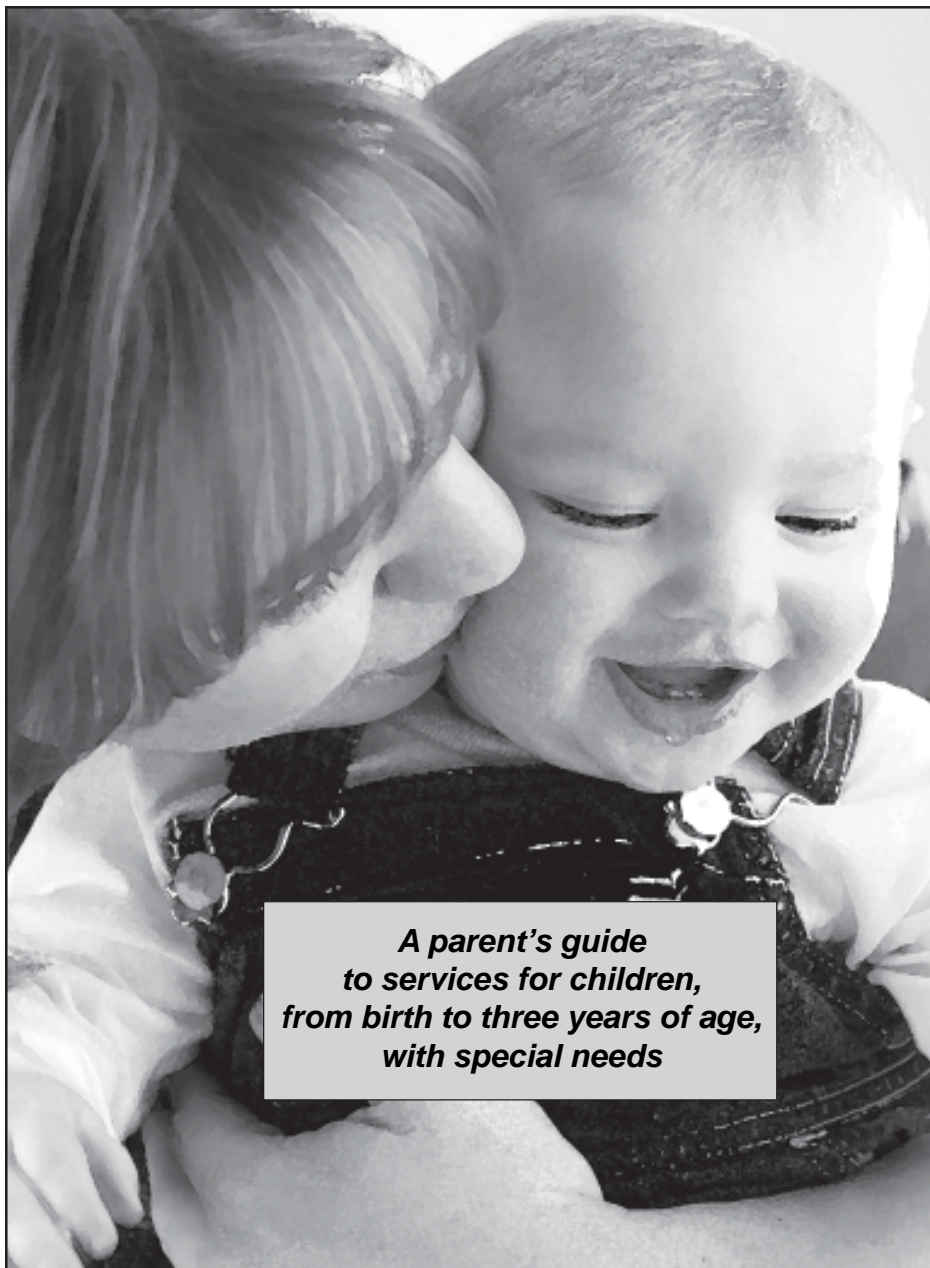


## Dear Parents,

*This booklet is for you and your family. It will introduce you to **Tennessee's Early Intervention System (TEIS)**. This system is funded through the Tennessee Department of Education and it can provide a lot or a little; it depends on what you feel you need. Through **TEIS** you can get answers to the questions you may have about your baby's growth and development and find the special services your child may need. You can also use this system to determine which other services your child may be eligible to receive, including Children's Special Services (CSS) through the Tennessee Department of Health, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits through the Social Security Administration office, and many others. There is help for your child, and it is only a phone call away.*

