

Importance of Early Intervention Services



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Types of Early Intervention Services

Early Childhood Education

Services such as HeadStart and other high quality early learning/development centers are positive interventions that can mitigate the impact of ACEs. ECE programs provide educational opportunities and resources for all children including families impacted by poverty. High quality programs such as Early Head Start or other programs accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) focus on school readiness and provide support services for families with young children.

Home Based Parenting Programs

Intervention services that occur within the home are considered home-based parenting programs and are designed to reduce the barriers of families traveling to community based services and provide intervention services that can be implemented in the home setting. Trained professionals provide families with in-home developmental screenings, resource referrals, social support, parenting education, and interventions focused on supporting high-risk families. The goal of home-based parenting services such as SafeCare, Parents as Teachers, Sooner Start and Children First can differ, with all programs designed to support children and families⁶.

Community Based Group Interventions

Community based group interventions, such as Legacy for Children, focus on group based approaches. The goal of these services are to provide a safe place for mothers to connect with other moms in similar circumstances while also providing onsite child care. They meet weekly to discuss current issues and problems they face, while a trained professional provides insight and access to services to help the group members.

Family Focused Intervention

Family focused treatment interventions focus on services for the broader family system. Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP) is a common family intervention for individuals who have experienced trauma. The main goal of CPP is to strengthen the parent child relationship after a traumatic event, as a child may have lost trust or the sense of security in their parent⁷. Family treatment services occur after exposure to multiple ACEs.

Adverse Childhood Experience

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events (such as child abuse, neglect, and family dysfunction) that can have lifelong impacts on a child's social, emotional, and physical well-being¹. ACEs can impact normative development and are linked to possible risk outcomes including risky behavior and physical and mental health difficulties¹. ACEs are measured on a scale of 1-10 with 45.5% of high risk Oklahomans experiencing three or more ACEs as compared to 22% in the original CDC-Kaiser Permanente study³.

Importance of Early Brain Health

Brain development begins before birth and lasts well into adulthood. The first 5 years are the most crucial for brain development among individuals. To develop a healthy brain, it needs a strong base. Think of a brain like building a house, it needs to have a sound foundation before being built upon. Simple neural connections are built first, followed by more complex neural connections¹.



Importance of Early Intervention Services

Early intervention services are designed to aid children that are exposed to risk factors, diagnosed with developmental delays, or diagnosed physical health conditions⁴. Early intervention services have proven to show success with children both in and out of the classroom. The earlier the services begin, the more positive the long-term outcome for the child. Early intervention services create positive early experiences for children, strengthening the structure of the developing brain. Each state has their own early intervention programs and require certain qualifications for eligibility. However, services generally include a focus on enhancing physical, cognitive, adaptive, communication, social, and sensory processing skills⁵.

Early Brain Health and ACE's

A toxic response is considered the prolonged activation of the stress response systems in the absence of protective relationships¹. Further early adverse experiences can lead to weakened brain structures and improper neural connections. A weak brain structure affects the foundation for all learning and behavior, as well as overall health². Children who are exposed to four or more ACEs are:

- 4.6 times more likely to experience depression and/or develop a drug or alcohol addiction
- At a higher risk to experience learning disabilities
- More likely to be diagnosed with severe health problems³

Benefits of Early Intervention Services

- Early intervention services may include the whole family
- Service practices can be used in the child's daily routine
- Children learn lifelong skills
- Parents learn appropriate ways to connect with their child
- Parent - Child interactions are strengthened
- Family members are more willing to utilize community services
- Greater success between the alignment of diagnosis and outcomes



References

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