



# Vision Support Services for Babies Born with Vision Loss Due to the Zika Virus

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**THE *focus* INITIATIVE**

*a forum on vision and public health convened by Prevent Blindness*

# Objective:

Discuss how those working with expectant and new parents of babies infected with the Zika virus can provide support for vision impairment and low vision services

## Key take-aways for infants and families impacted by Zika-related vision loss:

- Early Intervention & Evaluation
- Family-Centered IFSP
- Supports for CVI
- Resources

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# Early Intervention

- Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) [idea.ed.gov/part-c/search/new.html](http://idea.ed.gov/part-c/search/new.html)
- Designed to help infants and toddlers with developmental delays or diagnosed disabilities.
- Available in every state, coordinated by state's **lead agency**
- The lead agency
  - must ensure that all infants and toddlers with disabilities in the state who may have a developmental delay or a diagnosed disability are identified and evaluated.
  - conducts public awareness and child find activities throughout the state to let residents know that early intervention services are available to help eligible infants and toddlers with disabilities.
- Learn more: [www.parentcenterhub.org](http://www.parentcenterhub.org)



# Referral to Early Intervention

- Primary referral: Physicians and hospitals and other programs refer the child to the early intervention program through the state's referral system.
- Parents can contact their state's early intervention program directly (sometimes called Child Find) and ask that their infant/toddler be evaluated.
- Parental consent is needed before the child may be evaluated.



# Evaluation

- Evaluations in major developmental areas (including vision and hearing) :
  - to see if he/she meets the state's definition of delay or disability, and
  - to determine the child's eligibility for services.
- Each state determines the percentage of delay that will be used to establish eligibility; states can also establish a list of conditions that may result in developmental delay.
- Evaluation and assessment process must be completed within 45 days of the child being referred to early intervention.



# IFSP & IFSP Team

- IFSP = Individual and Family Service Plan
- IFSP team includes parents, advocates/other family members as requested by the parents, the assigned service coordinator, individuals involved in evaluation, and, as appropriate, service providers
- IFSP must include:
  - current levels of developmental functioning;
  - family's resources, priorities, and concerns;
  - measurable results/outcomes to be achieved;
  - services identified as appropriate for the child based on his or her needs;
  - settings where services will be provided; and
  - other services the child will receive.
- Services are to be provided in **natural environments** to the maximum extent appropriate
- IFSP is reviewed **at least every six months**



# Early Intervention Specialists Serving Infants & Toddlers with Visual Impairment

- Vary by state, but typically include:
  - Teacher of students with visual impairment
  - Orientation and mobility specialist
  - [www.familyconnect.org/info/education/know-your-rights/early-intervention-services/135](http://www.familyconnect.org/info/education/know-your-rights/early-intervention-services/135)
- For children who are deafblind:
  - Teacher of students who are deaf/hard of hearing
  - Intervener
  - [nationaldb.org/wiki/page/8/136](http://nationaldb.org/wiki/page/8/136)
- Early intervention services end at age 3; transition to preschool services



## Infants and Toddlers with Zika-related vision loss will benefit from...

- Clinical and functional low vision evaluations
- Family-centered practices
- Multi-sensory toys and activities that encourage movement and motor skills... but also time to “focus” with reduced auditory distractions
- Assistive technologies such as switch-activated toys
- Routines, routines, routines!



# Multi-sensory Toys and Activities

**Toy bar with items that make sound and have unique textures  
(home-made)**



**Sensory Learning Kit  
(American Printing House for the Blind)**





# For Infants and Toddlers with CVI, Consider...

- increased contrast of the environment
- increased or varied room and task lighting
- decreased visual clutter
- head support and breaks from using vision
- presenting objects in child's peripheral field of vision
- presenting a moving object for optimal viewing
- support from the mobility specialist

see:

<http://www.familyconnect.org/info/after-the-diagnosis/browse-by-condition/cortical-visual-impairment/123>



# Fantastic resources...

- AFB's Family Connect:  
[www.familyconnect.org](http://www.familyconnect.org)
- Wonder Baby:  
[www.wonderbaby.org](http://www.wonderbaby.org)
- National Association of Parents of Children with Visual Impairments:  
[www.napvi.org](http://www.napvi.org)
- Perkins e-Learning:  
[www.perkinselearning.org/scout/early-childhood-services-children-visual-impairments](http://www.perkinselearning.org/scout/early-childhood-services-children-visual-impairments)
- Thomas Marshall Does It All (blog)  
[www.thomasmarshalldoesitall.com](http://www.thomasmarshalldoesitall.com)

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