**1-800-852-7157**



Tennessee's Early Intervention System  
***"Tomorrow's Success Begins Today."***



## Inside this guide

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- 6 Your child may need an eligibility evaluation.
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## Welcome

All babies are special. They bring joy, pride, and immeasurable love into our lives. From the beginning, our task as parents seems simple enough. We must provide nourishment, shelter, and love.

As our children begin to grow, we look beyond their basic needs and consider their physical and mental abilities. Some children and their families have special needs. Families may need information about specific disabilities and the numerous services that are available for their child. Examples would be physical, occupational, speech/language therapies, and special instruction. Families may also be interested in support groups and services, which will strengthen the family's ability to help their child. This is where **Tennessee's Early Intervention System (TEIS)** can help.

**TEIS** is a system where parents and professionals work together to provide every possible advantage for children with special needs. **TEIS** is a system devoted to providing these advantages in the most natural environment, close to home, and within the family's community.



## *The first step is a referral.*

Referrals can come from parents, doctors and other professional, aunts, uncles, grandparents and friends. Through a referral, parents are offered the opportunity to get the information and support they need or desire for their child with special needs. This information and support should be tailored to the family's existing schedules and routines.

Contacting **TEIS** can be done by writing or calling the nearest system office listed on the map in this guide.

**1-800-852-7157**

## *After the referral, there will be an initial meeting.*

Once you or someone you know has made contact with **TEIS**, a regional service coordinator will meet you to obtain some basic information about your child and family. This is often referred to as an intake. The service coordinator will need to know your child's full name, date of birth, social security number, and birth certificate number. Additional information such as physicians' addresses, insurance numbers, and disability diagnoses will also be needed to complete an intake form. If you were able to provide a brief medical history or the results from an assessment that your child might have had, this too would be useful information.





### *Next comes coordination of services*

**TEIS** offers your family a system of coordinated services so you can spend more time in family activities, instead of locating needed services.



Following the intake meeting, the service coordinator will continue to gather information including your child's current medical and developmental records. Additional screenings, evaluations, and assessments may be needed to determine eligibility for services through this system. If your child is eligible under the guidelines of **TEIS**, a service coordinator will be available to you and your family until your child reaches the age of three. This service coordinator is

the person whom you can count on to help you find services suited to you and your child.

Your service coordinator will work with other professionals who are important to your child's development in order to create a team. Through this team's effort a plan of service will be developed and coordinated to work on behalf of your child and family in the environment most natural for your life-style.

If your child does not meet **TEIS** eligibility, information and referral to other programs may be provided.

### *Your Child may need a screening.*

A screening is a brief review of your child's skill's to see if there are concerns or delay in any area of development. If a delay is noticed during the screening, further evaluation will be suggested. This process will determine whether or not your child is eligible for services with **TEIS**. Sometimes your physician, a nurse from the Health Department, or a developmental specialist completes a screening through routine checkups.

### *Or your child may need an eligibility evaluation,*

Some children are eligible for the services provided by **TEIS** from a diagnosis of a known medical condition. These children will not need an eligibility evaluation. Other children may need a skill check that looks at development



in more detail than a screening. This is called an evaluation. An evaluation takes longer than a screening. Evaluations give more information about development.

Children must have a certain level of delay to be eligible for the services of **TEIS**. Many times an evaluation is needed to determine more precisely how well a child is developing.

Remember children with known conditions like cerebral palsy, spina bifida, and Down syndrome are eligible for services with **TEIS** automatically. No screening or evaluation is needed because these conditions place children at high risk for developmental delays.

*Your child can be evaluated or assessed only with your permission. The results are strictly confidential and can only be released with your written consent.*





*Or your child may need an assessment for programming.*

Once a child is found eligible for **TEIS** it is important to assess the child with tests. This will help in planning the best course of action. These tests help parents and teachers know better how to help a child learn skills and make progress. Screening, eligibility evaluation, and assessment each involve steps of their own. Each one uses specific procedures and tests. If you would like to know more about any of these three aspects of TEIS, please call the TEIS office closest to you. There is a map on the last page of this guide to help you locate the office nearest to you.

