



**Board of Developmental
Disabilities Services**

EARLY INTERVENTION FAMILY ORIENTATION GUIDE



Welcome to Montgomery County Early Intervention!

*The program is administered through **Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS)** and is accredited by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities.*

PROGRAM MISSION

To help infants and toddlers who have an identified risk reach their developmental potential by building upon the strengths and priorities of each family.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

We Believe that:

- Every child is capable of learning
- Families are the most powerful influence in a child's development
- With the support of coaching, families can help their child reach their full potential

Montgomery County Early Intervention Services

Eligibility

- All children must be actively enrolled in Montgomery County Help Me Grow Brighter Futures and assigned an Early Intervention Service Coordinator
- A child must be determined to have a developmental delay through an evaluation and assessment process defined by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities to be eligible for enrollment in the Early Intervention program
- All enrolled children must be under the age of three, residents of Montgomery County, and referred for early services by their Service Coordinator

Location of Early Intervention Services

- Services are provided in the natural settings of infants and toddlers such as: Home, childcare settings, local park, and community centers to the maximum extent appropriate per federal Part C requirements of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act).

Service Method Options

- Early intervention services can be provided in-person, through virtual methods, or a combination of both.

No Out of Pocket Costs

- The Montgomery County Board of DDS early intervention program is funded through local, state and federal tax dollars so there is no out of pocket cost for those who qualify for services. Local dollars are provided through the Montgomery County Human Services Levy.

Hours of Operation

- Routine hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 8:00am-4:30pm. The program is offered year-round and is closed on federal holidays as well as the day after Thanksgiving.

Description of Montgomery County Early Intervention Services

A Primary Provider (PSP) will deliver services as agreed upon at your Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) through an evidence-based coaching approach. This program design acknowledges families and caregivers as the most effective mode of intervention. The PSP will meet regularly with your family and a full early intervention team to suggest strategies that may be effective in achieving your family's outcomes. All are individualized based upon your family's routine and activities that are enjoyable for your child.

Your full team meets virtually on a weekly basis to check in and coach one another as to ways to help each family achieve IFSP outcomes. **You are always welcome and encouraged to attend!**

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

- The Individualized Family Service Plan, or IFSP, is developed with you and your team. It uses the information obtained during the eligibility and assessment processes to develop the outcomes you would like to achieve. The outcomes on your IFSP are written based on what you want your child or family to be able to do within your family's real-life routines and activities. They use your own words and focus on what is important to your family.
- The IFSP describes which service or services will be needed to help you meet the outcomes and when, where, and how those services will be provided and paid for.
- Once the IFSP is complete and you have signed it, it will be reviewed at least every six months at a time and place that works for you. You will always receive a copy of your IFSP from your service coordinator.

What is Coaching in Early Intervention?

- Coaching aims at building the confidence and competence of families and caregivers to help their child make developmental gains by providing feedback through observation of the family implementing strategies. Feedback is meant to be collaborative, and solution focused.
- Coaching is an adult learning strategy in which the coach promotes the families' ability to reflect on their actions as a means to determine the effectiveness of an action or a practice and develop a plan for refinement and use of the action in immediate and future situations.

Montgomery County Early Intervention practices adhere to the Seven Key Principles for Providing Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments. Ohio has adopted these Key Principles as the foundation of Early Intervention Services in the state:

1. Infants and toddlers learn best through every day experiences and interactions with familiar people in familiar contexts.
2. All families, with the necessary supports and resources, can enhance their children's learning and development.
3. The primary role of a service provider in early intervention is to work with and support family members and caregivers in children's lives.
4. The early intervention process, from initial contacts through transition, must be dynamic and individualized to reflect the child's and family members' preferences, learning styles and cultural beliefs.
5. IFSP outcomes must be functional and based on children's and families' needs and family-identified priorities.
6. The family's priorities, needs and interests are addressed most appropriately by a primary provider who represents and receives team and community support.
7. Interventions with young children and family members must be based on explicit principles, validated practices, best available research, and relevant laws and regulations.

