



# Early Intervention Leadership Guide

Office of Child Development and Early Learning  
Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports

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# Welcome!

Dear Early Intervention Leader,

On behalf of the entire Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your work in your current position. I trust that this letter finds you mutually excited about being part of the Early Intervention team. Each of us play an integral part in ensuring the success of your program.

As you are very much aware, our purpose is to serve families, children, and professionals in Early Intervention to the best of our ability. We want you to have pride in what you do on a daily basis and realize the importance of the impact that you make in the lives of children and families. You bring a unique set of skills to the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) and you are the best at what you do. We thank you for your dedication and the knowledge and experiences you bring to the field.

Being a leader in Early Intervention at times, brings many questions. We will make sure that you know who your Early Intervention Advisor and Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA) Consultant are. They will work as a team to support you and answer any questions that you have to build your leadership role in Early Intervention.

We are pleased to have you on our Early Intervention team and look forward to continuing to work with you.

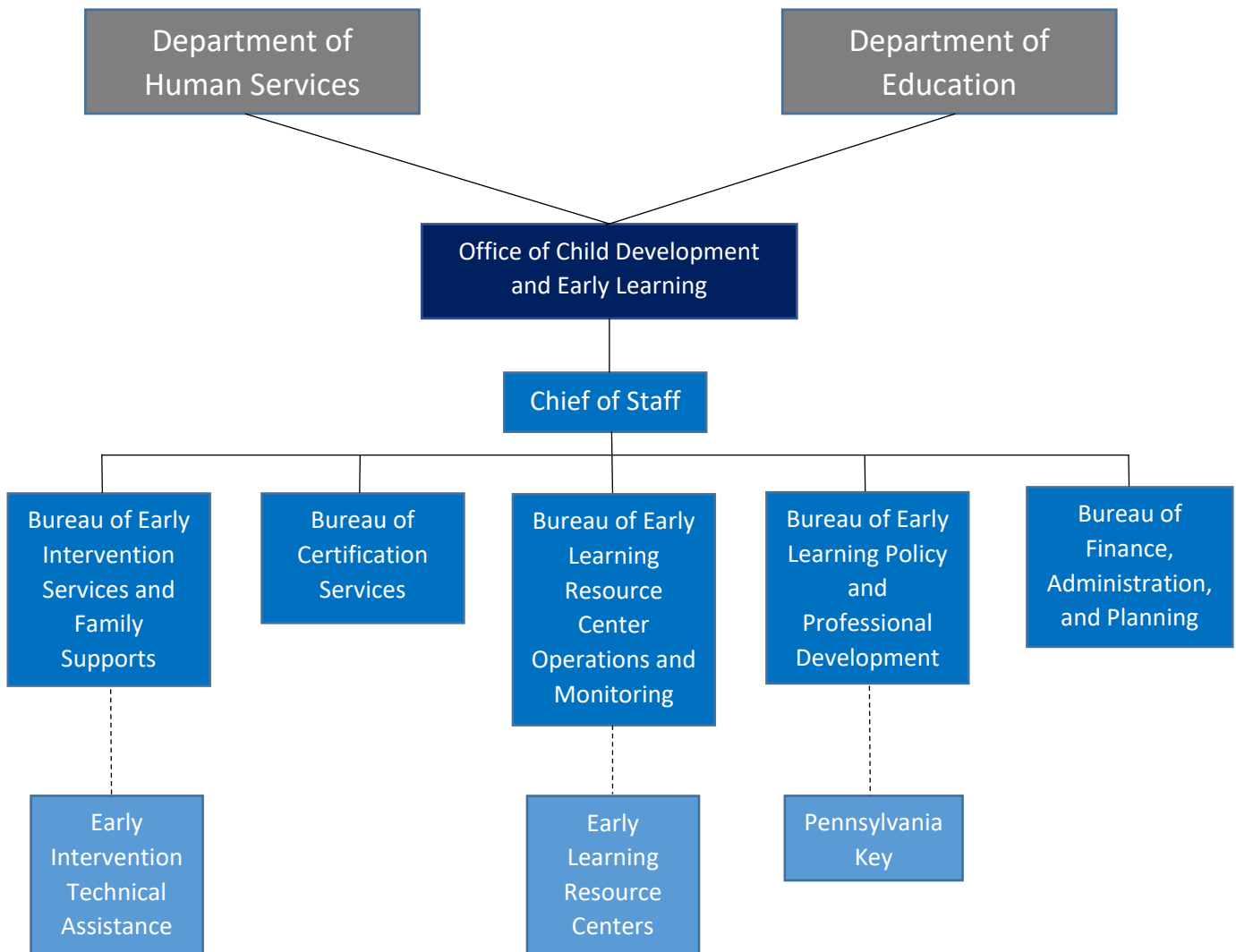
Sincerely,

*Lisa Parker*

Lisa Parker  
Director, Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports

# Meet the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL)

Conceived in 2007, OCDEL has focused on creating opportunities for the Commonwealth’s youngest children to develop and learn to their fullest potential. This goal is accomplished through a framework of supports and systems that help ensure that children and their families have access to high quality services. Pennsylvania’s Department of Human Services (DHS) and Department of Education (PDE) jointly oversee OCDEL.



## Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports (BEISFS)

BEISFS assures all eligible children from birth to five with developmental delays and disabilities and their families receive services and supports to help them develop and learn to their full potential so they are successful in settings where they would be if they did not have a disability or delay. Programs are provided to at-risk infants and toddlers, or those with disabilities and/or developmental delays, as well as to preschool children three years of age to the age of beginners, who have disabilities and/or developmental delays. BEISFS oversees the Early Intervention (EI) program for eligible infants, toddlers, and preschool children from birth to the age of beginners through their work with local administrators. Additionally, BEISFS administers family support programs that strengthen families, reduce risk, and increase early learning opportunities for children. The BEISFS also assists families to link with a variety of community services and supports.

## Bureau of Early Learning Policy and Professional Development

Through Pennsylvania's quality rating improvement system (QRIS), Keystone STARS, the Bureau of Policy and Professional Development develops and implements standards for early learning programs and professionals to improve the quality of early learning for our young children; provides financial supports and technical assistance for programs and professionals. BPPD is also responsible for establishing and maintaining the rules, regulations, and procedures for the subsidized child care program, Child Care Works. Both the Keystone STARS and Child Care Works programs are managed at the regional level through grantees known as the Early Learning Resource Centers (ELRCs). In addition, BPPD develops the Pennsylvania Learning Standards for Early Childhood, and provides supports, resources, and professional development that supports Early Learning Standard (ELS) implementation across all OCDEL programs. BPPD also provides oversight for Infant/Toddler Contracted Slots program, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, and the Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program, as well as coordinates professional development across bureaus.

## Bureau of Early Learning Resource Center Operations and Monitoring

The Bureau of Early Learning Resource Center Operations and Monitoring provides direct support to ELRCs managing Child Care Works (subsidized childcare program) and Keystone STARS through program coaching and instruction on all fiscal, programmatic, and system requirements.

## Bureau of Certification Services

The Bureau of Certification Services has the responsibility to certify (license) all the Pennsylvania childcare centers, group childcare homes, and family childcare homes. Certification staff are based in five regional offices, as well as the headquarters staff who work in Harrisburg. The Bureau of Certification Services is responsible for ensuring that all childcare providers are complying with the statutes and regulations for operating a childcare facility. The Bureau investigates complaints of regulatory allegations at a certified childcare program and investigates complaints of illegally operating facilities. The Bureau also provides information to providers about the requirements and process for opening a childcare facility.

## Bureau of Finance, Administration, and Planning

FAP staff oversee budget, data, and research in support of OCDEL'S programs. OCDEL oversees a budget of approximately \$2 billion dollars in state and federal resources combined to serve children, families, and programs.

*Additionally, OCDEL contracts with two primary business partners to support OCDEL programs and services:*

## Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA)

EITA provides statewide training and technical assistance on behalf of OCDEL. The primary recipients of EITA training and technical assistance are the local Infant/Toddler and Preschool EI programs that provide supports and services to children birth to school age with developmental delays and/or disabilities and their families. Local agencies that provide Evidence-Based Home Visiting (EBHV) services and Family Centers are also recipients of EITA training, monitoring, and technical assistance. Local agencies provide home visiting and family support services to children birth to school age and their caregivers. EITA is part of the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN). EITA works most closely with BEISFS. EITA is administered through the Tuscarora Intermediate Unit 11.

## Pennsylvania Key

The Pennsylvania Key works with OCDEL to provide statewide leadership in the development of an integrated and coordinated system of program quality improvements and professional development supports for early childhood education programs. The Pennsylvania Key manages statewide professional development initiatives, coordinates the Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Program, manages Environmental Rating Scale assessments, administers the Head Start State Collaboration office, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts grants, and supporting websites, including the [PA Promise for Children](#). The Pennsylvania Key works most closely with the Bureau of Policy and Professional Development at OCDEL. The Pennsylvania Key is administered through the Berks County Intermediate Unit 14.

