

Common Myths

About Children With Disabilities and the Early Intervention Program

Children With Disabilities

MYTH:

All children with disabilities need additional support delivered in specialized settings.

FACT:

Like all children, children with disabilities have unique personalities, strengths, interests and abilities. There are many types of disabilities. Most children with disabilities or developmental delays need little or no additional care at their child care program, but some may need additional services, like those provided by the Early Intervention (EI) program. EI provides services in many settings, including child care programs.

MYTH:

Children with disabilities cannot interact or play with children who do not have disabilities.

FACT:

Research shows that including children with disabilities in the same activities and educational settings as their typically developing peers benefits all children.

MYTH:

Children with disabilities cannot learn.

FACT:

All children can learn. It may take extra patience and time for some children, but repeated practice within routine activities can help children with disabilities learn at home and at their child care program.

Early Intervention Service Providers at the Child Care Program

MYTH:

EI service providers need a separate space to work alone with the child.

FACT:

EI service providers should incorporate their services into the child care program's daily activities. The child care program should not set aside a separate space.

MYTH:

Child care providers are not involved with EI services.

FACT:

Everyone who takes care of a child – including child care program staff, parents and babysitters – must know how to meet the child's needs. By partnering with EI service providers, child care providers can develop strategies to use with all the children in their program.

Clearances for EI Service Providers to Work in Child Care Programs

MYTH:

Child care providers need extra liability insurance when an EI service provider works at their child care program.

FACT:

EI service providers must have professional liability insurance that covers the delivery of their services in home and community settings. Child care providers can request information about this insurance from the EI service provider.

MYTH:

Child care providers must receive clearance from the State Central Registry (SCR) and medical forms from any EI service provider who works at their child care program.

FACT:

All EI service providers have State Central Registry (SCR) clearance, medical clearance and reference checks, and are licensed or credentialed by the New York State (NYS) Department of Education. The organization that assigns EI service providers to child care programs checks that each provider meets the necessary requirements.

Families and the EI Program

MYTH:

You may know someone who didn't talk or walk until they were 4 years old, but developed normally. If a child is showing signs of a developmental delay or disability, they will grow out of it.

FACT:

While babies and toddlers develop at different rates, seek help right away if you think a child has a developmental delay or disability. Early help, like the services provided by EI, can make a difference for children and their families.

MYTH:

Only a child's doctor can refer them to EI.

FACT:

Anyone, including a parent or a child care provider, can refer a child to EI without a medical prescription or referral. However, parents should tell their child's doctor that the child has been enrolled in EI. The doctor should know what stage of the program the child is in, because they may need to write a prescription for certain services.

MYTH:

Parents have to pay for EI services.

FACT:

EI services are provided at no cost to families in NYS and New York City (NYC). If the family has Medicaid or NYS-regulated private insurance, EI will use it to pay for the services.

MYTH:

EI reports undocumented immigrants.

FACT:

EI does not ask about or keep a record of immigration status. The program is available to all eligible families, regardless of immigration status.

MYTH:

Once a child is enrolled in EI, they will be labeled and always placed in special education classes in the future.

FACT:

Some children who are in EI will need special education services in the future, but more than half of children do not need any special supports or services after they leave EI.

MYTH:

EI will share my child's information with the NYC Department of Education.

FACT:

EI is run by the New York City Health Department, not the Department of Education. EI will not share a child's records with anyone, including the Department of Education, unless a parent gives written permission. Participation in EI is completely confidential.

