

How to Get Help When Concerned about a Child's Development - Birth to 5 years



I have concerns about a child's development. What should I do?

Children develop at their own pace, however; most children reach [developmental milestones](#) at or about the same age.

If you have concerns about how a child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, it's important to:

1. Share your concerns with the child's parents.
2. Refer the child for **Early Intervention** or **Early Childhood Special Education** services.

*If you have concerns about a child's development, don't hesitate to refer a child.
Anyone can make a referral.*

What is Early Intervention?

Early Intervention (EI) helps children **under the age of 3** who aren't developing as expected or have a medical condition that can cause delays, learn new skills and improve development. **Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia (ITC)** provides early intervention services to eligible infants and toddlers. Examples of early intervention are speech therapy to help your child communicate and physical therapy to help your child's body movements.

To make a referral for Early Intervention, call 1-800-234-1448 or make an [online referral](#).



What is Early Childhood Special Education?

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) is for children **aged 2 (whose birthday falls on or before September 30) through age 5** with a disability in need of services to support development and school readiness. ECSE services are provided through the **local school division**. Examples of services include speech therapy to help the child communicate or instruction to help the child become independent.

To make a referral, you can call, email, or stop by your neighborhood school or contact the [Special Education Director](#) for the school division. If you need assistance with identifying an appropriate contact in your local school division, contact VDOE's [Parent Ombudsman for Special Education](#) by calling 1-800-422-2083.

Where can I learn more about the process?

- [Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center \(PEATC\)](#), 1-800-869-6782, Partners@peatc.org
- [Center for Family Involvement at VCU](#), 1-877- 567-1122, [CFI Help Desk](#)
- [Infant & Toddler Connection](#)
- [VDOE Early Childhood Care and Education](#)
- [Videos about the Special Education Evaluation Process](#)

