



ROBERT BENTLEY
GOVERNOR

STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
RSA UNION BUILDING
100 NORTH UNION STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 301410
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-1410
WWW.MH.ALABAMA.GOV



JAMES V. PERDUE
COMMISSIONER

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Contact: Office of Planning and Resource Development
334-242-3417

Early Intervention Decreases the Need for Special Education

MONTGOMERY — The Alabama Department of Mental Health encourages Alabamians to learn about Alabama's Early Intervention System.

AEIS, a program of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, coordinates services statewide for infants and toddlers with disabilities and developmental delays from birth to age 3, preparing them and their families for the transition to the Alabama State Department of Education's First Class Pre-K program. In FY15, AEIS served 6,231 infants and toddlers and their families.

ADMH participates in AEIS by contracting with 24 local community agencies across the state to provide direct EI services to eligible infants and toddlers and their families. Commissioner Jim Perdue recently paid a visit to one of those agencies, the Shoals Committee on Programs and Employment, in Florence. While at SCOPE he spent some time learning about their EI program and interacting with a couple of toddlers. Commissioner Perdue said "Money spent on children is money well spent. Our return on investment becomes evident as they mature into responsible adults. My mission is to make sure that we invest our best asset: our children."

Studies indicate:

- About one in six children in the U.S. had one or more developmental disabilities or delays in 2006-2008 (CDC)
- The prevalence of parent-reported developmental disabilities increased 17 percent from 1997-2008 (CDC)
- 46 percent of children who had received Early Intervention and been at risk of needing special education services did not need special education at kindergarten age (NEILS)
- Every dollar spent on Early Intervention saves \$7 in future costs (Heckman)

Children receiving EI services through ADMH contracts do not have to have a mental health concern or diagnosis, but must meet the AEIS eligibility criteria of being a child under the age of 36 months who is either demonstrating a 25% delay in any of the five areas of development: *cognitive, communication, physical (includes motor, hearing, and/or vision), adaptive/self-help, or social/emotional*, or have a documented qualifying medical diagnosis that has a likelihood of leading to developmental delay during early childhood.

If you have a concern about your infant or toddler's development, call Early Intervention Child Find at 1-800-543-3098 (English) or 1-866-450-2838 (Spanish).

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Resources

With the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services as the lead agency, Alabama's Early Intervention System is comprised of the following agencies: Alabama Department of Human Resources, the Alabama Department of Insurance, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Alabama Department of Public Health, the Alabama Department of Transportation, the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, the Alabama Medicaid Agency, the Alabama State

Department of Education and Head Start. For more information about ADMH's role in the AEIS, please visit:
<http://www.mh.alabama.gov/ChildrenAdolescent/EarlyIntervention.aspx>.

For additional questions, you may contact the ADMH Early Intervention Coordinator, Jane Duer at:
205-478-4756 or jane.duer@mh.alabama.gov.

