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 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!

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 your concerns, and obtaining key information about programs and supports you think will be useful for you and your infant.

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, which includes identifying what you and your infant need during feeding, bathing, and/or other routines. Who will support your infant's growth and development at home? Be sure to contact for help once your infant is home.
- Reflect on what you have learned about early intervention and ask whether the services are appropriate for you and your infant. If appropriate, ask the staff to begin a referral to an early intervention program.
- If the early intervention program contacts you to schedule a meeting, share your preferences for when and where you want to meet. Be prepared to share your experiences with the early intervention program.
- Ask what will happen during your infant’s evaluation to determine if your infant 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.

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 your concerns, and obtaining key information about programs and supports you think will be useful for you and 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
- "Parent and Family Engagement" by Amy Stewart at the UNDERSTOOD for Learning and Attention issues website

Watch a video about your baby’s move from hospital to home.