

Alabama's Early Intervention System

Getting to Know Your Family

Survey Report

July 2019 – June 2020



This survey was conducted and analyzed by faculty and staff from the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), including the UAB School of Public Health's Applied Evaluation and Assessment Center.

UAB School of Public Health, Department of Health Care Organization and Policy

Julie Preskitt, MSOT, MPH, PhD
Associate Professor
Director of the Applied Evaluation and Assessment Center

Beth Johns, OTR/L, MPH
Senior Project Director
Applied Evaluation and Assessment Center

Elizabeth Blunck, MPH
Program Manager
Applied Evaluation and Assessment Center



Key Findings

- Survey Responses
 - Surveys were sent to 46 Early Intervention (EI) sites. Over the course of the 2019-2020 reporting year, 248 surveys were submitted from 26 sites.
 - Most families responding to the survey had children aged 25-32 months, completed the survey by themselves, and were completing their First Annual IFSP review.
- Family Concerns
 - The most commonly reported family concern was about how their child understands and uses language and communication skills.
 - The next most commonly report family concern was about their child gaining independence in meeting his/her needs in appropriate ways compared to children his/her age.
- Understanding of Developmental Needs
 - Families report significant improvement in their understanding of their child's needs after participating in EI services.
- Family and Child Impact
 - Social/Emotional/Behavior: After receiving EI services, most families agree or strongly agree:
 - their family is better able to participate in daily activities and community events.
 - their child had developed new skills relating to social and emotional development.
 - they had an increased knowledge of how to identify and respond to their child's needs in the area of social and emotional development.
 - Language and Communication: After receiving EI services, most families agree or strongly agree:
 - their child had improved in his/her language and communication skills.
 - they themselves had an increased knowledge of how to support their child's language and communication skills.
 - Learning skills: After receiving EI Services, most families agree or strongly agree:
 - their children had learned and use new skills in understanding the world around him/her.
 - they had an increased knowledge of how to support their child in learning these life skills.
 - Gaining Independence: After receiving EI services, most families agree or strongly agree:
 - their child has gained independence in meeting their needs and in using socially appropriate ways to get what the child wants.
 - they had an increased knowledge of how to support their child in gaining their independence in meeting their needs and in using socially appropriate ways to get what the child wants.
- Overall EI Experience
 - After receiving EI services, most families agreed or strongly agreed they were:
 - better able to talk about their child's development needs with professionals who work with their family.
 - better able to participate in making decisions about their child with the professionals who work with their family.
 - more knowledgeable about available community resources to support their child and/or family.

I. Demographics of Survey Respondents

Respondents

Alabama’s Early Intervention System (AEIS) requests that each local EI program site use the Getting to Know Your Family survey with enrolled families at each of the following timepoints: first annual IFSP review, second annual IFSP review, and when exiting early intervention. Prior to the 2019-2020 cycle, responses were also requested from families at initial enrollment in early intervention (New to EI). However, the survey approach was revised during the 2019-2020 cycle to support a stronger focus on capturing information from families who had been receiving ongoing services through AEIS versus families new to the system. Participation is strongly encouraged, but is voluntary both for families and for programs. The purpose of the survey is to capture satisfaction and family and child outcomes overall and by program site. Only aggregate, statewide reports are released publicly.

The survey was distributed to each of the 46 local program sites in both online and hard copy formats. This report includes surveys collected between July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020. A total of 248 survey responses were collected and analyzed and most responses were in hard copy format. The number of responses is lower than in previous reporting years because of the change noted above. The number and percentages of responses by AEIS are presented in the table below.

What is the name of the Early Intervention Program that serves your child and family?

Site Name	%	Count
AIDB Auburn Regional Center	6.6	16
AIDB Birmingham Regional Center	1.2	3
AIDB Dothan Regional Center	0.0	0
AIDB Huntsville Regional Center	0.0	0
AIDB Mobile Regional Center	0.4	1
AIDB Montgomery Regional Center	0.0	0
AIDB Shoals Regional Center	5.3	13
AIDB Talladega Regional Center	0.8	2
AIDB Tuscaloosa Regional Center	18.9	46
Arc of Autauga/ West Elmore	0.0	0
Arc of Jefferson County HOPE Program	0.0	0
Arc of Madison County Infant/ Toddler Program	0.4	1
Arc of Walker	0.0	0
Cahaba Center Early Intervention	4.1	10
CDD - Center for the Developmentally Disabled of North Central Alabama, Inc	0.4	1
Children R Us, Inc	0.0	0
Children's Center of Montgomery	0.0	0
Children's of Alabama Early Intervention Services	2.5	6
Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc	28.0	68
East Central AL UCP	3.7	9
EI @ UA	0.0	0
Goodwill Easter Seals	1.2	3
Gulf Coast Therapy	0.8	2
Marshall/ Jackson MRA	0.0	0

