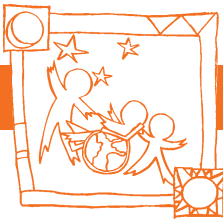


five steps

TO BECOMING YOUR INFANT OR TODDLER'S BEST ADVOCATE



Start by knowing **you are an equal partner** in your infant or toddler's development, medical care & education!

You know your child best...

- You know his or her developmental & medical history.
- You know your child's likes and dislikes.
 - You know what makes him or her happy or sad.
 - You know how to comfort & love your child.
 - You have a vision for your child's future.
 - You are an expert on your child!



Understand your feelings about yourself as a parent of a child with special needs or a disability!

Talk about your feelings with your spouse, partner, other family members, or friends.

You are not alone. Find out about local groups or organizations where you can find support and meet other families with similar experiences.

Know that some days will be better than others and that's OK!

Stay connected with your friends and favorite activities as much as possible.

Take good care of yourself and you will be better able to care for your child.



Acquire knowledge!

Learn about your baby's growth and development.

Learn what you can do to help your child grow and learn.

Learn about your rights under the Individuals w/ Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) & the services provided through the NC Early Intervention Infant-Toddler Program.

Ask lots of question when you talk with your child's physician and nurses, Early Intervention Service Coordinator, therapists, childcare providers, teachers, service providers and others.

4 Improve your Skills!

Communicate:

- Develop positive partnerships with professionals and others in your child's life.
- Address any concerns you have as they come up.
- Attack problems not people!
- Keep the focus on your child.

Documentation is key:

- Follow up your requests or conversations in writing and always keep a copy for your records.
- Keep a log or list of phone calls to your child's doctor, service providers & others.

Record Keeping:

- Keep all of your child's records together in one place.
- Ask your Early Intervention Service Coordinator for a Record Keeping Toolkit.



Participate!

Participate in...

- all meetings about your child.
- the development of your infant or toddler's IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan).
 - Be prepared to share your thoughts, ideas, and dreams for your child and family.
 - Work with your Early Intervention Service Coordinator to revise the IFSP as your child's needs change.

And remember... You really are your child's BEST advocate!

**The NC
Infant-Toddler Program**
1-855-623-2759
www.beeearly.nc.gov

ECAC
Exceptional Children's Assistance Center
1-800-962-6817
www.ecac-parentcenter.org

**The Central Directory of Resources
at FSN - Family Support Network**
1-800-852-0042
www.fsnnnc.org

ECAC is NC's Parent Training and Information Center (PTI)
and all services are provided free.



State of North Carolina • Department of Health and Human Services • Division of Public Health
www.ncdhhs.gov • www.beeearly.nc.gov

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