



November 19, 2025

Meghan Miller, HHS  
Becky Dodd, DOE



Department of Education

# Today You Will Hear.....

- Overview of Early ACCESS
  - What is Early ACCESS
  - Iowa's System
  - Child Find
  - Eligibility
  - Service Delivery Model
- Early ACCESS Process
  - Referral
  - Eligibility Determination
  - Child & Family Assessment
  - Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)
  - Early ACCESS Services
- Early ACCESS Materials & Resources



# What is Early ACCESS?

- Early ACCESS is Iowa's early intervention system (IDEA Part C)
- For eligible infants and toddlers under three years old
- IA- 25% delay in at least one area or have a diagnosed condition that can delay typical development
- Anyone can refer
- Voluntary participation
- IA-Birth Mandate, no wait lists
- IA- No cost to families
- Focus on helping parents and other caregivers so that they can support their child's growth and development during everyday routines and activities
- Variety of services (e.g., developmental services, instruction, physical therapy, speech, occupational therapy)

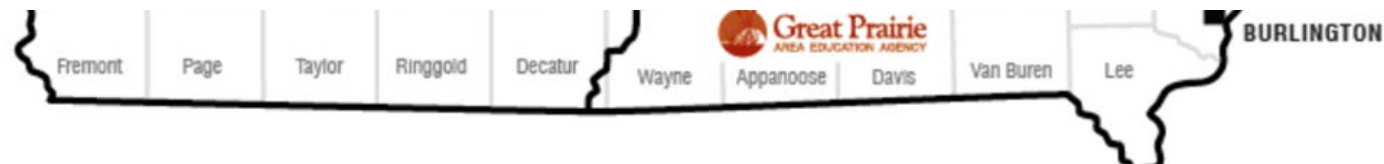
# Early ACCESS Interagency System & Grantees



Department of Education



Health & Human Services



# Child Find

- All agencies play a role in finding children
  - AEAs screenings & evaluations, NICU liaison
  - Dept of Education- inform public- [IFSN](#)
  - Dept of Health & Human Services- screening, refer all children with founded abuse
  - U of I - screening, family navigators, NICU family support specialist



# Early ACCESS NICU Presence

## **Des Moines Metro - Blank & Mercy NICU**

- In person at NICU 1 x week
- Collaborate with medical staff
- Meeting families: building rapport, helping with smooth transition, accessing services

## **UIHC NICU Family Support Specialist**

- Former NICU and Early ACCESS parent
- Listen, Support, Connect, and Information



# Early ACCESS Eligibility

- A child is eligible based on diagnosed condition
- A child is eligible based on a 25% delay in at least one developmental area
- A child is eligible based on the team's informed clinical opinion



# Diagnosed Condition

A child who has a diagnosed and documented physical or mental condition which has a high probability of resulting in developmental delays is automatically eligible for Early ACCESS.

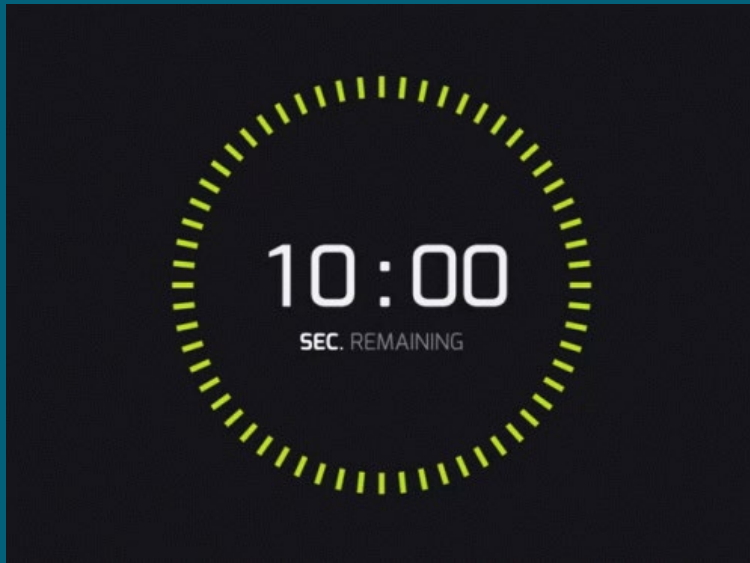
A child with diagnosed hearing loss is eligible for Early ACCESS.

[Iowa Early ACCESS Diagnosed Conditions Eligibility List](#)

[Information for Referral Sources](#) posted on IFSN



# Don't Wait and See



- If child doesn't have a diagnosis or obvious delay, refer and let Early ACCESS evaluate to determine if qualify.

# Early Intervention Services

Services are designed to meet the developmental needs of an infant or toddler with a disability and the needs of the family as identified by the team. Potential services that can be provided:

Assistive technology device	Psychological services
Audiology services	Service coordination
Family training, counseling, and home visits	Sign language and cued language services
Nutrition services	Social work services
Occupational therapy	Special instruction
Physical therapy	Speech-language pathology services
Psychological services	Vision services

# Early Intervention (EI) Model

Medical Model	Educational Model	Early Intervention (EI) Model
Child-centered services	Child-centered services	Family-centered services
Therapy focuses on alleviating or “fixing” deficits identified on standardized testing	Therapy focuses on improving the student's ability to succeed in the school environment	Services focus on improving the child's learning and development during naturally occurring routines and activities
Therapy sessions are provided one-on-one (therapist and child)	Therapy sessions are provided one-on-one (therapist and child) or in a small group setting with other students	Services are provided to the caregiver in the presence of the child, siblings, and other family members; these regularly scheduled sessions are referred to as "home visits" or “EI sessions” instead of "therapy sessions"
Therapy toys and materials are provided by the therapist	Therapy toys and materials are provided by the therapist	Any toys and materials used should be part of the child's natural environment
Therapy is provided in an outpatient clinic or hospital setting	Therapy is provided in the school setting	Services are provided in the child's natural environment (home or community setting)



