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# Early Intervention

For children ages 0-3 years

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## IDEA 2004 AND CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

Early intervention, serving children from birth to age 3, is required by law. Public law 94-142 was enacted in 1975 and was renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990 and revised again in 2004. There are different sections of this law. Part C outlines early intervention services. Federal funding is available to states that have early intervention services under IDEA. A child between birth and 36 months of age, who is developmentally delayed or has an established condition with a high probability of a developmental delay, can qualify for IDEA Part C services. “Hearing Impairment” and “deafness” are two of the established conditions under this law.

Federal law requires each state to develop its own policies and a system to oversee and monitor IDEA Part C services. In Arizona, a division of the Department of Economic Security (DES)

oversees all Part C service-providing agencies. That division is called the Arizona Early Intervention Program, or DES-AzEIP.

**Arizona Early Intervention Program, AzEIP**

[www.azdes.gov/azeip](http://www.azdes.gov/azeip)

**888-439-5609**

There are a total of five state agencies that are part of the Arizona Early Intervention Program:

1. The Arizona Department of Health Services (DHS)
2. The Department of Economic Security (DES)
3. The Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (ASDB)
4. The Arizona Department of Education (ADE)
5. The Arizona Healthcare Cost Containment System (AHCCCS)

Of these five agencies, there are three state agencies responsible for providing the early intervention services in Arizona. These service-providing agencies are:

1. The Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (ASDB)
2. The Department of Economic Securities: Division of Developmental Disabilities (DES/DDD)
3. The Department of Economic Security: Arizona Early Intervention Program (DES/AzEIP)

All of these agencies work together under a Team-Based Early Intervention model, but coordination of services for each child may be done by a different agency, depending on the child's eligibility. Children with a permanent, bilateral hearing loss are eligible for service coordination and specialized hearing-related services through ASDB and AzEIP. Children with a temporary or unilateral hearing loss causing a delay in development may be eligible for services through DES/AzEIP. Children with developmental delays receive services through DDD and may also qualify for services from ASDB if there is a permanent bilateral hearing loss. As AzEIP states: "Early Intervention is professionals working in partnership with parents and families of children with special needs, to support their children's growth, development, and learning. Early Intervention happens in places where children and families live, learn, and play; the families' natural environments."



## Developmental and Educational Services for Children Ages Birth through 21 Years

Some children have more difficulty learning than others. They may have trouble achieving milestones in one or more of the following developmental or academic areas:

- Vision and Hearing
- Motor Control or Coordination
- Behavior or Social Skills
- Speech or Communication Skills
- Cognitive or Academic Skills

A referral for early intervention or special education services can come from a parent, guardian, foster parent, family member, teacher, counselor, or the student who finds learning difficult.

The earlier you express your concerns, the sooner your child's needs will be identified and the sooner he or she will receive the help needed to succeed.



Do you have concerns about your child's development or progress in school?

## Helping All Children Succeed



### What Is Child Find?

Child find is a component of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 (IDEA '04) that requires states to *locate, identify, and evaluate* all children with disabilities, **aged birth through 21**, who are in need of early intervention or special education services. This includes children who are highly mobile, such as migrant or homeless children, children suspected of having a disability even though they are advancing from grade to grade, private school students, and homeschool students.

The Arizona initiative for child find is referred to as AZ FIND.

Local public education agency contact:

#### AZ FIND

1-800-352-4558 or 928-679-8106  
azfind@azed.gov or  
[www.azed.gov/special-education/az-find](http://www.azed.gov/special-education/az-find)

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**Help for Infants and Toddlers**

Children ages **birth to 2 years 10 1/2 months** are screened through the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) to determine if early intervention services are needed.

Early intervention brings professionals, working in partnership with parents and families of children with special needs, together to support infants' or toddlers' growth, development, and learning.

If you have questions about your child's development an AzEIP specialist will talk with you about your concerns and observe your child. If your child is found eligible, a plan will be designed to include strategies, activities, and supports to achieve desired outcomes related to your child's needs.

**Make an online referral** at [www.azdes.gov/azecip](http://www.azdes.gov/azecip). For more information, call 1-888-439-5609 or (602) 532-9960.

**Help for Preschool and School-Aged Children**

Your local school district, or the charter school your child attends (for school-aged students), screens children ages **2 years 10 1/2 months through 21 years**. Public schools use an informal screening process to check your child's development and academic progress.

