

Transition from Hospital to Home

When a family transitions their child from a hospital stay into early intervention services, it is important for them to feel comfortable and respected in their communication with the early intervention provider. The early interventionist should gather information from family members/parents about their experiences in the hospital in a sensitive and respectful manner. Learning about a family's concerns and priorities is an important first step in the process of developing trust, beginning a new relationship, and developing an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) that is responsive to the family's wishes and needs.

[Click to see a video of this Learning Way](#)

Video courtesy of Illinois Early Intervention Training Program

Learning Way: Gathering Information about Family Concerns

- Ask parents/family members for their preferences regarding a convenient time and place to meet. Determine if they prefer to meet in the hospital or wait until their child has been discharged and at home.
- Be sure that parents/family members know they can invite other people to the meeting if that would be helpful to them.
- Once the meeting is scheduled, send a follow-up confirmation via e-mail, text, or mail, depending on family preferences for communication.
- Review any records or information sent by the hospital before the meeting to be prepared with have a clear understanding of the course of treatment and any concerns for the infant.
- Be prepared to answer family member questions and share resources, as appropriate.
- Ask the family if they would like to tell their story about the pregnancy and their experience in the hospital.
- Be sure to use active and reflective listening skills as the parents/family members share their story and any concerns.
- Ask parents/family members about any concerns they might have.
- Ask the family if there are any particular services and supports with which they would like you to communicate and coordinate regarding their infant.
- Ask family members about their priorities for their infant and family and how they think early intervention and or other services might be able to address their concerns and priorities.

A Quick Peek

Luis and Carla are finally home as a family. Their twins, Lily and Louisa, were born prematurely and spent a month in the hospital's neonatal intensive care unit. It was a difficult and sometimes frightening time for Luis and Carla, but the girls have been discharged and are doing well. Their physician and a hospital social worker talked to them about early intervention services. While the babies are doing well, they are showing some mild delays due to their prematurity, and Lily struggles with some reflux and oral sensitivity. At first Luis and Carla were nervous about meeting the EI service coordinator, Molly, and having strangers come into their home. When Molly first talked to the parents, she was very courteous, asked only a few questions over the phone, and worked with them to find a good time to meet. During the home visit, Molly shared what she had learned from the referral information and asked them to tell her their story as they were ready. She listened quietly and only occasionally asked a clarifying question. Luis and Carla felt very comfortable with her and shared their concerns about their babies' health and development. Molly made sure she understood their priorities. Then she begin to talk about resources and discuss how the EI program might be able to help. Both new parents felt relieved and told Molly they looked forward to her next visit.



You'll know it's working if ...

- Family members express their concerns and priorities to the practitioner
- Family members seem interested in learning more about Early Intervention services and accessing resources
- Family members indicate they feel like they are adjusting to new circumstances and are supported in their decisions regarding their children

Online resources about facilitating the transition from hospital to home include a learning module, [An Early Interventionist's Guide to Prematurity](#), and [Early Intervention Strategies for Success: Listening to the Family's Story](#) by Dana Childress, both from the Virginia EI Professional Development Center.