

OHIO EARLY INTERVENTION

Public Awareness Campaign
COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT



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ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit is designed to provide Ohio Early Intervention (EI) service coordination agencies, along with Help Me Grow Central Intake, with foundational messaging, templates, and resources to be able to consistently raise awareness and build outreach efforts for EI services in each county and across the state. This toolkit is organized in three sections:

1. Awareness Building & Outreach Materials
2. Marketing & Communications
3. Peer-to-Peer Learning & Collaboration

WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOLKIT?

This toolkit is designed for Ohio Early Intervention service coordination agencies and their staff. Whether your agency has a dedicated marketing/communications position or not, the resources are designed to provide you with a framework and allow for flexibility as you customize your communications efforts to your community and stakeholders.

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THIS TOOLKIT?

- Key messaging framework and audience-specific messages
- Examples of family and provider referral materials
- Ideas for promotional products
- Ideas for supporting an EI Awareness Day/Event
- Launching a local advertising and media relations campaign
 - Sample Public Service Announcement (PSA)
 - Sample print ads – color and black/white
 - Sample billboard ads
 - Sample social media content and graphics
 - Sample press release
 - Sample blog post/newsletter article
 - Tips for working with the media
- Ideas for supporting peer-to-peer collaboration
 - Family peer networks
 - Professional peer networks
 - Parent/family events
 - Local provider agency/organization collaboration

HOW TO ACCESS THE RESOURCES

To access all of the resources and templates in this toolkit, go to www.HelpMeGrow.org. Then, click on the “Early Intervention” section and go to the bottom of the page. There, EI service coordination agencies will be able to access all of the resources.

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about the resources in this toolkit, please contact communications@HelpMeGrow.org and a member of the Help Me Grow Central Intake’s marketing and communications team will respond.

**Toolkit content created June 2020*

PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVE

The objective for this campaign is to increase public awareness and outreach efforts within local communities about Ohio Early Intervention (EI) services and initiatives, including the referral process.

SUCCESS METRICS

Public Awareness

- Increase in Ohio Early Intervention website traffic (visits, downloads, etc.)
- Increase in social media engagement
- Secure positive media coverage

Outreach

- Increase in the number of referrals
- Increase in percentage of referrals leading to eligibility
- Increase in attendance at local events
- Increase in number of local and regional partnerships

TARGET AUDIENCES

- Parents and families
- Early learning caregivers/providers (in-home and childcare centers)
- Physicians and other medical professionals

STRATEGIES

1. Ensure consistent use of the Ohio Early Intervention brand and messaging across Ohio, including recognizing Help Me Grow as the 'umbrella' system of supports.
2. Educate and empower families and early learning caregivers/providers to increase their comfort and confidence in making EI referrals.
3. Shift the 'wait and see' culture among physicians and other medical professionals and increase knowledge of the value of EI and how to make a referral to EI.
4. Enhance local service coordination agencies' ability to collaborate to share stories, examples, and ideas about effective outreach efforts and impact.
5. Leverage local and regional partnerships to help disseminate information about EI and build brand champions/ambassadors.

AWARENESS BUILDING & OUTREACH MATERIALS

KEY MESSAGING AND AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

Purpose: The message framework and audience-specific messages are designed to ensure consistency and continuity around how to communicate about what EI is, its benefits, and how to refer a child to EI.

Intended Audience: All of the messaging is designed for service coordination agencies to use with parents/families, early learning caregivers/providers, and physicians and medical professionals.

Suggested Uses: The messaging can be integrated into all of your communications related to early intervention services, including your website, eNewsletters, blog posts, eblasts, social media, event promotions, presentations, etc.

Tagline: Concerned? Act early!

Topline Messages/Elevator Speech:

Early Intervention (EI) works with families with children birth to age 3 who have developmental delays or disabilities so that they have the best possible start in life.

