

Early Intervention in Montana

Families in Montana who have **infants and toddlers with disabilities or delays** are served under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Families are served in their homes or in the natural environment where the child spends much of his/her time. We are obligated to travel to the families regardless of where they live. These families are supported by Family Support Specialists who carry a college degree and a comprehensive certification by the State of Montana to provide early intervention services in homes across Montana. Each family has a unique individual plan with specific outcomes for their child and family. Early intervention in Montana supports families so they are empowered and competent to work with their child within the daily routines of everyday life. This is an extremely cost effective model that minimizes dependency on expensive add-on services.

Is Early Intervention in Montana Effective?

- **74% of the infants and toddlers with disabilities and delays who left early intervention services did not go into special education preschool.**
- 99.6% of infants and toddlers with documented disabilities and delays show significant improvement after early intervention services. This is documented as required by the Montana Performance Standards on Early Childhood Outcomes.
- 94% of families served through early intervention services respond affirmatively that their family and child were helped.

Is Early Intervention in Montana Efficient?

- Montana's model uses a single certified FSS as service coordinator, child development specialist and special educator (all in one). This compares to the national standard of more expensive and isolated services provided by the majority of other states.
- Early intervention prevents many special education costs by changing the developmental trajectory and allowing families to better meet their children's special needs from an early age and throughout their lives.

Is Early Intervention in Montana Able to Maintain Effective and Efficient Services?

- Best practices in early intervention are reflected in a new model being implemented statewide, Routines-Based Early Intervention. This calls for weekly visits with families in their homes in order to have the greatest long-term impact (compared to the current average of 1-2 visits per month). The increase in frequency of early intervention visits is a significant additional financial impact on early intervention agencies and will at least double the staff time and travel costs.

