

Your Child's Move from Hospital to Home

Before your infant leaves the hospital, you can take a number of steps to be sure needed supports are in place once your child is home. Referrals to community programs and early intervention services can begin while your infant is still in the hospital. You can play an important role in the discharge planning process by asking questions, sharing concerns, and obtaining key information about programs and supports you think will be useful for you and your infant.

Watch a video of this Learning Guide

Video courtesy of WHAT TO EXPECT

Learning Guide: Preparing for Supports and Services at Home

- Talk with the hospital staff and ask questions about resources and supports your infant might need at home. Be actively involved in the development of your infant's discharge plan and referral for any future services. Find out who will help you arrange health care and the developmental supports (such as a pediatrician) your child will need when home.
- Work with members of your infant's medical team to learn about caring for your infant when at home. What special care will your infant need during feeding, bathing, and/or other routines? Will your infant need any special equipment or supplies? Be sure you know who to contact for help once your child is home.
- Request written or web-based information about early intervention services and ask whether the services would be appropriate for you and your infant. If appropriate, ask the staff to begin a referral to an early intervention program.
- When the early intervention program contacts you to schedule a meeting, share your preferences for when and where you want to meet. Invite other family members or friends you want to be present. Make a list of your questions before the meeting.
- During the first meeting, ask questions to learn about early intervention services. What services and supports are available to you and your infant? How are services provided? What is provided? How will staff work with your infant, you, and other caregivers?
- Describe what you have learned about your infant's strengths and needs. Share your priorities and hopes for your child and your family as well as any specific concerns.
- Ask what will happen during your infant's evaluation to determine if he or she is eligible for early intervention services. Ask who will be involved, where the evaluation will take place, and how your personal information will be used or shared. Share your preferences for how you want early intervention services to be provided.

A Quick Peek Lily and Luisa were born prematurely and spent over a month in the neonatal intensive care unit. Before bringing the infants home, Luis and Carla spent several days learning how to feed and bathe them, understand their needs, and provide special care for them. The parents also arranged for visits with their new pediatrician and learned about other community resources that could be supportive of them once they all were at home, including early intervention services. After reading information about early intervention, they agreed to a referral to the local early intervention program. They wrote a list of questions about how early intervention could support their family life and what would be involved in determining whether the twins' were eligible for services. Once the family was settled at home, Luis and Carla met with Maria, the service coordinator from the early intervention program. During the meeting, the parents learned a lot about what would happen during the evaluation to determine their daughters' eligibility for early intervention. They asked about what happens during home visits and shared their goals for what they hoped to receive from early intervention. After the meeting with Maria, they felt more prepared and knowledgeable about how early intervention could support their daughters. They were ready to take the next steps!



You'll know the practice is working if ...

- You understand procedures for your infant's care at home
- You understand how early intervention can support your family and your infant's growth and development
- You are adjusting to new circumstances and feel supported as you care for your infant

A variety of online resources provide more information about your baby's move from hospital to home. Among them are:

- **"Bringing Baby Home"** by Elizabeth Payne on the Neonatal Intensive Care Awareness blog
- **"What Is Early Intervention?"** by Annie Stewart on the UNDERSTOOD for Learning and Attention Issues website