



Support for Young Children with Developmental Delays

Are you aware that the county offers support to families with children who demonstrate a developmental delay? The Infant and Toddler Connection is a county program for children ages birth to 3 years of age. Children are eligible for ITC services if they demonstrate a 25% delay in any area of development, have a diagnosis that has a high probability for delay (for example autism or Down syndrome), and/or are demonstrating atypical development.

Anyone can make a referral to ITC if they are concerned about a young child's development, but the best referral information comes directly from a child's family. As a trusted caregiver, you can share information with families about the ITC program and explain the process to them. It is a great way for you to partner with families and find the best supports available for their young children.

What is the Assessment Process?

When a child is referred to ITC, a service coordinator visits the home to complete a developmental screening. If the screening reveals that the child is eligible for services, then staff performs a full assessment to determine the child's specific strengths and concerns.

The service coordinator uses that information to develop a plan of action to support the child's growth and the family's and caregiver's ability to promote the child's development.

There is no charge to the family for service coordination, eligibility determination, and development of the plan. If services are recommended, there is a fee that can be billed to the family's medical insurance. ITC uses an income-based fee scale to reduce the family's cost for non-covered services. Children with Medicaid never have a fee. The family is not required to accept any services.

Families and Early Childhood Educators Provide Support

All the services are provided in environments that are a familiar part of the child's routine, such as a child care program. The therapists at ITC work closely with early childhood educators to identify how to best support the child in their care. The ITC provider can work with you, and the child's family to make the important, everyday routines like eating and playing, the best they can be to help their child learn and grow.

If you are concerned about the development of any young children in your program, please talk with their families about this resource. If a family member has a question about development refer them to ITC or help them make contact at 703-246-7193 (English), or 703-246-7181 (Spanish). Language support is available in other languages, if you make a request through the English number. ITC staff look forward to partnering with you and supporting the very important work you do to help children in our county thrive. For concerns about the development of a child, 3 years or older, contact the Fairfax County Public Schools' Early Childhood Identification and Services program at 571-423-4121.





Online Resources for Early Childhood Educators

The Office for Children, offers early childhood educators many ways to conveniently connect online to share resources, ask questions and pursue professional learning goals in interactive and meaningful ways.

Connect through Facebook

Educators can stay in touch by “liking” the Office for Children’s **Facebook** page **@FairfaxCountyOfficeforChildren**, and following our posts. On Facebook, we share early childhood research, best practices, information about training courses and job openings as well as dynamic videos with ideas to incorporate into your work with young children. You can participate in our Facebook conversations by sharing or commenting on our posts. You can also send a message to the Office

for Children directly through our Facebook page, and we will respond to you by the next business day.

Connect through YouTube

The Office for Children has an extensive video library on **YouTube**. Search on YouTube.com for “Fairfax County Office for Children” to find our playlist with videos on topics from school readiness to safe sleep.

Learn through Webinars

Early childhood educators can access learning opportunities online through **Institute for Early Learning webinars**. Registration is available through the Office for Children’s website at FairfaxCounty.gov (search “IFEL webinars”). Early childhood webinars are available on several different topics each month and each webinar

engages participants in interactive discussions to create a community of learning.

Learn through Online Courses

If you would like to learn through video-based online courses created by the Institute for Early Learning, you can participate in an “**Introduction to the Office for Children’s Online Courses**” webinar. This webinar is offered throughout the year and is how you can learn about the system and gain access to the online courses. The online learning system offers courses that educators can view on-demand using their own technology.

Please email us at childcareclasses@fairfaxcounty.gov for more information about online professional resources.



Handwashing Prevents the Spread of Illness

One of the best ways to prevent the spread of germs is to practice proper handwashing. It helps keep you and others from getting sick with infectious diseases such as the flu.

It is important to remember that germs may be on your hands, even when they appear to be clean. You can pick up germs from touching people, surfaces and objects throughout the day. If you touch your mouth, eyes, or nose without washing your hands you could get sick or become a carrier for the germs. Make sure that you wash your hands after coughing, sneezing, or using tissues to wipe your nose or a child’s.

Proper handwashing consists of five easy steps and takes only 20 seconds!