Early Intervention professionals work with a child's family to identify strengths and needs and address concerns as early as possible. Services are provided where families live, play, and spend their day.

If you're concerned that a child may have a delay or disability, it's important to refer them for Early Intervention as soon as possible. Developmental experts will determine if a child is eligible for services and will support the family to address the child's specific developmental, physical, social, and emotional needs.

Anyone can and should refer a family to EI if they have concerns that a child is experiencing a possible delay or disability. There is no need to "wait and see."

EI is part of the Help Me Grow system of supports.

SUPPORTING MESSAGES:

Providing EI services based on a child's and family's specific strengths and needs is critical to life-long success:

- Research shows that starting EI services early gives a child the best chance to learn and grow.
- Early support can reduce the need for services later in life. In fact, it is more cost effective to provide EI than to wait until the child is older.
- Every child is unique, and EI services are designed based on these specific needs.
- Parents and families are the center of a child's development. That's why service coordinators and other service providers work closely with the family to help build their skills and confidence in supporting their child and to help them navigate the journey with their child.
- EI can address all types of concerns: some examples include physical development like crawling or walking, speech delays, or social interaction like playing with other children or smiling.
- EI is available in every part of the state and to any eligible child, regardless of the family's income.
- Because children learn best with familiar people and in familiar places, EI services are usually provided in the home or a community setting. Virtual options may also be available.

Anyone can refer a child to EI—and the earlier the better:

- There is no “downside” to referring a child for Early Intervention services. Screening and eligibility determination are free.
- The first three years of a child’s life are the most important. 80% of a child’s brain is developed by age 3. Because this is a critical time, parents, families, doctors, and others who are concerned about a child’s development should refer a child to EI as early as possible.
- EI services can be provided side-by-side with other services a family receives in their community. EI focuses on building skills with the family in places where the child already spends time, including at home, childcare, and in the community.

The referral process is simple:

- Anyone can refer a child to EI, and families can self-refer their child if they have concerns. You do not need to be a doctor or teacher to refer a child. All it takes is a simple phone call or filling out a short form online.
- After the referral is made, Help Me Grow will contact the family, complete an intake assessment, and connect the family with the early intervention provider.
- Once the family is assigned to an early intervention provider, that provider will walk the family through the eligibility process and determine the next steps.
- If the child is eligible for EI services, the family and their service coordinator will develop a plan to support the family on their journey to help their child get their best possible start in life.

AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC MESSAGES**Families**

- You know your child best. Talk to your child’s healthcare provider if you are concerned. If you still have concerns, contact EI. They can help determine if your child needs services or not.
- EI supports you and your child. EI is a partnership with families to support a child who has developmental delays or disabilities.
- Children learn best through everyday experiences and routines in places they know. You don’t have to travel for services or coordinate with a bunch of different people. Your EI service coordinator and primary service provider support your child where you live, play, and spend your day.

For Medical Professionals

- EI services help address a child’s physical, social, emotional, and other developmental delays in the setting where the child lives, plays, and spends their days.
- EI services support parents and caregivers in understanding a child’s delay or disability.
- The earlier you refer a child, the better. This is a step that you can take as soon as you suspect a delay or disability. You can help the family ensure their child has services that support the best start in life.
- “Wait and see” does not provide peace of mind and is not an answer to a family’s concerns. The earlier you refer, the better. EI services can ONLY help a child.
- EI services are not the same as traditional clinical therapy. EI typically provides services in the child’s home or childcare setting, in the context of everyday routines, based on the family’s priorities.

Childcare Early Learning Caregivers/Providers

- You spend hours every day with children – and you are an expert.
- In your daily work, when you have concerns about a child’s development, the best thing you can do is discuss those concerns with your supervisor and refer the child to EI.
- The earlier you refer a child, the better. This is a step you can take as soon as you have concerns about a child’s development.
- By referring a family, you give them support and peace of mind that their child has the best start in life.
- It can be a hard conversation, but it is the best thing to do for the child and the family.
- Parents often see their childcare providers as an expert or resource. This means you are in the unique position of being able to see the child and help the family understand the benefits of EI.

