

# A PARENT'S GUIDE

## Finding Help for Young Children with Disabilities (Birth-5)

*A publication of the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities*

# N I C H C Y

The birth of a child is an exciting, life-changing event. A beautiful new baby comes to your house, family, and neighborhood. It is a time for joy and celebration. Family members look at the new child and wonder: Will he be a football star, will she be a famous musician, will he discover the cure for cancer, will she become President of the United States!

But what happens when this new child has a disability? What if there are health problems? What if there are questions about the special needs this child may have? What happens now, and who can help?

In fact, there are many supports for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities. If you are concerned about your child's development or suspect that your child may have special needs, this *Parent's Guide* can help. It's designed to help you get started learning what your child may need and finding professionals and other families who can help along the way. The guide is a bit technical—it offers the nuts and bolts to building support systems for your child and your family.

Emotional support is, of course, also important. Finding the resources in your community is a first

step to building up family strength and to helping you become confident in your ability to provide for your special child's needs. The professionals and families you contact will introduce you to many possibilities. NICHCY also can put you in touch with a wide range of resources and supports.

Read on, contact the groups and organizations that are appropriate to your child and family's needs, and come to NICHCY if you need more assistance. We are here to help you.



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## A. Early Intervention Services

### ☆—Children Birth Through Two Years Old—☆

What are early intervention services?

Broadly speaking, early intervention services are special services for eligible infants and toddlers and their families. These services are designed to identify and meet children's needs in five developmental areas. These areas are:

- physical development;
- cognitive development;
- communication;
- social or emotional development; and
- adaptive development.

Early intervention services are an effective way to address the needs of infants and toddlers who have developmental delays or disabilities. The services are made available through a federal law known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA provides states and territories with specific requirements for providing early intervention services to infants and toddlers with special needs. In turn, each state and territory develops its own policies for carrying out IDEA and its requirements.

Under IDEA, a complete evaluation of the child is necessary to decide whether he or she is eligible for early intervention services.

**My child seems to be developing much slower than other children. Would he/she be eligible for early intervention services?**

It is possible that your child may be eligible for early intervention, but more investigation is necessary to determine that. Some children

develop more slowly than others or develop in ways that seem different from other children. This can cause parents to worry. If you think that your child is not developing at the same pace or in the same way as most children his or her age, it is often a good idea to talk first to your child's pediatrician. Explain your concerns. Tell the doctor what you have observed with your child. Your child may have a disability or what is known as a developmental delay, or he or she may be at risk of having a disability or delay.

*Developmental delay* is a term that means an infant or child is developing slower than normal in one or more areas (Anderson, Chitwood, & Hayden, 1997). For example, he or she may not be sitting up (or walking or talking) when most children of that age are. The term *at risk* means that a child's development may be delayed unless he or she receives early intervention services.

IDEA describes broadly who is eligible for early intervention services. This includes a child with a diagnosed physical or mental condition with a high probability of resulting in developmental delay. It also includes a child experiencing a developmental delay. At the State's discretion, at-risk infants and toddlers may also be eligible for services.

So, if you are concerned about your child's development, you will need to have your child evaluated to find out if he or she is eligible for early intervention services. This evaluation is provided at no cost to you. There are many people who can help you with this.



*Babies are  
such a nice way  
to start people.*

—Don Herald

## Where do I go for help?

There are a number of ways you can find help for your child. Since you are reading this *Parent's Guide*, we recommend that you look on the NICHCY *State Resource Sheet* for your state under the heading "Programs for Infants and Toddlers: Birth Through 2." There, we have listed the main contact number for early intervention services in your state. Call the agency listed. Explain that you want to find out about early intervention services for your child. Ask for the name of a contact person in your area.

If you don't have a *State Resource Sheet* for your state, visit our Web site at [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org). All *State Resource Sheets* are available there. You can also call NICHCY at 1.800.695.0285 and ask one of our information specialists to give you the number for early intervention services in your state.

How else might you find out about early intervention services in your community? Here are two ways:

- Ask your child's pediatrician to put you in touch with the early intervention system in your community or region;
- Contact the Pediatrics branch in a local hospital and ask where you should call to find out about early intervention services in your area.

It is very important to write down the names and phone numbers of everyone you talk to. (You can use the Sample Record-Keeping Worksheet on page 15 of this publication as a guide.) Having this information available will be helpful to you later on.

