All children learn and grow at their own pace, but sometimes they may need extra support.

WHEN TO CONTACT STRONG START

Families, caregivers or a member of the community, such as a pediatrician, may notice that a child is not developing at the same rate as other children. Anyone concerned about a child's early development from birth to age 3 should call Strong Start as soon as possible.

After a referral, a Strong Start specialist will collect basic information, explain more about early intervention and answer any questions.

Refer online at **eip.osse.dc.gov** or call **(202) 727-3665**.

Strong Start is the early intervention program in DC administered through the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), Division of Early Learning.

Strong Start works with DC families, child care providers and medical professionals to identify children younger than the age of 3 who have, or at the risk of having, developmental disabilities or delays.
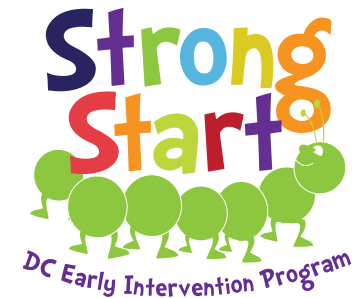
CONTACT US

If you have questions or developmental concerns about a child who is 3 or younger, please contact the Strong Start Hotline.

Call **(202) 727-3665** or visit **www.osse.dc.gov**

Strong Start
DC Early Intervention Program

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
WE ARE WASHINGTON
DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR
OSSE

Strong Start
DC Early Intervention Program

DC's Early Intervention Program

Giving the District's Children a Strong Start

WHAT IS EARLY INTERVENTION?

Children learn best within their everyday activities and interests. Early intervention services support parents and caregivers to assist in their child's growth and development within daily activities, interests and routines.

Parents and caregivers are their child's best advocate.

Since parents spend the most time with their child, they are the best people to track and support their child's development.

Strong Start provides early intervention services and supports for children birth to 3 and their families who are District residents.

Families are not charged for early intervention services. Under DC law, all services delivered by Strong Start are provided at no cost regardless of the family's income, availability of insurance and legal or employment status.

STRONG START SERVICES

Strong Start provides year-round services that are voluntary, flexible and free.

- Strong Start early intervention services are provided in a child's natural environment, which includes home, early care and education settings, libraries and other community settings.

- Strong Start uses a coaching interaction style to build on the capacity of families and caregivers to help their child learn and develop. This approach is different from the in-clinic approach often used by hospitals, therapy centers and private therapists who accept prescriptions.

- The services take place during a family's daily activities and routines.

- One member of the team, serving as the Primary Service Provider (PSP), functions as the primary liaison between the family and other team members.

HOW STRONG START HELPS DC FAMILIES

After a referral is made, the family is assigned a service coordinator who is their main point of contact throughout the Strong Start program. The service coordinator is also the link between the family and other professionals who will work with the child.

The service coordinator is trained to help families understand the services available and connect them to community resources.

Together families and service coordinators will decide how often they may need support to help their child meet his/her Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) outcomes. Using a PSP approach to service delivery, a team of professionals works together to support children, families and caregivers.

Early intervention services are provided to eligible infants and toddlers and their families until a child's third birthday. Eligibility is based on the child's developmental needs. It is determined by conducting an evaluation of the child's communication, motor, adaptive, cognitive and social-emotional areas.

If eligible, the family and early intervention team will develop an IFSP that identifies the services, supports and goals that best address the concerns and priorities of the parents or caregivers.