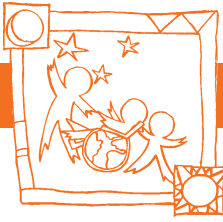


# five steps

## TO BECOMING YOUR INFANT OR TODDLER'S BEST ADVOCATE



Start by knowing **you are an equal partner** in your infant or toddler's development, medical care & education!

### You know your child best...

- You know his or her developmental & medical history.
- You know your child's likes and dislikes.
  - You know what makes him or her happy or sad.
  - You know how to comfort & love your child.
  - You have a vision for your child's future.
  - You are an expert on your child!



**Understand your feelings** about yourself as a parent of a child with special needs or a disability!

**Talk** about your feelings with your spouse, partner, other family members, or friends.

**You are not alone.** Find out about local groups or organizations where you can find support and meet other families with similar experiences.

**Know** that some days will be better than others and that's OK!

**Stay connected** with your friends and favorite activities as much as possible.

**Take good care** of yourself and you will be better able to care for your child.



### Acquire knowledge!

**Learn** about your baby's growth and development.

**Learn** what you can do to help your child grow and learn.

**Learn** about your rights under the Individuals w/ Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) & the services provided through the NC Early Intervention Infant-Toddler Program.

**Ask** lots of question when you talk with your child's physician and nurses, Early Intervention Service Coordinator, therapists, childcare providers, teachers, service providers and others.

### 4 Improve your Skills!

#### Communicate:

- Develop positive partnerships with professionals and others in your child's life.
- Address any concerns you have as they come up.
- Attack problems not people!
- Keep the focus on your child.

#### Documentation is key:

- Follow up your requests or conversations in writing and always keep a copy for your records.
- Keep a log or list of phone calls to your child's doctor, service providers & others.

#### Record Keeping:

- Keep all of your child's records together in one place.
- Ask your Early Intervention Service Coordinator for a Record Keeping Toolkit.



### Participate!

#### Participate in...

- all meetings about your child.
- the development of your infant or toddler's IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan).
  - Be prepared to share your thoughts, ideas, and dreams for your child and family.
  - Work with your Early Intervention Service Coordinator to revise the IFSP as your child's needs change.

**And remember... You really are your child's BEST advocate!**

**The NC  
Infant-Toddler Program**  
1-855-623-2759  
www.beeearly.nc.gov

**ECAC**  
Exceptional Children's Assistance Center  
1-800-962-6817  
www.ecac-parentcenter.org

**The Central Directory of Resources  
at FSN - Family Support Network**  
1-800-852-0042  
www.fsnnnc.org

ECAC is NC's Parent Training and Information Center (PTI)  
and all services are provided free.



State of North Carolina • Department of Health and Human Services • Division of Public Health  
www.ncdhhs.gov • www.beeearly.nc.gov

NC DHHS is an equal opportunity employer and provider.  
10,000 copies of this public document were printed at a cost of \$833.00 or \$0.083 each. 06/13