

Early Services

Enable Ireland's Early Services programme maximises a child's overall development in the vital early years from the age of 0 to 6 years. Assessment and treatment are provided by an inter-disciplinary team. We work in close partnership with the child's parents – together we identify needs, make decisions and plan for their child.

Why intervene early?



When a baby or a child is diagnosed with a condition involving physical disability or is delayed in physical development, it is important that we intervene to ensure that the child will achieve his or her maximum potential in all areas of their development.

Babies who can sit up and move around will explore their immediate surroundings for themselves. Young children who cannot move around for themselves need help from others to bring that world to them. For example, proper positioning is essential in the development of play skills, so we find toys and activities that will stimulate their mobility, curiosity and interest. By doing this, we encourage all aspects of the baby's development – physical, social and intellectual.

Who are the team?

The day-to-day management of children's services are the responsibility of the Director of Service or the Children's Service Manager as appropriate

- **Consultant Paediatrician:** The paediatrician holds regular clinics, seeing children soon after they are referred and then for regular review.
- **Occupational Therapist:** The occupational therapist focuses on the maximum independence of the child especially in relation to dressing, eating, playing, sitting, ability, mobility, and perception.
- **Physiotherapist:** The physiotherapist aims to increase functional abilities such as sitting independently and mobility.

- **Speech and Language Therapist:** The speech and language therapist treats speech and language disorders and delays. These include areas such as eating and drinking skills, aids for communication, play skills, and social communication.

- **Social Worker:** The social worker provides a counselling and advice service to families to help the social and emotional needs.

- **Psychologist:** The psychologist's role includes assessment of the child's general development, intelligence, and abilities. The psychologist is also involved in advising parents on school placement, behavioural and emotional difficulties.

- **Child Care Staff:** Child care staff work with children individually and in groups both in the Centre and, in some areas, providing in-home support.

You will meet some or all of the team depending on your child's needs. The composition of the team may vary from service to service.

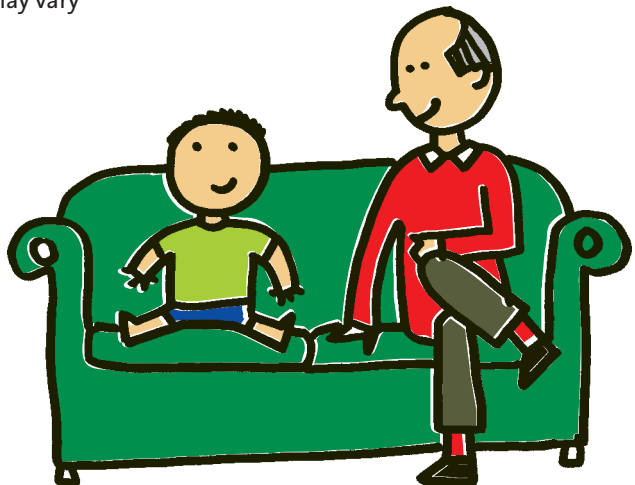
Assessment

During the initial stage of assessment, our team takes time getting to know your child, observing, listening to you as parents and identifying your child's individual strengths and needs.

Together with you, the parents, we discuss the suitability of the Early Services programme for your child. If the needs of your child cannot be met by our service a referral to a more appropriate service will be made.

Individual Programmes

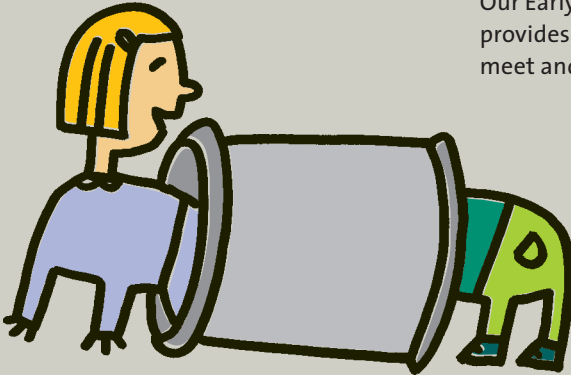
Individual programmes for each child are discussed with parents. It is vital that parents and family are completely informed of the purpose and goals of the therapy programme. Our team is there to act as a source of information and support for the family. Where possible and appropriate staff may visit you at home to see your child in a more relaxed environment.



As well as having regular contact with the individual therapists parents are invited to periodic review meetings to look at the progress made and to make plans for the immediate future.

Coming to terms with a child's disability is often difficult for parents. Feelings of isolation, confusion and anxiety are common at this time. Our team is there to listen and to give information and support.

Many parents appreciate meeting and sharing experiences with other parents of children with disabilities. Our Early Services programme provides a framework for parents to meet and get to know each other.



Who We Are

Enabling people with physical disabilities to achieve maximum independence, choice and inclusion in their communities.

Since its founding in 1948, Enable Ireland has evolved into a national organisation with centres or branches located nationwide. We have worked together with thousands of children and adults with physical disabilities such as cerebral palsy, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy, and developmental delay.

The demand for our services continues to increase throughout Ireland. We have set ourselves the challenging goal of meeting these needs by providing a full range of high quality services, and expanding greatly into local communities.

Enable Ireland