LOGO OPTIONS AND LOGO COLOR PALETTE

The brand guidelines for using the Ohio Early Intervention logo are as follows:



Full Color Logo



Grayscale Logo



Reversed Color Logo



Reversed Grayscale Logo



C:2 M:26 Y:100 K:0
R:247 G:190 B:22
#F7BE16



C:43 M:17 Y:0 K:0
R:140 G:183 B:226
#8CB7E2



C:0 M:0 Y:0 K:68
R:82 G:80 B:81
#525051

OTHER BRAND ASSETS & COLLATERAL

For other collateral materials, such as brochures, ads, etc., please follow Ohio's brand guidelines for color palette, font use, etc, found [here](#).

AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC REFERRAL MATERIALS

FAMILY REFERRAL CARD

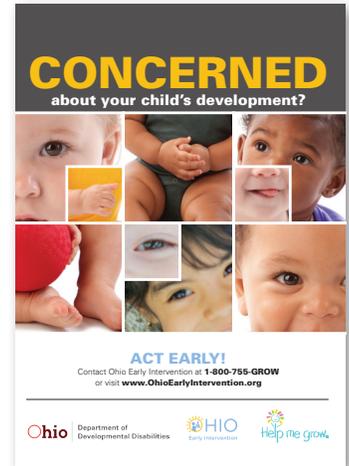
Purpose: The family referral card is designed to provide clear, concise, and reading-level appropriate messaging that communicates the importance of EI, what EI is and its benefits, and how to refer a child to EI.

Intended Audience: Parents, families, and other caregivers who may refer a child to EI.

Suggested Uses: The referral card can be:

- Uploaded to the parent/family section of your website
- Printed and available at your agency office
- Distributed to community organizations that serve parents/families
- Distributed by your staff at community events
- Shared electronically through digital communications (eNewsletters, etc.)

* *Print and web-ready files for this card are included with this toolkit.*



PROVIDER GUIDANCE CARD

Purpose: The EI provider guidance card is designed to provide information on the importance of EI, how to refer a child to EI, and what to do when given the referral card.

Intended Audience: Physicians, pediatricians, childcare providers, and other medical professionals who may receive the EI referral card (referenced above) or make an EI referral.

Suggested Uses: The provider guidance card can be:

- Uploaded to the provider section of your website
- Printed and available at your agency office
- Distributed to physician offices/community health centers
- Shared electronically through digital communications to physicians, caregivers, and other providers (eNewsletters, etc.)
- Distributed to community organizations that serve parents/families, including physician offices, community health centers, childcare centers, etc.

* *Print and web-ready files for this card are included with this toolkit.*



PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS

Purpose: Promotional products are items that can be imprinted with an organization’s name, logo, or message. They are designed to increase brand awareness among key audiences and can be a powerful communications tool when combined with other marketing efforts.

Intended Audience: Focusing on the campaign’s three priority audiences—parents/families, early learning caregivers/providers, and physicians/medical professionals—following are ideas for your consideration. Or, feel free to come up with your own ideas depending on audience preferences and budget.

Suggested Uses: Items can be used or distributed at:

- Your office
- Events (meetings, conferences, parades, fairs, etc.)
- Physician/pediatrician or other provider offices
- Anywhere you and your staff are sharing information about EI services

Note: All promotional products will need to adhere to the state’s brand standards (e.g., color palette, fonts, etc.). If the product selected is not offered in colors that align with the brand standards, you may use black or white as a secondary option. For any questions, contact communications@HelpMeGrow.org.

To ensure consistency across the state, please use the Ohio Early Intervention logo, URL, and 800-number in all promotional products. These include: www.OhioEarlyIntervention.org and 1-800-755-GROW.

