

## **Early Childhood Special Education Video Transcript**

Hello. My name is Amy Lyle. I am a family navigator at the Waisman Center. Today, we are talking about early childhood special education. We are going to answer these questions.

**What is early childhood special education?**

**Why is early childhood special education helpful?**

**What else is important to know about early childhood special education?**

**How do you connect with early childhood special education?**

**Where can you go to learn more about early childhood special education?**

First, let's answer the question **what is early childhood special education?**

Early childhood special education, which we will call early childhood for the rest of this video, are services available through all public school districts. These services are for children ages three to five who have delays in development or already diagnosed disabilities. Early childhood services help your child to learn with their preschool aged peers. Your local school district will do an evaluation to find out if your child is eligible for early childhood services. The school's evaluation looks at many areas of your child's development. This evaluation will help determine if your child has significant delays in how they play, learn, speak, act, or move. There are timelines the school district has to follow. Most of the time, the evaluation process takes about 90 days to complete. If your child is eligible, the school staff work with you to make an individualized education plan or IEP for your child. The IEP includes goals that address your concerns and hopes for your child. The IEP also includes services and supports at school to help your child meet those goals.

Next, let's talk about **why early childhood services are helpful.**

Research shows that early intervention is really important if your child has developmental concerns. Early childhood services through your school district are one of the key ways to get early help for your child. If your child is eligible for early childhood, they may be able to receive therapies such as speech, occupational, or physical therapy. Your child may also get help from a teacher who supports your child's overall learning and growth. Early childhood services work on skills that will help your child be successful in school. These services give your child the chance to learn and practice their skills.

**What else is important to know about early childhood services?**

These services are free to you and your child. There is no need for insurance and citizenship or legal residency is not required. Your child does not have to be toilet trained. Remember, these

services can start right on your child's third birthday. Even if your child is older than three, they could still be eligible for early childhood services. Early childhood services might occur in your home, your child's daycare, or in a classroom in your child's school. This all depends on your school district and your child's needs. Transportation may be provided in some situations. Your child can receive early childhood services in addition to other developmental supports like Head Start, play groups, and more.

### **So how do you connect to early childhood services?**

If your child is receiving services through birth to three, with your permission, your birth to three service coordinator will make a referral to your local school district. This occurs a few months before your child's third birthday. If you are not connected with birth to three, you may contact your local school district's special education office directly to ask for an evaluation. You can ask the school district to start an evaluation before your child turns three. It is important your request for an evaluation is in writing. Include a short description of your concerns about how your child is learning and growing. This request can be a letter, an email, or a form the school district provides. Some of the larger school districts have an online referral form. A written request starts the evaluation process. It is a legal document. School districts may also hold child find screening days throughout the school year. Child find screenings are an at a glance look at how your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves. This screening provides the school with information to decide if more testing is needed. You may sign up for a child find screening, but you can also request a full evaluation at any time. You do not have to wait for a child find screening day. Doctors, daycare teachers, Head Start, or other professionals can help you with a referral.

### **Finally, where can you learn more?**

You can also reach out to your local school district and ask for their special education department. Thanks so much for joining us today, and we look forward to seeing you next time. Please see the resource links in the video details. All of these resources are available through the QR code on this screen.