- Screening must be completed within 45 calendar days of the date you notify the school of your concerns.
- When a concern is identified through screening procedures, you must be notified within 10 school days and informed of procedures to follow up on your child's needs. For example:
  - Your child may be referred to the school's study team for pre-intervention services; or,
  - If screening results indicate your child may have a disability, a comprehensive evaluation will be necessary to determine your child's eligibility for special education and related services. A team, of which you will be a member, will meet to begin the process.

Screening and evaluation are free. All information contained in the screening or evaluation is confidential.

**Contact your local school district or the charter school your child attends.** For children attending private schools, contact the principal at the school district in which the private school is located.

**Be Involved!**

Family engagement has a positive influence on your child's academic success and emotional development.

- Set high expectations and establish goals.
- Communicate frequently with teachers to monitor your child's achievements.
- Ask for ideas and materials to help your child learn at home.
- Reward progress and celebrate accomplishments.
- Volunteer for classroom and schoolwide activities.
- Attend community events and workshops that promote learning and social growth.

Source: Arizona Department of Education, AZ FIND

## Arizona Parent Resource Guide for Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Hospitals, audiologists, medical providers, family members, caregivers, or even neighbors may refer a child to AzEIP. An online referral form is available on their website, as well as on the ASDB website. Additionally, audiologists who diagnose a hearing loss will send a referral to the Department of Health Services and ASDB's early intervention program. No matter who receives the referral, all of the AzEIP service providing agencies (ASDB, DDD and AzEIP) will coordinate together to make sure the family is contacted in a timely manner. Below are some of the key timelines in early intervention:

- The referring person should receive a notification that the referral was received within 2 business days.
- An early intervention provider will contact the family within 2 business days after notification. If the family cannot be contacted after several attempts, then a letter will be sent to the family notifying them that the referral is being closed. If the family is interested in pursuing eligibility or services, the family should receive a home visit from a provider within 10 business days.
- If the child is determined eligible for services by a review of medical records or an evaluation, an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) will be written within 45 days of the initial referral.
- Any services on the IFSP should be expected to begin within 30 days of the writing of the IFSP.
- The IFSP should be reviewed and updated at least every 6 months, with a new IFSP being written annually.

More detailed information about Arizona Early Intervention services can be found on the AzEIP website.

### **Arizona Early Intervention Program, AzEIP, Family Information**

[www.azdes.gov/AzEIP/Family-Information](http://www.azdes.gov/AzEIP/Family-Information)

**888-439-5609**

## Arizona Parent Resource Guide for Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

The component of IDEA that requires states to locate, identify, and evaluate all children from birth to age 21 with disabilities who are in need of early intervention or special education services is called “Child Find.” In the state of Arizona, it is titled “AZ Find.” The website for AZ Find contains links and resources for parents of children at different ages.

### **AZ Find**

[www.azed.gov/special-education/az-find](http://www.azed.gov/special-education/az-find)

**800-352-4558**

A child who has an established hearing loss is determined to be eligible for early intervention services following an evaluation of medical records. In some cases, a home evaluation may be conducted to determine if the child has a developmental delay greater than 50%.

The next step is for family members to meet with a few professionals from the early intervention team to complete a child and family assessment. The assessment is simply a discussion with the family about their daily routines and activities, priorities for their family and child, any resources they might have available to them outside of the early intervention program (i.e. community programs, church, family support, etc.) and any concerns about their child. If there are concerns about certain areas of the child’s development, the early intervention provider may use an approved tool or test to help gather more information.

Based on the family’s routines, resources, priorities, and concerns, the team (including the family members) will identify some desired outcomes and the services that might be needed to help the family and/or child to reach those outcomes. Some examples of services that may be available depending on the needs of the child and the desire of the family are: audiology services, sign language services, special instruction, speech language pathology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, social work, psychology, and vision services.

Arizona utilizes the Team-Based Model of early intervention, so expertise from a full range of Part C service professionals will be accessible to the team for every child. During the IFSP meeting, the family and other team members will select a Team Lead, who will be the primary contact for the family and the one who does the most visits with the family. Other team members may join the Team Lead for family visits and offer support and assistance, or may just be available if the Team Lead needs to ask them some questions by phone or during weekly team meetings.

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This support, however, depends upon the desired outcomes that the family and other team members have documented on the IFSP.