## What do I say to the early intervention contact person?

Explain that you are concerned about your child's development. Say that you think your child may need

early intervention services. Explain that you would like to have your child evaluated under IDEA. Write down any information the contact person gives you.

The person may refer you to what is known as Child Find. One of Child Find's purposes is to identify children who need early intervention services. Child Find operates in every state and conducts screenings to identify children who may need early intervention services. These screenings are provided free of charge.

Each state has one agency that is in charge of the early intervention system for infants and toddlers with special needs. This agency is known as the *lead agency*. It may be the state education agency or another agency, such as the health department. Each state decides which agency will serve as the lead agency. The agency listed on the NICHCY *State Resource Sheet* under the heading "Programs for Infants and Toddlers: Birth Through 2" is your state's lead agency.

## What happens next?

Once you are in contact with the early intervention system, the system will assign someone to work with you and your child through the evaluation and assessment process. This person will be your temporary *service coordinator*. He or she should have a background in early childhood development and ways to help young children who may have developmental delays. The service coordinator should also know the policies for early intervention programs and services in your state.

The early intervention system will need to determine if your child is eligible for early intervention services. To do this, the staff will set up and carry out a multidisciplinary evaluation and assessment of your child. Read on for more information about this process.



*Birth is  
the sudden  
opening of a  
window through  
which you look upon  
a stupendous  
prospect.*

—William Dixon



*Making the decision to have a child—that's momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart go walking around outside your body.*

—Elizabeth Stone

## What is a multidisciplinary evaluation and assessment?

IDEA requires that your child receive a timely, comprehensive, multidisciplinary evaluation and assessment. The purposes of the evaluation and assessment are to find out:

- the nature of your child's strengths, delays, or difficulties, and
- whether or not your child is eligible for early intervention services.

*Multidisciplinary* means that the evaluation group is made up of qualified people who have different areas of training and experience. Together, they know about children's speech and language skills, physical abilities, hearing and vision, and other important areas of development. They know how to work with children, even very young ones, to discover if a child has a problem or is developing within normal ranges. Group members may evaluate your child together or individually.

*Evaluation* refers to the procedures used by these professionals to find out if your child is eligible for early intervention services. As part of the evaluation, the team will observe your child, ask your child to do things, talk to you and your child, and use other methods to gather information. These procedures will help the team find out how your child functions in five areas of development: cognitive development, physical development, communication, social-emotional development, and adaptive development.

Following your child's evaluation, you and a team of professionals will meet and review all of the data, results, and reports. The people on the team will talk with you about whether your child meets the criteria under IDEA and State policy for

having a developmental delay, a diagnosed physical or mental condition, or being at risk for having a substantial delay. If so, your child is generally found to be eligible for services.

If found eligible, he or she will then be assessed. *Assessment* refers to the procedures used throughout the time your child is in early intervention. The purposes of these ongoing procedures are to:

- identify your child's unique strengths and needs, and
- determine what services are necessary to meet those needs.

With your consent, your *family's* needs will also be identified. This process, which is family-directed, is intended to identify the resources, priorities, and concerns of your family. It also identifies the supports and services you may need to enhance your family's capacity to meet your child's developmental needs. The family assessment is usually conducted through an interview with you, the parents.

When conducting the evaluation and assessment, team members may get information from some or all of the following:

- Doctor's reports;
- Results from developmental tests and performance assessments given to your child;
- Your child's medical and developmental history;
- Direct observations and feedback from all members of the multidisciplinary team, including you, the parents;
- Interviews with you and other family members or caretakers; and
- Any other important observations, records, and/or reports about your child.

## Who does the evaluation and assessment?

It depends on your state's policies or rules. Ask your local contact person or service coordinator about this. However, evaluations and assessments must be done by qualified personnel. As was said above, a multidisciplinary group of professionals will evaluate your child. The group may include a psychologist or social worker, an early interventionist or special educator, and an occupational or physical therapist. All assessments must be performed in your child's native language.

## Who pays for the evaluation and assessment?

Under IDEA, evaluations and assessments are provided at no cost to parents. They are funded by state and federal monies.

## My child has been found eligible for services. What's next?

If your child and family are found eligible, you and a team will meet to develop a written plan for providing early intervention services to your child and, as necessary, to your family. This plan is called the *Individualized Family Service Plan*, or IFSP. It is a very important document, and you, as parents, are important members of the team that develops it.