Autism Support and P.L.A.Y. Project

Families of children who are enrolled in the Early Intervention Program and have been diagnosed with Autism will be presented with information about the P.L.A.Y. Project. Through the P.L.A.Y. approach (Play and Language for Autistic Youngsters), a Developmental Specialist trained in this strategy, coaches you through techniques that are effective, fun, and useful in your day-to-day interactions with your child. The P.L.A.Y. Project's vision "that all parents will be supported in developing a joyous relationship with their children with autism spectrum disorders in a way that will help each child reach their full potential" supports the mission and philosophy of the Early Intervention Program.



Canceling or Rescheduling an Early Intervention Appointment

Please notify your Primary Service Provider of a need to cancel or reschedule a service visit as soon as possible. We do understand that families face circumstances that may prevent that from taking place.

When Your Child or Family Members are ill

Symptoms such as rashes, diarrhea, vomiting and coughing are all possible signs of a contagious illness. Each would require that you notify your Primary Service Provider of a need to reschedule an in-person appointment to a different day or to consider changing it to that of a virtual format. If you or someone in your home is ill at a time an Early Intervention staff member is scheduled to visit your home, please call your PSP prior to discuss an alternative or attempt to reschedule the in-person visit.

Inclement Weather/Calamities

There may be times when inclement weather or other calamities prevent staff's ability to travel safely to in-person visits. In these situations, the Superintendent will communicate that the agency is on "PLAN A" status or designate remote-work only. As these situations arise, it may be possible to adjust your service visit originally scheduled to be in-person visit to that of a virtual one if all scheduled to attend the appointment agree to the change and such temporary adjustments remain within the allowable state guidelines. *Montgomery County Board of DDS has IPADS available to lend out to families if you need access to technology for virtual services.*

There also may be times when the Superintendent communicates that the agency is on "PLAN B" status, which indicates that all service visits will be cancelled for the day and staff are not to report to work.

The quickest way to access updates regarding agency updates on any given day is to visit the agency website at www.mcbdds.org. The home page will note any agency alerts. You may also subscribe to "Emergency Alerts" on the website so that agency alerts can be sent to you directly via text or email:

[Sign Up for Emergency Alerts for Montgomery County Board of DDS](#)

Protecting Your Child's Health and Safety

The State of Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities rule 5123:2-17-02 states that the Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities Services must report to the state major unusual incidents. A major unusual incident means the alleged, suspected or actual occurrence of an incident that adversely affects the health and/or safety of an individual.

This rule also states that our agency must keep track of unusual incidents. An unusual incident means an event or occurrence involving an individual that is not consistent with routine operation, policies, procedures or the care and plan of the individual, but is not a major unusual incident.

Confidentiality

Personally identifiable data will be shared with other early intervention providers in the DODD system. Information you provide about your child and family will not be released to any other person, agency or organization without the written permission and signature of the parent/legal guardian. Personally identifiable data includes: child's name, parent or family member's names, child/family address, personal identifiers (such as child's social security number), indirect identifiers (such as child's date of birth, place of birth and mother's maiden name), or any other information that could be used to link to the child.

In an effort to protect your information, EI staff may only text basic information such as appointment confirmations based on your opting in to texting during your child's enrollment in Montgomery County Board of DDS-Early Intervention. Opting in to texting is optional and you can change your mind at any time. Other electronic communications related to your child's early intervention program will take place via encrypted email with your EI Team in an effort to protect your confidential information.

Consent

Consent can be given by the parent or legal guardian once they have been informed of the information relevant to the activity for which consent is being sought. Consent will be obtained in writing.

Consent will be obtained by the EI service provider from the parent before the following events: administering developmental screenings, conducting an evaluation or assessment, conducting a family assessment, providing EI services to the child or family, using private insurance for services, disclosing personally identifiable information to anyone other than those authorized for purposes of EI services.