*A “family needs assessment” can be helpful.*

Knowing what a family needs what they hope for and want can help **TEIS** serve families better. One way to get this information is through a, “family needs assessment”. This should include discussions (interviews) with you and members of your

family and, should you choose, completion of helpful questionnaires. These questions will be simple and straightforward and you may feel that they are less important than more obvious needs, such as the medical or physical needs of your child. Nevertheless, this information is probably the most important information that you will provide. The “family needs assessment” is optional. It would be your decision whether or not to explore the unique needs and concerns of your family with your service coordinator. Then this information would be included in the overall assessment process. Some or all of these facts may be shared with other early



intervention professionals. With this added information, the plan of services developed for your child and family would better reflect your desires for your child. Putting this plan in writing is the next step in the process for **TEIS**.

*If your child is eligible for TEIS services, it is time to write an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).*

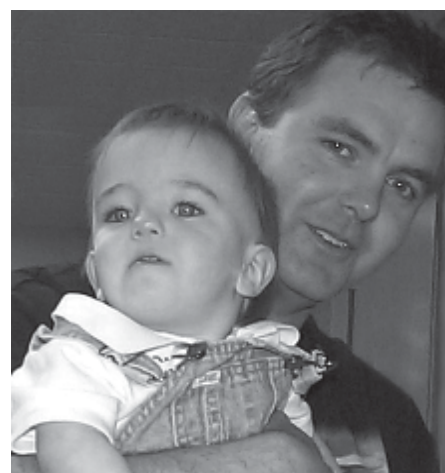
As a parent, you are the most knowledgeable source of information when it comes to your child’s needs. That is why your role in the IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan) is the most important one of all.

What is an IFSP? It is simply the process of writing down a family plan of services for you and your child to be sure that all of your needs are recognized. It is a team effort including your family, the service coordinator, service providers, and any others you would like to have present.

Some of the things that will be discussed and used to develop a family plan are:

- Your needs, routines, schedules, and environments that are natural to your family’s lifestyle
- Your child’s immediate needs and long range goals
- Specific services that will help your family and your child to meet those goals
- Activities to help your child’s transition to future services on his/her third birthday

The IFSP is the beginning of a partnership with the professionals who provide services that your family wants. The papers that are filled out at the IFSP are a set of actions to meet your needs. This plan can be modified anytime to handle the changes in concerns or priorities. The IFSP team is meant to be responsive to the changing circumstances of your needs and to safeguard your child’s rights.







*You will want to know your legal rights.*



Public Law 105-17 Part C is a section of the greater law, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This section lists steps and requirements that must be followed when providing early intervention services. These requirements are called



procedural safeguards. They were designed to make sure that the rights of your child and your family are protected during the early intervention years.

These procedural safeguards are listed below:

- Appropriate communication to parents
- Steps for getting parental consent
- Impartial procedures for solving problems
- A child's right to services in a natural environment
- Parents' right to review their child's records
- Parents' right to decline services
- Nondiscriminatory testing procedures
- Appropriate notice for changes in services
- In the event that no parent is available, appropriate procedures for appointing a surrogate parent must be implemented to ensure that the educational rights of the child are safeguarded

You will be given a written copy of these rights at the intake meeting. This document is called, "The Rights of Infants and Toddlers". It will be reviewed with you during the IFSP meeting. You may request further information on these procedural safeguards by contacting your **TEIS** service coordinator or any district office. We would be happy to assist you.

**1-800-852-7157**

*Time flies, so thinking ahead is beneficial.*

It is important for **TEIS** to know what you have in mind for you child as he/she grows. Questions



like..."What will happen to services for my child when he turns three?", "Where can I get child care?" "Can I get the special services my child needs when leaving the early intervention program?",...can all be discussed long before your child actually goes to or transitions into other services systems. When your child turns three, early intervention services will be provided by the local education agency (LEA) or by another appropriate program. Well in advance, the "Transition" portion of the IFSP will address these questions. It will provide a place for you and your team to record these discussions and specific activities. This transition part of the IFSP is intended to make the process of moving to a new service system at age three as easy as possible.