## What is an Individualized Family Service Plan, or IFSP?

The IFSP is a written document that, among other things, outlines the early intervention services that your child and family will receive.

One guiding principal of the IFSP is that the family is a child's greatest resource, that a young child's needs are closely tied to the needs of his or her family. The best way to support children and meet their needs is to

support and build upon the individual strengths of their family. So, the IFSP is a whole family plan with the parents as major contributors in its development. Involvement of other team members will depend on what the child needs. These other team members could come from several agencies and may include medical people, therapists, child development specialists, social workers, and others.

Your child's IFSP must include the following:

- your child's present physical, cognitive, communication, social/emotional, and adaptive development levels and needs;
- family information (with your agreement), including the resources, priorities, and concerns of you, as parents, and other family members closely involved with the child;
- the major results or outcomes expected to be achieved for your child and family;
- the specific services your child will be receiving;
- where in the natural environment (e.g., home, community) the services will be provided (if the services will *not* be provided in the natural environment, the IFSP must include a statement justifying why not);
- when and where your son or daughter will receive services;
- the number of days or sessions he or she will receive each service and how long each session will last;
- whether the service will be provided on a one-on-one or group basis;
- who will pay for the services;



*Training a baby by the book is a good idea, only you need a different book for each baby.*

—Dan Bennett



*A baby is  
something you  
carry inside you  
for nine months,  
in your arms for  
three years, and  
in your heart til  
the day you die.*

—Mary Mason

- the name of the service coordinator overseeing the implementation of the IFSP; and
- the steps to be taken to support your child's transition out of early intervention and into another program when the time comes.

The IFSP may also identify services your family may be interested in, such as financial information or information about raising a child with a disability.

The IFSP is reviewed every six months and is updated at least once a year. The IFSP must be fully explained to you, the parents, and your suggestions must be considered. You must give written consent before services can start. *If you do not give your consent in writing, your child will not receive services.*

Each state has specific guidelines for the IFSP. Your service coordinator can explain what the IFSP guidelines are in your state.

#### What's included in early intervention services?

Under IDEA, early intervention services must include a multidisciplinary evaluation and assessment, a written Individualized Family Service Plan, service coordination, and specific services designed to meet the unique developmental needs of the child and family. Early intervention services may be simple or complex depending on the child's needs. They can range from prescribing glasses for a two-year-old to developing a comprehensive approach with a variety of services and special instruction for a child, including home visits, counseling, and training for his or her family.

Depending on your child's needs, his or her early intervention services may include:

- family training, counseling, and home visits;
- special instruction;
- speech-language pathology services (sometimes referred to as speech therapy);
- audiology services (hearing impairment services);
- occupational therapy;
- physical therapy;
- psychological services;
- medical services (*only* for diagnostic or evaluation purposes);
- health services needed to enable your child to benefit from the other services;
- social work services;
- assistive technology devices and services;
- transportation;
- nutrition services; and
- service coordination services.

#### How are early intervention services delivered?

Early intervention services may be delivered in a variety of ways and in different places. Sometimes services are provided in the child's home with the family receiving additional training. Services may also be provided in other settings, such as a clinic, a neighborhood daycare center, hospital, or the local health department. To the maximum extent appropriate, the services are to be provided in natural environments or settings. Natural environments, broadly speaking, are where the child lives, learns, and plays. Services are provided by qualified personnel and may be offered through a public or private agency.

## Will I have to pay for any services?

Whether or not you, as parents, will have to pay for any services for your child depends on the policies of your state. Under IDEA, the following services must be provided at no cost to families:

- Child Find services;
- evaluations and assessments;
- the development and review of the Individualized Family Service Plan; and
- service coordination.

Depending on your state's policies, you may have to pay for certain other services. You may be charged a "sliding-scale" fee, meaning the fees are based on what you earn. Check with the contact person in your area or state. Some services may be covered by your health insurance, by Medicaid, or by Indian Health Services. Every effort is made to provide services to all infants and toddlers who need help, regardless of family income. Services cannot be denied to a child just because his or her family is not able to pay for them.

## Are there parent groups in my area that can give me more information about services?

Yes, most likely. Parent groups can offer information, support, and/or training to help parents take a more active role in helping their children. Through such groups, families meet other families with similar needs to discuss resources, day-to-day problems, and personal insights.

