



Guide to Early Intervention Services



WHAT IS EARLY INTERVENTION?

Early Intervention is a family/caregiver coaching program that provides educational, therapeutic and support services to families with young children who have developmental delays or who may be at risk of delays.

Kennedy-Donovan Center (KDC) Early Intervention is a comprehensive, family-centered, home/community-based service offered through our five different EI programs throughout Central and Southeastern Massachusetts. Our EI programs support each family's efforts to enhance the development of their infant or toddler and partners with the family through a team approach to services



KDC EI Services are provided weekdays, Monday – Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

WHO CAN BE REFERRED?

All children, **from birth to 35 months**, can be referred to Early Intervention for an evaluation to see if they qualify for Early Intervention services. Referrals are accepted from a variety of sources including parents/caregivers, doctors, childcare programs, DCF, and hospitals. Early Intervention Programs do not accept referrals for discrete therapies, such as physical therapy, occupational therapy or speech therapy, though if there are concerns related to development in these areas, the child may qualify for and benefit from EI services.



HOW ARE SERVICES PAID?

Early Intervention services are paid for by your health insurance. If your insurance does not cover EI, you do not have insurance, or do not want to use your insurance, the Department of Public Health will pay for your services. You are encouraged to contact your health insurance provider to determine if your Early Intervention benefit affects other medical coverage. During the time you receive services from one of our EI programs, you will be asked to confirm your current insurance plan monthly.

It is important that your KDC Early Intervention program be kept informed about any changes in your insurance coverage. Please notify the program or your service coordinator right away if you lose your insurance or have a change in insurance.



HOW IS ELIGIBILITY DETERMINED?

Eligibility for Early Intervention is determined through an evaluation in your home by a multi-disciplinary team using a standardized evaluation tool approved by Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH). The current eligibility tool approved by DPH is the Battelle Developmental Inventory, 3rd Edition (BDI-3).

The following categories are considered when determining eligibility for EI:

- A **medical diagnosis** that is included in DPH EI Diagnosed Conditions that puts a child at risk for developmental delay. Depending on the diagnosis, a child may be eligible for EI for one year or until the day before his/her third birthday.
- A **developmental delay** (DQ of 77 or below) as determined with the Battelle Developmental Inventory, 3rd Edition (BDI-3) in one or more of the following areas: Adaptive, Cognitive, Motor, Person/-Social and/or Communication. The results of the BDI-3 are given in terms of developmental quotients (DQs). Average DQ scores range between 90 and 109, with low average scores ranging 80-89 and high average scores ranging 110-119. To be eligible for Early Intervention, a child must have a score of 77 or below in any area. Children determined eligible on the BDI-3 are eligible for one year or until the day before his/her third birthday, whichever comes first.
- A child/family meets **four or more MA DPH EI Eligibility Factors**, which may put a child at risk for developmental delay and makes him/her eligible for one year or until the day before his/her third birthday, whichever comes first.
- If a child is not eligible through any of the three categories noted above and there are concerns with the quality of developmental skills and functioning, the multi-disciplinary evaluation team may use their informed clinical opinion to determine a child eligible based on the category of "clinical judgment". If a child is eligible through clinical judgment, he/she can receive EI services for 6 months or up until his/her third birthday, whichever comes first.



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

If your child is ineligible/not eligible for EI

If your child does not meet qualifications for EI eligibility, the team will notify you and let you know about your option to re-refer to EI up until age three. The team will provide you next steps and once the evaluation report is finalized, you will receive a copy.

If your child is eligible for EI

If your child meets eligibility criteria for EI services, the team will notify you and let you know the area(s) of and duration of eligibility.

EI services are voluntary. If you choose to enroll, the team will develop an IFSP with you and a service coordinator will be assigned.

IFSP DEVELOPMENT

An Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is developed in partnership with your family. A meeting to write the IFSP will be scheduled with you and should occur within 45 days of when your child was referred to the EI Program and found eligible for EI services.

An IFSP is a working document that contains the following sections:

- *Daily Routines, Strengths and Needs
- *Family Concerns, Priorities and Resources
- *Health and Eligibility Summary
- *Developmental Summary
- *Child & Family Outcomes
- *Service Plan
- *Other Services
- *Transition



A service coordinator is assigned to ensure that your family's priorities, needs and concerns are addressed and to coordinate collaboration among all EI and community team members.

Through your service coordinator, you have access to the full KDC team of professionals and services. Your EI Team utilizes a trans-disciplinary play-based approach to help you achieve the outcomes you identify for your child/family.

The IFSP is reviewed on a regular basis with you, your service coordinator, and additional team members to ensure you are getting the best support possible.

EI SERVICES

Early Intervention services are primarily provided in your home, in the community, or at childcare programs within the catchment area of your EI program.

Early Intervention providers use coaching interactions during visits to help parents/caregivers develop their abilities to interact with their children in ways that support their child's learning and development.