NCA- MRA	11.5	28
Project Wiggles and Giggles	0.0	0
SCOPE 310 Authority	0.4	1
The Arc of Shelby County	0.4	1
Tri- County Early Intervention	1.2	3
Twin Acres	0.0	0
UCP Mobile- Sunrise	1.2	3
UCP of Huntsville and Tennessee Valley	0.4	1
UCP of Mobile - Bright Beginnings	0.0	0
UCP of Mobile - Family Ties	0.0	0
UCP of Mobile - Horizons	0.4	1
UCP of Mobile - New Journey	0.0	0
UCP of Mobile - Project Special Delivery	1.6	4
UCP of Mobile- Families First	0.0	0
UCP of Northwest AL	4.1	10
United Ability- Birmingham	2.5	6
Valley Haven School	0.0	0
Vaughn-Blumberg Center	1.2	3
Village EI	0.0	0
Vivian B. Adams	0.0	0
Watch Me Grow	0.0	0
WISE	0.0	0
I do not know the name of my Early Intervention Program	0.4	1
Other- District Name, etc.	0.0	0

- The largest number of survey responses are from Community Service Programs of West Alabama (28.0%), AIDB Tuscaloosa Regional Center (18.9%), and NCA-MRA (11.5%).
- Only 26 of 46 sites submitted surveys. AEIS is working with the UAB evaluation team on strategies to increase participation.

Age of child (in months)

Age of Child	%	Count
Less than 6 months	8.0	19
6-12 months	9.2	22
13-18 months	17.6	42
19-24 months	21.8	52
25-32 months	32.6	78
33-36 months	10.9	26

- Most families responding to this survey had children aged 25-32 months.

Is someone helping you complete this survey?

	%	Count
No, I am completing it by myself	54.8	131
Yes, my family or friend	0.0	0
Yes, a professional who works with my family (such as service coordinator, PT, OT, Speech)	43.1	103
Other please specify	2.1	5

- Most survey respondents (54.8%) completed the survey by themselves.
- Many respondents (43.1%) had a professional that works with the family help them complete the survey.

Please select the time period that best reflects when you are completing this survey.

	%	Count
First Annual IFSP review	56.8	50
Second Annual IFSP review	26.1	23
Exiting Early Intervention	17.1	25

- The majority of survey respondents (56.8%) were completing their First Annual IFSP review.
- Only 88 of 248 survey respondents answered this question. This excessive amount of missing data on this question limits the ability to analyze differences in responses at these various timepoints.

II. Results

A. Family Concerns

Families were asked about concerns they have related to specific areas of their child’s development. The most commonly reported concern from families was about how their child understands and uses language and communication skills compared to other children his/her age. The following questions are specific to their child’s development.

1. *I have concerns about my child’s behavior and/or social or emotional skills (controlling emotions, relating with adults and other children, following rules) compared to other children his/her age.*

	%	Count
Yes	41.1	101
No	52.6	128
Don’t Know	6.1	15

- Over half (52.6%) of families reported no concerns about their child’s behavioral and/or social or emotional skills compared to other children his/her age.

2. *I have concerns about how my child understands and uses language and communication skills compared to other children his/her age*

	%	Count
Yes	73.4	171
No	22.8	53
Don’t Know	3.9	9

- Almost two-thirds (73.4%) of families reported concerns about how their child understands and uses language and communication skills compared to children his/her age.

3. *I have concerns about how my child learns new skills like thinking, remembering, problem solving, or understanding the world around him/her compared to other children his/her age.*

	%	Count
Yes	42.1	99
No	50.6	119
Don't Know	7.2	17

- Over half (50.6%) of families reported no concerns about how their child learns new skills like thinking, remembering, problem solving, or understanding the world around them.

