



Understanding your rights and knowing about available resources are essential when navigating the complex world of parenting a young child with disabilities. Contact us if you have specific questions about FCESS/early intervention services or other disability related programs.

Know Your Rights Early Intervention



Caring for a newborn or toddler is challenging in the best of times.

Trying to navigate the system of disability-related supports and services while caring for your newly diagnosed baby can be overwhelming. However, a young child's diagnosis helps to unlock a system of home-based services and supports, known as early intervention, that are specifically designed for children 0-3 years old.

Early intervention (also known as Family-Centered Early Supports and Services or FCESS) provides comprehensive evaluations and services for infants and young children with developmental disabilities, including autism. Early intervention services take place in a child's home or other location where the child spends time so that the child and their caregivers can better actively participate. Services and supports can include service coordination as well as:

- Vision & hearing services
- Speech, physical, & occupational therapy services
- Nutrition counseling & assessment
- Assistive technology/Equipment (evaluation, acquisition, & training)
- Transportation & mileage reimbursement when appropriate to receive services

Learn More

✓ **Although insurance may be charged, early intervention services are provided free of charge to the child and family.** See <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcbcs/bds/earlysupport/index.htm> for more information including a comprehensive list of supports and services.

✓ **Parent Information Center's Family Guide to Family-Centered Early Supports and Services (FCESS)** <https://picnh.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Family-Guide-to-FCESS.pdf>

Disability Rights Center - New Hampshire (DRC-NH) is dedicated to the full and equal enjoyment of civil and other legal rights by people with disabilities.

DRC-NH is New Hampshire's designated Protection and Advocacy agency and authorized by federal statute "to pursue legal, administrative, and other appropriate remedies" on behalf of individuals with disabilities. We are a statewide organization independent from state government or service providers.



How to Access Supports & Services Through Early Intervention

Early Intervention supports and services are provided through NH's Area Agency system. There are ten area agencies throughout the state and you can find the nearest one to you at www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcbcs/bds/agencies.htm.

Anyone can refer a child to an area agency for an evaluation. Often-times a child will be referred by a parent or primary caregiver or a medical provider. Once the referral has been made, area agency staff have 45 days to complete an evaluation, determine eligibility, and create an Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP) if the child is found eligible for services.



Learn More

Transitioning Out of Early Intervention/FCESS

Once a child turns 3, they are no longer eligible for early intervention. At the age of 3, a child may be eligible for other community-based services such as outpatient therapy, continued area agency support, and/or special education services from their community preschool program. Not all children who receive early intervention services qualify for preschool special education or area agency services – each program has its own eligibility criteria. As part of the transition planning process, your Service Coordinator will discuss the child’s options with you and help you to review and plan for the child’s transition out of early intervention. This transition plan should be included in the Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP). Transition planning should begin when the child turns 27 months, or earlier if they are found to no longer be eligible for early intervention.

✓ **Transition from Family-Centered Early Supports and Services: A Guide for Families and Staff (Blue Book)**

<https://picnh.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Blue-Book-GuideR12.pdf>

✓ **Overview of the Early Childhood Transition Process**

<https://picnh.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/An-Overview-of-the-Early-Childhood-Transition-Process.pdf>

Disability Rights Center - NH

Protection and Advocacy System for New Hampshire

64 North Main Street, Suite 2
3rd Floor, Concord, NH 03301-4913

MISSION: The Disability Rights Center is dedicated to eliminating barriers to the full and equal enjoyment of civil and other legal rights for people with disabilities.

twitter.com/DRCNH

facebook.com/DisabilityRightsCenterNH

WEBSITE: www.drcnh.org

EMAIL: mail@drcnh.org

VOICE AND TDD: (603) 228-0432
1-800-834-1721

FAX: (603) 225-2077

TDD access also through NH Relay Service

VOICE AND TDD: 1-800-735-2964

This publication was supported solely by federal funding from grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living/Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities; U.S. Department of Education, Department of Rehabilitation Services; Social Security Administration; and a grant from the New Hampshire Bar Foundation.