**Each agency will be responsible for working with vendors in their respective communities to create and pay for their promotional products.*

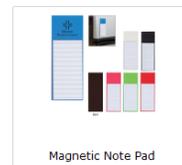
FOR PARENTS/FAMILIES

- Hot/cold packs
- Easy-grip baby toothbrush
- Baby nail clippers
- Safety plug covers
- Vinyl medi-wallet/first-aid kit
- Hand sanitizer



FOR CAREGIVERS/PROVIDERS

- Vinyl medi-wallet/first-aid kit
- Hand sanitizer
- Magnetic notepad
- House clip with sticky notes
- Hot/cold packs



PHYSICIANS/MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

- Small tin containers
- Squeeze tech pouch
- Silicone phone holder
- Microfiber cloth
- Privacy cover with screen cleaner
- Metallic stylus pen
- Hand sanitizer



MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

LAUNCHING A LOCAL ADVERTISING & MEDIA RELATIONS CAMPAIGN (PRINT, RADIO, TV)

Purpose: An advertising campaign is designed to build brand awareness around a product, social issue, political candidate, and more. Using thoughtful strategies, you can target messaging to specific audiences through the channels they use most. Those communication channels may include local newspapers and publications, radio public service announcements (PSAs), television ads, billboard ads, transit ads, etc. A comprehensive approach works best. That means utilizing different communication channels to reach your audience.

As a service coordination agency, you know your stakeholders and communities best. The resources in this toolkit, along with key considerations outlined below, are designed to build the foundation for local advertising and media efforts.

Intended Audiences: The target audiences for the EI Public Awareness Campaign include:

- Parents and families
- Early learning caregivers/providers (in-home and childcare centers)
- Physicians and other medical professionals
- Other community organizations that serve parents/families

Things to Consider Before Launching

As you plan your local efforts, keep in mind the overarching objective of this campaign, which is to increase public awareness and outreach efforts within local communities about Ohio Early Intervention (EI) services and initiatives, including the referral process. Before getting started, consider the following:

- **Know your audiences and how they like to receive information.** If you're working with a limited budget, it helps to know how and where your audiences receive their information. That way, you can make the most of your budget by targeting those communication channels.
- **Tailor your message to your audience.** The key messaging and audience-specific messaging has already been provided for you. Consider the communication channel you'll be using and tailor the messaging accordingly, if necessary.
- **Consider your budget.** Know how much you have to work with and then align your resources to the channels most applicable to your target audiences.
- **Consider partnering with other local agencies or EI programs in neighboring counties.** By partnering with others, you will likely be able to reach a broader audience and reduce your expenses.
- **Consider who will be responsible for supporting the campaign efforts.** Think about someone who has marketing/communications experience or someone who is interested in learning more about marketing/communications. Be mindful that it will take time to organize the messaging and materials, and coordinate efforts to work with local newspapers, radio stations, etc. So plan accordingly for staff time.
- **Consider your timeline.** When do you want to launch your local efforts? Is there a community event or celebration that you can tag onto or is there an awareness month to align with?
- **Monitor impact.** Monitor the communication channels you're using to gauge what's having an impact and what's not. Be sure to review website traffic, social media engagement, local media coverage, etc.

SAMPLE PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (PSA) SCRIPT

PSAs are designed to generate awareness or create a shift in public opinion about important topics. Most PSAs are: 30 seconds (approximately 65-90 words in length) or: 60 seconds (approximately 150-180 words in length). The following script uses wording from the messaging framework and is approximately 30 seconds (73 words in length).

You know your child best.

If you have concerns that your child has a delay or disability, talk to your healthcare provider as early as possible.

Early Intervention works with families with children birth to age 3 who have developmental delays or disabilities so that they have the best possible start in life.

To learn more, contact Ohio Early Intervention at 1-800-755-GROW or visit www.OhioEarlyIntervention.org.