# Natural Activities to Promote Development in the Home & Community



# Early ACCESS explained by providers.....







## Early ACCESS Process



\*indicates fields required

## Early ACCESS Referral



Incomplete Page(s): Child Info, Parent Info, Referral Source Info, Reason for Referral



Child Info



Parent Info



Referral Source Info



Reason for Referral



Documentation

### Child Information

First Name\*

Middle Name

Last Name\*

DOB (MM/DD/YYYY)\*



Field is **required**

Field is **required**

Field is **required**

Gender\*

☐

Female

☐

Male

Primary Language Spoken in Home \*



Field is **required**

Interpreter Needed\*

☐

Yes

☐

No

# Early ACCESS Process: Referral



- AEA's receive referral - verify child is not already served
- Child is assigned a service coordinator (SC)
- SC attempts to contact family within 2 working days of being assigned the referral
- If contact made, and family interested, move ahead with scheduling intake and evaluation/assessment visits

# Early ACCESS Process: Eligibility and Assessment



- Service coordinator assembles team to evaluate/assess based on family concerns
- Review records, if eligible based on a diagnosed condition move to assessment
- If no diagnosed condition, provide comprehensive evaluation to determine delay
- If eligible, develop IFSP


All this accomplished within 45 days from referral

# Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

Written documentation of who will do what, when and where for a 6 months period of time ~~can~~ change as needs of the child/family change.

Includes:

- specific information about the child and family, for example, the child's current developmental status
- Sets reasonable developmental goals for the infant or toddler
- States the services that Early ACCESS will provide- providing services in the child's natural environment
- As child approaches three years old a Transition plan out of Early ACCESS



### Early ACCESS Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

Child Spencer Adams	Age 3	IFSP Meeting Date 12/07/2022
Date of Birth 03/24/2020	Referral Date 06/15/2022	IFSP Type Initial
Family Lara Adams	Email meghanwolfe@work@gmail.com	Phone N/A
Resident District Central		Area Education Agency Keystone AEA
Periodic Review of IFSP 06/07/2023	Annual IFSP Meeting 12/06/2023	Transition Planning Meeting 12/24/2022

The Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is a plan written specifically for Spencer and your family by you and the Early ACCESS providers. The IFSP can change over time as your child and family's priorities and needs change. The IFSP includes a summary of information about Spencer and your family, outcome(s) you want to see for Spencer and your family, and Early ACCESS services.

#### Early ACCESS Service Coordinator

Every family who participates in Early ACCESS is assigned a service coordinator. The Early ACCESS service coordinator will communicate with the team to coordinate meetings, assessments, and assist in developing IFSPs. The service coordinator will also partner with you to identify the appropriate services, resources, and support necessary to benefit your family and Spencer's growth and development.

Your family's Early ACCESS Service Coordinator and contact information is:

Name	Agency	Phone	Email
Meghan Miller	Keystone AEA		meghan.miller@idph.iowa.gov

#### IFSP Team Members

The IFSP team members listed below participated and contributed to the development of the IFSP.

Dee Gethmann, Other Professional Staff  
Lara Adams, Family  
Mary Adams, Family  
Meghan Miller, Consultant




# Delivery of early intervention services

Once family has consented to the services in the IFSP

## 30 day timeline

State requirement to begin services within 30 days from parent consent



### Consent for Early ACCESS Services

Child Spencer Adams	Date of Birth 03/24/2020	Age 5
Referral Date 06/15/2022	Notice Date 09/22/2025	IFSP Date 12/07/2022
Resident District Central		Area Education Agency Keystone AEA
Family Member Mary Adams	Relationship Parent (Biological or Adoptive)	Email megolego77@hotmail.com
Family Member Lara Adams	Relationship Parent (Biological or Adoptive)	Email meghanwolfework@gmail.com

I understand Spencer is eligible for Early ACCESS and services are described in the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

**Consent/Decline Services (check only one of three):**

- ☐ I give consent for the IFSP and Early ACCESS services as written.
- ☐ I give consent for the IFSP and Early ACCESS services to be provided, with the exception of service(s) indicated as Family Declined, in the IFSP.
- ☐ I do not give consent and am declining all Early ACCESS services. I understand I may contact Early ACCESS at any time before my child turns three to reinstate the evaluation process.

**In accepting Early ACCESS services:**

I understand that my consent:

- May be withdrawn at any time and does not affect actions that occurred between when consent was given and revoked; and,
- May exclude or withdraw from a particular Early ACCESS service(s) without affecting other services provided in the IFSP.

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your family's Early ACCESS Service Coordinator:

# Early ACCESS Provider

Welcome Becky Dodd



# Links to Resources

- Iowa Family Support Network
- Early ACCESS Eligibility
- Iowa Early ACCESS Diagnosed Conditions Eligibility List
- Early ACCESS Printed Materials- no cost



Thank you!

Meghan Miller, HHS  
[meghan.miller@hhs.iowa.gov](mailto:meghan.miller@hhs.iowa.gov)

Becky Dodd, DOE  
[rebecca.dodd@iowa.gov](mailto:rebecca.dodd@iowa.gov)



Department of Education