Below you will find OCDEL'S vision, mission, and goals. For more information, please visit [the PA Key's website](#).



## Vision

The Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning supports families and their children, from prenatal through school age, by using data, research and stakeholder guidance to assure high quality services.

## Mission

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) provides families access to high quality services to prepare children for school and life success.

## Goals

**Work effectively, collaboratively, creatively and successfully** to ensure that all families have access to high quality programs for their children.

**Engage stakeholders** in actionable ways that provide guidance on programs and policies.

**Identify and use key data and research** to improve policies and practices.

## Priority Initiatives

Integrating and Aligning  
OCDEL services

Keystone STARS

Supporting the Early  
Childhood Education  
Workforce

Reducing  
Expulsion/Suspension and  
Promoting Inclusion in Early  
Childhood

Building Capacity for High-  
Quality Early Learning  
Services

Child Care and  
Development Block Grant

**The result:** Better outcomes for  
our young children and their  
families!

# Meet the Departments of Human Services, Education, and Health

*OCDEL is jointly overseen by DHS and the PDE. OCDEL's Deputy Secretary reports to the Secretaries of both DHS and PDE. OCDEL staff work closely with the other program offices and bureaus in each Department to best serve Pennsylvania's children and families.*

## Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)

The [PDE](#) oversees 500 public school districts, more than 170 public charter schools, public cyber charter schools, Career and Technology Centers/Vocational Technical schools, public Intermediate Units, the education of youth in State Juvenile Correctional Institutions, Head Start State Supplemental Program and publicly funded preschools, migrant education, family literacy, Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) and community colleges. PDE also oversees policies related to public, academic, and school libraries, and the State Library of Pennsylvania.

The mission of PDE is to ensure that every learner has access to a world-class education system that academically prepares children and adults to succeed as productive citizens. Further, the Department seeks to establish a culture that is committed to improving opportunities throughout the Commonwealth by ensuring that technical support, resources, and optimal learning environments are available for all students, whether children or adults.

### Bureau of Special Education (BSE)

Within PDE, the [BSE](#) works collaboratively with educators, schools, agencies, and other stakeholders across Pennsylvania to ensure students have access to quality and meaningful education supports, services, and opportunities. The BEISFS works collaboratively with the BSE on issues specific to EI as preschool children transition to school age programs.

## Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS)

The mission of the [DHS](#) is to assist Pennsylvanians in leading safe, healthy, and productive lives through equitable, trauma-informed, and outcome-focused services, while being an accountable steward of commonwealth resources. DHS's seven program offices administer services that provide care and support to Pennsylvania's most vulnerable individuals and families.

As a leader in EI, you should be familiar with DHS's program offices for interagency collaboration activities at the local level in supporting families who may have a variety of services provided through DHS. These are programs with whom you may work closely.

### Office of Medical Assistance Programs (OMAP)

[OMAP](#) is responsible for purchasing health care for more than 2.3 million Pennsylvanians and enrolling Medical Assistance providers who administer the care. Many children who are eligible for EI are eligible for Medical Assistance.

## Office of Developmental Programs (ODP)

[ODP](#) provides intellectual and developmental disability services to children and adults, through the four Medicaid Home and Community Based Waivers, the Adult Autism Waiver, the Consolidated Waiver, the Person/Family Directed Support (P/FDS) Waiver, and Community Living Waivers. Each waiver has its own unique set of eligibility requirements and services.

Referrals for Intellectual and developmental disability services are made to the county Mental Health/Intellectual Disabilities program. Following an eligibility determination, children and adults may receive services and supports through choice of willing and qualified providers. Funding availability is based on urgency of need.

EI leaders should be familiar with ODP's programs so that they can discuss the prospect of a referral with the family when a child has a diagnosis of an intellectual disability, developmental disability, and/or autism (ID/DD/A) or when it is suspected that a child is likely to have a diagnosis. Referring the child with the county MH/ID program can ensure children and their families have access to information, services, and supports in the community, through an assigned Supports Coordinator, who can assist the family in navigating their child's life's transitions through childhood into adulthood.

## Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF)

[OCYF](#) serves children and families through a nationally recognized child support enforcement program, oversees adoption and foster care services, and works with counties on child abuse prevention and juvenile justice issues. EI Leaders should be familiar with their local OCYF, as you may receive referrals from OCYF or work with them on Plans of Safe Care (PSC).

## Office of Income Maintenance (OIM)

[OIM](#) serves low-income Pennsylvanians through cash assistance programs such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF); employment and training programs; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); home heating assistance; and assistance programs for refugees and the homeless. EI Leaders should work closely with their county assistance offices to refer families with concerns or needs in any of these areas.

## Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS)

Within [OMHSAS](#), the Children's Bureau is responsible for developing and implementing a comprehensive plan for serving children and adolescents with behavioral health needs in the Commonwealth. This includes program development, policy development, service monitoring, and working with the OMHSAS Children's Advisory Committee, family and youth advocates, as well as state and local child-serving systems.

EI leaders should become familiar with the services that are offered at the local level by contacting the county offices for behavioral health services. These services will most typically be called Intensive Behavioral Health Services (IBHS) and can include a variety of individual and group services that can be delivered in the home, school, and community.

## Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH)

The mission of [DOH](#) is to promote healthy behaviors, prevent injury and disease, and to assure the safe delivery of quality health care for all people in Pennsylvania. Through community-based strategies, DOH

has successfully reduced the number of serious illnesses, injuries and deaths due to major health threats; tobacco-related diseases; infectious disease; and accidental injuries.

As a leader in EI, you will work most closely with local Department of Health officials, as they are an official member of your Local Interagency Coordinating Council.

Within the DOH, there is the Bureau of Family Health, Division of Newborn Screening and Genetics. This bureau receives and administers the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) federal grant. The BEISFS works collaboratively with this bureau on newborn hearing screening, diagnosis of children who are deaf or hard of hearing as well as children diagnosed with elevated lead levels and neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS).

OCDEL is currently partnering with DOH on the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Health Integrational Prenatal-to-Three (ECCS) grant, which was awarded to Pennsylvania by Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), part of the US Department of Health and Human Services. These funds will advance cross-sector collaborations and partnerships, health system improvements, state-level policy and fiscal innovation, equity, and family leadership to promote early developmental health and family well-being among prenatal populations.

# A Deeper Look at the Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports and Early Intervention Technical Assistance

## What is the Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports (BEISFS)?

The BEISFS has an overall responsibility for the management, implementation, and oversight of the statewide EI program for children birth to age of beginners and their families. Pennsylvania's EI program is implemented through the requirements of federal and state laws and regulations and state policy announcements. The Bureau Director, along with three Division Chiefs, headquarters staff and a staff of EI advisors are responsible for oversight of the local programs.

Each local Infant/Toddler and Preschool EI program is assigned an EI advisor, who serves a primary contact to each local EI program and is responsible for addressing budget questions, monthly review of data, verification/monitoring, validation of compliance reviews, complaints, and quality improvement with each local program.

In addition to supporting Infant/Toddler and Preschool Early Intervention programs, BEISFS also oversees evidence-based home visiting programs and family centers. BEISFS staff are responsible for monitoring and supporting all Evidence-Based Home Visiting (EBHV) and Family Support programs across the state of Pennsylvania, such as the Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) programs, Family Centers, and more. BEISFS staff provides technical assistance and training to the Local Implementing Agencies (LIAs), lead stakeholder groups and teams, and ensures all state and federal reporting is completed.

## A Deeper Look at Early Intervention in Pennsylvania

### Laws, Regulations, and Announcements

EI in Pennsylvania is governed by federal ([Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004-\(IDEA\)](#)) and state ([Pennsylvania Act 212-1990](#)) statutes. IDEA charged each state with administering EI services. In Pennsylvania, OCDEL/BEISFS, administers both Part C (Infants/Toddlers) and Part B (Preschoolers) of the federal law requirements. Pennsylvania Act 212-1990: The Early Intervention Services System Act outlines the Pennsylvania specific components for EI services. Both ensure that young children who are eligible for services (birth until the age of beginners) and their families receive EI services and programs that are designed to meet the developmental needs of each child and address the needs of the family to enhance their child's development.

EI in Pennsylvania is also governed by [IDEA regulations at 34 CFR § 300 \(Part B\)](#) and [34 CFR § 303 \(Part C\)](#) as well as state regulations at [55 Pa. Code § 4226](#) (Infant/Toddler) and [22 Pa. Code § 14](#) (Preschool). In addition, [OCDEL policy announcements](#) are created to provide clarification and

guidance to the federal or state regulations. Leaders should check regularly to ensure they are up to date on current practices outlined in the announcements.

## Eligibility for Early Intervention Services in Pennsylvania

### *Child Find*

Child find and public awareness activities are key components to the EI system. It is important to identify eligible children as early as possible. Infant/Toddler and Preschool EI programs must maintain an effective, comprehensive, and coordinated child find system that includes interagency collaboration with other local agencies responsible for administering various education, health, and social service programs. Each local EI program must conduct awareness activities to inform the public of EI services. Requirements for child find are in both federal and state regulations and OCDEL policy announcements.