There are several types of parent groups in the U.S., including:

- Support groups (such as Parent-to-Parent) for families of children with disabilities;

- Parent training and information (PTI) centers and community parent resource centers (CPRC) in every state (funded by the federal government); and
- Groups concerned with a specific disability, such as United Cerebral Palsy Associations, Inc. (UCPA) or the Arc (formerly the Association for Retarded Citizens).

The contact information for all these types of groups is listed on the NICHCY *State Resource Sheet* for your state. The state sheets are available on our Web site ([www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)) and by contacting us directly (1.800.695.0285). Your service coordinator may also be able to tell you about groups where you live.

## I still have a lot of questions. How can I find out more?

As time goes by and your child begins to receive services, you will probably have more questions. For example, you might want to know:

- How do I check on the services my child is getting?
- What do I do if I am not satisfied with my child's assessment, services, or progress?
- What happens to my child once he/she is too old for the early intervention program?
- Will my child be identified as a child with a disability when he or she is ready for preschool?
- What about private services and programs?

For answers to these and other questions, talk to your service coordinator, contact a parent support and/or training group in your area, or contact NICHCY.



*You plan a baby  
and get a person.*

—Linda McCutcheon

## B. Special Education Services

☆—For Preschoolers with Disabilities (Ages Three Through Five Years Old)—☆



*My duty is  
to care for her;  
my love explains  
the manner of  
my days.*

—Jane Wiley

### What is special education?

Special education is instruction that is specially designed to address the educational and other needs of children with disabilities, or a child experiencing developmental delays. Special education is provided free of charge through the public school system. It is available through the same law that makes early intervention services available—the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. More will be said about special education below.

I'm concerned about my preschool child's development. I think he or she may have special needs. Should I investigate special education services?

Yes, you should. If you are concerned that your child is not developing at the same pace or in the same way as most other children, your child may have special needs. He or she may have a developmental delay or a disability. There's help available! As mentioned above, special education services are available to eligible children through your public school system. Under IDEA, your child will need an evaluation to determine whether he or she is eligible for special education.

How do I find out if my child is eligible for services?

If you think your child needs special help, you should get in touch with the special education system in your area. The easiest way to do this is to call your local elementary school. Ask to speak to someone who knows about special education services for children ages 3 through 5.

There are other ways to connect with special education services for your preschooler. Since you are reading this *Parent's Guide*, we recommend that you look on the NICHCY *State Resource Sheet* for your state under the heading "Programs for Children with Disabilities: Ages 3 through 5." There, we have listed the main contact number for special education services in your state. Call the agency listed. Explain that you want to find out about special education services for your child. Ask for the name of a contact person in your area. If you don't have a *State Resource Sheet* for your state, visit our Web site at [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org). All *State Resource Sheets* are available there. You can also call NICHCY at 1.800.695.0285 and ask for the resource sheet for your state. (You can also ask the information specialist who takes your call for the number for special education services for preschoolers in your state.)

It is very important to write down the names and phone numbers of everyone you talk to. (You can use the Sample Record-Keeping Worksheet on page 15 of this publication as a guide.) Having this information available will be helpful to you later on.

Tell me more about special education.

As was said above, special education is defined as instruction that is specially designed to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, or a child experiencing developmental delays. Specially designed instruction may include adapting the content, methodology, or the delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of an

eligible child. Special education can include classroom instruction, home instruction, instruction in hospitals and institutions, or other settings. It can include speech-language pathology services or any other related services, instruction in physical education, vocational education, and travel training.

Special education services are provided free of charge through the public schools. Even though your child is a preschooler, he or she may be eligible for these helpful services. To find out if your child is eligible, your child will first need to be evaluated to see if he or she has a disability. The evaluation is conducted by (or arranged by) the special education system. It is provided free of charge.

#### What is an evaluation?

Evaluation means the procedures used to determine:

- if the child has a disability as defined by IDEA, and
- the current educational needs of the child.

A group of people, including you, will be involved in your child's evaluation. This group will begin by looking at what is already known about your child. More information may need to be gathered. The group may look at the following sources of information about your child:

- Doctors' reports;
- Results of developmental tests given to your child;
- Current classroom-based assessments and observations;
- Your child's medical history;
- Developmental and behavioral checklists;
- Observations and feedback from all members of the evaluation

team, including you as parents; and

- Any other important observations, records, and/or reports about your child.

