

Concerned About Your Child?

Frequently Asked Questions Birth to 3

1) What can I do if I am concerned about my child's development?

A: You know your child best! Share your concerns with your child's pediatrician or other trusted health care provider. Together you can determine the best next steps to take to help your child.

2) What can I do if my pediatrician does not diagnose my child but I remain concerned?

A: Trust Yourself! Openly share your concerns with your pediatrician. Be as specific as possible. (Examples: My child is two and not able to say any words; My child is 12 months and unable to sit independently; My Child is 26 months avoids eye contact and does not like to be touched) If you disagree with his/her assessment you may request a second opinion or obtain a referral to have your child evaluated by a Pediatric Developmental Specialist

3) How do I schedule an evaluation for my child at the hospital? (Who do I call/ see first)?

A: An evaluation for your child can be scheduled by dialing 1-888-244-5373 (ext. 8054). At this extension, a scheduler can help you make an appointment for a specific therapy evaluation (speech/language, feeding, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy) or connect you with the Mental Health Access Coordinator (for behavioral concerns). They can also set up an appointment with a Neurodevelopmental Specialist if your concerns are about several areas, or you are uncertain where to begin. Many insurance providers require that parents get a referral or prescription from a doctor before an evaluation is scheduled. Be sure to check with your insurance carrier to learn their procedures.



4) How do I decide what course of treatment is right for my child (Early Intervention, hospital-based therapy, a combination of both, etc.)?

A: Choosing between Early Intervention services and hospital based therapy is a personal choice which will be impacted by many factors. Think about what services have been recommended for your child. Check with both your insurance carrier to see what services are covered and with your school district to see what services they offer. Consider your specific family needs. In some cases, concerns regarding childcare for siblings, distance and cost will steer the decision. In others, comfort with a particular provider, availability of a specialized service or the opportunity to regularly communicate with the therapist/doctor will be the deciding factor. Talk with your pediatrician and the evaluators, trusting that you will make a good decision for your child and family.

5) When do I need to contact my school district regarding my child with special needs?

A: Your child may be evaluated 120 days before their 3rd birthday. Once the district has received your request in writing asking that your child be evaluated, they then have 20 calendar days to hold an evaluation planning meeting, and begin the process.

6) How do I go about having my child evaluated by the school district (i.e. how do I contact them, is there a letter, etc.). How do I set up the evaluation?

A: You must contact your school district in writing in order to set up an evaluation for your child. You can find the name and address of the person to address your letter to on your school district's website, or by calling them. Please also see the attached "Resource List" for websites that will provide sample letters to help you get started.



7) What documents should I bring with me to an evaluation with the school district?

A: You should bring a medical diagnosis if you have it. You should also bring any and all medical records, as well as a private evaluation from a therapist, if you have one. (Do keep in mind, that if you have your own evaluation done, the school cannot do an evaluation within one year. It will void out the evaluation). In addition, it is helpful to bring a list of skills the child has (from a therapist), as well as a list of concerns, (also from a therapist).

8) What can I do if my child is denied services, or before a meeting with the school district?

A: If your child is denied services, remember that there are options! You have the right to request mediation. There are sample forms to fill out for this in the Parental Rights Handbook which is given to everyone at, or before a meeting.

9) How do I find out what role Children's Specialized Hospital plays in my process so there is a smooth transition from hospital services to school, and what role they will play in working with the school system?

A: If your child is receiving Early Intervention Services, their team will help provide a smooth transition to school at the age of three. If your child is not receiving such services, they may be eligible for something known as Public Expense- that is they do not receive the services, but they will get assistance with transition and a review every 6 mos. For more information on this, as well as for help contacting the Department of Health referral line for Early Intervention Services, you can contact Mary Mc Ardle M.A., CCC-SLP Early Intervention Regional Manager- Toms River/ Hamilton Target Team Evaluation Coordinator at 732-797-0368 (Toms River) 609-631-2804 (Hamilton) or at mmcardle@childrens-specialized.org. In addition, you can also speak with your child's



doctors and therapists about them speaking to your school district regarding your child, as well as let your school district know that your child's team is available.

10) I have a child with special needs. I am concerned about their siblings having needs, or future children I may have. Who can I turn to for help?

A: Experts from Children's Specialized Hospital are providing free, quick developmental screenings for children ages 1 to 5 years old. Information is provided online, on the hospital's website, www.childrens-specialized.org, or you can call 1-888-CHILDREN ext. 5498 to register and get directions.

Websites

The following are a list of websites parents may find helpful. They are excellent resources for gathering information, finding sample letters, etc.

- **Special Child Health Services:** www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/sch/
- **NJ Early Intervention System:** www.njeis.org
- **Early Intervention Information & Events for Families:** www.thefamilymatterswebsite.org
- **New Jersey Early Intervention System Family Cost Participation:** www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/documents/fs_fcp_qa05.pdf



- **Early Intervention System - Disability Rights New Jersey:** www.drnj.org/.../Early%20intervention%20FAQ%20final%20version%20for%20web
- **The Right to Special Education in New Jersey:** www.edlawcenter.org
- **Children's Specialized Hospital | Early Intervention:** www.childrens-specialized.org/Programs-Services/...Programs/Early-Intervention
- **Children's specialized Hospital:** www.childrens-specialized.org
- **SPAN (Statewide Parent Advocacy Network):** www.spanadvocacy.org





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