The statewide CONNECT Helpline (1-800-692-7288) is available for families and others to refer a child to EI. BEISFS has developed a variety of child find materials that should be used for child find and public awareness activities. These materials can be found on the PaTTAN website.

### *Eligibility*

EI for all children regardless of age begins with an individualized multidisciplinary evaluation process to determine the strengths and needs of the child and family. The process will determine eligibility for EI supports and services based on developmental delay and/or disability. If the child is determined eligible, the information from the evaluation will help the EI team know what is important to the family and help the team create meaningful, individualized services.

### *Eligibility for Infants and Toddlers*

An infant or toddler is eligible for EI under the following circumstances:

1. A delay of 25% of the infant's or toddler's chronological age in one or more of the developmental areas or if a developmental delay in one or the developmental areas is documented by a test performance of 1.5 standard deviations below the mean on an accepted or recognized assessment for infants or toddlers.
2. A diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay (such as Down syndrome).
3. Qualified personnel use informed clinical opinion, especially when there are no standardized measures or the standardized measures are not appropriate for an infant's or toddler's chronological age or developmental area.

### *At-Risk Tracking for Infant/Toddler Early Intervention Services*

In Early Intervention, there is a systemic process to monitor the development of at-risk infants and toddlers to determine whether they have become eligible for Early Intervention services. Children who fall into any of the following at-risk categories should be tracked:

- Birth weight below 3.5 pounds
- Cared for in a hospital neonatal intensive care unit (NICU)
- Affected by prenatal substance exposure, including alcohol exposure
- Referred by Children, Youth & Families
- Exposed to lead

- Experiencing homelessness
- County follow-up (defined by each local Early Intervention program)

Children who are found eligible for tracking services should receive ongoing assessments/developmental screening from their local EI program. Families and caregivers may also request an evaluation at any time.

### *Eligibility for Preschool Children*

A preschool age child is eligible for EI under the following circumstances:

1. A delay of 25% of the child's chronological age or 1.5 standard deviations below the mean in one or more of the developmental areas.
2. Identified as having any of the following disabilities: autism/pervasive developmental disorder; serious emotional disturbance; neurological impairment; deafness/hearing loss; specific learning disability; Down syndrome; multiple disabilities; physical disability; speech impairment; blindness/visual impairment; or other health impairment.

In addition to having a disability or developmental delay, a preschool age child must also be in need of special education and related services in order to be eligible for EI services.

For detailed information on EI eligibility, see [OCDEL Announcement: EI 13-#08 - Eligibility for Infant/Toddler and Preschool Early Intervention](#).

## **Pennsylvania's Early Intervention Service Delivery Model**

EI provides coaching supports and services to infants/toddlers and preschool age children with disabilities and their caregivers so that they may help the child grow and develop. [Service delivery](#) aligns with a set of [core principles](#) that include providing services that are evidence based and individualized, embedding meaningful and functional outcomes, and working collaboratively with the family, caregivers, and early childhood educators.

It is important for you to help your staff in understanding the EI principles as they work with families. You should support staff using the Early Intervention Supports and Services: [Facts for Families](#) publication or tool on [EITA Mobile](#) when explaining EI services and supports to families. It was developed by the OCDEL to provide guidance on supports and services (birth to age of beginners), including those needed during transition. It outlines what the EI service delivery model looks like in Pennsylvania.

### *Inclusion*

In 2017, OCDEL released a [policy statement and guidelines](#) for supporting Inclusion of All Children in Early Childhood Programs, as well as a policy statement and guidelines for Reducing Suspension and Expulsion in Early Childhood Programs. The Inclusion of All Children in Early Childhood Programs announcement was updated and reissued in 2020.

Pennsylvania has a long-standing commitment to support the inclusion of infants, toddlers, and young children as active members in early childhood programs and community settings. The goal is for children with disabilities and/or developmental delays to participate and succeed in the same learning environments with their same age peers. EI provides supports to the child and family in settings that are

consistent with the needs of the child and family, builds upon the natural learning occurring in those first few years and is individualized to enhance the child's growing and learning.

Community partnerships also an important component in enhancing local, inclusive learning opportunities for all young children. Leaders play a key role in establishing partnerships with their counterparts across agencies within their communities. Sharing program goals and a culture of inclusion to promote shared collaboration for the benefit of all children and families is essential.

IDEA Part C (Infants and Toddlers) requires states to provide services for infants and toddlers with disabilities in the natural environment. [§ 303.13\(a\)\(8\)](#) states "(a) to the maximum extent appropriate, Early Intervention services are provided in natural environments; and (b) the provision of early intervention services for any infant or toddler with a disability occurs in settings other than a natural environment that is most appropriate, as determined by the parent and the individualized family service plan team, only when early intervention cannot be achieved satisfactorily for the infant or toddler in a natural EI environment." Natural environments are also defined in OCDEL announcement [ELS/EI-06 #04](#). Early Intervention may be delivered in settings other than the natural environment that are most appropriate, as determined by the parent and the IFSP team, only when EI services cannot be achieved satisfactorily in a natural environment.

IDEA Part B (Preschool) requires states to ensure preschool age children with disabilities receive services in the least restrictive environment (LRE). [§ 300.114](#) states, "to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children that are nondisabled; and that special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services, cannot be achieved satisfactorily."

Visit the [PA Key website](#) for more information on [guidelines to support inclusion](#) or the [PA Promise website](#) to download an infographic on the benefits of inclusion in early childhood.

### *Transition*

Transition planning is a collaborative, extensive, and dynamic series of conversations and activities for all children and their families in the Infant/Toddler and Preschool EI programs. Transition is viewed as a process rather than a specific event. EI teams should begin the transition process early and continue to review and monitor the steps along the way, to individualize the experience for the family. By including the family from the beginning and encouraging their participation throughout the transition process, the family's capacity to support the growth and development of their child is enhanced.

Transition planning provides important anticipatory guidance, as families make decisions for their child and includes individualized activities and strategies to ensure that services and supports adapt to meet the ongoing developmental needs of the child. EI teams facilitate and provide support to children and families in a variety of transitions, including transitions to home, an early childhood education or community setting, or to school. Furthermore, programs may assist families in adjusting to informal transitions or changes that impact their lives.

Throughout these processes, Infant/Toddler and Preschool EI program leaders adhere to requirements in respective OCDEL announcements around areas of ensuring transition notification, scheduling



transition meetings, supporting staff as they develop and implement transition plans with families, writing and following Local Interagency Agreements, and developing local program transition procedures that are designed to promote and ensure access to seamless EI and community services. Transitions from Infant/Toddler to Preschool EI happens on a rolling basis, based on when each child turns three, while transition from Preschool EI to School Age Programs requires planning each fall to hold transition meetings in winter for any child eligible to transition to kindergarten.

In an Infant/Toddler program, EI leaders may focus on developing relationships with their local Preschool program leaders to ensure that all processes are in place for a seamless, supportive transition for children and families as they exit the Infant/Toddler program and enter the Preschool program. Preschool EI Leaders must balance supporting transition for children both as they enter the Preschool program from their local Infant/Toddler program(s) and as they exit the Preschool program and enter kindergarten in their local school districts. This means that, in addition to developing a rapport and processes with local Infant/Toddler leaders, Preschool leaders must also meet regularly with all school districts in their catchment area to ensure that transition meetings happen for each child and family successfully according to the timelines defined in the OCDEL announcement.

For further information on transition, please read the announcements, [Transition of Toddlers to Preschool or Other Community Services](#) and [Transition of Preschool Children to School Age Programs](#) or visit the [EI Transition Resource Library](#).

## Similarities and Distinctions between Infant/Toddler EI and Preschool EI

Pennsylvania is unique in that one office, OCDEL oversees both Infant/Toddler EI and Preschool EI. While funding streams may be different between Infant/Toddler and Preschool EI, both programs share the same goal: provide the best possible services to children and families. To learn more about the similarities and distinctions between the Infant/Toddler and Preschool EI programs, review the *Similarities and Distinctions Between the Infant/Toddler and Preschool Early Intervention Programs* job aide on the [Professional Development page of the EITA Portal](#).

## Family Engagement in Early Intervention

Partnering with families is the foundation of BEISFS. As an EI leader, you are in a unique position to influence, shape, and model effective family engagement practices. BEISFS values and supports families in their role as a child's first teacher. It is essential to leverage the expertise, knowledge, and leadership of families to shape the EI environment within the settings that EI services are provided, your local program, the state, and national levels. Partnerships with families must be strengths-based, be inclusive, culturally and linguistically responsive, and rely on two-way communication. They focus on the shared goal of positive learning and developmental outcomes for children.