A parent or legal guardian may consent or withdraw consent at any time. Withdrawing consent will not jeopardize other EI services. It should be understood that granting consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time but that a revocation is not retroactive.

Access, Destruction and Amendments of Your Child's Record

Parents and legal guardians may access their child's records at any time. The request for access is made through the child's Primary Service Provider, preferably in writing.

Records collected or created for the participation in EI services will be maintained for a period of 6 years past an adjudicated audit. Records that are used to establish eligibility for EI services or County Board services will be maintained permanently. Access to records maintained by the County Board will be based on the type of document in that EI specific documents will be accessible to EI staff and County Board documents will be available to County Board staff (including EI staff) that may need access to provide requested services. The parent or legal guardian may request in writing that all records be destroyed on the child's ninth birthday. A demographic record of the child including name, date of birth, parent contact information, EI service coordinators and service providers, and exit data may be maintained permanently and is not subject to the request to destroy all records.

A parent or legal guardian has the right to request an amendment to the child's record if they believe the information is inaccurate, misleading or violates the privacy or other rights of the child or parent. The request can be made verbally or in writing. The EI service provider will decide whether to make the amendments or not within a reasonable time period. If the EI service provider refuses, the parent will be informed and the parent or legal guardian will have the right to a due process hearing.

*Should you have questions about your child's record,
please contact Lauren Fritz, Records Manager and Privacy Officer for the
agency at LFritz@mcbdds.org or 937-457-2779.*

Early Intervention Program- Procedural Safeguards- 5123-10-01

Dispute resolution

1. Disputes regarding an alleged violation of part C may be resolved informally at the local level.
2. When resolution at the local level is not achieved or preferred, a complainant of parent may file a complaint with the department.
3. A complaint filed with the department shall:
 - a. Be in writing
 - b. Be filed within one year after the alleged violation that is the subject of the complaint; and
 - c. Include:
 - i. A statement that an early intervention service provider violated a requirement of part C;
 - ii. The facts on which the statement is based;
 - iii. The signature of and contact information for the complainant of the parent; and
 - iv. If alleging violations with respect to a specific child:
 1. The name and address of the residence of the child;
 2. The name of the early intervention service provider serving the child;
 3. A description of the nature of the problem, including facts relating to the problem; and
 4. A proposed resolution of the problem to the extent known and available to the complainant or parent at the time the complaint is filed.
4. The complainant or parent shall forward a copy of the complaint to the early intervention service provider serving the child at the same time the complaint is filed with the department.
5. During the pendency of any proceeding involving a complaint, unless the department and the parent of a child otherwise agree, the child shall continue to receive the early intervention services that were agreed to in the individualized family service plan.
6. If the complaint involves an application for initial early intervention services, the child shall receive those services that are not in dispute.
7. After a parent has filed a complaint with the department, the parent may request that the department investigate the complaint pursuant to paragraph 5123-10-01 J of the rule, may request to mediate the complaint pursuant to paragraph 5123-10-01 K of the rule, or may choose to proceed with a due process hearing pursuant to paragraph 5123-10-01 L of the rule.

Your Rights as a Parent in Ohio's Early Intervention System

1.) You have the right to informed consent.

- You must grant written permission **before**:
 - your child is screened, assessed, or evaluated.
 - Anyone can share information about your child with anyone outside of the EI system.
- You can change your mind about any of the services at any time. You can do this by contacting your EI service coordinator.

2.) You have the right to request a new eligibility determination if your child was found ineligible for EI.

- You must submit this in writing to DODD (ei@dodd.ohio.gov) within 45 days.
- You must also include the reasons you believe the decision was incorrect.

3.) You have the right to have information about your child's EI services in writing.

- You will get written information from your EI team before any screenings, evaluations, or assessments take place; anytime there is an IFSP; and any time services change.