SAMPLE PRINT ADS

Print ads can be published in your local or community newspapers or in partner organization’s publications (e.g., magazines, newspapers, etc.). Following are examples of color and black/white ads using the key messaging. Sizing may vary depending upon the publication. The design files, including dimensions, fonts, colors, etc. for the ads will be provided and shared.

** Print and web-ready files are included with this toolkit.*



SAMPLE BILLBOARDS

Billboards are a great way to have people see your message and they’re often strategically placed to receive attention (e.g., busy intersections, along highways, etc.). This also allows your message to be exposed to more than one audience. Following are two examples of billboard ads. Sizing may vary depending upon the billboard. The design files, including dimensions, fonts, colors, etc. for the ads will be provided and shared.

** Print and web-ready files are included with this toolkit.*



SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

Social media is a great way to share important information and announcements about services, events, and resources. Using your organization's social media accounts, here are a few basics to get you started:



Using Hashtags

A hashtag is a word or phrase preceded by a hash sign (#) and used on social media websites and applications, especially Twitter, to identify messages on a specific topic. Incorporating hashtags in your social media content helps your organization/services to be found by people who are interested in what you're offering or posting about. For EI services, considering incorporating #OhioEarlyIntervention into your posts.

Using Graphics

Social media posts that use graphics, photos, or videos are more likely to grab people's attention and have them remember your logo or image compared to a text-only post. Social media graphic sizes vary depending on the channel. Sample graphics have been included below and will be shared.



For additional information on how to use Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, check out the following:

[How to Post and Share Facebook Content](#)

[Getting Started with Twitter](#)

[How to Market on LinkedIn](#)

Following is sample social media content that can be used for Facebook, Twitter, or other social media channels. Feel free to edit the content to fit specific channel requirements, including character counts, hashtags, etc.

- #OhioEarlyIntervention (EI) works with families with children birth to age 3 who have developmental delays or disabilities so that they have the best possible start in life. Learn more and refer early. [ADD LOCAL WEB LINK](#)
- Concerned that your child may have a delay or disability? If so, it's important to refer them to #OhioEarlyIntervention as soon as possible. We'd love to help you. Learn more. [ADD LOCAL WEB LINK](#)
- Did you know that anyone can refer a family to #OhioEarlyIntervention (EI) if they have concerns that a child is experiencing a possible delay or disability? There is no need to "wait and see." Learn more about EI. [ADD LOCAL WEB LINK](#)
- You know your child best. If you have concerns about your child's development, talk to your child's healthcare provider. However, if you still have concerns, contact us. #OhioEarlyIntervention can help. [ADD LOCAL WEB LINK](#)
- Anyone can refer a child to #OhioEarlyIntervention, and families can self-refer their child if they have concerns. You do not need to be a doctor or teacher to refer a child. All it takes is a simple phone call or filling out a short form online. Learn more. [ADD LOCAL WEB LINK](#)
- Concerns about your child's development? There is no "downside" to referring a child to #OhioEarlyIntervention services. Screening and eligibility determination are free. Learn more. [ADD LOCAL WEB LINK](#)
- The first three years of a child's life are the most important. 80% of a child's brain is developed by age 3. Because this is a critical time, parents, families, doctors, and others who are concerned about a child's development should refer a child to #OhioEarlyIntervention as early as possible. Learn more. [ADD LOCAL WEB LINK](#)
- Because children learn best with familiar people and in familiar places, #OhioEarlyIntervention (EI) services are usually provided in the home or a community setting. Virtual options may also be available. [ADD LOCAL WEB LINK](#)
- Every child is unique, and #OhioEarlyIntervention (EI) services are designed based on these specific needs. EI can address all types of concerns: some examples include physical development like crawling or walking, speech delays, or social interaction like playing with other children or smiling. Learn more. [ADD LOCAL WEB LINK](#)
- Research shows that starting #OhioEarlyIntervention services early gives a child the best chance to learn and grow. And, early support can reduce the need for services later in life. Learn more. [ADD LOCAL WEB LINK](#)

Note: The following examples have been pre-formatted to adhere to the appropriate platform sizes.

