

In 1986, the “Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities Program”, which focused on infants and toddlers (birth to age three) as well as their families was added to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to:

- enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities, to minimize their potential for developmental delays and to recognize the significant brain development that occurs during the child’s first three years;
- enhance the capacity of families to meet the special needs of their infants and toddlers with disabilities.

In 1989, Oklahoma established the Oklahoma Early Intervention Act to provide for early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families in accordance with Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Implementation of this legislation required the development of a comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary and interagency system of services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families in Oklahoma. As a result of the Oklahoma Early Intervention Act the **SoonerStart Early Intervention Program** was created.

SoonerStart Mission Statement

The mission of the SoonerStart Early Intervention Program is to enhance the abilities of Oklahoma infants and toddlers with disabilities and/or developmental delays by strengthening the capacity of their families to support their development through an individualized, comprehensive, coordinated system of services and supports that are family-centered and transdisciplinary, occur in natural life contexts, and are based on evidence and current best practices in early intervention.

What is SoonerStart?

SoonerStart is Oklahoma’s Early Intervention Program for infants and toddlers, birth to 36 months, who have developmental delays, and their families. SoonerStart offers services families may need to promote healthy development in their child. SoonerStart can provide developmental screenings, evaluation, assessment, and early intervention. Early intervention during the first years of life can make a big impact on a child’s future.

SoonerStart can help families:

- Learn about and enhance their child’s development;
- Find information and community resources
- Connect with parent-to-parent support networks

SoonerStart is designed to help families maximize their child’s potential. Parents and service providers are partners in developing and implementing a program to achieve the best possible results for the child. Early intervention services are designed to meet the developmental needs of each eligible child and the needs of the family related to enhancing the child’s development.

Who is Eligible?

The children eligible for early intervention services in the state of Oklahoma are infants and toddlers age birth to 36 months who are developmentally delayed. Developmentally delayed means children of the chronological age group birth through two who exhibit a delay in their developmental age compared to their chronological age of fifty percent or score two standard deviations below the mean in one of the following areas or in a sub-domain of one of the following areas: cognitive, physical, communication, social or emotional or adaptive development; or exhibit a delay in their developmental age compared to their chronological age of twenty-five percent or score one and one-half standard deviations below the mean in two or more of the following areas or in a subdomain of two or more of the following areas: cognitive, physical, communication, social or emotional or adaptive development; or have a diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in delay.