4.) You have the right to an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

- A written plan is called an IFSP and is developed by you and your team to record your priorities and concerns about your child's development within your everyday activities and routines.
- An IFSP lists the services that will best help reach desired outcomes and it describes when, where, and how services will be given and paid for.
- You can choose to reject some services without affecting other early intervention services.
- You may invite anyone you wish to your family's IFSP meeting (for example, another family member or trusted friend).
- An IFSP meeting cannot take place without you.
- The IFSP is reviewed every six months or sooner if needed.
- IFSP meetings occur at a time and place that works for you.
- You will receive a written or electronic copy of your IFSP.

5.) You have the right to have EI services in natural environments.

- Natural environments are places where children live, learn and play, and also include children's routines, or what children do, as they participate in their everyday life at home and in their community.

6.) You have the right to keep information about your family private.

- Personally identifiable information that would identify you or your family will not be shared with people outside of the EI system unless you say it is ok.

7.) You have the right to file a written complaint.

- The quickest way to resolve a concern is to talk with your EI Service Coordinator or their supervisor. If that does not work, you can contact EI staff at the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities at (614) 466- 6879 or ei@dodd.ohio.gov.
- You can file a signed written complaint.
- Complaints should be mailed to: Early Intervention Ohio
Department of Developmental Disabilities 30 East Broad Street, 12th Floor Columbus, Ohio 43215.
- The complaint will be investigated and you will get a response within 60 calendar days. While the complaint is being investigated, your child can continue to receive EI services.

8.) You have the right to mediation or a due process hearing.

- Another way to settle disagreements is to ask for mediation or a due process hearing. Mediation lets you and EI program staff talk about the details of your disagreement with a neutral, trained mediator. The mediator will work with you and your program to find a solution that works for both of you. The State will pay the cost of the mediator.
- A due process hearing is a more formal process conducted in front of an impartial hearing officer. Parents can hire an attorney to represent them at a due process hearing, but this is not required. The State will pay the cost of the hearing officer.

Other Resources and Supports through Montgomery County Board of DDS

A support also available to your family is an **Intake and Transition Specialist or Early Childhood Support Specialist (ECSS)**. This professional will provide you with additional information about other services and supports through the Board of DDS for which your family may be eligible.

- The I&TS/ECSS is your contact for other Board services such as Family Support Services outside of early intervention services received through your PSP. Staff in these positions are responsible for your enrollment in Board Services and will continue to be your Board contact when your child turns three should your child continue to be eligible after they age out of the Montgomery County Early Intervention program. Each participates in your child's teaming meetings and often IFSP meetings if invited by your family to have an enhanced understanding of your child's strengths and needs while enrolled in Montgomery County Early Intervention.

Lending Library

Montgomery County Early Intervention offers families ongoing opportunities to borrow adaptive equipment, technology, toys, books and training videos based upon the needs and interests of your family. The items are designed to assist families in trying out expensive adaptive equipment and alternative augmentative communication (AAC) apps before purchasing to determine if such strategies are functional for your family and beneficial to achieving outcomes of your IFSP.

Family Connections

Family-to-Family support is valued by the Montgomery County Early Intervention Program! Early Intervention offers group opportunities called Family Connections so that your children can play and interact together and provide an opportunity for families to do the same. In-person and virtual events are held throughout the year. Attendance is encouraged and there is never a cost to attend any Family Connection Events.

Family Support Services Program

The Family Support Services Program (FSS) is another support apart from Early Intervention that may be available to eligible families through Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities Services. This program:

- 1) Enables the family to care for their family member with a disability at home
- 2) Enhances the quality of life for that family, including the individual with a developmental delay or disability.

Your I&TS/ECSS will assist you in enrolling in and utilizing the Family Support Services program.

Program Feedback

Feedback from families is an important part of making sure the program is the best that it can be! If at any time you have comments, concerns, praises, or suggestions as how to improve the Montgomery County Early Intervention Program, please do not hesitate to contact:

Esther Borders, Director of Early Intervention, at eborders@mcbdds.org or 937.918.2132.

