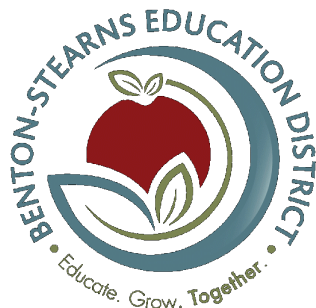


Benton-Stearns Education District



Early Intervention Program Family Handbook

Mission Statement

The mission of the Benton-Stearns Early Childhood Special Education program is to promote active meaningful learning, while respecting the diverse strengths and needs of each child and family.

Early Intervention Services for ages 0-3

Benton-Stearns Education District provides an Early Intervention Program as part of its special education system. The program services children from birth up to the age of three who have developmental delays or have a medically diagnosed condition. There is no cost to families. The program is funded by State and Federal funds generated by the school districts that are members of the Benton-Stearns Education District. These Districts include; Foley, Sartell, Sauk Rapids, Holdingford, ROCOR and Kimball. Children in this program are provided the same due process rights and procedures as all students identified with special needs. (Help Me Grow- is a statewide referral system that directs families to their local early intervention program).

What are Early Intervention Services?

Early intervention services are provided to children birth through age three, who meet the Minnesota state criteria for Developmental Delay – Early Childhood Special Education. Some of the children served in Early Childhood Special Education are those who are born with medical conditions such as Down Syndrome or Spina Bifida, others are referred due to delays in developmental areas (motor, cognitive, communication, adaptive or social-emotional) caused by pre-maturity, significant illnesses or injuries. For many children the cause of delay is unknown.

How will I know if my child needs Early Intervention Services?

After you contact Help Me Grow, an early childhood team will complete a screening and/or evaluation to look at your child's development. If your child qualifies for services following the evaluation, a plan called an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) will be developed to address your child's strengths and needs as well as family needs.

How will my child receive these services? Children receive services through the home based model or in consultation with other agencies already serving the child. These services are provided year round. Parents and caregivers are very important to the success of the Early Intervention Program and are encouraged to be involved in all aspects of their child's program.



YOUR CHILD'S TEAM

The members of your child's team will depend on his or her individual needs. Team members may include one or more of the following:

Intake Facilitator/Service Coordinator: this person is typically the first contact a family has with our program. Intake facilitators gather the referral information and coordinate services between the educational system and services from medical and other agencies that your family may have. An initial home visit to gather developmental and health history is often done by a facilitator.

The **Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Teacher** typically serves as the contact point (case manager) for the family. They have extensive training in overall child development and consult with other therapists as to specific needs of the child. The early intervention teacher provides parents with strategies to help children & their families become more self-sufficient and monitor development.

Speech –Language Clinicians work with individuals who struggle with speech and language. They assist children who have problems using or understanding language. Some children cannot produce sounds or do not produce them clearly, have fluency (stuttering) difficulties, or voice (harshness, etc) disorders. Speech pathologists help parents figure out what their child is trying to communicate (wants/needs).

Physical therapists work with children who are delayed in their gross motor skills and having difficulty moving and exploring the environment. Since young children use their motor skills to interact with and learn from the world around them any delay in these skills can impact all other areas of development. The physical therapist provides families with information, activities, exercises, and supports that enhance the child's overall functional abilities.

Occupational Therapists provide consultation with parents/caregivers for children who have difficulty processing sensory information. A sensory processing problem can reduce a child's ability to pay attention; follow directions; enjoy touch and cuddling; be successful with daily routines such as mealtime, bedtime, bathing, dressing; or make transitions from one activity to another. Occupational therapists also provide consultation for children who have delays in fine motor/hand skills and feeding skills.

Early Intervention Supervisor: Sue Currens 257-7350 scurrens@bentonstearns.k12.mn.us



A NOTE FROM SUE:

The staff at Benton-Stearns Education District comes highly trained and qualified to work with young children with special needs. I am confident they will provide personal yet professional and confidential services to your family. If at any time you have any questions or concerns about your child's programming. Please do not hesitate to contact me.