The Hearing and Vision Specialists (Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; and Teachers of the Blind and Visually Impaired), and some audiologists are employed by ASDB. These professionals support all modes of communication.

### **ASDB Early Childhood and Family Education**

<http://bit.ly/ASDBECFE>

**520-770-3464; 855-822-5121**

Service Coordinators for children who qualify for DDD services are employed by DES/DDD.

AzEIP contracts with different businesses in local communities across Arizona to hire local team members to serve families. These contracted teams have a core team including: a developmental special instructionist, a speech language pathologist, an occupational therapist, and a physical therapist. Additional team members include a social worker, psychologist, and the ASDB Hearing and Vision Specialists. A Service Coordinator, employed by the AzEIP team, may be utilized for children who do not receive service coordination from ASDB or DDD. All of these team members work together and meet as a group regularly to constantly improve the quality of services for families. Families are invited to participate in team meetings (in person or by phone) when their child is being discussed.

Evaluation and assessment, service coordination, and team meetings are provided at no cost to all families receiving AzEIP services. Arizona is a state that charges families a percentage of the cost for their other IFSP services, based on a sliding scale. This fee system is called Family Cost Participation. When a family first meets with their early intervention Service Coordinator, they will receive a copy of the Family Cost Participation paperwork. This paperwork must be completed and mailed to ASDB or AzEIP to determine the percentage of services, based upon their household income, the family will have to pay. Many families have 0% or a very low percentage of fees to pay. Knowing this percentage helps families decide which services to accept at the IFSP meeting. If a family chooses not to submit this information, their percent to

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pay is automatically 100%. Families may also consent to have AzEIP bill their private or public insurance companies for services first. If the insurance company does not pay, then the family must pay their percentage. Please see more details on Family Cost Participation on the AzEIP website listed below.

### **AzEIP Family Cost Participation**

**[www.azdes.gov/AzEIP/Family-Cost-Participation](http://www.azdes.gov/AzEIP/Family-Cost-Participation)**

Families with public insurance programs are often approved for audiology and speech language pathology services through Arizona Children's Rehabilitative Services (CRS). CRS is a family-centered medical treatment, rehabilitation, and related support service center for children under the age of 21 with qualifying conditions and who are enrolled in the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). Members may receive care and services in a clinic-like setting or from participating doctors in their office practice. AHCCCS has contracted with UnitedHealthcare Community Plan to administer the CRS Program.

### **United Healthcare- Arizona Children's Rehabilitative Services (CRS)**

**[www.uhcommunityplan.com/az/medicaid/childrens-rehabilitative-services.html](http://www.uhcommunityplan.com/az/medicaid/childrens-rehabilitative-services.html)**

**800-348-4058**

Families may choose to supplement the Early Intervention Services provided by the state through other local community resources. Additionally, participation in the Arizona Early Intervention Program is optional, and a family may choose to decline AzEIP services and use only community resources.

One community resource that may be considered is the private, not-for-profit school, Desert Voices in Phoenix, Arizona. The mission of the school is to teach deaf and hard of hearing children the oral language skills needed to speak and understand when others speak to them. The school is a certified Moog Center, seeking to prepare children who are deaf/HH to enter a traditional school setting with age appropriate speech and language skills and at the academic

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level of their hearing peers. Desert Voices Early Intervention Program typically serves children from 4 weeks to approximately first grade.

### **Desert Voices Early Intervention Program**

[www.desert-voices.org](http://www.desert-voices.org)

**602-224-0598**

The IFSP team might also suggest that the child who is deaf or hard of hearing receive additional services from a speech pathologist, also called a speech-language pathologist or SLP, who works for a university program or is in private practice. The speech therapy approaches used with a child who has a hearing loss are different from those used with a child with normal hearing who has difficulty with speech and/or language. It is therefore important to find a speech pathologist who specializes in working with children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Each of the three large state universities in Arizona have speech and hearing clinics that provide speech, language, and hearing services for children. Please visit the website for each of these programs to investigate the special services these universities might be able to provide for your child with a hearing loss.

### **Arizona State University Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences**

[www.shs.asu.edu](http://www.shs.asu.edu)

**480-965-2374**

### **Northern Arizona University Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders**

[www.csd.nau.edu](http://www.csd.nau.edu)

**928-523-2969**

### **University of Arizona Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences**

[www.slhs.arizona.edu](http://www.slhs.arizona.edu)

**520-621-1644**