babyhearing.org

When to Start Early Intervention

The answer to the question "When?" is "Now!"

Babies' **brain development** benefits from early stimulation and parents benefit from the support early intervention provides.

- The earlier a baby starts to watch and/or listen to the language you are using, the sooner language, speech and/or signing and listening can develop.
- Your family-infant teacher will support you in figuring out how to provide rich stimulation all day long during every day events like; feeding, diapering and cuddling.
- Early intervention will offer support as you make adjustments to knowing that your little one is deaf or hard of hearing.

How will we know if we are succeeding?

Your family-infant teacher will observe your baby, ask you about signs of development, and help you look for progress. Together you look for growing eye contact and use of gestures and vocalizations from your baby in response to your voice and/or signs.

- Update checklists of developmental milestones that you can every week, every month, or every few months.
- There are games that family-infant teachers play that are really tests of your baby's growth and development.
- This process is called ongoing assessment. Babies change so rapidly in their first months and years that we cannot wait a year to see if they are making progress.

How is assessment like a road map?

Your family-infant teacher will help you take cues from observing your baby.

- How your baby responds tells you what is working and what to try next.
- Ongoing assessments and observations teach us about how your baby likes to learn and communicate.
- Many babies respond well to hearing aids and/or cochlear implants and are able to learn clearly by listening; other babies learn just as fast through their eyes.
- If we pay attention to what they do, and how they respond to us, we will know how to encourage their communication.
- That decision is very important, and it needs to be based on ongoing assessment.
- Later, as we continue to observe, we can make new decisions based on new information.