Below are several resources to assist you in your role:

## The Pennsylvania Family Engagement Birth through College, Career, Community Ready Framework

[The Pennsylvania Family Engagement Framework](#) is a tool to guide the implementation of effective practices, use of shared language, and a family engagement continuum for families across their educational lifespan. There is also a [companion guide for families](#).

## Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports Family Resources

[This guide](#) was developed to help families understand the resources that are available to them. These programs/organizations support families by connecting them to others, build family leadership skills, and assist them in navigating the Early Intervention system. As an EI Leader, it is important to know about these programs so that you can ensure that families are connected to them. This is also a resource to be shared with families.

Within the [Pennsylvania Family Support Resources](#) on the EITA Portal, you will find an interactive map with contact information for EI programs, ELRCs, and Family Support resources in each individual county. Additionally, you will find other resources to support children and families experiencing substance use disorder, domestic violence, homelessness, and sexual assault.

## Getting to Know the Families in Your Early Intervention Program

As an EI Leader, one of the best ways to learn more about your local EI program is to experience it from a family's perspective. We encourage you to learn from families through family interviews, observations of service delivery (within your program and your partner EI Infant/Toddler or Preschool program), and observations of evaluations and Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP)/Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings. To guide these interactions, we encourage you to utilize the interview and observation tools that were developed as part of the verification process.

## Early Intervention Family Survey Process

OCDEL is committed to a continuous quality improvement process across our EI program; it is appropriate and integral that families have the opportunity to provide their voice as part of any evaluation and improvement process. The family survey is just one of the tools that we use to evaluate the quality of our programs. EI leaders should reach out to the families in their program to ensure that as many families as possible are completing the family survey.

## Family Engagement Initiatives

BEISFS supports programs across the Commonwealth that connect families of children in Early Intervention and empower families to build leadership skills and advocate at the local, state, and even national level. It is imperative that, as an EI Leader, you ensure that your families are aware of these programs. For more information on all of the programs listed below, please visit the [Families page of the EITA Portal](#).

### *Parent to Parent of Pennsylvania*

[Parent to Parent of Pennsylvania](#) connects families of children and adults with a disability or special need to a peer supporter (mentor) for purposes of emotional support and information.

### *Competence and Confidence: Partners in Policy Making Early Intervention (C2P2 EI)*

C2P2 EI is an innovative program that provides participants with up-to-date information, leadership development training, resources, and skills. Participants learn about the local, state, and national issues that affect children with disabilities.

### *Parents as Partners in Professional Development (P3D)*

P3D brings together families of children receiving Early Intervention or Family Support Services to share their experiences with the Early Intervention system to improve training and resources. P3D also promotes connections between families.

### *Parent Cafes*

Parent Cafes take place periodically and are a chance for parents and caregivers to meet and talk with other parents and caregivers about the joys and challenges of parenting.

## Procedural Safeguards

Procedural Safeguards are intended to protect the interests and rights of families and their children. In order for families to be fully informed of their rights and safeguards, they must also understand the Early Intervention system and their role as partners and informed decision-makers in the Early Intervention process. Procedural safeguards function as the checks and balances of the system that ensure quality, equity, and the protection of an impartial system for complaint resolution. Early Intervention personnel are legally obligated under federal and state laws and regulations to explain procedural safeguards to families and to support an active understanding of these safeguards for all involved.

Essential components of procedural safeguards include:

- Confidentiality
- Parental consent and the ability to accept or decline services
- Prior written notice
- Use of the parent's native language and preferred mode of communication
- Documentation through the use of releases of information
- Parents Rights Agreement (PRA)
- Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP)

## Dispute Resolution and Family Concerns

From time to time, families may have concerns regarding their child's services. Procedural safeguards also help a parent to resolve any concerns or disagreements they may have regarding their child's EI services. The process is known as Dispute Resolution. There are a variety of options families can use to [resolve concerns](#).

- *First Steps:* Questions or concerns about Early Intervention programs and services are addressed at the local level by contacting the Service Coordinator
- **Complaint Investigation:** Parents may contact the Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports (BEISFS) to discuss their concern and/or file a formal complaint

- *IFSP/IEP Facilitation:* Parents may use IFSP/IEP facilitation, which is a voluntary process that can be used parents and EI staff agree that the presence of a neutral person would help facilitation communication for a successful IFSP/IEP meeting
- *Mediation:* When the Early Intervention program and family do not agree on aspects of a child's services, and are unable to come to a solution through an informal meeting to discuss those concerns, the family may file for mediation or due process. Mediation is offered as a first step before due process. A trained, impartial mediator will facilitate problem-solving will facilitate problem-solving between the family and the Early Intervention program. An agreement may be reached through this process that satisfies both parties.
- *Due Process:* Parents may file for a proceeding known as due process, which is a formal procedure that includes a hearing officer to resolve the concern. The hearing will assure that a knowledgeable and impartial person, from outside of the program, hears both party's concerns and decides how best to resolve them.

The [Office of Dispute Resolution \(ODR\)](#) provides the resources for parents to reach agreement on a child's EI services or program. ODR offers specific information on Pennsylvania legal processes for dispute throughout the development of an IFSP/IEP and facilitates the processes for IFSP/IEP Facilitation, Mediation, and Due Process.

The [procedural safeguard job aids](#) (Infant/Toddler and Preschool) outline what this process may look like in Infant/Toddler EI or in Preschool EI.

## Protecting Child and Family Information

Confidentiality must be assured at the collection, maintenance, use, storage, disclosure, and destruction stages of a child's EI record and applies from the point in time when the child is referred to the EI program. The importance of confidentiality and parent consent is outlined in [OCDEL Announcement EI-12 #03](#) and is in accordance with requirements of IDEA. For more information on the requirements for confidentiality for persons collecting or using personally identifiable information in Early Intervention and how to protect the confidentiality of children and families, please review the [Confidentiality job aid on the EITA Portal](#).

## Funding for Early Intervention Services

Funding for EI Programs is made up of federal, state, and local funding sources.

By law, the EI program cannot decline to serve additional children, even if the cost to serve those children exceeds the original funding allocation.

### Infant/Toddler Funding Streams

The majority of funding for EI services are provided by the state appropriation that is allocated to County EI programs by BEISFS. In Pennsylvania, we refer to these programs as Infant/Toddler EI programs who operate the EI programs.

Each Infant/Toddler EI program is issued an allocation at the start of the fiscal year that details categorical allocations to include Part C federal funds, state funds and Medical Assistance funds designated by a specific appropriation number. These allocation letters serve as the basis for the quarterly payments made by the budget office/comptroller. For each fiscal year, allocations are based

on previous year's allocations and analysis of data regarding the number of children served. Rebudget data is collected from each Infant/Toddler EI program to determine needs assessment for changes in State funds.

### *Federal Funds*

- IDEA, Part C: The US Department of Education, Office of Special Education (OSEP) awards an annual grant to the Department of Human Services for provision of EI services for infants and toddlers (birth to 3) with disabilities.
- EI Medical Assistance: funding reimbursed for children eligible for the Pennsylvania Medicaid program.
- Infants, Toddlers, and Families (ITF) Medicaid Waiver: Medicaid Home and Community Based Waiver program for infants and toddlers, 0-3, who are experiencing developmental delay(s) evidenced by a minimum of a 50% delay in one or 33% delay in two or more developmental areas and who need EI Services.

### *State Funds*

- Funding appropriated by the Pennsylvania state budget to the Office of Child Development and Early Learning to be used to fund the portion of the EI program not otherwise funded through Federal funding.

### *Local Funds*

- Each local Infant/Toddler EI program is also required to have a local county match of 10% of the state funds used for the delivery of EI services.

## **Preschool Funding Streams**

The majority of funding for EI services are provided by the state appropriation and is allocated to EI programs through a Mutually Agreed upon Written Arrangement (MAWA) with BEISFS. The term MAWA is defined in PA Act 212 as a written agreement between the PDE and a local intermediate unit, or school district or other public or private agency that comply with the EI regulations standards for the provision of EI services to eligible children age three to the age of beginners. In Pennsylvania, we referred to these programs as Preschool EI programs who operate the EI programs. Funding is allocated to EI programs by OCDEL primarily through both Federal and State sources, along with a small portion of local/other funds.

### *Federal Funds*

- OSEP awards an annual grant to PDE for provision of EI services for preschool children (3 to 5 or age of beginners) with disabilities.
  - Federal 611 Component 1 provides funds for children with disabilities based on the total number of eligible young children in the December 1 child count
  - Federal 619 provides funds that support supplemental programs for students with disabilities and/or developmental delays, age 3-5, enrolled in EI Special Education Programs.

### *Medical Assistance*

- The School-Based ACCESS Program (SBAP) allows the EI program to receive Medicaid reimbursement for the provision of health-related services as part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for children who are eligible for Medical Assistance.

#### *State Funds*

- State EI Grant is awarded to each Preschool EI Program annually. Total allocation per program is established by OCDEL minus the federal funds and Medical Assistance funds.

#### *Local/Other Funds*

- Kindergarten eligible children who remain in EI during the year in which they may transition receive money from the school district of residence for the provision of services for the additional year. This revenue source varies from program to program according to the number of children who remain in EI and the established cost between the Preschool EI Program and school district of residence for the child.
- Grants and other funding streams may also be included and vary across Intermediate Units and school district programs.

On a regular basis, the BEISFS will solicit input from the Preschool EI programs to discuss the status of funding for the fiscal year and determine if the program's allocation needs to be revised for additional funding.

## A Deeper Look at Family Support Programs

### Evidence-Based Home Visiting (EBHV) Programs

EBHV programs offer voluntary, family-focused services to expectant families with infants and young children. Trained professionals meet regularly in the homes, or an agreed upon location, to support families by teaching positive parenting skills and parent-child interactions; promote early learning; and provide information and guidance on topics such as breastfeeding, safe sleep practices, injury prevention, and nutrition. Additionally, professionals working with EBHV programs conduct screenings and provide referrals (and follow up) to address issues such as depression, substance use disorders and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), screen children for developmental delays and refer to EI, and connect families to other resources.

Depending on the EBHV model, the home visitor may be a parent educator, nurse, or a master level clinician, but all receive training in the model they are delivering to ensure fidelity.

The following models are available in Pennsylvania, though not necessarily in every county:

- [Early Head Start \(EHS\)](#)
- [Family Check-Up for Children \(FCU\)](#)
- [Healthy Families America \(HFA\)](#)
- [Nurse-Family Partnership \(NFP\)](#)
- [Parents as Teachers \(PAT\)](#)
- [SafeCare Augmented](#)
- [Child First](#)

- [Family Connects](#)

Learn more about the effectiveness of home visiting models by visiting [the Administration for Children and Families website](#).

## Family Centers

Pennsylvania's Family Centers provide community services to help families become stronger, healthier, better educated, and more self-sufficient. These centers help parents and caregivers:

- Learn about their child's development
- Engage in parent education and child development activities
- Access health care information, as well as assistance regarding health care services and insurance
- Access education, training, and employment information
- Receive information on and assistance with other community resources, such as well-baby care, immunizations, and Early Intervention services.

Each Family Center takes a unique approach to meeting its community's needs. Services available may include:

- Parents as Teachers (PAT) Program
- Parent Support Groups
- Parenting Skills Programs
- Child Health and Development Screenings
- Promoting Responsible Fatherhood Program
- Child Care Programs
- Child Abuse Prevention Program
- Language Skills
- Literacy Programs
- Adult Education
- Job Training and Placement
- Family Activities
- Toy and Book Lending Libraries
- Summer Activities and After-School Activities

## Funding for Evidence-Based Home Visiting Programs and Family Centers

Funding for Family Centers and Home Visiting Services come from a variety of federal and state grants, including:

- Family Support (includes all prior EBHV state funding)
- OCDEL Nurse-Family Partnership
- Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)
- Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP)
- Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF)

For further questions or inquiries, please contact [ra-pwpahomevisiting@pa.gov](mailto:ra-pwpahomevisiting@pa.gov).

EI leaders should work with EBHV program and Family Center leaders in their community to involve them in their Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICCC), as well as local community events. Additionally, the programs should work together so referrals can be made to other services for which families may qualify for or that are available in their community. To promote best practices in program collaboration, EBHV programs and Family Centers are required to coordinate services with EI programs to assure support to those children receiving services or children identified after enrollment as needing services. Coordination should be documented in a Memorandum of Agreement/Understanding (MOA/U). The MOA/U should address the following minimum requirements and should be signed by an authorized individual from each agency:

- Transition of children and families into and out of the program;
- Procedures for referring to EI in the event that the children’s screenings indicate a need for further evaluation;
- Establish a point of contact by each agency for follow up conversations and planning as needed;
- Outline protocols to share information and coordinate services as appropriate;
- Determine a frequency for the MOA/U to be reviewed and revised; and
- Other topics as relevant to local programs.

More information can be found on the [Pennsylvania Family Support Programs site](#).

## What is Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA)?

EITA provides statewide training and technical assistance on behalf of BEISFS. The primary recipients of EITA training and technical assistance are Infant/Toddler and Preschool EI programs who provide supports and services to children birth to school age with developmental delays or disabilities and their families and Pennsylvania’s Family Support programs. EITA has consultants who provide EI and Family Support programs technical assistance.

Family members are welcome at training and technical assistance events and are often part of the training team. Through the Parents as Partners in Professional Development (P3D) initiative, EITA provides supports to family leaders to participate in, co-develop, and provide an authentic family voice to all statewide training initiatives. For more information about how P3D supports Family Leaders, visit the [Families page of the EITA Portal](#).

EITA also provides both statewide and regional training initiatives that are developed through the analysis of statewide data, including program verification results, state and federal requirements, and relevant research. Statewide initiatives are planned in collaboration with BEISFS and other OCDEL staff. Statewide professional development trainings are provided across the Commonwealth when it is necessary to ensure a consistent message from OCDEL.

EITA provides local training and technical assistance through the development of an individualized Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) with each Infant/Toddler and Preschool EI Program.

Each EI program is assigned an EITA Consultant that will support them. In some instances, it is possible that a program will work with a second EITA Consultant depending on any awards/grants the program has applied for as each consultant is assigned to different statewide initiative teams as mentioned below.



EITA Consultants' responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Developing QEPs in collaboration with Infant/Toddler and Preschool Early EI on-site technical assistance and training locally and statewide
- Participate in EI Verification process in coordination with the EI program and BEISFS Advisor
- Provide support and technical assistance to Local Interagency Coordinating Councils (LICCs) as indicated in the QEP
- Participating in development and implementation of state technical assistance priorities
- Maintaining regular contact with the EI program and providing assistance as needed in quality improvement activities
- Monitor the performance of Family Support programs through on-site visits and online data systems
- Provide proactive consultation, training, and technical assistance to Family Support programs
- Work proactively with other state agencies and offices to develop and implement support for the state's initiatives on infants affected by prenatal substance exposure, including alcohol, and their families
- Establish relationships with ELRCs, Head Start regional staff, and TA staff from all EBHV programs
- Participate in state leadership network opportunities.

## EITA Online Learning Portal

The EITA Portal hosts a multitude of EI and early childhood education resources for families and professionals who support young children. Within the EITA Portal, you will find specific topic of interest pages, which house links to national, state, and local resources around specific topics such as Autism or Coaching; the families page, which has forms and resources useful for families with children receiving EI Services; the Professional Development page, which includes credit-bearing and non-credit bearing online training; and interactive learning opportunities on a variety of categories. The EITA Portal can be accessed at <http://www.eita-pa.org>. The EITA Portal can be used for professional development for new and existing EI Leaders and the continued professional development of staff.

Access to EITA online courses and job aids can be found on the [Professional Development page of the EITA Portal](#). Once on the PD page, you can use the search tool on the left-hand side of the page to filter by topic, credit offered, audience, or access.

Many of the courses offer Infant Toddler training hours and have a self-enrollment option. This means that you do not need to register in advance to take these courses. Other courses are offered for Act 48 credit and you will need to register using the [PaTTAN training calendar](#) (more information provided on page 24).

### *Steps to Create an Account on the EITA Training Site*

1. After clicking on the "Get Started" button under the desired course or job aid on the PD page, you will be directed to the EITA Training Site
2. Scroll to the bottom of the page and select "create new account."
3. Fill out the New Account form with your details.
4. Select "Create my new account."
5. An email will be sent to the email address that you provided.

6. Click on the web link in the email to confirm your account.
7. You may now log in with your new account and may begin viewing the course or job aid.

If you do not receive an email as indicated in Step 5 within a reasonable amount of time, please do not try to create another account. Email the Help Desk at [eitahelpdesk@tiu11.org](mailto:eitahelpdesk@tiu11.org) with your name and email address used for the account. The Help Desk will manually confirm your account.

Once your account has been confirmed, please use the username and password to log into the site when taking any courses or job aids.

If you experience any technical difficulties while taking a course or job aid, please [submit a Help Desk ticket](#).

## Portal to Practice

The EITA Portal to Practice is a monthly online publication that provides information on new and existing online learning, professional development opportunities, and resources relevant to Pennsylvania's EI and early childhood community. Leaders should encourage new and existing staff to join the mailing list. You can subscribe to the Portal to Practice through the home page of the [EITA Portal](#) or directly at <http://www.eita-pa.org/subscribe-to-portal-to-practice>.

## EITA Mobile

EITA Mobile allows you to access information and resources while on the go. These resources are for parents and professionals working in the field. You can download EITA Mobile from the App Store or Google Play. [Watch this informational video on EITA Mobile to learn more](#).

## Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN)

EITA is part of PaTTAN. PaTTAN provides a full array of professional development and technical assistance targeted primarily to the school age population. This professional development and technical assistance takes many forms in order to meet the varied needs of professionals and families.

Leaders in EI may access the PaTTAN website for:

- [Training Calendar](#): information and registration for EI online training and in-person training events.
  - Please note that online course registration is only available during the month preceding the course opening date. You cannot pre-register for a course more than one month ahead of time. You must register before the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the month to enroll for the following month.
  - Online courses must be completed within 30 days of the month for which you are registered. If you do not complete the course within this timeline, you will be unenrolled in the course and any work you may have completed will not be saved.
  - Once you have completed an online course, you are able to print an unofficial certificate of completion.
  - For any courses or trainings, both online and in-person, your official transcript in the PaTTAN training site will be available 30 days after the end of the month in which you completed the course or training event.

- [EI Forms](#): designed by BEISFS to be used by Infants/Toddler and Preschool EI programs, including both annotated and non-annotated versions. Forms are available as Word and PDF documents. Filter by Infant/Toddler, Preschool, or School Age; language, and whether or not the form is annotated.
- [EI Publications](#): developed by BEISFS to be used by Infants/Toddler and Preschool EI programs. Some of these publications are available for download, while some are available to order. Filter from a variety of topics.

## Who Do I Call When...?

EI advisors and EITA consultants have a collaborative working relationship with one another, as well as with the local EI program. The EI Advisor and EITA Consultant will work together to assist local programs to address questions, concerns, or technical assistance needs.

A good rule of thumb for programs to follow when wondering who they should contact for questions or concerns:

- If there is a concern on a federal or state regulation or policy, contact your EI advisor.
- For training related issues, contact your EITA Consultant.

# Get to Know Your Program Management Tools

As an EI leader, there are various data reports and pieces of information of which you should be aware. Quality data reports are vital in helping you to make programmatic decisions. The following management tools provide this information. It is suggested that you review this information at least monthly to stay as up to date as possible with the data in your program. For additional support in accessing and analyzing these reports, visit the [Data Literacy page](#) on the EITA Portal.

## Pennsylvania's Enterprise to Link Information for Children Across Networks-Early Intervention (PELICAN-EI)

[PELICAN-EI](#) is a case management system used to manage the records of children receiving EI in Pennsylvania. PELICAN-EI is supported by the Home and Community Based Services Information System (HCSIS) to assist EI programs with registration, case management, planning, financial management, and reporting. To access PELICAN-EI, contact your Business Partner Administrator (BP Admin).

### Accessing PELICAN-EI

To access PELICAN-EI, contact your Business Partner Administrator (BP Admin). There is a designated Business Partner Administrator in every IT and PS program who provides access to PELICAN-EI by setting up user roles and providing user IDs to access the system. Once a user ID is created, you will need it and a passcode to access the system.

### Training Requests

The HCSIS Help Desk is a "Technical Issues" help desk. Users who require training assistance on how to use PELICAN-EI, should utilize the Learning Management System (LMS). Please contact your program's BP Admin if you do not have a LMS account.

### How do I contact the HCSIS Help Desk?

The HCSIS Help Desk is a "Technical Issues" help desk that was established for the sole purpose of responding to user issues. Your program will have procedures for when to contact the Help Desk when you encounter issues in PELICAN-EI.

The Help Desk provides assistance with error messages that you may encounter while using PELICAN-EI and provides follow up to those issues. It also tracks and informs BEISFS of system-wide issues that may require a data fix in the PELICAN-EI system.

Emailing is the most efficient method of requesting assistance, as it allows users to continue working on a child's record while waiting for a response from the Help Desk.

Email: [c-hhcsishd@pa.gov](mailto:c-hhcsishd@pa.gov)

Phone: (866) 444-1264

Fax: (717) 540-0960

Hours: Monday – Friday: 7:45AM – 5:00 PM

To resolve an issue faster, provide as much information as possible, including:

- User ID of person performing the task
- Child’s MCI number
- Screen names, menu paths and activity being performed when the error occurred
- 2 Screen shots of the page; one each of the page before, and after the error message is displayed.

After reporting your issue, you will receive an email that contains a Reference Number (INxxxx01), and details about your issue. Please save this email, as you will need to provide the ticket# on all future inquires.

If the Help Desk instructs you to contact OCDEL for further assistance, you can email the BEISFS at [RA-ocdintervention@pa.gov](mailto:RA-ocdintervention@pa.gov)

## Learning Management System (LMS)

The [LMS](#) houses documents that include descriptions of how PELICAN-EI functionality works. These resources are useful training materials and serve as an appropriate first strategy when seeking answers about how to implement or problem solve data entry processes. It also provides you with information about how to assign child records, how to create and manage caseloads, transfer and close records and other resources to help you with program oversight.

Your access to the LMS is granted through your BP Admin. The LMS can be accessed through a link on the HCSIS home page or by using [this link](#) when not in HCSIS.

## DOCUSHARE

[DOCUSHARE](#) provides targeted reports and other data to EI program managers on a regular basis through a live file sharing system. The reports in DOCUSHARE can be used to make data-based decisions. Programs may also choose to use this information to inform their practice and find individual trends within the data set.

When using DOCUSHARE, you can:

- Get documents for verification, such as program worksheets, supervisor interview questions, checklists, and more.
- Access monthly reports that include a breakdown of required timelines, child specific data, educational environments, and how that data compares to other EI programs. A username and pass code is needed. Please note: this is the same login information that is used for HCSIS.

## Enterprise Data Warehouse

[Enterprise Data Warehouse](#), often referred to as Data Warehouse or COGNOS, consists of a copy of select data from the PELICAN-EI production environment, providing pre-built reports, packages, and data cubes at user request. This information can be used to make data-based decisions.

When using Data Warehouse, you can:

- Access “near real time” reports about child specific information and trends for program management. Because the data in these reports is updated on a regular basis, you can monitor

any edits/corrections that are made in PELICAN-EI without waiting for the next month's report to be generated and loaded into DOCUSHARE. This updating of information allows for more timely management of data.

- Access specific reports based on filters, such as evaluation and plan timelines, out of compliance evaluation reports, and eligible number of children in a specific time frame

A username and passcode are needed to access these data reports. Please note: this is the same login information that is used for HCSIS.

## How Do I Access Data Warehouse?

The Data Warehouse registration form can be found on the LMS under the PELICAN EI All: Data Warehouse module. Complete the form and send back to BEISFS at [RA-ocdintervention@pa.gov](mailto:RA-ocdintervention@pa.gov). Once your account has been created, you will receive an email confirmation from the Data Warehouse. Be sure to log in immediately, to ensure your registration has been processed correctly.

If you encounter access issues once you have a user name and passcode assigned, email [RA-DataWarehouseReg@pa.gov](mailto:RA-DataWarehouseReg@pa.gov). It is recommended that users login once every 60 days to ensure that the account does not get locked out. Accounts that are not active are locked out after 60 days.

A username and passcode are needed to access these data reports. Please note: this is the same login information that is used for HCSIS.

## Infant Toddler Early Intervention Provider Registry

The Infant Toddler Early Intervention Provider Registry is an online, statewide system to accurately track the qualifications, credentials, and training requirements of EI Infant Toddler providers and Service Coordinators. The administrator/supervisor of an EI program, agency, or SC entity is responsible for setting up and managing the Provider Registry for their staff. The program or agency may also designate someone to assume the responsibilities of managing the Provider Registry.

In addition, programs and agencies may access reports for verification and determination activities, including the Interventionist List, Interventionist Education Details, Interventionist Training, Hours Summary, and Interventionist Clearances, and Licenses. The [Provider Registry](#) can be accessed at the PD Registry. Resource materials for users can be accessed on the [Professionals page of the EITA Portal](#).

# The Verification Process

## Local Program Determination

The federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requires that each state measure and report program performance based on key indicators identified in [Section 616\(a\)\(1\)\(C\)\(i\)](#) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. § [1416\(a\)\(1\)\(C\)\(i\)](#), and accompanying regulations at 34 CFR § [300.602](#) (Part B) and 34 CFR § [303.702](#) (Part C). The program performance determination process ensures that all children and families in Pennsylvania who may need EI are fully protected and served in a timely, effective manner. More information about Pennsylvania's local determination process can be found in the OCDEL Announcement, [EI-18 #2, Local Determination process](#).

The following are just a few examples of data that are used in your program's determination report:

- Family survey data
- PELICAN-EI data
- Records of staff qualifications and clearances
- Local program numbers of complaints, mediations, and due processes

A Determination Letter and Program Report are issued annually to each local Infant/Toddler and Preschool EI program. The Program Report outlines the outcomes assessed and data elements used for the EI Program's Determination levels.

Following the issuance of the local program Determination Letter, Infant/Toddler and Preschool EI programs must address all noncompliance identified and any quality improvement activities that received a level below meets requirements. This information is documented in the program's QEP.

## Verification

Verification is the way that your program is monitored and areas for continuous quality improvement are determined. Each local EI program participates in a verification every four years. There are seven areas reviewed during the program's verification. In each of these areas, there are several required indicators that cover compliance, program management and state identified priorities that focus on improving outcomes for children and families. Verifications include the following activities: data reviews, review of policies, individual child record reviews and observations of service delivery, evaluations and plan meetings. Verification teams are utilized through-out the process and include EI Advisors, EITA staff and when on-site, a peer reviewer.

Once the verification is completed and the Program Report is issued, the local program develops a QEP that focuses on the correction of noncompliance, as well as activities to enhance program quality to improve outcomes for children and families. Validation of any non-compliance identified during the verification visits are conducted by BEISFS staff each year to ensure all areas of non-compliance are corrected within required timelines.

The verification process is designed to provide differentiated levels of support to local programs. This allows BEISFS to use resources in a more effective and efficient manner and have the greatest impact on program practices.

Additional on-site visits from BEISFS staff may occur at the discretion of BEISFS staff if during the verification cycle there is a significant decrease in program performance, or individual or systematic concerns arise.

**Documents for your Verification can be located by following this path in DocuShare:**

Home » OCDEL » Bureau of Early Intervention Services » Infant/Toddler & Preschool General Information » Verification Documents 20\_\_\_\_

Bureau of Early Intervention Services » Infant/Toddler & Preschool General Information » County Name/Preschool Program » Verification Data » FY\_\_\_\_

## Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

The goals of the QEP include:

- Development of outcomes related to an area of concern identified through the verification or determination process
- Development of necessary technical assistance or training for the program
- Concentration on long term-impact for children and families and
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of program improvement strategies and activities.

The QEP is a fluid, continuous improvement process and should focus on correcting noncompliance, as well as quality improvement activities. The local EI program is responsible for development and implementation of the QEP with the support and participation of an EI Advisor and EITA Consultant dependent on the supports needed by the Program.

All updates to the QEP should be sent to the BEISFS Advisor and EITA Consultant. EI Programs may want to keep the QEP on a shared drive. This would make it easier for the QEP team to see updates and validate activities. This information should be reviewed at least quarterly to stay familiar with the goals that have been created and to update your progress throughout the year. Your advisor and EITA consultant will most likely meet with you a few times a year to discuss progress as well.

The QEP form is comprised of two sections:

- Part 1 – completed in response to determination findings
- Part 2 – statewide priorities (inclusion and child progress) and local priorities
- QEP Addendum – completed in response to verification findings

Additional information on QEP activities can be found in the annotated QEP document and the Verification Protocol that can be found in DocuShare following the menu path above.

## Monitoring Providers

Infant/Toddler and Preschool EI programs are required to demonstrate oversight over local providers. Local programs are responsible for ensuring that contracted providers of EI services abide by all state and federal regulations. Infant/Toddler programs must complete the monitoring of both internal and external service coordination entities. All provider monitoring items include oversight of critical assurances in the following areas: personnel qualifications, health and safety (all personnel have



required clearances and preservice/annual training), fiscal oversight (provider claim submissions) and correction of noncompliance. Also, local Infant/Toddler and Preschool programs must complete the monitoring of all contracted service providers. Local programs may request that a provider submit the full scope of assurances regarding health and safety (required clearances and training) and qualifications so that it can be shared across multiple local programs as needed. Monitoring must be completed by the end of each fiscal year. Following the monitoring process of each entity by the local program, an improvement plan may be required to correct non-compliances or to identify recommended improvements; the plan must be developed within thirty (30) days of issuance of the monitoring results letter.

## The Early Intervention Special Education Plan

Preschool EI programs are responsible for submitting a EI special education plan to BEISFS. This plan may include details on special education classrooms, annual approved program calendar, assurances, etc. Occasionally, this plan may need to be revised throughout the fiscal year. The process to accomplish the revisions such as classrooms (to move, add, delete) or to increase teachers' or therapists' caseloads, is referred to as a Special Education Plan Revision Notice (SEPRN). The plan usually requires collaboration between the special education, human resources and business departments in the development of projected staffing and planned expenditures for the entire special education EI budget, including leases, staff salaries, materials/supplies, etc. The plan is submitted, annually, no later than June 30th of each year.

# Getting to Know Your Community Partners and Other Important Organizations

## Early Learning Resource Centers (ELRCs)

In 2018, OCDEL created regional [ELRCs](#) to improve the quality of and access to early learning services in the state. ELRCs also help families identify the best child care options that meet the needs of the child(ren) and offer connections to additional services, such as a child care subsidy.

The ELRCs provide a single point-of-contact for families, early learning service providers, and communities to gain information and access services that support high-quality childcare and early learning programs. ELRCs administer childcare subsidy and supports.

Through the ELRC, child care professionals can obtain support in building quality outcomes for children by working with Quality Coaches to achieve Keystone STAR 3 and 4 status, building connections with community partners, and supporting children and families in accessing additional services, such as PA Pre-K Counts, Head Start, EBHV programs, and EI.

All ELRCs have a primary location in their designated region and most have satellite offices. ELRCs also partner with community organizations to meet families' needs where they naturally congregate.

EI leaders should work with ELRCs to ensure that the ELRCs are referring children to EI if the family has concerns about their child's development. Additionally, EI leaders should invite ELRC leaders to attend LICC meetings, and EI leaders should connect with ELRC leaders about joining their local ELRC Leadership Councils.

For more information on the ELRCs, visit the [PA Key website](#). To find an ELRC near you, visit [www.raiseyourstar.org](http://www.raiseyourstar.org).

## Professional Development Organizations (PDOs)

PDOs will drive local degree attainment through clearly articulated career pathways. Equitable, relevant career pathways will be accessible to aspiring early educators and those seeking to increase their qualifications, across settings. While OCDEL is increasing efforts and partnerships to support the preparation of early educators, the office also seeks to build in-service capacity across the state through PD institutes. Collectively, these efforts will have a greater impact on structural quality in programs and build leadership capacity across the field.

For more information on the PDOs, visit the [PA Key website](#).

## Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units (PAIU)

The PAIU is a nonprofit organization representing Pennsylvania's twenty-nine regional education service agencies known as intermediate units. PAIU promotes educational and operational collaboration; leverages partnerships and resources; facilitates communication on educational practice and public policy; and advocates on behalf of intermediate units to expand high quality services to students,

schools and communities. The Association is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of the 29 Intermediate Units that operate in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. For more information on PAIU or to view a map of IUs in Pennsylvania, visit [www.paiu.org](http://www.paiu.org).

## Early Intervention Providers Association (EIPA)

[EIPA](#) was founded in 1986 and was established as a 501c6 non-profit organization. Members include EI providers for children ages birth through the age of beginners. Pennsylvania is divided into four regions: Northeast, Southeast, Central, and West. Each region is represented with members from EIPA and is comprised of regional co-chairs and their members. Regional co-chairs represent their regions on EIPA's Executive Committee along with the Officers of EIPA. EIPA brings together EI Providers in Pennsylvania through a unified voice to advocate for and promote quality EI supports and services.

# Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Support Advisory Entities

## State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC)

The [SICC](#) is a Governor-appointed council that advises and assists the Departments of Health, Education, and Human Services to ensure that a comprehensive delivery system of integrated EI programs and services is available in Pennsylvania to all eligible infants, toddlers, and young children and their families. The SICC has required members, including family members and representatives from higher education, Head Start, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), EI provider agencies and program administrators, Intermediate Units, as well as representatives from the Pennsylvania Departments of Health and DHS.

SICC meetings occur six times each year at all three PaTTAN sites, as well as other downlink sites across the state. Meetings are open to the public, and minutes and presentations from the meeting are always posted publicly. Occasionally, family meet and greets are held prior to the meeting to encourage parent participation and attendance at SICC meetings. EI Leaders should attend SICC meetings to stay abreast of happenings at the state level and to network with other leaders from their region.

## Committee for Stakeholder Engagement (CSE)

The CSE is a workgroup of the SICC with a long history of supporting BEISFS. In its role as a stakeholder group to the SICC, the CSE provides input and advice to BEISFS on statewide initiatives. CSE members have an opportunity to “dig deep” into OCDEL’s initiatives, provide BEISFS with an opportunity to learn from the field, and make recommendations to the SICC.

## Local Interagency Coordinating Councils (LICCs)

LICCs are groups of parents and professionals who work together across counties to ensure that all children and families in need of EI services are identified and receive needed services. LICCs provide opportunities for community organizations, service providers, parents, and any interested party to collaborate in ensuring that children and families receive high-quality, timely EI services.

LICCs are required per [Pennsylvania Act 212](#) and [Title 55 PA Code 4226](#). LICCs are required to have family leaders, representatives from the local behavioral health/intellectual disabilities programs, the local preschool EI program, the local Department of Health (DOH), and local Head Start programs. The LICC must complete certain tasks, like articulating transition agreements between the programs, articulating conflict resolution procedures, participating in, or holding child find events and activities, and ensuring the overall success of the EI programs and implementation of best practices. Each year, an LICC interagency agreement must be developed to delineate this collaboration at the local level. The process of drafting, approving, and implementing the plan locally is the responsibility of the local Infant/Toddler Early Intervention Program and the local Preschool Early Intervention program, and the Department of Health in conjunction with the Co-Chairs of the Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC). Signatories of the plan must include the following: agency heads or delegates of the Infant/Toddler and Preschool Early Intervention programs and the local or state Department of Health or an appropriate Designee.

To find out about your LICC, contact your neighboring Infant/Toddler EI programs and/or EI programs or your BEISFS advisor and/or EITA consultant. EI Leaders should participate in and/or co-chair their LICCs.

## Children's Trust Fund (CTF) Board for Family Supports

The [CTF's](#) mission is to prevent child abuse and neglect in Pennsylvania. To do this the CTF Board, comprised of Public and Legislative appointed members, funds through grants community-based primary and secondary prevention programs that support families. The CTF Board meets quarterly. The Board believes every community should be trusted and supported to make decisions about services most appropriate for its children and families and that the social, economic, cultural, and racial diversity of Pennsylvania's communities are respected. Funds for grants are generated from a \$10 surcharge on marriage licenses and divorce complaints and income, taxpayers can contribute all or a portion of their Pennsylvania tax refund to the CTF. The Board consists of three members from the Senate, appointed by the senate president pro-tempore; three members from the House of Representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house; and nine public members, appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate. OCDEL staff serve as the executive director and carries out the duties and responsibilities assigned by the board through staff employed at OCDEL. For questions or inquiries, please contact [ra-pwpahomevisiting@pa.gov](mailto:ra-pwpahomevisiting@pa.gov).

## Family Support Advisory Committee

The vision within OCDEL is to support families and children, from prenatal through school age, by using data, research and stakeholder guidance to assure high quality services. The Family Support Advisory Committee works towards this vision by meeting on a quarterly basis. Participants are selected through an application process, and are identified as anyone who is affected by, or can influence, a program or organizational decision or action within the family support and home visiting system. OCDEL works to find participants who have different backgrounds, expertise, and knowledge within the home visiting system. Feedback and problem solving by the diverse group assists OCDEL in a cross-systems effort, by providing input through focus groups, surveys, and feedback on reports. Current members of the Committee include Family Support Lead Implementing Agencies, advocates, family support and EBHV representatives, partner agencies, parents, private funders, and government staff. For questions or inquiries, please contact [ra-pwpahomevisiting@pa.gov](mailto:ra-pwpahomevisiting@pa.gov).

## Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Advisory Committee

In July 2021, OCDEL received the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Health Integration Prenatal-to-Three Program, which will focus on cross-sector collaboration and partnership, health system transformation, state-level policy and fiscal innovation, family leadership, and advancing equity. The mission of the ECCS Advisory Committee is to support the advancement of Early Childhood Comprehensive systems project goals and to advise and inform existing P-3 Committees of collaborative strategies to increase referral and access to developmental health and family well-being services.

# Early Learning in Pennsylvania

As an EI leader, you collaborate on a day-to-day basis with many partners who work with young children birth to the age of beginners. It is necessary to become knowledgeable in early childhood development. Research confirms that the first five years are particularly important for the development of the child's brain, and the first three years are the most critical in shaping the child's brain architecture. The social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development of young children has a direct effect on their overall development and ability to thrive throughout school into adulthood. Understanding the stages of early child development helps practitioners know what to expect and how to best support the child.

## Learning Standards for Early Childhood

[The Learning Standards for Early Childhood](#) provide the framework for children's learning in Pennsylvania. They provide the foundational information for what children should know and be able to do. The Pennsylvania Learning Standards for Early Childhood build on information learned previously, creating a continuum of learning that assures consistency and linked learning that begins in infancy, increasing in complexity as it extends through graduation.

The purpose of the standards is to:

- Inform professionals about curriculum and assessment
- Guide the selection of instructional materials and design of interactions/goal setting
- Inform families of appropriate expectations for children
- Provide a common framework for community-based birth to grade 3 alignment work

OCDEL has an informative, asynchronous course that provides a deeper review of the Learning Standards for Early Childhood. To view, please visit the [PD Registry](#).

## Prenatal to Third Grade (P3) Approach

A P3 approach is a mindset that focuses on building a comprehensive system of policies and practices that vertically and horizontally align to support unique needs of all children across the early learning continuum (prenatally through third grade). To support a P3 approach, The Pennsylvania Prenatal through Third Grade (P3) Systems Building Logic Model was developed to assist a variety of groups (state agencies, regional teams, local communities) in the planning and implementation of innovative P3 policies and practices.

The model includes four guiding principles that remind us that systems building work is complex, continuous, and contextual, and should focus on inclusive policies and practices. The model includes three areas of focus (effective learning environments, family engagement, and physical and mental health and well-being) that impact one another. The final components of the model are called the "accelerants." Accelerants deal with how implementation in the areas of impact are accomplished and include responsive relationships, cross sector coordination, leadership, data-informed decision making.

The P3 Systems Building Model coupled with Pennsylvania's established early care and education infrastructure, creates transformative opportunities for the development of policies, strategies, and

programs that ensure wide and diverse participation of children, families, and providers in high-quality ECE services and fully support children’s transition to kindergarten and the early grades statewide.

OCDEL has an informative, asynchronous course that provides a deeper review of P3. To view the course P3 Systems Thinking, please visit the [PD Registry](#).

## Standards Aligned System (SAS)

SAS, developed by PDE, is a comprehensive, research-based resource to improve student achievement.

SAS identifies six elements that impact student achievement:

- Standards
- Assessments
- Curriculum Framework
- Instruction
- Materials and Resources
- Safe and Supportive Schools

Schools and educators across Pennsylvania are supported in their efforts to implement SAS by the development of a state-of-the-art portal. OCDEL has multiple resources that can be found on SAS. To view, please visit [OCDEL resources on SAS](#).

## WIDA Early Years

OCDEL supports multiple language learners by partnering with WIDA Early Years. While all young children need support, guidance, and positive interactions with adults, multilingual children need additional attention to their individual linguistic needs and experiences as they develop both their home language(s) and additional languages. Multilingual children’s early language development is a key factor in their success in K-12 systems. OCDEL collaborates with WIDA Early Years because as a state there is an already established partnership with WIDA in the K-12 system. This partnership became an opportunity to have continuity between early learning and the K-12 system. This is an effort to help make connections and provide a seamless transition for our multiple language learners as they enter school upon completion of their early learning program. OCDEL, through its partnership with WIDA, has five informative asynchronous courses that take a deeper dive on supporting multiple language learners. To view, please visit the [PD Registry](#).

# Important Events

As an EI leader, there are many opportunities to network and engage with your colleagues and stakeholders. We encourage you to use these meetings and events as opportunities to build and strengthen relationships within your community and across the state. The following are just a few of the events you may want to attend in the coming year.

## SICC Meetings

[SICC meetings](#) are typically held on the first Thursday afternoon of every other month at one of the three PaTTAN locations, as well as downlinks across the state.

## LICC Meetings

LICC meetings are typically held monthly or every other month at an agreed upon location by the LICC members. In many instances, these are held at an IU building

## BEISFS Statewide Leadership Meetings

[Statewide leadership meetings](#) are held every other month virtually or in-person at the three PaTTAN locations. Statewide Leadership meetings include updates from the Bureau Director and Division Chiefs. This information often includes potential changes in practice, funding updates, and new resources. Following the leadership meeting, there are focused regional breakout sessions for both infant/toddler and preschool programs to collaborate, problem solve, and discuss current issues. It is important for EI leaders to attend to hear updates, as well as connect with their peers.

## Leadership Conferences

Leadership conferences are held periodically for local EI leaders. These meetings are often geared towards leadership development or topics of importance for the management and administration of local EI supports and services. Information on these events are provided to EI leaders when available. Please visit the [leadership page](#) of the EITA Portal for more information.

## ELRCs Leadership Council Meetings

ELRC meetings are typically held at an ELRC location once every 6-8 weeks.



# Closing Remarks

Congratulations! You've just completed your review of the EI leadership guide. We hope that while you completed this process, your confidence and competence has grown as you've learned about the structure of OCDEL, the ins and outs of your role as a leader, and the opportunities to make a positive effect on your staff, families, and children that you serve.

The field of EI is constantly evolving and growing, making your role more critical than ever. You are a coach, mentor, consultant, teacher, counselor, manager, leader, and more. You are so valuable to us. We promise to continue to invest in you, so that you may invest in the professionals, families, and children in your local communities. You are in a position where you can impact change for children and families in your local community each day. We are thrilled to continue to have you as part of our Pennsylvania team! Never hesitate to reach out with any questions.

**Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports Advisor**

Name:

Phone Number:

Email:

**Early Intervention Technical Assistance Consultant**

Name:

Phone Number:

Email:

**Other Early Intervention Programs in Your Area**

Program:

Administrator/Supervisor Name:

Phone Number:

Email:

Program:

Administrator/Supervisor Name:

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