Telehealth

Some services are also available virtually via telehealth. At your request and/or acceptance, some services can be conducted through a phone call or video call.

What will visits look like?

1. **Reflection** - At the beginning of the visit, you and your EI provider talk about the plan and goals from the last visit. You share what you tried with your child and what did or didn't work.
2. **Observation & Action** - Your EI provider watches how you and your child play and interact in your daily routine. Your EI provider helps you practice new ways to help your child meet his/her goals as you go about your daily routine.
3. **Feedback** - Your EI provider shares information with you and helps you figure out what strategies will best help your child reach their goals.
4. **Joint Planning** - At the end of your visit you and your EI provider create a plan together that says what you want to try with your child in between visits, and schedule next visit.

Setting the Stage for Successful Home Visits

- **Eliminate distractions** - Please turn off TVs and put away phones and tablets.
- **Be present for the entire visit** - The work that we do is done with the parent/caregiver participating in and joining us. This is a time for you to ask questions, learn new techniques and practice to support your child's continued success.
- **Carryover and practice** - Infants and toddlers learn best through lots of practice and repetition during daily activities. Your service provider will work with you to develop strategies that you can use throughout the day, not just during the visit.
- **Please secure your pets** - Pets can cause a distraction, and some of our staff and other families that we are seeing are allergic.

GROUP SERVICES

Based on the need and service area, some of our EI programs offer specialized groups.

Community Play Groups

Our playgroups provide small group experiences with activities designed to promote overall development. Our playgroups are open to the community and support accessible and integrated play for children of different abilities and developmental needs.



Parent Groups/Support/Education

Parent groups provide an opportunity to meet with other parents or caregivers to share concerns or information. In addition to weekly parent groups, special training programs and educational workshops are offered throughout the year.

SPECIALTY SERVICES



Specialty Services are available through Massachusetts EI division for children enrolled in EI programs who have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), blindness/vision loss, deaf and hard of hearing, or who have complex medical needs.

These services are provided by a clinician with specialized skills or knowledge. This provider supplements the child's EI services and works on Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) outcomes.

TRANSITION PLANNING

Early Intervention will work with your family to plan a smooth transition to other supports, services and/or socialization opportunities available to your child and family after your child's Early Intervention services have ended.

We start transition planning when it is appropriate. Transition is unique to your child's and family's needs and may include information about childcare programs, play groups, preschool programs, activities, and resources. In some cases, your service coordinator may discuss the option to refer to the local school system in your town and with your consent can proceed with making this referral.



SAFETY IS A PRIORITY

KDC works hard to maintain a safe environment for team members, children, families, and visitors.

- We ask that all families **refrain from smoking** of any kind, consumption of alcohol, and use of legal or illegal substances prior to or during a visit in your home or on KDC property.
- **Weapons should be appropriately secured** during visits and are not permitted on KDC property.
- If a KDC team member does not feel safe in a visit, he/she will end the visit and discuss the reasons with you at a later date.

MANDATED REPORTERS

All Early Intervention Program staff are mandated reporters to the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families. This means they are required by law to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect of any child.

KEEPING YOU AND OUR TEAM HEALTHY

To help keep children, families, and our team healthy, please contact your EI provider before an in-person visit if your child or anyone in the household has symptoms of a contagious illness, including:

- *Fever of 100.0°F or higher
- *Vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24 hours
- *Persistent cough or difficulty breathing
- *Symptoms that make it hard to participate in usual activities
- *Pink eye or another contagious childhood illness
- *Confirmed COVID-19, flu, or RSV



In-person visits may resume when symptoms are improving and the person has been fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication. When mild symptoms are present, a Tele-Intervention visit may be offered when appropriate.

El team members will take the following steps to ensure that they stay healthy and avoid spreading illness to other families:

- Cancel appointments if team member or your child/family member are unwell
- Use hand sanitizer or ask to wash hands before and after seeing your child
- End an appointment early if child/family member or team member is unwell

YOUR CHILD'S RECORD

It is our responsibility to ensure that all laws and regulations regarding the safe keeping of your child's record are kept. Information contained in the record will not be shared or released to anyone outside of the program without the written consent of the parent/guardian, unless requested through a court order, mandated reporting. As part of receiving early intervention services, some of the information you provide will be sent to the Department of Public Health. You may request a copy of the information sent to the Department from our program.

You have certain rights that are guaranteed to you under federal laws regarding the confidentiality of records, how the information is maintained, and who has access to it. These include the right to:

- See the list of all Department of Public Health personnel who have access to the data system and find out what records are kept.
- Inspect and review any records that are collected and kept on your child at the program as well as at the Department of Public Health
- Ask the Early Intervention Program to take out or change information in the record that you feel is untrue, misleading, or not related to your child's early intervention needs. If you disagree with information in the record, you may place a statement in the record of your views and/or request a hearing.
- Upon your written request, the program will transfer your child's record to any other person identified by you to receive the record.

