**Early Intervention Services**

Early Intervention Services (EI) are provided by independent therapists whose services are coordinated and authorized through Child and Family Connections, an agency under the umbrella of Department of Human Services (DHS). Child become eligible for EI through a multidisciplinary evaluation process that must include at least two evaluators. Working with the child and family is always a developmental therapist (DT) and at least one other discipline (OT, PT, Speech, Social Work, Vision, Hearing, Dietician, etc). The evaluators must agree that the child has at least 30% delay in one or more areas, or state that in their “clinical opinion” the child requires services based on a set of observations.

An Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) is written for children receiving EI services. An IFSP is similar to an IEP, but it may include goals for both the child and the family. An IFSP should indicate what services and supports are being offered to the family in the “natural environment.” DHS defines the natural setting as anywhere that you would normally find children who do not have special needs. Typically, in the state of Illinois, this means that the child will be seen in his or her home so that the family can be shown how to help the child access the environment using the resources that are present in the home or using adaptive equipment that is purchased for the child’s use in the home through EI funds. The IFSP is reviewed every six months, and progress reports are written by the serving therapists at this time. If no therapist is available to provide services to the child, a re-evaluation will be conducted at the six month mark. This progress allows for data to be collected on a consist basis.

The VASE Assistant Director and the VASE Early Childhood Technical Assistant receive a list of children from the Illinois State Board of Education including those children who are 27 months or older. The list is generated to assist districts in planning of resources and classrooms in through the school year. In addition to the list provided by the state, CFC sends a list of children who are 30 months or older.