

What is Early Intervention?

Early Intervention provides services for children from birth to age three who have, or are at risk for, developmental delays. A community-based, integrated, developmental service sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Early Intervention provides comprehensive, integrated services, utilizing a family-centered approach.

Program Staff

Staff members are knowledgeable about the unique needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, and may include Developmental Specialists, Speech/Language Pathologists, Physical and Occupational Therapists, a Social Worker, Teacher of the Deaf and a Transition Specialist.

Program Schedule

Parent Child Playgroup:
Wednesdays 9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

Toddler Playgroups:
Wednesdays 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Fridays 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Registration

Enrollment can be initiated by parents or providers and can occur throughout the year.

Children enrolled in any EI Program in eastern/central Massachusetts may enroll in this specialized program upon completion of a waiver from the Department of Public Health.

The program is available at no cost to families of children who qualify for Early Intervention services. Siblings and children from the community who are under age 3 may enroll on a tuition basis, as space permits.

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Minute Man Arc: *improving the lives of children and adults with disabilities by increasing independence, personal choice, and self-advocacy.*

Minute Man Arc

Changing Lives, Changing Communities



Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Specialty Program at
Minute Man Arc
Early Intervention



The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialty Program

at Minute Man Arc Early Intervention provides family-centered services, information and support. The communication approach emphasizes listening and spoken language. Visual supports include English-based sign language, gestures, pictures and speech reading. Communication strategies are specific to each child's unique needs. Strong parental involvement in all aspects of the program results in the best outcomes.

- Supportive parent child playgroup for babies and families
- Nurturing toddler playgroup that facilitates and enhances all aspects of the child's development
- Defined, sequential approach to auditory skills and a language curriculum
- Staff who are knowledgeable about the unique needs of children with hearing loss and are licensed in their area of expertise
- Parent support group
- Weekly sign language class

Sign Language

In the weekly sign language class, parents and caregivers learn vocabulary from the language curriculum used in the Parent Child Playgroup and Toddler Playgroup settings. Instruction in sign language is intended to support spoken language and is offered during the Friday parent group.



Parent Child Playgroup

A comfortable and supportive environment in which to navigate the challenges of raising a child who is deaf or hard of hearing. It provides parent education on hearing loss and an opportunity to learn from each other. Led by a Social Worker and a Developmental Specialist, the playgroup enables parents to participate with their child. Recommended for children from birth to 22 months.

Toddler Playgroup

A curriculum-based, dynamic, and language-rich environment with a high staff-to-student ratio, this group is staffed with a Teacher of the Deaf, Speech and Language Pathologists, Developmental Specialists and a Physical Therapist. Sessions include child-centered play and directed activities intended to facilitate all areas of development with a focus on auditory, speech and language skills. Accommodations and classroom modifications assure the best access to speech for children with hearing loss, including a sound field system for whole group circle, art activity, and personal HATS (Hearing Assistive Technology Systems).

Toddler Playgroup Schedule

- Welcome children to classroom
- Monitor and troubleshoot personal amplification devices
- Child centered free play
- Snack
- Individual speech/language/auditory therapy sessions
- Circle time
- Goodbye song and parents return

Individual Therapy

Speech/language/auditory therapy is provided for each child with a hearing loss either once or twice a week, based on the child's needs. Parents participate in these therapy sessions.

Parent Group

Meets each Wednesday during playgroup to discuss the unique issues involved in raising a child who is deaf or hard of hearing. The facilitator is a Social Worker with significant expertise working with parents of children with hearing loss. Topics are based on the group's preference and interests. Guest speakers may be invited to present information on topics chosen by the group.



Funding

Early Intervention services are funded through private and public health insurance plans and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialty Program receives financial support from The Decibels Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to sponsoring this program and assuring that support for this population continues as children transition into school.