4. *I have concerns about how my child is gaining independence in meeting his/her basic needs and using socially appropriate ways to get what he/she wants compared to other children his/her age.*

	%	Count
Yes	55.3	131
No	37.1	88
Don't Know	7.6	18

- More than half of families (55.3%) reported concerns about their child gaining independence in meeting his/her needs in appropriate ways, compared to children his/her age.

B. Understanding of Developmental Needs

Respondents were asked about their understanding of their child’s developmental needs both before and after participating in Early Intervention.

<i>Please select the responses that best reflect your opinion.</i>	Poor % (n)	Below Average % (n)	Average % (n)	Above Average % (n)	Excellent % (n)	Mean
<u>Before my child and family received Early Intervention services</u> , I would have rated my understanding of his/her developmental needs as:	14.5 (12)	27.7 (23)	44.6 (37)	10.8 (9)	2.4 (2)	2.6
<u>Now that my child and family are receiving Early Intervention services</u> , would rate my understanding of his/her developmental needs:	1.2 (1)	2.4 (2)	21.7 (18)	41.0 (34)	33.7 (28)	4.0

- More than 40.0% of families reported that before receiving Early Intervention services, they would have rated their understanding of their child developmental needs as “Poor” or “Below Average.”
- Almost three quarters of families (74.7%) rated their understanding of their child’s development as “Above Average” or “Excellent” after receiving Early Intervention services.
- Survey results demonstrate that families report substantial gains in understanding of their child’s needs after participating in Early Intervention services.

C. Family and Child Impact

Families were also asked about new skills their child had developed and about their own personal knowledge increases related to identifying, responding to, and supporting their child’s developmental needs and skills. Families largely reported their child had increased his or her skills and that they had increased their own knowledge in how to identify, respond to, and support their child’s development. The lowest area of gain in child skills and family knowledge (still above 75.6% and 89.0%, respectively) was reported in the developmental area of gaining independence.

1. Social/Emotional/Behavioral

<i>Please select the responses that best reflect your opinion.</i>	Strongly Disagree % (n)	Disagree % (n)	Neither Agree nor Disagree % (n)	Agree % (n)	Strongly Agree % (n)
<u>After receiving Early Intervention services, I feel that my family is better able to participate in and enjoy typical daily activities and community events.</u>	2.4 (2)	1.2 (1)	15.9 (13)	42.7 (35)	37.8 (31)
<u>After receiving Early Intervention services, I feel that my child has developed new skills relating to social or emotional development (i.e., following rules, getting along with others)</u>	1.2 (1)	1.2 (1)	12.2 (10)	43.9 (36)	41.5 (34)
<u>After receiving Early Intervention services, I feel that I have an increased knowledge of how to identify and respond to my child’s needs in the area of social or emotional development.</u>	1.2 (1)	1.2 (1)	4.9 (4)	48.2 (39)	44.4 (36)

- After receiving Early Intervention services, 80.5% of families agree or strongly agree that their family is better able to participate in daily activities and community events.
- After receiving Early Intervention services, 85.4% of families agree or strongly agree that their child had developed new skills relating to social and emotional development.
- After receiving Early Intervention services, 92.6% agree or strongly agree they had an increased knowledge of how to identify and respond to their child’s needs in the area of social and emotional development.

2. Language and Communication

<i>Please select the responses that best reflect your opinion.</i>	Strongly Disagree % (n)	Disagree % (n)	Neither Agree nor Disagree % (n)	Agree % (n)	Strongly Agree % (n)
After receiving Early Intervention services, I feel that my <u>child has improved</u> in his/her language and communication <u>skills</u> .	3.6 (3)	1.3 (1)	10.0 (8)	46.3 (37)	38.8 (31)
After receiving Early Intervention services, I feel that I <u>have an increased knowledge</u> of how to support my child's language and communication skills.	1.3 (1)	0.0 (0)	6.3 (5)	47.5 (38)	45.9 (36)

- After receiving Early Intervention services, 85.1% of families agree or strongly agree that their child had improved in his/her language and communication skills.
- After receiving Early Intervention services, 93.4% of families agree or strongly agree that they themselves had an increased knowledge of how to support their child's language and communication skills.