#### Who conducts my child's evaluation?

Under IDEA, the group involved in your child's evaluation will include these people:

- at least one of your child's regular education teachers (if your child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment);
- at least one of your child's special education teachers or service providers;
- a school administrator who knows about policies for special education, children with disabilities, the general curriculum (that is, the curriculum used by nondisabled children), and available resources;
- you, as parents or guardians;
- someone who can interpret the evaluation results and talk about what instruction may be necessary for your child;
- individuals (invited by you or the school) with knowledge or special expertise about your child;
- your child, if appropriate; and
- other qualified professionals, as appropriate (such as a school psychologist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, physical therapist, medical specialist(s), or others).

#### Will I have to pay for the evaluation?

No. The evaluation must be provided at no cost to parents. If your child is eligible for special education services, he or she will also



*My duty dictates the  
journeys we take  
together, the words I  
speak, the imaginings of  
my mind. My love is the  
sudden movement of my  
hand to caress the  
smooth, brown hair,  
the unexplained kiss as  
she passes me in the  
kitchen...*

—Jane Wiley



*Children are one-third of our population and all of our future.*

*Select Panel for the Promotion of Child Health*

receive those services at no cost to you.

### What happens after my child's evaluation?

After your child has been evaluated, you and school personnel will meet to go over the results. Your child's eligibility will be discussed. The group will decide if your child is eligible for services or not. You are part of the team that decides your child's eligibility.

If your child is found eligible for services, then you and school personnel will sit down and write what is known as an Individualized Education Program, or IEP. Your child's IEP is a written statement of the educational program designed to meet your child's individual needs. Every child who receives special education services must have an IEP. The IEP has two general purposes:

- to set reasonable learning goals for your child; and
- to state the services that the school district will provide for your child.

### Are there any parent groups in my area that can give me information about special education?

Yes, most likely there are several types of parent groups in your state. Parent groups can offer information, support, and/or training to parents. They can help parents take a more active role in helping their children. Through such groups, families meet other families with similar needs to talk about resources, day-to-day problems, and personal insights.

There are several types of parent groups throughout the United States, including:

- Support groups (such as Parent-to-Parent) for families of children with disabilities;

- Parent training and information (PTI) programs and community parent resource centers (CPRC) in every state (funded by the federal government); and
- Groups concerned with a specific disability, such as United Cerebral Palsy Associations, Inc. (UCPA) or the Arc (formerly the Association for Retarded Citizens).

The contact information for these groups (and many more!) is listed on your NICHCY *State Resource Sheet*, which is available on our Web site ([www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)) or by contacting us. Someone at your local school may also be able to tell you about groups where you live.

### I still have a lot of questions. How can I find out more about special education services?

Once your child has been found eligible for special education services, you will most likely have more questions. For example:

- How do I check on my child's special education services or program?
- What do I do if I am not satisfied with my child's assessment, placement, services, program, or progress?
- What happens when my child reaches the goals in the IEP?
- What about private services, programs, or schools?

For answers to these and other questions, talk to your special education coordinator or school principal, or contact a parent group in your area. Also, NICHCY offers many publications that can help answer your questions. Visit our Web site ([www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)), e-mail us ([nichcy@aed.org](mailto:nichcy@aed.org)) or phone (1.800.695.0285). We'd be pleased to talk with you about your special questions and concerns.

## C. Services for Rural, Native American, Adoptive/Foster, and Military Families & Their Young Children with Disabilities

What services are available for families in remote or rural areas?

The goals of early intervention and special education services for young children with special needs are the same for both rural and urban families. However, the ways in which these services are offered may be different. Two groups that may be able to offer information specifically about services for rural families are:

The University of Montana  
Rural Institute  
52 Corbin Hall  
Missoula, MT 59812  
Telephone: 1.800.732.0323;  
406.243.5467 (V/TTY)  
Web: ruralinstitute.umt.edu

National Rural Education  
Association (NREA)  
820 Van Vleet Oval, Room 227  
University of Oklahoma  
Norman, OK 73019  
405. 325.7959  
Email: bmooneyham@ou.edu  
Web: www.nrea.net/

What about services for Native American families living on reservations?

The lead agency for each state is responsible for seeing that early intervention services are provided to infants and toddlers (ages birth through two years) with special needs in the state. The State Education Agency (SEA) is responsible for seeing that special education programs and services are provided to preschool children (ages three through five) with special needs.