Team members working with my child:

ECSE Teacher: _____

Speech/Language Clinician: _____

Occupational Therapist: _____

Physical Therapist: _____

Other: _____



Our team provides supported home visits. This model has five key principles:

1. **It's the family that influences the child, and we can influence the family.** Families have greater influence over children than do home visitors who might only see the child for one hour a week.
2. **Children learn throughout the day.** Children do not learn in clumps of instruction or therapy that requires the processing of multiple rapid-fire inputs.
3. **Early intervention is not about providing weekly lessons.** In addition to the fact that young children learn through distributed trials, they have difficulty transferring from a structured "lesson" to regular routines.
4. **All the intervention for the child occurs between visits.** The function of the home visit needs to shift from direct intervention with the child to support of the caregivers.
5. **It's maximal intervention the child needs, not maximal services.** If the first four principles above are followed, the child's many learning opportunities are maximized and optimized. Regular caregivers' interventions with children are not affected by having more professional providing more services.

(McWilliam's 2010b)

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to actively participate in home visits as directly as possible. This allows for input from the parents relating to the skills or behaviors observed in the home and ways in which the staff can help work through challenges in the family's daily routines. It also allows parents to observe and practice techniques or strategies demonstrated by the staff. Parents should also feel free to invite others involved in their child's life (such as grandparents or caregivers) to attend home visits.

ABSENCES

If your child or anyone in your family is ill or you are not going to be home for a scheduled visit, please contact your child's teacher or the Education District (242-8427) to cancel your visit. If at all possible, please call at least one hour before your scheduled visit to ensure that your teacher receives the message. If your teacher is not available, please leave a message with our secretary.

Staff members visit several homes in one day. They take health precautions which include frequent hand washing and bleaching of toys and materials. However, there can be some risk of spreading infections from home to home if extra care is not taken. Parents should inform visiting staff prior to a visit if ANY family member in the home has a contagious illness. Home visits will not take place if there is a risk of spreading germs among families.

The following are helpful guidelines of illness that would warrant canceling a visit:

- ✓ Elevated temperature (above 98.6) within the last 24 hours.
- ✓ Vomiting within the last 24 hours
- ✓ Diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- ✓ Strep throat – needs to be on antibiotics for 24 hours before home visits can resume.
- ✓ Pink eye, skin rashes, lice, scabies, impetigo, measles or chicken pox.

Our staff will also notify you if they are ill. We all need to work together to control diseases and to create healthy environments for all of our families.



CALENDAR

Benton-Stearns Education Staff work a year round, flexible calendar. Your child's teacher will set up visits monthly with you based on the service time indicated on your child's IFSP.



WEATHER

The Early Intervention Program will follow the school closing policy for the district in which you live. Due to the amount of miles traveled to some of our home visits the teachers will use their judgment in deciding whether or not to make a home visit if school is not canceled. If the roads to your home have not been plowed, please call and let your teacher know.

SAFETY OF STAFF

Please have all pets contained when staff is scheduled to visit. Staff will not get out of a vehicle if there is a dog loose in the yard.

The Benton-Stearns Education staff has the right to find and request an alternate placement or site for delivery of service if the home environment is not safe.



FAMILY NEEDS

Children require a safe, nurturing environment for them to grow, learn and feel accepted. For children to grow and feel good about themselves, they must have the following minimal requirements; good nutrition, shelter, medical care, clean clothes and body, intellectual stimulation, appropriate discipline, love and a feeling of importance. When these needs are not met, a child is not able to really grow and learn.

If you have difficulty providing for your child's emotional or physical needs, you are encouraged to ask our staff for help. We will gladly review your needs and help you find a community resource that can offer assistance.

MANDATED REPORTING

According to MN Statute 626.556 REPORTING OF MALTREATMENT OF MINORS

Public School Employees, including those who work for Benton-Stearns Education District are mandated reporters and are obligated to report neglect and abuse to the proper authorities.



SERVICES FOR AGES 3-6

Early Childhood Special Education services for children over the age of three who qualify are also available, at no cost to families through the school district of residence.

