

EARLY Communication Intervention

- What is Early Communication Intervention?
- Who may need Early Communication intervention?
- How does it work?
- Consider the following



What is Early Communication Intervention?

Early childhood communication includes adequate development of feeding, hearing, parent-child interaction, language, speech, play, literacy and social-interaction.

Early Communication Intervention is aimed at families with infants and preschool children with or at risk of development difficulties in these areas.

Early Communication Intervention is important to consider because the quality of childhood communication development affects the child's future development and achievements. Early communication skills are widely accepted as the best predictor of later school performance.

Current literature continues to state that communication delay is the most common symptom of developmental disability in children under the age of 3 years.



Early communication delay affect the neural circuits in the brain underlying speech, language, reading and written language processes. Research using neuro-imaging techniques has shown that the neural circuits in the brain of children with early communication delays differ from other kids. The effect may extend well into adolescence.

Communication development starts at birth. As the child grows and develops, communication becomes more complex. The child learns to use communication to interact with people, to direct play, to learn new things, to share emotions and experience the world.

Children learn to communicate through interactions with their environment. Healthy parent-child interaction and attachment as well as enjoyable feeding times are the most important interactions in the child's development and learning.

Who may need Early Communication Intervention?

Any child younger than 3 years

- where there is concerns regarding the child's development
- where there is a concern about parent-child interaction or parenting style
- that has chronic Otitis media
- that has a feeding problem
- that has a loss of hearing /vision

- that has sensory processing difficulties
- that was prematurely born or had a very low birth weight
- that has a genetic disorder
- that has a neurological disorder
- that has a metabolic disorder
- that has a chronic medical illness or has a parent with chronic medical illness

How does it work?

1. When an infant/child is referred, an appointment is scheduled to assess the infant/child. The assessment will include:

- History taking
- Contextual information taking regarding family structure and interaction, family needs, strengths, stressors and resources
- Compile a profile of risks impacting on the child's development
- Genetic screening
- Hearing screening
- Sensory integration screening
- Oral-facial structure and function assessment
- Pre-feeding and Feeding assessment
- Speech, language and communication assessment
- General development assessment

2. Then family intervention goals will be set according to all assessment areas where the child demonstrated difficulties. Appropriate referrals will be part of the intervention goals. Intervention sessions will be scheduled if necessary.

3. Intervention will be focused on family or group activities designed to provide training for the parents and intervention for the child.

Intervention activities will include:

- Feeding intervention and neuro-developmental care training for parents of infants in a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
- Parent-child interaction training
- Play-Based communication and feeding intervention
- Development enhancing play activities

Consider the following

- The period 0-6 years is critical to develop listening and language skills for more advanced academic language proficiency
- Neural plasticity is at its peak during infancy and pre-school period and early intervention can shape brain development
- Intervention should start early, ideally before three years of age
- Families are the only constant in a child's life and a child's best facilitator for intervention and learning

- Family members form the closest attachment and relations with the child, shaping the child's communication interaction
- The quality of a child's communication interaction determines the quality of his later learning and language proficiency

"Those who talk well before school are likely to learn well at school"

(SASLHA, 2011)

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