

# Understanding Service Delivery for Children Ages 0-5 Years



This guide explains how young children ages birth to 5 with disabilities or delays can get help and support. Understanding this can make it easier for families to find services and advocate for their children.



## MEDICAL



## EARLY INTERVENTION



## EDUCATIONAL

### DEFINITION

After a medical and/or developmental diagnosis, a therapist provides treatment based on the diagnosis.

Once eligible for the Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program, a provider, supported by a team, coaches the family or other caregivers to help the child take part in everyday routines and activities at home and in the community.

Once eligible for special education, a teacher (and other providers, if eligible) gives the child specialized instruction within a school or childcare setting so they can learn with their peers.

### AGE RANGE

Birth to 5+ years

Birth to 3+ years<sup>1</sup>

3 to 5+ years

### ELIGIBILITY

Medical diagnosis – a referral by a physician or other medical provider may be needed.

Child has one or more of the following:

- 25% delay in one or more areas of development,
- a high probability condition<sup>2</sup>, or atypical development.<sup>3</sup>

Child meets one of the disability categories listed in special education law – and the disability impacts their learning.

### TIMELINE

A treatment plan is developed as needed after an evaluation is completed.

Referral, evaluation, eligibility determination, and (if eligible) development of an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) occur within 45 days.

Referral, evaluation and eligibility determination occur within 60 days. If eligible, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed within 30 days. The parent is part of the team that determines eligibility.

### FREQUENCY OF SERVICES

The medical team decides how often a child receives services. Services must be medically needed by a child.

The IFSP team decides how often a child and family gets services, based on what the child needs and what's important to the family.

The IEP team decides how often a child gets services, based on what they need to learn and do.

<sup>1</sup> If eligible for special education, families may choose to continue with early intervention services until the first day of school after the child turns four. This is the extended IFSP option

<sup>2</sup> A medical diagnosis likely to affect development (e.g., genetic disorder, low birth weight).

<sup>3</sup> Development that differs from typical patterns and may lead to future delays.

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### FREQUENCY OF SERVICES

Services happen in a hospital or therapy office/clinic.

- Therapist works with the child.
- These services can be used along with early intervention or school services.

Services happen in the home or community.

- Services are provided primarily to the adults who care for the child.
- A provider coaches the family or other caregivers to help a child learn new skills during everyday routines—like mealtime, playtime, or getting dressed.
- Services happen all year long.

Services happen in a school or childcare setting.

- Services are provided to the child
- A child may get help in or out of the classroom, in a small group or one-on-one.
- Services take place during the school day.
- Some students may qualify for extended school year (ESY) services during school breaks.

### TEAM MEMBERS

The medical team may include a doctor, therapist, and someone from the insurance company who decides if services will be covered.

The IFSP team includes the family, a coordinator, service provider(s) and others who help care for the child, based on what the child and family need.

The IEP team includes parents, general educator, special educator, administrator, and other providers based on what the child needs.

### GOALS/OUTCOMES AND PROGRESS

Goals and progress are written in a care plan and updated when needed, based on what the insurance company requires.

The outcomes and progress are written in the IFSP.

- They are based on what is important to the family and the family's daily routines.
- The plan is reviewed every 6 months.

Goals and progress are written in the IEP.

- The team reports on the child's progress, typically quarterly during the school year (and during ESY if applicable).
- At least yearly, the team updates the goals.
- The goals must be related to helping the child in school.

### HOW TO ACCESS

Child's pediatrician or other medical provider.

- Call 1-800-535-0182
- Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program (MITP) Online Referral: <https://referral.mditp.org>
- Contact your local MITP "single point of entry."<sup>4</sup>

- Contact your local Child Find<sup>4</sup> office.
- Contact your neighborhood school.

### COST

- Medicaid or private insurance may pay.
- Families may have to pay the full cost (self-pay) or just a small part (co-pay).

- Services are free to families.
- Medicaid might help pay for some services if the parent agrees.

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<sup>4</sup> Child Find Programs (<https://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/Special-Education/MITP/PreschoolServices.aspx>)