The State of MN has different criteria to qualify for services when a child is over the age of three. An evaluation will need to be completed to determine if your child continues to qualify for services beyond their third birthday.

Districts vary slightly in their program model., however, majority of the students are integrated into a typical preschool classroom. As your child approaches his/her third birthday, the teacher will assist you in the transition process to the school based program. Children who continue to receive services beyond age three are on a plan called an Individual Education Plan (IEP). These plans are more educationally based, focusing on skills needed in a school setting versus the IFSP for the 0-3 year olds where the focus is more home/family based needs.

OTHER PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

Early Childhood Family Education Program (ECFE) Each individual school district has an ECFE program. Classes are offered on a sliding fee scale. For more information in child/parent classes and activities, check with your local district.

Sauk Rapids- Hillside Early Childhood Center – 30 4th Ave S Sauk Rapids, MN 320-255-8910

Rice Elementary School - PO Box 25 Rice, MN 320-393-2177

Sartell- District Service Center – 212 3rd Ave. N Sartell, MN 320- 656-3763

ROCORI – District Education Facility– 527 Main Street, Cold Spring, MN 320- 685-4035

Foley Elementary School – 743 Penn St, Foley, MN 320- 968-7286

Kimball Elementary School – 405 Hazel Ave E. Kimball, MN 320-398-5425

Holdingford Elementary School – 900 5th St. Holdingford, MN 746-2221

Headstart Reach-Up Inc. provides Head Start, Early Head Start, child care and family support services for eligible children and families in Benton, Sherburne and Stearns counties in central Minnesota.

1250 Johnson Road, St. Cloud, MN 56304 (320) 253-8110

County Services – Social Services and Public Health

Stearns County- 725 Courthouse Square, St. Cloud, MN 56303 320-656-3600

Benton County- 531 Dewey Street, PO Box 129, Foley, MN 56329 320-968-5000

Sherburne County - 13880 Business Center Dr NW Elk River, MN 55330 763-765-4000
1-800-433-5239

United Way 2-1-1: Community Help Line 1-800-543-7709 www.unitedwayhelps.org

Connects people with community resources: support groups, basic needs, etc. Free, confidential 24/7.

Milestones- 1-866-511-2244 www.milestonesmn.org

Milestones, formerly known as Child Care Choices, has provided leadership and support for child care excellence. We have broadened our reach and now offer guidance, support, expertise and resources to parents, grandparents, child care providers, early childhood educators and the community as a whole to ensure we make the best decisions about the young children in our lives.

Parent Aware – www.parentaware.org

Search tools to find quality child care and early childhood education programs in your community.

Help Me Grow 1-866-693-GROW (4769) www.helpmegrowmn.org

Website with information, resources, and activities for parents to help their children grow, develop and learn from birth to high school.

Zero to Three www.zerotothree.org

Information, tools and support designed to help parents nurture their young children's development.

TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

OT – Occupational Therapy

PT- Physical Therapy

ASD- Autism Spectrum Disorders

DHH- Deaf and Hard of Hearing

AT – Assistive technology

ECFE- Early Childhood Family Education

ECSE – Early Childhood Special Education - the program or services young children with disabilities receive

Early Intervention – the Early Childhood Special Education services for children ages 0-3 are often called the Early Intervention program (EIP)

DD – Developmental Delay – the disability category that children must meet criteria for to qualify for early childhood special education services between the ages of 0-7 in the state of MN.

Part C – The federal law– IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – Part C is the language that provides services for children ages 0-3 with special needs.

Part B – The federal law– IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – Part B is the language that provides services for children ages 3-21 with special needs. (after age 7, children no longer qualify for DD- Part B services, but must meet the criteria for one of the other disability categories)

IEP – Individual Education Plan

IFSP – Individual Family Service Plan

ER – Evaluation Report

Prior Written Notice – This form is provided to parents along with a consent form when planning your child's programming and whenever there is a change to the program or services, your signature indicates you agree with the services, or it's a place for you to object if you don't agree.

PHN- Public Health Nurse

MA- Medical Assistance

SLP – Speech/Language Clinician