



Policy No. 113

Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments

Adopted: November 20, 2006

The Developmental Disabilities Council supports the provision of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities in natural environments as required by the Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004, Part C. This support is consistent with the Council's federal mandate to work toward the integration and inclusion of children and adults with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life. The Council recognizes that the Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program (ITEIP), Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is the lead agency responsible for the implementation of the IDEIA, Part C in Washington State. The Council strives to assist families of infants and toddlers with disabilities to think of themselves and their children as valued members of their communities.

The definition of Early Intervention Services in IDEA Part C, "...means developmental services...to the maximum extent appropriate, are provided in natural environments, including the home, and community setting in which children without disabilities participate, and are provided in conformity with an individualized family service plan..."

Best practice in providing early intervention services and natural environments includes (a) where the services are provided, and (b) how the services are provided. IDEIA requires that appropriate early intervention services are based on scientifically based researched. Early intervention services are part of the routine and daily activities of infants and toddlers and their families, such as bath time, reading, mealtime or playing i.e. natural environments.

The Council urges the legislature, Governor and state agencies to reaffirm the basic civil rights of all, including those with disabilities, and enforce IDEIA, Part C. In addition, ITEIP, other DSHS division and state agencies as well as local service providers are strongly encouraged to ensure early intervention services are integrated within the home and community of infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

The Council invites childcare and other community programs to welcome infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

The Council recognizes and applauds early intervention programs that are providing services in natural environments. The Council will continue to work with state agencies and other organizations to increase the knowledge, skills, and support for early intervention service providers to better prepare them to provide inclusive programs.

Sources:

The Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of rights Act, PL 106-403 Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004, Part C.

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