The law that enacted **TEIS** has been written with the requirement and commitment to encourage family focused intervention in a natural environment. After years of best practice intervention, the service system in Tennessee has profited from families' influences. Their input is evident at every level of our state's service delivery system.



It is families and their strength and resolve to help their child that makes services, programs, and systems work. It is the commitment of the family, the professional, the community, and the state working and learning together that produces a true partnership. It is this kind of partnership that has long lasting influence and the potential to make positive improvements in society for all of its citizens.

### *Transitioning is part of early intervention.*

There are many important considerations about transitioning from one service or system to another. This process should begin by the time your child turns two. Depending on the needs of your child, sometimes this planning can begin earlier. The IFSP will oversee this aspect of early intervention to ensure a smooth transition from **TEIS** to whatever program you choose.

Programs that have been committed to family-professional partnerships that build on the strengths of families



are more beneficial for everyone involved. Programs that have been mindful of the unique needs of families' existing schedules, routines, and daily demands have created flexible models of service. This unique partnership has awarded these same programs with long term successes.

### *This is a partnership.*



**"Tomorrow's Success Begins Today."**



**Dear Parents,**

Thank you for taking time to read this booklet. The steps to this service system have been briefly covered here. You can call **TEIS** at 1-800-852-7157 and reach the district office nearest you for more detailed information.

Please cut off the bottom portion of this page and use this information card. Fill it in, and fold it to carry with you. When you visit different providers and programs, you will have all your basic information you may need for any paper work. It could save you some time and effort while caring for your child. **Tennessee's Early Intervention System** can help in many ways.



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## Tennessee's **Early Intervention System**

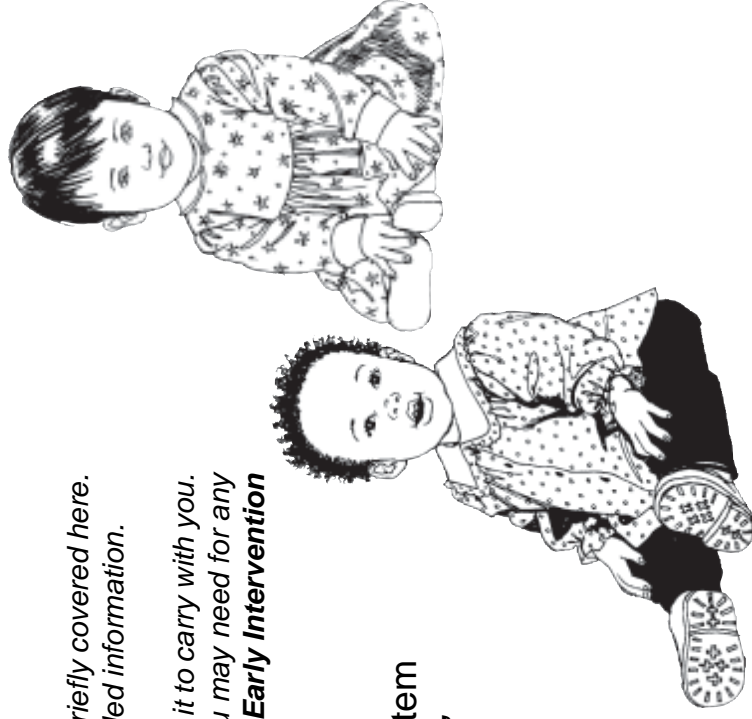
*"Tomorrow's Success Begins Today"*



**Call TEIS at 1-800-852-7157**



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Names (child): \_\_\_\_\_  
(parents): \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
SS # (Parents): \_\_\_\_\_

### **Child's Identification/Information**

D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_  
Diagnosis: \_\_\_\_\_  
SS # \_\_\_\_\_  
Birth Certificate # \_\_\_\_\_  
CSS # \_\_\_\_\_

SSI# \_\_\_\_\_  
TennCare # \_\_\_\_\_  
Insurance # \_\_\_\_\_  
Insurance Company & Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Medicines & Medical History: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician/Specialist: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**TELS Statewide: 1-800-852-7157**