



## 10 Things Families Need to Know About Early Intervention in the District of Columbia (DC)

- 1. Strong Start, the District of Columbia's Early Intervention Program (DC EIP),** provides early intervention services and supports for children birth to three, such as speech and language, occupational therapy, and playgroups on a voluntary basis for District residents free of charge.
- 2. Services are provided to eligible infants and toddlers and their families.** Your child is evaluated to determine if he/she is eligible for early intervention services or other community supports.
- 3. An Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) is unique to the needs of each child and their family.** If your child is found eligible, you and your DC EIP team will develop an IFSP. The services and supports described on the IFSP are specific to the concerns and priorities discussed during the IFSP meeting. The IFSP may also include other community-based programs and activities you can access to help your child reach the IFSP outcomes.
- 4. Early intervention services are family-centered.** Family-centered care takes into consideration the strengths, concerns, priorities, and resources you have as a family when the team is developing your child's IFSP.
- 5. Strong Start uses a coaching interaction style to work with children and families.** This approach is different from the in-clinic approach used by many private therapists and agencies who accept prescriptions. Your early intervention team will collaborate with you to decide how often you need support to help your child meet his/her IFSP outcomes. You will receive coaching on how to promote your child's IFSP outcomes through participation in everyday activities.
- 6. Parents are their child's best advocate.** Collaborate and communicate often with your early intervention team about your child's progress and needs. Your relationship with your early intervention team is important for both you and your child.
- 7. Strong Start service providers are qualified professionals.** All service providers meet the District of Columbia's personnel standards. They are skilled and knowledgeable individuals, and are trained to support you and your family in meeting your child's IFSP outcomes. All services are monitored by local program administrators.
- 8. Early intervention services are provided in a child's natural environment.** A child may receive services in locations such as: a home, an early care and education setting, through a playgroup and/or at a library.
- 9. Families and children have rights under DC and federal law.** You will receive a copy of the Families Have Rights: DC's Procedural Safeguards Notice whenever a decision, change, or update is made in your Early Intervention Record. This includes at your initial family interview, prior to evaluation or assessment, and again during the development and update of your child's IFSP. A parent has the right to consent or decline any service recommended by the early intervention team.
- 10. Families are not charged for early intervention services.** Under DC and federal law, all services delivered by Strong Start must be provided at no cost to you, regardless of your family's income, availability of insurance, or employment status.

