eligible for services and *referring* them to Alabama's Early Intervention System. It is an important step that provides families with the guidance and support they need to make on their own behalf.

There are three steps in the Child Find process:

1. Identification - Children who may be in need of special help are identified by parents or by individuals within the community. These individuals, agencies or organizations may include:

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| parents | developmental disabilities programs | outpatient clinics |
| well-baby clinics | prenatal/postnatal facilities | public health facilities |
| hospital follow-up clinics | child day care centers | Medicaid programs |
| physicians | home child day care programs | hospitals |
| pediatricians' offices | Head Start programs | social service agencies |
| community health services | local educational agencies | other health providers |

Children are identified when *parents or other family members* express concern about their child's development. Children are also identified when a *service provider* suspects that there is delay in a child's development and discusses this concern with the parents. Any infant or toddler age birth to 3 with a delay of 25 percent or more in any of the major areas of development - cognitive, physical, communication, social or emotional or adaptive development - who lives in Alabama is eligible to receive supports and appropriate services through the state's early intervention system. Children may be identified if a child has a *diagnosed physical or mental condition* that may contribute to a developmental delay.

Once potentially eligible infants and toddlers have been identified as having a suspected or diagnosed delay, the professional or family may make a referral to Child Find. Families need to be aware that a service provider is making a referral.

2. Making a Referral - making a referral to Alabama's Early Intervention System is as simple as making a phone call to **Early Intervention Child Find at 1-800-543-3098** (voice/TDD). Fax-back referral forms are also available for use by doctor's offices, social workers, hospitals, etc.

If parents ask a service provider to make the referring phone call, the referral must be made no more than *two working days* after the child has been identified. Information needed to make a referral includes the child's name, sex, ethnic origin, birth date and Social Security number, if available. Additional information needed to process the referral includes the name of the parents or guardian, language spoken by the family, areas of development that are of concern to the parents and professional, the name of the child's primary care physician and whether the family has agreed to the referral to AEIS.

3. Processing of a Referral - When a call is received by Child Find, the child's name and other identifying information will be entered into the data base for follow-up by Alabama's Early Intervention System. The referral will be passed on to the local contact (known as the District Early Intervention Coordinator or DEIC) within the child's community. The coordinator will contact the child's family within a two-week period to discuss Alabama's Early Intervention System and explain the evaluation process. The child and family's progress through Alabama's Early intervention System will be monitored under the lead agency, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services.

Any individual who works with young children and their families is in a unique position to help identify, at an early stage, those infants and toddlers who may need intervention. It is important that any child under the age of 3 that may have a delay in development be referred to Alabama's Early Intervention System as quickly as possible. The evaluation and assessment process for the state's early intervention system for infants and toddlers with disabilities, and their families, is free to the family. Families are also not required to pay for appropriate services for their eligible child.

If you work with young children and families, you can help them in the following ways:

- Display information about Alabama's Early Intervention System in offices, libraries, faith-based facilities and clinics. Free materials are available by simply calling **Early Intervention Child Find at 1-800-543-3098** and making a request for free AEIS materials.
- Help families monitor their children's development by helping them to understand developmental milestones.
- Act on any concerns that you have or that are expressed by parents by discussing the early intervention Child Find process with the family and helping them to make the contact if they are interested.
- Monitor the progress of an infant or toddler that may have a delay if a family is not ready to make a referral or a decision and talk to the parents at a later date if necessary.
- Nurture families who have infants and young children and understand the stress they are enduring. Provide information, guidance and support that parents may need to make informed choices during the early stages of accessing services for an eligible child.



**To learn more about
Alabama's Early Intervention System,
contact the Early Intervention Office,
located within the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services,
at 1-800-441-7607 or visit the web site at www.rehab.state.al.us.**