

Parent's Guide to Early On

Dear Parents,

Welcome to **Early On** of the EUP! Parents are often referred to **Early On** by medical professionals or other community agencies. We are delighted that physicians and other providers in our area take such an interest in your child's development. This letter is to help you better understand the **Early On** model of service delivery.

Sometimes other agencies, outpatient rehab facilities, and physicians use what is called a "medical model" when recommending treatment to their clients or patients. What do we mean by medical model? It is easy to understand medical treatment for a broken arm, cut finger, etc. We mean that doctors or nurses use their special skills to set an arm, bandage a cut, etc. Care is determined and carried out by a medical professional. When therapy is needed to help mend the arm, a doctor will decide the type, amount, and duration of that therapy, based on physical needs of the child. The medical model is used in hospitals, clinics, and post-surgical procedures.

While early intervention is clearly done in partnership with the medical community, its model of service delivery is very different. The early intervention model is called the developmental model. This model emphasizes parental involvement in setting goals and outcomes, and bases the decision on services from input by therapists, educators, and you, the parent. All of you form a "team" that will develop the plan of services for your child.

What does this mean to you? It may mean that you have entered early intervention services with a recommendation for a specific therapy and/or a specific number of therapy treatments per week. However, as you entered the IFSP process, you found that outcomes you and the team created involved skills that could be taught to you and you could incorporate into your daily routine. It is far more helpful to a child to have a caregiver who has been trained to provide support throughout the day than to have three intense hours with a professional and no carryover.

While a therapist may work with your child for a few hours each month, there are many hours left when opportunities for working on movement, speech, feeding, small muscle skills and more can occur. Our approach is to help you know how to help your child. As a result, you may see a difference between what your physician has recommended and the plan that the IFSP "team" (parents, evaluators, and service coordinators) develops. If there is a difference, it does not necessarily mean we have different goals for your child, only a different approach to achieving them. If you have any questions, your service coordinator can help you understand how the developmental model applies specifically to your child.

Sincerely,

Early On