1. **Wet your hands** with running water and apply soap. (Anti-bacterial soap is no more effective than regular soap.)
2. **Lather your hands completely!** Include the backs of your hands, between your fingers and under your nails.
3. **Scrub hands for at least 20 seconds.** Sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice to time yourself.
4. **Rinse your hands under running water.**
5. **Dry your hands** with a clean towel or an air dryer.

Hand sanitizer that is 60 percent alcohol can be used when soap and running water are not available, but be sure to monitor children closely when they use hand sanitizer.

Taking the time to wash hands properly is a simple and effective way to keep yourself and those around you healthy.



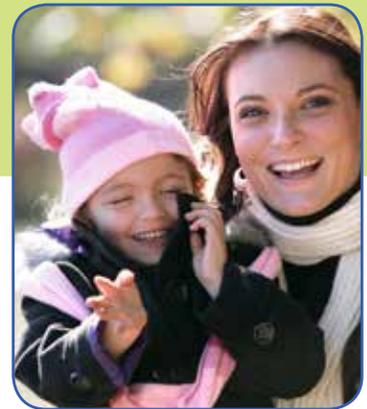
Tips for a “Choosy” Eater

“Choosy” eating is common among young children. A child’s “no” can mean he is growing in independence and learning to make decisions, or it may be due to a smaller appetite. Children tend to eat more and have bigger appetites during growth spurts. Don’t worry if a child in your care eats only certain foods. These periods usually don’t last long. If she is growing normally and playing as she always has, then usually there is no reason to worry.

Try to relax and follow these tips as you work with a “choosy” eater:

- ▶ Remember, most children eat more variety throughout the week than in one day. Keep in mind what a child eats over several days.
- ▶ Stay positive and avoid using the word “picky eater.” Children tend to believe what they hear.
- ▶ Trust children’s appetites. Do not force a child to eat everything on the plate; it may encourage overeating. Provide a variety of foods, and let each child choose how much to eat.
- ▶ Offer healthy choices. For example, ask “Would you prefer broccoli or carrots?”
- ▶ Stick to a routine time to serve meals every day. Limit liquids close to meal time.
- ▶ Set a reasonable time for each meal. Remove the plate quietly. Remember each child needs a different amount of time to eat.
- ▶ It’s best not to allow distractions such as television or electronics while eating.
- ▶ Be patient when you introduce new foods. Allow children to explore the touch, color, smell and taste of the foods.
- ▶ If a child doesn’t like a certain food such as sweet potatoes, offer squash instead.
- ▶ Set a good example. As children watch you eat vegetables, it will encourage them to try them, too.

New Workshops Aim to Improve Community Health



Healthy Provider, Healthy Child

Community Education and Provider Services is partnering with our local Fairfax County Health Department to create a new workshop, Healthy Provider/Healthy Child. This two-hour workshop will focus on information that providers can use to nurture their own health and the health of children in their care. The workshop will cover several topics, including: Health Department resources, understanding immunizations and community immunity, childhood immunizations required for school,

the importance of hand-washing, and the dangers of influenza. The workshop will also present information on tuberculosis, and why the county requires testing.

Daily Observation and Health Considerations

Being able to assess how children are feeling when they arrive to child care is an important skill. CEPS, in partnership with the Virginia Health Department, is offering a new course that provides instruction in daily health observation and more. This comprehensive 4-hour course, Daily Observation and

Health Considerations, gives participants practical ways to reduce the spread of illness in the family child care home. It also helps providers to understand when to exclude children from care by understanding more about communicable disease and promoting health practices in the child care setting.

Fairfax County Office for Children
Department of Family Services
Community Education and Provider Services
12011 Government Center Pkwy., Suite 800
Fairfax, VA 22035-1102

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You are invited to join Virginia Quality.

Virginia Quality is the state's voluntary quality rating and improvement system focused on improving early learning experiences for young children.

All Northern Virginia early childhood programs, including center-based and family child care programs are eligible.



Why Join Virginia Quality?

Early childhood programs participating in Virginia Quality:

- Incorporate best practices.
- Receive recognition for quality work with children and families.
- Have access to professional development and technical assistance linked to achieving and maintaining quality.

For more information or assistance in joining Virginia Quality, please:

Visit the website: VirginiaQuality.com

Email us: VirginiaQuality@fairfaxcounty.gov

Call us: 703-324-7162

Funding for this project was provided by a VQRIS grant. Virginia Quality is a state-wide program designed to support and improve quality in early learning programs.