



Beyond the Test Booth: Education and Your Child

Resources that Can Help

Early Intervention (*birth to age three*):

Early Intervention is a federally funded program for infants and toddlers from birth to age three, which pays for services for children with varying special needs. Each state operates their Early Intervention programs somewhat differently.

To be eligible for Early Intervention services, children must be younger than 3 years of age and have a confirmed disability or established developmental delay, or have a condition, such as hearing loss, which if left untreated, can cause a developmental delay. In some states, services provided under Early Intervention are offered to families at no cost, while in other states, some payment by the family may be required.

The Early Intervention process involves:

- ▶ A referral into the Early Intervention system following diagnosis of hearing loss.
- ▶ Assignment of an Early Intervention Coordinator to you and your family to help guide you through the process.
- ▶ Scheduling additional hearing testing, speech and language evaluations, and psychological testing in order to determine the baby's needs.
- ▶ Meeting with the Early Intervention Coordinator, the evaluators and an Early Intervention Official Designee to develop a plan for your child after the evaluation is complete. This plan is called the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).
- ▶ Reviewing of the IFSP every six months by an Early Intervention Official Designee (EIOD) in order to monitor progress and make recommendations as needed. Parents, service coordinators, and therapists should be present at the review.
- ▶ Keep in mind that parents and/or therapists have the right to review the IFSP at any time to discuss any questions or concerns. It is not necessary to wait the six-month period.

“Remember, there is no “can’t” when planning your child’s education plan.”

Getting Ready for School – What Happens after age three?

After the age of three, services will typically be funded by the Board of Education. In each school district, there are separate committees on special education for pre-school and school-age children.

Services vary from state to state, and it is important that you check your own state's guidelines to determine what services your child is eligible for. Regardless of the state, however, the Department of Education is required to provide parents with a statement of their rights regarding meeting the needs of your child.

An Individualized Education Plan or IEP will be developed to meet your child's needs in school. Remember, there is no "can't" when planning your child's education plan. Throughout your child's education, you, as the parent, will be your child's strongest and most important advocate.

As advocates, parents need to access continually the skills of the professionals working with their child. Some questions to ask are:

- ▶ Does the professional have experience with young children with hearing loss?
- ▶ Does the professional have experience teaching children with hearing loss to speak using the approach the parent has chosen?
- ▶ Is the program home-based (at your house) or center-based (at a facility)?

To learn more about your rights and for more information, see:
<http://www.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html>

Choosing a school – What to look for:

With early identification of hearing loss, early use of hearing aids or cochlear implants, a strong communication therapy program, and ongoing support services, at the League, we believe that many children with hearing loss can be mainstreamed successfully in school.

There are many factors involved in choosing the right school for your child. Consider the following in your decision making process:

- ▶ Go and observe the school
- ▶ Meet with the principal
- ▶ Get a sense if the school is welcoming to children with individual differences
- ▶ See your child's potential classroom
- ▶ Meet your child's potential teacher

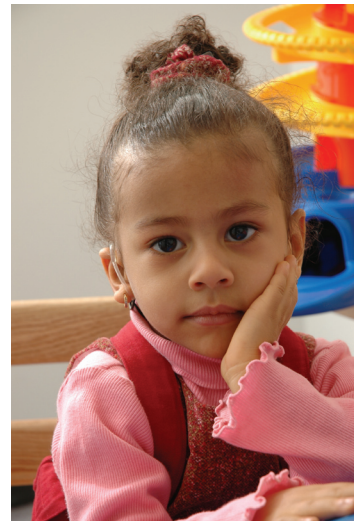
Ask the following questions:

- ▶ Does the school have experience with other children with hearing loss, and if so, what kind of support is offered?
- ▶ Does the school provide listening, speech, and language therapy?

Look at the facility and pay attention to the acoustics of the classroom. Consider:

- ▶ Is there carpeting?
- ▶ Is the school on a noisy street?
- ▶ Do the windows of your child's classroom face out to a noisy street?
- ▶ Is the classroom structured into areas with physical barriers to reduce noise?

Talk to as many people as you can, and if possible, connect with a parent in your area who has a child with hearing loss and has already been through the school selection process.



Some helpful hints for your child's classroom:

After choosing a school for your child, remember that all classrooms can get noisy and that a noisy environment makes it more difficult for a child with a hearing loss to communicate effectively. All children with a hearing loss should use an FM system in the classroom. Talk to your child's audiologist about the benefits of an FM system.

The following tips can easily help to create a quieter classroom:

- ▶ Use carpet remnants on the floor to absorb noise.
- ▶ Cut and place tennis balls on the bottom of chairs to reduce noise when children move chairs around the classroom.
- ▶ Use corkboards and artwork on the walls to reduce reverberation.

Helpful Tips to Keep in Mind:

- ▶ Have a complete hearing evaluation by a licensed pediatric audiologist every three months until your child is 2 years old.
- ▶ From age 2 until age 4, bring your child to a pediatric audiologist for a hearing evaluation every 6 months, and then annually, unless more frequent testing is indicated.
- ▶ Make sure your child's audiologist tests how your child hears with his/her hearing aids.
- ▶ Ask your child's audiologist why a particular type of hearing aid is being recommended.
- ▶ Make sure your child's hearing aid is FM compatible.
- ▶ Make sure your child's hearing aid has a telecoil (T-Coil).
- ▶ Make sure you learn how to troubleshoot your child's hearing aid. You should own a listening tube, a battery tester, and a bulb to blow water out of the earmold tubing.
- ▶ Ask your audiologist about products such as oils and/or creams that make it easier to insert earmolds.
- ▶ Make sure that the professionals working with your child have experience working with young children who have hearing loss.
- ▶ Understand your child's rights in obtaining an appropriate education.
- ▶ Visit several centers before deciding which one is right for you and your child.
- ▶ Speak to other parents of children with hearing loss.
- ▶ Contact the League for the Hard of Hearing for information and support.
- ▶ Learn to be your child's advocate and to teach your child self-advocacy
- ▶ Expose your child to people of all ages with hearing loss who can serve as positive role models.



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The Center for Hearing and Communication provides:

Audiology

- Fully Licensed Audiologists
- Hearing Testing for Infants, Children & Adults
- Hearing Aid Evaluation, Recommendation & Fitting
- FM Evaluation & Dispensing
- Central Auditory Processing Evaluation
- Six state-of-the-art Audiological Test Suites
- Tinnitus & Hyperacusis Center

Otology

- Board Certified Otologists

Assistive Technology

- Hearing Aid Dispensary
- Hearing Aid Repair
- SoundBytes, In-House Assistive Devices Store

Communication

Communication Evaluation & Therapy

- Speechreading
- Auditory Training
- Articulation & Voice
- English as a Second Language
- Auditory-verbal speech therapy program for children

Cochlear Implant Support

- Communication Evaluation
- Pre- & Post- Implant Evaluation
- Post-Implant Auditory Training
- Support Group

Mental Health & Social Work

- Individual, Family & Couples Psychotherapy
- Case Management, Information & Referral Services
- New York State Licensed Therapists & Board Certified Psychiatrists

Public Education

- Community Outreach & Education
- Center for Health Care Access

Career Development

- Competitive Job Placement
- On-site Communication/Technology Assessment
- Vocational Counseling
- Psychological/Vocational Counseling