SAMPLE FACEBOOK GRAPHICS



* Design files for these graphics are included with this toolkit.

TWITTER AND LINKEDIN GRAPHICS



* Design files for these graphics are included with this toolkit.

Tips for Leveraging Earned Media

Earned media is known as publicity or media relations. It's about getting your name in print, having a newspaper write about you, appearing on the noon news to talk about your organization and its services, etc. Here are a few tips to consider as you think about securing earned media coverage:

1. **Write a compelling and relevant press release.** The release should include the 'who, what, when, where and why' and be explained in the first two sentences or lead. The audience for the press release is the reporter/journalist, so it's important to think about the content from their perspective and what's in it for them and why they should care.
2. **Know the media.** Who are the reporters and key media outlets in your community? If you don't know them, get to know them and develop a relationship. Knowing their beat and the types of stories they cover is also important. Establishing a relationship with them will help you when you have something important to share and would like to see covered. Develop a media list and update it regularly.
3. **Pitch and sell your story.** Sending the press release is the first step. It's important to follow up with reporters to pitch and sell your story. What's in a pitch? First, highlight the most important points and tailor it to the reporter's beat and/or publication. Second, share why this story is relevant and why people should care. Third, offer an interview opportunity with your organization's spokesperson, and don't forget to include contact information.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**FOR MORE INFORMATION: [List contact person's name, telephone number, and/or email address]****Ohio Early Intervention Continues to Serve Families during the COVID-19 Crisis***Things are changing quickly; families need support now more than ever during this COVID-19 crisis.**If you're concerned that a child may have a delay or disability, it's important to refer them for Early Intervention (EI) as soon as possible. Early Intervention can address all types of concerns, like crawling or walking, speech delays, or social interactions like playing with other children or smiling. Parents and families are the center of a child's development. Early Intervention professionals work closely with the family to help build their skills and confidence in supporting their child and to help them navigate the journey with their child.**Ohio Early Intervention, offered through local EI teams, is evidence-based, statewide, and supports families of young children birth to age three with developmental delays and disabilities, including children with elevated blood lead levels and those diagnosed with neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS).**Early Intervention providers across the state have the ability to provide services using videoconferencing and phone calls as appropriate and accessible. Early Intervention remains critical for children and families. Research shows that starting Early Intervention services early gives a child the best chance to learn and grow, and can reduce the need for services later in life.**Don't wait. Act early!**The referral process is simple. Anyone can refer a child, and families can self-refer their child if they have concerns. You do not need to be a doctor or teacher to refer a child. All it takes is a simple phone call to 1-800-755-GROW or filling out an [online form](#). After the referral is made, Help Me Grow will contact the family, complete an intake assessment, and connect the family with the Early Intervention provider. There is no downside to referring a child; screening and eligibility determination come at no cost to the family.**[Insert family testimonial]**Ohio Early Intervention is a part of the Help Me Grow system of supports. Learn more at www.ohioearlyintervention.org. For frequently asked questions during the COVID-19 crisis, [click here](#).*

###

Tips for Leveraging Paid Media

Paid media doesn't always refer to big, fancy commercials and highly creative print ads. On the contrary, a lot of today's paid media includes social media advertising, sponsored content, display and video ads, pop-ups, and email marketing. Think Facebook ads and LinkedIn video ads. Paid social media campaigns can be a great way to extend your reach, get more clicks, and generate more traffic. Here are a few tips to consider as you think about when using paid media:

1. **Know your audience and what communication channels they use.** When you know the demographics of your audience and where they're spending time, you can more effectively target your budget for greater impact.
2. **Know your budget.** You don't have to have thousands of dollars to make an impact. Boosting social media content is an easy and effective way to get your message in front of your audience for even a small budget.
3. **Monitor.** If you're investing in paid social media or larger scale advertising efforts, be sure to monitor your analytics and reports. Use that information to see where traffic is coming from. You can use this information to adjust your efforts accordingly.