These requirements include Native American infants, toddlers, and children living on reservations. Information on these services is available from the lead agency, from the SEA, or by contacting the office of the tribal leader or the tribal education committee. Local public or Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools and Indian Health Service (IHS) offices and clinics are also possible sources of information. You may also wish to contact:

Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office  
of Indian Education Programs  
1849 C Street NW, MS-3512 MIB  
Washington, DC 20240  
Telephone: 202.208.6123  
Web: www.oiep.bia.edu/

National Indian Education  
Association (NIEA)  
700 N. Fairfax Street, Suite 210  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Telephone: 703.838.2870  
E-mail: niea@mindspring.com

What additional information do families of adopted or foster children with disabilities need about early intervention or special education services?

In general, the process for getting early intervention or special education services for adopted children with special needs is the same as it is for all children with special needs.

The National Adoption Information Clearinghouse provides information to families who have adopted a child. Their contact information is:



*What is laid  
down, ordered,  
factual, is never  
enough to  
embrace the  
whole truth:  
Life always  
spills over the  
rim of every  
cup.*

—Boris Pasternak



*If I know what  
love is, it is  
because of you.*

—Hermann Hesse

National Adoption Information  
Clearinghouse  
330 C Street S.W.  
Washington, DC 20447  
Telephone: 1.888.251.0075  
Email: [naic@caliber.com](mailto:naic@caliber.com)  
Web: <http://naic.acf.hhs.gov>

There is also the *Adoptive Families Magazine*, a source of help for parents that includes information and resources for families of adopted children that have special needs. Information about subscriptions is available from:

Adoptive Families Magazine  
39 West 37th Street, 15th Floor  
New York, NY 10018  
1.800.372.3300  
[letters@adoptivefam.org](mailto:letters@adoptivefam.org)  
Web: [www.adoptivefamilies.org](http://www.adoptivefamilies.org)

Families who provide foster homes to children who have disabilities or who are at risk of developing disabilities may want to contact the National Foster Parent Association, Inc. (NFPA). This national, non-profit group offers information and support to all foster parents. Members of the group receive a bimonthly newsletter and can use all the resources of NFPA. For the Information/Services Office of NFPA, contact:

National Foster Parent  
Association  
7512 Stanich Avenue, Suite 6  
Gig Harbor, WA 98335  
Telephone: 1.800.557.5238  
Web: [www.nfpainc.org](http://www.nfpainc.org)

How do I find out about programs and services for military families whose young children have special needs?

You can find out about early intervention and special education programs and services for military families from several sources.

The Specialized Training of Military Parents (STOMP) organization provides information and help to military families (both in the U.S. and overseas) who have children with special needs. The STOMP staff is made up of parents of children with special needs who are trained to work with other parents of children with special needs. As spouses of members of the military, the staff understands the unique needs of military families. To contact STOMP, call or write:

Specialized Training of Military  
Parents (STOMP)  
6316 So. 12th Street  
Tacoma, WA 98465  
253.565.2266 (V/TTY);  
1.800.5.PARENT (V/TTY)  
[rfullerton@washingtonpave.com](mailto:rfullerton@washingtonpave.com)  
Web: [www.stompproject.org](http://www.stompproject.org)

The office of the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) issues extensive guidance for military families with children who have special needs and who are receiving, or are eligible to receive, a free appropriate public education either domestically or overseas. Take a look online at: [www.dodea.edu/instruction/curriculum/special\\_ed/index.htm](http://www.dodea.edu/instruction/curriculum/special_ed/index.htm)

DoDEA can be reached at:

Department of Defense  
Education Activity  
4040 N. Fairfax Drive  
Arlington, VA 22203  
Telephone: 703.696.4493

## What support groups are available to help families?

There are several types of parent groups throughout the United States, including:

- Support groups (such as Parent-to-Parent) for families of children with disabilities;
- Parent training and information (PTI) centers and community parent resource centers (CPRC) in every state (funded by the federal government); and
- Groups concerned with a specific disability, such as United Cerebral Palsy Associations, Inc. (UCPA) or the Arc (formerly the Association for Retarded Citizens).

The contact information for these groups is listed on your *NICHCY State Resource Sheet*, which is available by contacting us (1.800.695.0285, [nichcy@aed.org](mailto:nichcy@aed.org))

or visiting our Web site ([www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)). Your service coordinator or someone at your local school may be able to tell you about local groups where you live. You can also identify groups on many of the Web sites we've listed on page 14.

