

# YOUTH RIGHTS: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND INTERVENTION

## What is Head Start?

Head Start is free preschool program for children between the ages of three and five that delivers long-term benefits for children. Head Start provides early childhood education to low-income children as well as parenting support. Some Head Start programs provide parents help with job training and education. The program lasts for about 4 to 6 hours a day and usually is in session during the school year. Research shows that Head Start children have higher achievement test scores, higher graduation rates, and lower rates of repeating grades. To be eligible for Head Start, you must meet the income guidelines. To find out where your local Head Start Program is located and if you are eligible call (717) 526-4646 or check out: [http://phsa.theabramgroup.com/stateMap.cfm?mm\\_id=2](http://phsa.theabramgroup.com/stateMap.cfm?mm_id=2)



## What is Early Head Start?

Early Head Start is a program for low income pregnant women and children under age 3. Early Head Start provides home visits, parent-child groups, nutrition instruction, referrals to health and social service providers, and parenting support. The program also provides educational and employment support to parents. To find out where your local Head Start Program is located and if you are eligible call (717) 526-4646 or check out: [http://phsa.theabramgroup.com/stateMap.cfm?mm\\_id=2](http://phsa.theabramgroup.com/stateMap.cfm?mm_id=2)

## What are Early Intervention Services (EI)?

Early intervention services provide support and services for children from birth to 5 years old with developmental delays. A child may have developmental delays if they are behind other children their age in developing skills such as communication and mobility. EI services include services that help the child and teach the parent skills to help their child develop. These services can include speech, physical, and/or occupational therapy, early childhood education and intervention, ideas for families to help their children at home and in the community, and activities that help to enhance a child's growth and learning. These services are provided to the young child where the child normally would be – such as at home, in a day care, or at a preschool.

## Who is eligible for Early Intervention services?

Children under age three are eligible for free Early Intervention (EI) Services if they have a 25% delay or more in at least one of five areas of development or they have a physical or medical condition which has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay, including conditions like Down Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Children between the ages of three and five are eligible for EI services if they have a developmental delay or a disability that would qualify them for special education services if they were school age. Children who have a substantiated case of abuse or neglect, have experienced substantial trauma, are affected by illegal substance abuse or have a low birth weight (3.3 lbs) or were in the neonatal intensive care unit should be tracked to determine if they need early intervention services.

If your child is eligible for services, a plan will be created that says what services the child is to receive. Depending on the child's age, the plan is called an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). You will be part of the team that creates that plan. If you do not agree with the type or amount of services determined for your child, you have a right to disagree. To find out more about your right to disagree, call the Disability Rights Network at 800-692-7443 or see [www.drnpa.org](http://www.drnpa.org).

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

If your child is under 3 years old, call your County Office of Mental Health and Mental Retardation and request an evaluation. In Philadelphia, referrals for screening for the birth to 3 EI program are done by the Childlink program. Call 215-731-2110 to make a referral. If your child is 3 years old or older, you will probably call your local Intermediate Unit (IU) to ask for an evaluation of your child. However, if you live in Philadelphia or Chester, Elwyn – which is a private company – has the responsibility for evaluating a child for preschool EI services. In Philadelphia, Elwyn can be contacted at 215-222-8054.