BEYOND THE MEDIA: BE AN EXPERT RESOURCE

Pursuing opportunities to share information with your key audiences outside of traditional media is another way to spread the word. Consider looking for opportunities to write a guest blog or newsletter article for another community organization. Consider seeking opportunities to share content in partner publications and electronic communications.

SAMPLE BLOG/NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

There is No Need to 'Wait and See'

The first three years of a child's life are the most important. Did you know that 80% of a child's brain is developed by age 3? Because this is a critical time, parents, families, doctors, and others who are concerned about a child's development should refer a child for Early Intervention (EI) as early as possible.

Early Intervention (EI) works with families with children birth to age 3 who have developmental delays or disabilities so that they have the best possible start in life. Early Intervention professionals work with a child's family to identify strengths and needs and address concerns as early as possible. EI can address all types of concerns: some examples include physical development like crawling or walking, speech delays, or social interaction like playing with other children or smiling. Every child is unique, and EI services are designed based on these specific needs.

Anyone can refer a child to EI—and the earlier the better.

There is no "downside" to referring a child to Early Intervention services. Screening and eligibility determination are free. EI services can be provided side-by-side with other services a family receives in their community. EI focuses on building skills with the family in places where the child already spends time, including at home, childcare, and in the community.

The referral process is simple.

Anyone can refer a child to EI, and families can self-refer their child if they have concerns. You do not need to be a doctor or teacher to refer a child. All it takes is a simple phone call or filling out a short form online.

To learn more and to start the referral process, call 1-800-755-GROW or visit www.OhioEarlyIntervention.org.

SPEAKING AT LOCAL COMMUNITY EVENTS

Purpose: Speaking or exhibiting at local events is also a great way to share information with larger audiences about EI and the resources you offer. Consider seeking opportunities at local fairs, school events, chamber of commerce or Rotary meetings, etc.

Intended Audience: Depending on the event, the audience could include business and community members, parents/families, etc.

Suggestions for Getting Started

- Be proactive and reach out to various community organizations to offer your agency up as a possible speaker or exhibitor.
- Seek community/school fairs/events to display a booth and distribute information and promotional products.

SAMPLE EMAIL TO REFERRAL SOURCES

Purpose: Sharing information and updates with your referral sources is a great way to keep them up-to-date on the latest information. If you're not already sending regular updates, consider doing so on a regular basis.

Intended Audience: Referral organizations/agencies

Subject line: Refer to Ohio Early Intervention– especially now!

Things are changing quickly; families need support now more than ever during this COVID-19 crisis.

If you're concerned that a child may have a delay or disability, it's important to refer them for Early Intervention as soon as possible. Early Intervention can address all types of concerns, like crawling or walking, speech delays, or social interactions like playing with other children or smiling.

Services look a little different right now. During this time, the preferred method for visits may be a virtual visit using video technology or over the telephone. Staff may drop-off materials for families, or conduct a visit in a safe location, such as a park, while practicing social distancing guidelines.

The referral process is simple:

- Anyone can refer a child to Early Intervention, and families can self-refer their child if they have concerns. You do not need to be a doctor or teacher to refer a child.
- All it takes is a simple phone call to 1-800-755-GROW or filling out a [short form online](#).
- After the referral is made, Help Me Grow will contact the family, complete an intake assessment, and connect the family with the Early Intervention provider.

I can provide you and your staff with a virtual presentation about Ohio Early Intervention at your convenience. I will touch base with you in the coming days or feel free to contact me at [Sender's telephone number and/or email address].

If you have questions about Early Intervention services in [County's name] County, please contact [Agency name] at [Agency's EI telephone number].

Ohio Early Intervention is a part of the Help Me Grow system of supports. Learn more at www.ohioearlyintervention.org.

