

Early Intervention Services (EIS)



EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

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The Early Intervention Services (EIS) department at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland promotes the optimal well-being, development, and caregiving relationships of infants and young children.

Why Early Intervention Services are important

The research on the brain is clear: the earlier potential developmental delays in young children can be identified and addressed, the better the long-term outcomes will be. School success, healthy growth and development and overall well-being starts with strong child-caregiver attachments and appropriate support.

A young child's behavior, social-emotional well-being, and development are influenced by environmental factors, such as where he/she lives, learns and plays, as well as physical/biological vulnerabilities. When children experience stressors, live in low-income communities and/or are exposed to community and family violence, their ability to be successful is greatly compromised.

Our approach

Each infant or child brings unique attributes, capacities and vulnerabilities that impact developing relationships. Infants and young children grow in the context of their primary caregiving relationships and the quality of these relationships has lasting influence on their development and well-being.

Based on best practice research, we attempt to identify medical, developmental and social-emotional concerns in infants and young children as early as possible, with the goal of improving long-term outcomes. We partner with families—building on their strengths and guided by their concerns—offering a relationship-based approach that is grounded in reflective practice. We are a multidisciplinary team of nurses, developmental specialists, mental health specialists, and a family partner, and we integrate socio-cultural responsiveness into our work.

Our overarching vision is that all children will have the early support needed for optimal developmental, social-emotional and health outcomes. We continually develop new strategies and points of entry for our services as we strive, through grant and contract funding, to maintain and expand supports for vulnerable young children and their families.

Our key partners

We partner with our funders as well as public systems and non-profit organizations to develop and implement programs. Without our partners, we would not be successful in meeting the needs of infants, young children, and their families.

Our partners include:

Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services
Alameda County Health Care Services Agency
Alameda County Public Health Department
Alameda County Social Services Agency
Alameda Unified School District
Chabot-Las Positas Community College District (Title IV-E)
Center for Youth Wellness (Tara Health Foundation)
First 5 Alameda County
Help for Children (Hedge Funds Care)
Irving B. Harris Foundation
Jewish Family and Community Services East Bay
Oakland Unified School District
Regional Center of the East Bay
State of California Department of Health Care Services

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Our Programs

Our services are geared towards children from infancy through seven years of age. We predominantly serve children and families in Alameda County.

Gentle Hands

Beginning in the Intensive Care Nursery, parents and staff are guided in developmentally appropriate interventions that help support parent-infant attachment, create a secure and calm feeding and bathing environment for the infant, and support the growth of the premature and medically fragile infant.

Special Start Home Visiting Program

Once premature and extremely medically complicated infants are discharged from an Intensive Care Nursery, our staff provide home visiting services to help connect families with needed community resources, ensure comprehensive medical follow up, support the infant-parent relationship, monitor how the child is developing, and help parents adjust to the ongoing needs of their infant.

Fussy Baby Program

When babies have excessive crying or feeding, and sleeping issues, the parent/infant relationship can be impacted in stressful ways. For some babies, this is an issue that will resolve (i.e., colic) and for some babies there may be more complex reasons for these problems. Our multidisciplinary team helps parents identify their concerns, develop strategies to decrease stress and assist parents in developing plans to address the sleeping, feeding and crying issues. Services are based on family/infant need.

Parent Infant Program

As one of our first programs developed 30 years ago to serve children with developmental delays and their families, PIP utilizes a staff of highly skilled developmental specialists to offer home and center based early intervention services to children 0-3 with the participation of the child's family. A mental health specialist, who is the parent of a child with a disability, offers a parent support group and family counseling.

Developmental Playgroups Program

These groups move our successful PIP strategy out into the larger community and work with local partners to provide neighborhood-based, family-oriented play environments for young children at high risk for delays. The groups support school readiness skills and help families learn more about how to support their child's healthy development at home.

Early Childhood Mental Health Treatment Programs

When children are identified with social-emotional delays or behavioral challenges either by their family, pediatric provider, teacher, or another community provider, they may be in need of more treatment-based services. For young children, these services are provided to the parent/caretaker and the child together. We offer individual family services which are most often home-based. We also offer therapeutic groups for particular populations of young children and their families/caretakers. These include child welfare, incarcerated or previously incarcerated, and families addressing substance use issues.

Early Childhood Assessment Services

We offer additional services to identify areas that might need further intervention and provide families and providers with information that can help support treatment goals.

Irving B. Harris Early Childhood Mental Health Training Program

Two years of training and supervision are provided to community mental health workers and other providers working with young children who want to increase their skills in addressing the social-emotional well being of vulnerable young children.

Consultation and Training

A team of developmental and mental health specialists provide consultation to early care and education programs, as well as to programs specifically aimed at keeping children out of the child welfare system. Additionally, our team provides training on a variety of early childhood mental health and developmental issues throughout the county, state and nationally.

Early Childhood Policy

Providing leadership in county and national collaborations, EIS staff participate in efforts that address advocacy, improve state and local policies, and promote agendas that benefit the well-being of young children.

