



Let's Talk

Early Intervention for Speech, Language, and Swallowing Problems



“My daughter Sarah is 2½ years old and has autism. She doesn't say any words. She rocks and spins. She doesn't look at us when we talk to her. She's enrolled in a special infant-toddler program where the teacher and speech-language pathologist work together to help her make gestures so she can tell us what she wants. I hope she'll learn to talk. I just want her to say “Mama.””

—Leila

A young child goes through so many changes in the first three years...

- Learning to talk
- Learning to play
- Listening and understanding
- Getting ready to read and write
- Making friends

All these changes start early and happen fast—and all of them depend on communication.

Speech-Language Pathologists Can Help

Speech-language pathologists, or SLPs, work with young children who have problems hearing, talking, and understanding. SLPs can help you find ways to make your child's speech and language better. They also help children who have feeding and swallowing problems. SLPs make sure young children get the early intervention services that are key to later success!

You Are Part of the Team

SLPs work with parents, teachers, doctors, and child care workers on an early intervention team. The team works together to come up with the plan for your child's success—not a “one size fits all” approach.

Fast facts

- Young children may have problems with eating and drinking, understanding, and talking.
- Early intervention services may be needed. And the earlier, the better.
- Speech-language pathologists, or SLPs, can help.

Early Intervention That Works for Your Child

Every child is different and changes over time. So, the more you can tell the SLP and the rest of the team about how your child is doing, the better the plan will be.

You should also make sure the plan meets *your* needs. Early intervention services should:

- Focus on what you think is important
- Respect your values and beliefs
- Help your child be ready for school
- Help your child join in activities
- Be based on research

Stay Involved

- Talk with your child's doctor, SLP, and other team members about any concerns you have.
- Ask questions if you're not sure how your child is doing.
- Let the team know about improvements or problems that you notice.

Some changes might be needed along the way, and the road might be bumpy at certain times, but the most important thing is to get started early.

“Sarah's doing very well in early intervention. She's still not talking, but she uses some signs and is making sounds. Our SLP told us that learning signs can even help with her speech. She has a sign for mama, and that means the world to me.”

—Leila

SLPs and early intervention services can help your child.

To learn more about early intervention call iTherapy at: (717-651-9915

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