For frequently asked questions during the COVID-19 crisis, [click here](#).



EI AWARENESS DAY

Purpose: An Awareness Day (or National Day) often refers to a day that is set up by an organization to mark an occasion or place importance on a particular cause. While some are very light-hearted with a true novelty factor, some do carry an important message and support worthy causes or dates of significance. Awareness Days have become very popular across the world on social media, often becoming a trending topic. This presents a fantastic opportunity to get involved and reach an audience.

Intended Audience: EI Awareness Day activities should be directed to the campaign's three priority audiences—parents/families, early learning caregivers/providers, and physicians/healthcare providers.

Suggestions for Getting Started

- Be creative and brainstorm fun, yet impactful ideas.
- Come up with a relevant hashtag. Short, sweet, and catchy is the way to go.
- Be creative with your social media content and consider using images or videos. Before posting any images of families/children, make sure you have written consent.
- Plan your social media schedule in advance. Schedule on your social channels so that you are ready to engage on the day.

Note: An EI Awareness Date will be determined at the state level and communicated to service coordination agencies. Support resources, including social media content, icons, hashtags, etc. will be provided.

PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING & COLLABORATION

FAMILY PEER NETWORKS

Purpose: Peer-to-peer conversations and networking are effective ways for parents and families to feel support, share concerns, and ask questions. Peer networks often offer a 'safe' place for parents and families because there is a trust factor and comfort level between peers who share their experiences and feelings.

Examples: Sharing and collaborating with other agencies across the state are great ways to get new ideas on what's working well or what's not and how you might adapt an idea to best meet the needs in your community. If you're not already connecting with other EI programs, we encourage you to reach out to learn and share. Following are a few ideas of how other service coordination agencies around the state are helping to connect families:

- Hosting play groups
- Organizing support groups for parents or other caregivers
- Engaging with their local schools to distribute information and/or partner with parent mentors
- Encouraging the concept of 'refer a friend' to spread the word between other families



PROFESSIONAL PEER NETWORKS

Purpose: Like family peer-to-peer networks, professional networks for social workers, and medical and childcare providers are effective ways for professionals to feel support, share concerns, and ask questions.

Examples: Following are a few ideas for professionals:

- Hosting lunch-n-learn sessions
- Organizing professional learning events
- Sharing information with local committees
- Presenting at local conferences



PARENT/FAMILY EVENTS

Purpose: Parent and family-friendly events often gather larger groups of people and great opportunities for service coordination agencies to share information. Consider meeting parents/families where they already gather or host your own events for them.

Examples: Following are a few event ideas that other service coordination agencies have shared:

- Hosting special events to celebrate moms and dads (e.g., Moms or Dads Day/Night Out with pampering services, fun activities, etc.)
- Hosting family swim parties or other recreational parties (e.g., inflatables, etc.)



- Offering special classes or learning events at local libraries, hospitals, community centers, etc.
- Hosting a booth and distributing information at various community events, including fairs, festivals, baby/child events, women's expos, etc.
- Participating in community-based baby/child events, such as car seat fitting events, etc. and being on hand to talk with families and distribute information

LOCAL PROVIDER AGENCY/ ORGANIZATION COLLABORATION

Purpose: Collaborating with other community agencies and organizations are great ways to connect and share updated EI messaging, materials, and other resources available. It's also a great way to encourage cross-agency information and idea sharing.

Examples: Following are a few ideas that other service coordination agencies have shared about who they are partnering with in their communities:

- Community centers/organizations, such as the YMCA, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Clubs, community recreation centers, WIC, home visiting, local Job and Family Service agencies, etc.
- Healthcare entities, such as hospitals, clinics, local health departments, etc.
- Faith-based organizations, including churches, cultural centers, etc.
- Organizations that serve and support families, including Ohio Family and Children First, Ohio P2P, Kinship Care Network, etc.