## References

- Anderson, W., Chitwood, S., & Hayden, D. (1997). *Negotiating the special education maze: A guide for parents and teachers* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House. (Available from Woodbine House, 6510 Bells Mill Road, Bethesda, MD 20817, 1.800.843.7323, [www.woodbinehouse.com](http://www.woodbinehouse.com).)



*Children...they  
string our joys,  
like jewels  
bright, upon the  
thread of years.*

—Edward A. Guest

## D. Selected Web Sites of More Information



*Trust yourself. You  
know more than  
you think you do.*

*—Dr. Benjamin Spock*

### Early Childhood

American Academy of Pediatrics  
1.800.433.9016  
[www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)

Center for Early Education and  
Development (CEED)  
612.624.5780  
[http://education.umn.edu/  
CEED/default.html](http://education.umn.edu/CEED/default.html)

Circle of Inclusion  
[www.circleofinclusion.org/](http://www.circleofinclusion.org/)

Division for Early Childhood  
Council for Exceptional Children  
406.243.5898  
[www.dec-sped.org](http://www.dec-sped.org)

Early Childhood  
Outcomes Center—  
530.758.7483  
[www.the-eco-center.org](http://www.the-eco-center.org)

Early Childhood Research Institute  
on Culturally and Linguistically  
Appropriate Services (CLAS)  
1.800.583.4135 (V/TTY)  
[www.clas.uiuc.edu](http://www.clas.uiuc.edu)

First Signs, Inc.  
978.346.4380  
[www.firstsigns.org](http://www.firstsigns.org)

National Center for Early  
Development & Learning  
[www.fpg.unc.edu/%7Eencedl/](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/%7Eencedl/)

National Child Care Information  
Center (NCCIC)  
1.800.616.2242  
[www.nccic.org/](http://www.nccic.org/)

National Early Childhood  
Technical Assistance Center  
(NECTAC)—  
919.962.2001  
919.843.3269 (TTY)  
[www.nectac.org](http://www.nectac.org)

Research and Training Center  
(RTC) on Early Childhood  
Development  
828.255.0470  
[www.researchtopractice.info/](http://www.researchtopractice.info/)

ZERO TO THREE: National Center  
For Infants, Toddlers and Families  
202.638.1144  
[www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

### Parent Groups & Guidance

Beach Center on Disabilities  
785.864.7600  
[www.beachcenter.org](http://www.beachcenter.org)

PACER Center  
952.838.9000  
[www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org)

Parent to Parent—USA  
[www.p2pusa.org](http://www.p2pusa.org)

Technical Assistance Alliance  
for Parent Centers  
1.888.248.0822  
[www.taalliance.org](http://www.taalliance.org)

## E. Sample Record-Keeping Worksheet

The sample record-keeping worksheet below can help you start a file of information about your child. As you contact different people and places, it's a good idea to keep records of the people you've talked with and what was said. As time goes by, you will want to add other information to your file, such as:

- Letters and notes (from doctors, therapists, etc.);
- Medical records and reports;
- Results of tests and evaluations;
- Notes from meetings about your child;
- Therapists' reports;
- IFSP and IEP records;
- Your child's developmental history, including personal notes or diaries on your child's development;
- Records of shots and vaccinations; and
- Family medical histories.

Make sure you get copies of all written information about your child (records, reports, etc.). This will help you become an important coordinator of services and a better advocate for your child. Remember, as time goes on, you'll probably have more information to keep track of, so it's a good idea to keep it together in one place.

### Sample Record-Keeping Worksheet

Problem/Topic:

Name of person or agency you talked to:

Name of your contact person (may be same as above):

Date you called:

Phone #

Results of discussion:

Action taken (if any):



NICHCY *Parent Guide* is published in response to questions from individuals and organizations. NICHCY also disseminates other materials and can respond to individual requests for information. For further information or assistance, or to receive a NICHCY *Publications Catalog*, contact NICHCY, P.O. Box 1492, Washington, DC 20013-1492. Telephone: 1.800.695.0285 (Voice/TTY) and 202.884.8200 (Voice/TTY). You can e-mail us ([nichcy@aed.org](mailto:nichcy@aed.org)) or visit our Web site ([www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)), where you will find all of our publications.

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