Destruction of Records Policy

It is the policy of the Kennedy-Donovan Center to destroy a child's record seven (7) years after the child is discharged from the program. You have the right to receive any and all information contained in your child's record and may exercise this right until the records are destroyed.



GETTING INVOLVED

Your involvement in your child's visits and other services is the most important part of the EI experience. If you would like to get involved in additional opportunities, below are some options at the program and state level.

At the program level

- Fundraising and Family Engagement opportunities
- EI Program Parent Contact for Mass EI Family Leadership
- Parent to Parent support (if available)
- Parent Advisory Council (if available)

At the state level

- Massachusetts EI Family Leadership Opportunities
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/family-engagement-leadership>
- Massachusetts Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC)
<https://www.mass.gov/interagency-coordinating-council-icc>
- Federation for Children with Special Needs (800) 331-0688
www.fcsn.org
- Family TIES of Massachusetts (800) 331-0688
<https://fcsn.org/family-ties/>





Feedback, Concerns, and Complaint Resolution

Kennedy-Donovan Center (KDC) values family feedback and is committed to providing high-quality, family-centered services. Families are encouraged to share compliments, suggestions, concerns, or complaints at any time. Families may contact any team member, program leader, KDC leadership representative, or external agency listed in this policy at any point in the process, based on their preference and comfort level. Feedback helps improve services and ensures families feel respected, supported, and heard.

Family Feedback Surveys

Families may also be asked to share feedback through the state NCSEAM family survey and/or a KDC agency survey. Survey feedback is another important way families can share their experience, identify what is working well, and help guide ongoing program improvement.

Procedure for Addressing Concerns

If a family disagrees with a program policy, procedure, decision, or has concerns regarding services or interactions with team members, the following contact options are available. Families are not required to follow these options in order and may choose to contact whomever they feel is most appropriate at any time:

- Speak with your Service Coordinator to discuss the concern and attempt to reach a resolution through open and honest communication.
- Contact your local Early Intervention Program and request to speak with a member of the program leadership

Attleboro	25 Forest St., Attleboro, MA 02703	PH: (508) 226-6035
Cape Cod & the Islands	30 Ansel Hallet Rd, West Yarmouth, MA 02673	PH: (508) 418-5540
New Bedford	19 Hawthorn St. New Bedford, MA 02740	PH: (508)-997-1570
Plymouth	32 Crescent St. Kingston, MA 02364	PH: (508)-747-2012
South Central	486 Worcester St Southbridge, MA 01550	PH: (508)-765-0292

- Contact KDC Executive Leadership:
Kennedy-Donovan Center Corporate Office
One Commercial Street, Foxboro, MA 02035
Phone: 508-772-1200
- Contact Massachusetts Department of Public Health:
Massachusetts Department of Public Health – Early Intervention Division
250 Washington Street, 4th Floor, Boston, MA 02108
Phone: 617-624-5070
<https://www.mass.gov/early-intervention-dispute-resolution>

Families have the right to raise concerns or file complaints with the person, program, organization, or agency of their choosing without fear of retaliation. A complaint will not affect eligibility for services or the quality of services.

Commitment to Resolution

KDC will address concerns respectfully, objectively, and as promptly as possible while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with agency policies and applicable regulations.

KDC Early Intervention Agreement

Early Intervention services work best when EI team members and parents/caregivers work as a team.

As Early Intervention team members, we will:

- **Assist you** in finding the best ways to encourage your child's development through daily activities such as mealtimes, bathing, bedtime routines, play time, and family activities.
- **Work with you** and your child to implement, revise and update these strategies and suggestions at home or in community settings.
- **Be available** during working hours to answer questions, discuss concerns and provide support to your family as a team.
- **Provide information**, resources, contact information, etc. for other state and local programs that may support your family.
- **Respect your time** by keeping scheduled appointments or calling you in advance when it is necessary to cancel or re-schedule an appointment.

We ask Parents /Guardians to:

- **Participate fully in your child's visits** by being actively involved in the activities we are doing. This will make it easier to carry out the same things during the rest of the week.
- **Keep scheduled appointments** or let us know in advance if you need to cancel due to illness or other matter. Regular services support your child's development. We will try to reschedule whenever possible.
- **Help us stay healthy** by canceling in-person appointments (or changing to telehealth/virtual). If your child or someone in the house is experiencing symptoms of illness, please contact your service provider.
- **Provide a safe, distraction-free place** and time for visits so the visits are productive. If you would like your other children or family members to be included, let us know.
- **Not** smoking immediately before and during home visits; keep pets in a separate room; and turn off the TV during visits for our staff to be able to concentrate fully on you and your child.
- **Keep us updated** about any changes in your insurance coverage.
- **Communicate** with your EI team members about what is working for your family and what is not

Parent/Guardian

Acknowledgment: _____ Date: _____

Service Coordinator

Acknowledgment: _____ Date: _____

Service Coordinator's phone number:

Service Coordinator's e-mail address: