

Early Intervention Program Parent Handbook

Revised 7-7-2026



Lake County Board of Developmental Disabilities/Deepwood

Empower individuals with developmental disabilities to engage in activities that enrich their lives and contribute to their community.
www.LakeBDD.org

The offices for the Lake County Board of DD/Deepwood Early Intervention staff are located at:

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Lake County Board of Developmental Disabilities/Deepwood:

Elfie Roman, Superintendent

Board Members

Honorable Judge Joseph Gibson, President

Wayne Brodnan, Vice President

Pam Martin, Secretary

Sonja Maier

Tom Tarantino

Fred Tough, Jr.

Kim Stenger

The Mission of the Lake County Board of Developmental Disabilities:

To **empower** people with developmental disabilities to **engage** in activities that **enrich** their lives and contribute to their community.

In advancement of its mission, it is the philosophy of the Lake County Board of Developmental Disabilities/Deepwood to promote the strengths, interests, preferences and choices of people with developmental disabilities and foster community integration. To this end, the Board strives to offer the highest quality, most inclusive, collaborative, and person-centered services and supports within available resources.

Equal Opportunity Statement:

The Lake County Board of Developmental Disabilities/Deepwood does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services. Applicants for employment will be judged on the basis of an individual's ability to perform the essential job of the position with or without reasonable accommodation.



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Welcome to Early Intervention Services with the Lake County Board of Developmental Disabilities/Deepwood

Thank you for considering our program as a service provider option for the Ohio Early Intervention Statewide Program.

Our program and services are grounded in the latest research and advocate the philosophy that young children learn best from familiar people in familiar contexts. We offer supports and resources to help parents and caregivers communicate effectively, enhancing their children's development through everyday routines, priorities, and activities. We operate within a collaborative, home, and community-based system that respects families' learning styles, cultural beliefs, and practices.

Our commitment to families is encapsulated in the promise "that their needs will be met in a way that is respectful of their beliefs and values, and that their hopes and aspirations will be encouraged and enabled" (From Guidelines and Recommended Practices for Individualized Family Service Plan). We strive to build parents' competence and confidence in creating enriching learning opportunities for their children in natural environments such as homes and community settings. Accordingly, we aim to assist families in establishing natural supports within their chosen communities.

Parents play a crucial role as essential members of the early intervention team. Throughout the evaluation and screening process, parents provide valuable insights into their child's abilities, preferences, and routines. Our Early Intervention staff employs a coaching and consulting model to support and empower parents. Specific outcomes for children and families emphasize the function and context of skill development.

We believe in delivering services that are early, appropriate, and intensive for maximum benefit to the child and family. However, we also respect the family's right to determine how they wish services to be delivered, aiming to strengthen their capacity to achieve their own goals.



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The Flow of Early Intervention Services

Referral:

- After your referral to Early Intervention (EI) has been made, someone from your local EI program will contact you to explain what you can expect in EI and what the next steps are. A service coordinator will also be assigned to your family.
- Before beginning any part of the EI process, your service coordinator will first explain each part and obtain your consent. You may withdraw your consent at any time and participating in EI is always voluntary.
- There is no cost to your family to meet and talk with your service coordinator.

Eligibility:

- Before you can participate in EI, your child must be determined eligible. If you agree, your service coordinator will coordinate the eligibility.
- Eligibility for EI varies by state. In Ohio, some children who have certain diagnosed conditions are automatically eligible. Other children go through an eligibility determination process that will include an evaluation of your child's development using information obtained from many sources, including information from you, an evaluation tool, observations of your child and review of your child's medical records.
- Eligibility for EI is not income based and there is no cost to your family to determine whether your child is eligible for EI.

Assessment:

- If your child is eligible for EI, your service coordinator will get your consent to complete a child assessment. The point of the child assessment is to understand how your child participates in home life and to understand what you would like for your child to be able to do.
- During the child's assessment, the assessment team will learn more about your child's interests and abilities and your family's routines and priorities. The team might try to schedule the assessment during a particular time and place to be able to see one or more of the routines that are important to your family to get support.
- Your service coordinator will also offer to complete a family-directed assessment. The family-directed assessment is voluntary, but it provides important information for the team. This assessment is another opportunity to better understand your family's routines and priorities for your child. It is also a chance for the team to understand other supports your family might need, like finding a medical home or securing transportation assistance.
- There is no cost to your family to complete the child and family-directed assessments.

Individualized Family Service Plan:

- The Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is developed with you and your team. It uses the information obtained during the eligibility and assessment processes to develop the outcomes you would like to achieve. The outcomes on your IFSP are written based on what you want your



child or family to be able to do within your family's real-life routines and activities. They use your own words and focus on what is important to your family.

- The IFSP describes which service or services will be needed to help you meet the outcomes and when, where, and how those services will be provided and paid for.
- Once the IFSP is complete and you have signed it, it will be reviewed at least every six months at a time and place that works for you. You will always receive a copy of your IFSP from your service coordinator.
- There is no cost to your family to develop the IFSP.

EI Services:

- The services you and your team identify on the IFSP must begin within 30 days of your signing the IFSP. Services happen during the real-life activities that are important to your family. Some of these might be mealtime, diaper changing, time at the playground, or shopping.
- The services are aimed at supporting your family to make it easier for you to help your child participate in the activities that are important to you.
- The first 100 hours of services in a year are always provided at no cost to all families. If more than 100 hours are needed, your service coordinator will explain to you what those costs might be. Your service coordinator can also help you access your health insurance or Medicaid to pay for services.

Transition:

- When your child's journey in Early Intervention comes to an end, families face many choices about what they will do next.
- Your service coordinator and EI team will support you as your family decides what will work best for your child.
- Many children in EI are eligible at age three for special education services provided by the Ohio Department of Education. Other families choose to enroll their child in childcare or care for their child in their home.
- With your consent and prior to your child's third birthday, your service coordinator will arrange a transition planning conference with your family, your EI team, and the other people who will be serving your child after the age of three. Your IFSP will be updated to add the steps and services needed to make a smooth transition.
- Through it all, your EI team is here to support you and support your child as your child makes this important transition.



Natural Learning Environments

Natural learning environments turn every moment of your child's day into an opportunity! Young children generally thrive when they are in familiar surroundings with people and objects that are important and comforting to them. For young children with disabilities, these familiar surroundings are crucial in their early intervention services. Our philosophy of natural environments allows children to practice new skills while benefiting fully from professional intervention services in the comfort of their own home.

What is Natural Learning Environment?

A natural environment encompasses any place where your child and family live, learn, and play! This includes your home, backyard, childcare settings, parks, grocery stores, and more. Materials used by professionals can be anything found in your child's surroundings: toys, rocks, books, spoons, or favorite objects. People involved, such as parents, siblings, and relatives, are anyone who interacts with your child in their natural environment. Activities planned by professionals will align with your child and family's interests and routines, whether it's eating, bathing, dressing, playing, reading, swimming, celebrating holidays, or any cherished family routines.

- Our Early Intervention Program employs a Primary Service Provider (PSP). The PSP's role is to deliver early intervention services to the child and family, with consultation, support, and coaching from other team members.
- The Primary Service Provider (PSP) can be any member of the Early Intervention team. Upon the initial referral to the EI program, the team determines the best match for the child and family. The PSP should change as infrequently as possible.
- A core team, including the Crossroad Heaths' Service Coordinator, consists of a Developmental Specialist, Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapist, and Physical Therapist.

Using a Primary Service Provider Approach in Early Intervention Services

Key Principles for Providing Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments:

- Infants and toddlers learn best through everyday experiences and interactions with familiar people in familiar contexts.
- All families, with the necessary supports and resources, can enhance their children's learning and development.
- The primary role of a service provider in early intervention is to work with and support family members and caregivers in children's lives.
- The early intervention process, from initial contacts through transition, must be dynamic and individualized to reflect family members' learning styles and cultural beliefs and practices.
- IFSP outcomes must be functional and based on children's and families' needs and family-identified priorities.



- The family's priorities, needs and interests are addressed most appropriately by a primary provider who represents and receives team and community support.
- Interventions with young children and family members must be based on explicit principles, validated practices, best available research, and relevant laws and regulations.

What to Expect

- Your Crossroads Health Service Coordinator will guide you through the process; arrange evaluations, services and meetings.
- You will have one team member working with you and your family who will be the (PSP) Primary Service Provider.
- Your Crossroad Health Service Coordinator and PSP will learn about you and your family and your daily routines.
- You and your PSP will be supported by a team of professionals that have different areas of expertise, so all of your child's needs are addressed.
- You and your PSP will identify outcomes that you would like to work on collaboratively and document those common goals through an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP).
- You and your PSP will identify everyday learning activities important to your child and family.



Child Development

The first three years of your child's life are critical in shaping their future development. A child's growth involves complex interactions among many developmental areas:

- **Cognition**
(thinking and problem solving)
- **Oral Motor**
(eating and talking)
- **Fine Motor**
(using hands and fingers)
- **Gross Motor**
(crawling and walking)
- **Communication**
(understanding, gesturing and talking)
- **Social/Emotional**
(getting along with others and expressing feelings)
- **Self-Help**
(dressing, feeding, and toilet training)
- **Sensory**
(understanding the world through the senses of touch, sight and sound)



Your Role in Maintaining Early Intervention Services

The Lake County Board of Developmental Disabilities' Early Intervention Staff diligently schedules home visits at mutually agreeable times for both families and staff. Regular participation is crucial as part of our program's philosophy of parent education, aiming to help parents maximize their child's development. Inconsistent attendance disrupts your child's services and makes it challenging to maintain quality care for your child and family.

To ensure effective communication, the Primary Service Provider will remind families of appointments via phone call, email, or messaging app the day before scheduled visits. It is the family's responsibility to confirm the appointment. If confirmation is not received by 8:30 a.m. on the day of the appointment, it will be canceled. The Primary Service Provider will then contact the family to reschedule.

Lake County Early Intervention may consider discontinuing a child from the program under the following circumstances:

1. The family is a no-show or has an unexcused absence for three scheduled appointments. Families must contact the Primary Service Provider to cancel an appointment.
2. The family fails to respond to communication three consecutive times.
3. There has been no successful visit between the provider and the family for 90 days. Families have the option to conduct visits virtually.

The Primary Service Provider will inform the Crossroads Health Service Coordinator of no-shows, unexcused absences, failed communication attempts, or excessive absences. They will then collaborate to determine if a change in service delivery is necessary, which may involve transitioning to an inactive status, assigning a different service provider, or discharging from our program.



Program Closing Information



Please check Cleveland television stations for school closing information. The Early Intervention Program will be listed under the Lake County Board of DD.

However, the official number for program closing notifications for Broadmoor School, the Early Intervention Program, and LCBDD is (440) 350-5299. Any home or community visits scheduled for that day will be canceled accordingly.

LCBDD Early Intervention Record Retention Policies

- Early intervention service providers will retain a child's early intervention records until the child's ninth birthday, unless a longer retention period is requested by the parent(s) or legal guardian(s).
- If the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) request the destruction of personally identifiable information following the mandated retention period, the provider must comply with this request.



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Preparing for Home Visits

Cancellations

Please notify Early Intervention staff 24 hours in advance or as soon as possible for cancelled appointments. This will be helpful for the Early Intervention staff to meet scheduling needs of other families.

Distractions

In order to provide the best learning environment for you and your child, we ask that the television, computer, tablet, cell phone, electronic devices etc. be turned off or put away.

Pets

Please contain any pets in an area separate from where we will work together.

Smoking

We request that there not be smoking in the room where the visit is taking place.

Illness

If the child or other people in the home have an illness that would be considered contagious, please call to cancel the home visit and reschedule for another day/time. Examples include fever, pinkeye, vomiting, diarrhea, strep throat, flu symptoms, lice, COVID-19 etc. If you are not sure if your child is contagious, please contact a professional for guidance.

Participation

Plan to remain with the Early Intervention staff during the visit to learn specific ways to help your child be successful in their daily routines. We will develop these together. These should be practiced with your child in between visits.

We look forward to being a part of your Early Intervention team and working with you. Thank you.



What To Do If Your Are Not Satisfied with How Your Child Has Been Evaluated or Provided Service

Any questions or concerns that you, as a parent or legal guardian, may have can be referred to:

Jacki Hunt-DeWeese, Early Childhood Supervisor or Liz Miller, Director of Children's Services
8090 Broadmoor Road
Mentor, Ohio 44060
440-602-1000

If your issue is not satisfactorily resolved, you may proceed to direct a written notice to our Superintendent for review to:

Ms. Elfriede Roman, Superintendent
8121 Deepwood Blvd.
Mentor, Ohio 44060

Upon receipt of the Superintendent's decision, if not satisfied, you may appeal to the president of the Lake County Board of Developmental Disabilities/Deepwood.

To file a formal complaint, you may further proceed to present your non-resolved issue for a state level review to:

Ohio Early Intervention
Ohio Department of Children and Youth
P.O. Box 183204
Columbus, Ohio 43218
202-260-3887

See Appendix – 5123:2-1-12,
Complaint or Appeal of Adverse Action Explanation Form

Other Agencies that can assist are:

- Arc of Ohio 800-875-2723
- Disability Rights Ohio 800-282-9181

We view your input as a way to provide the most effective program possible to meet your needs.

Please feel free to express yourself through these channels openly and honestly.



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