

What is ECI?

ECI is a statewide program for families with children, birth to three, with disabilities and developmental delays. ECI supports families to help their children reach their potential through developmental services. Services are provided by a variety of local agencies and organizations across Texas.

- Vision & Mission statement - ECI's guiding principles
- Make a referral - Information for physicians and other professionals
- Division history - How ECI came to be
- How babies develop - Information about developmental milestones

State and federally funded through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, P.L. 108-446), ECI provides evaluations and assessments, at no cost to families, to determine eligibility and need for services. Families and professionals work as a team to plan appropriate services based on the unique needs of the child and family. ECI asks families who can afford to do so, to share in the cost of services. The amount a family pays for ECI services is determined using a sliding fee scale and is based on family size and income after allowable deductions. No child and family will be turned away because of an inability to pay.



ECI goes to families and focuses on working with the child and family in their natural environment, such as at home, grandma's, or a child care center. Essentially, it's where children live, learn and play.

Research shows that growth and development are most rapid in the early years of life. The earlier problems are identified, the greater the chance of eliminating them. Early intervention responds to the critical needs of children and families by:

- promoting development and learning,
- providing support to families,
- coordinating services, and
- decreasing the need for costly special programs.

ECI is here to help and can become an important resource for all families. For more information about ECI or to refer a child, call the DARS Inquiries Line at **1-800-628-5115**.

For more information: www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis/index.shtml

HOW TO MAKE A REFERRAL

ECI encourages families not to take a "wait and see" approach to a child's development. A referral to ECI can be based on professional judgment or a family's concern. A medical diagnosis or a confirmed developmental delay is not needed to refer. As soon as a delay is suspected, children may be referred to ECI, even as early as birth.

To refer a child, from birth to three, call the DARS Inquiries Line **at 1-800-628-5115** or send an email message to **dars.inquiries@dars.state.tx.us**. For the hearing impaired call, TDD/TTY 1-866-581-9328.

ECI Care Line operators provide callers with the name of a local program which works under the ECI umbrella. In addition to giving callers information about referrals and local ECI programs, operators also: provide general information about ECI; help families locate information about disabilities; provide referral information to early intervention programs in other states; and take publication orders.

Once a referral is made to an ECI program, the family is contacted by an ECI staff person to discuss the reasons for the referral. Usually an intake appointment is made so that the family's concerns can be further explored and a more in-depth explanation of ECI services can be provided. After the intake appointment, a decision is made about whether to proceed with an interdisciplinary evaluation and assessment. The family is very involved and a key team member in the evaluation and assessment process. If the child is eligible for ECI services, the team develops an Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP).

For children and young adults, ages three to 21, services are available through the local school district. A referral for assessment may be made. This may lead to individualized testing for children and young adults who may require specialized assistance and/or support. To begin this process, contact the director of special education at the local school district. The telephone number can be found in the white pages of the phone book or through the Texas Education Agency website.

Information for Health and Medical Professionals Referring to ECI

- Federal and State Referral Requirements
- List of Medical Diagnoses
- Eligibility & Services

For more information: www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis/referral.shtml