3. Learning New Skills

<i>Please select the responses that best reflect your opinion.</i>	Strongly Disagree % (n)	Disagree % (n)	Neither Agree nor Disagree % (n)	Agree % (n)	Strongly Agree % (n)
After receiving Early Intervention services, I feel that my <u>child has learned and uses new skills</u> relating to thinking, remembering, problem-solving, and understanding the world around him/her.	1.2 (1)	2.4 (2)	12.2 (10)	52.4 (43)	31.7 (26)
After receiving Early Intervention services, I feel that I <u>have an increased knowledge of how to support my child in learning and using new skills</u> relating to thinking, remembering, problem-solving, and understanding the world around him/her.	1.2 (1)	1.2 (1)	3.7 (3)	52.4 (43)	41.5 (34)

- After receiving Early Intervention Services, 84.1% of families agree or strongly agree their children had learned and use new skills in understanding the world around him/her.
- After receiving Early Intervention services, 93.9% of families agree or strongly agree they had an increased knowledge of how to support their child in learning these life skills.

4. Gaining Independence

Please select the responses that best reflect your opinion.

	Strongly Disagree % (n)	Disagree % (n)	Neither Agree nor Disagree % (n)	Agree % (n)	Strongly Agree % (n)
After receiving Early Intervention services, I feel that <u>my child has gained independence in meeting his/her needs and in using socially appropriate ways to get what he/she wants.</u>	2.4 (2)	2.4 (2)	19.5 (16)	48.8 (40)	26.8 (22)
After receiving Early Intervention services, I feel that I have an <u>increased knowledge of how to support my child in gaining independence in meeting his/her needs and in using socially appropriate ways to get what he/she wants.</u>	1.2 (1)	0.0 (0)	9.8 (8)	52.4 (43)	36.6 (30)

- After receiving Early Intervention services, 75.6% of families agree or strongly agree their child has gained independence in meeting their needs and in using socially appropriate ways to get what the child wants.
- After receiving Early Intervention services, 89.0% of families agree or strongly agree they had an increased knowledge of how to support their child in gaining their independence in meeting their needs and in using socially appropriate ways to get what the child wants.

D. Overall Early Intervention Experience

Families who were either participating in an annual IFSP review or exiting the EI system were asked about improvements in their abilities to interact with professionals who work with their families. Specifically, they were asked about their ability to talk about their child’s developmental needs and their ability to participate in making decisions about their child. Families were also asked about increases in their knowledge of community resources that can support their child and family.

<i>Please select the responses that best reflect your opinion.</i>	Strongly Disagree % (n)	Disagree % (n)	Neither Agree nor Disagree % (n)	Agree % (n)	Strongly Agree % (n)
<u>Because my child and family receive Early Intervention services, I am better able to talk about my child’s developmental needs with the professionals who work with my family.</u>	1.2 (1)	0.0 (0)	2.4 (2)	46.3 (38)	50.0 (41)
<u>Because my child and family receive Early Intervention services, I am better able to participate in making decisions about my child with the professionals who work with my family.</u>	1.2 (1)	0.0 (0)	2.4 (2)	41.5 (34)	54.9 (45)
<u>Because my child and family receive Early Intervention services, I am more knowledgeable about available community resources to support my child and/or family.</u>	1.2 (1)	0.0 (0)	4.9 (4)	50.0 (41)	43.9 (36)

- After receiving Early Intervention services, 96.3% of families agreed or strongly agreed they were better able to talk about their child’s development needs with professionals who work with their family.
- After receiving Early Intervention services, 96.4% of families agreed or strongly agreed they were able to better participate in making decisions about their child with the professionals who work with their family.
- After receiving Early Intervention services, 93.9% of families agreed or strongly agreed they were more knowledgeable about available community resources to support their child and/or family.

III. Stakeholder Comments

Early intervention has become like family to our household. If I ever do not understand or need anything they are always there to help. They have been really wonderful in every situation. We are so blessed to be a part of this program.

*Excellent program.
Excellent professionals.*

This has been a positive learning experience. Even as a healthcare professional, this team has taught me a ton about childhood development!

We have absolutely loved our time with the early intervention program so far. They have all been extremely kind, helpful, and caring. We have learned so much about how to care for our child developmental delays and how to work with him. We are so thankful for these services and look forward to continuing this journey with them!

I am amazed how well this program works for children and even more amazed how well it works for adults (parents). Being a first time mother not knowing how to best help my child, finding this program has been a godsend. It has helped in so many ways. Thank you for having this program to help children and their parents.

Our family has had nothing but positive, helpful experience working with early intervention.

They have given us so much help and understanding on what to do. They helped us find what works best for our son. We are so thankful for everything they have done.