



All in for Kids

A Birth to 3 Program Family Newsletter

All in for Kids: Birth to 3 Program is a newsletter that helps to keep you and your family informed about the services available through the Birth to 3 Program. The newsletter is published by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS).



Understanding ongoing assessment in the Birth to 3 Program

Every child learns and grows in their own way—and at their own pace. That’s why the Wisconsin Birth to 3 Program uses ongoing assessment to get a full picture of how your child is doing and how we can best support their development. But what does “ongoing assessment” really mean? Let’s break it down.

What is assessment in the Birth to 3 Program?

Assessment is how the Birth to 3 team gathers information about your child’s development. It’s not a one-time occurrence. It’s an ongoing process that includes observing your child, listening to your family’s insights, and using what

we learn to shape your child's individualized family service plan (IFSP).

What does an assessment look like?

Ongoing assessment happens during everyday moments. It's not something that only happens in a doctor's office or classroom. It includes:

- Watching how your child plays with toys at home or in childcare
- Observing your child's behavior at the grocery store, on a walk, or at a family gathering
- Hearing what siblings, grandparents, or daycare providers have noticed
- Talking with you about what you see day-to-day, like new words, movements, or ways your child communicates

The Birth to 3 Program gathers all these observations to build a picture of your child's strengths, needs, and interests.

How does assessment help my child?

Assessment helps your early intervention (EI) team:

- Track progress over time and plan next steps.
- Understand what your child can do in daily routines like eating, playing, and moving.
- Spot new skills and identify any challenges.
- Adjust services and supports when needed.

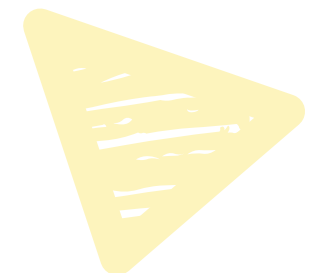
These insights help us develop meaningful and realistic goals (called **outcomes**) that fit into your everyday life.

What tools are used?

Birth to 3 Program teams use tools to guide and record the assessment. These tools compare your child's development to what is typical for children their age. But remember, your child is not being judged. These tools help us understand where your child is now and how to best support them moving forward.

What is an individualized family service plan (IFSP) and why is it important?

The IFSP is a document that has information about your team, your family, the outcomes (goals) that you set, and the services provided to help your child and family reach those outcomes. It is a roadmap to success. It's customized, includes what you think is important, and adapts as your child grows. It's a way to make sure your child gets to enjoy being a kid while learning and developing at their own pace, with you cheering them on every step of the way.



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Your service coordinator or primary service provider will explain the results and how they affect your child's IFSP. You'll always be part of the conversation.

When does assessment happen?

Assessment is ongoing because your child is always changing! Some examples of when we assess include:

- When your child first enters the program.
- At every home visit (even if it's informal).
- When you or your team notices changes in your child's skills.
- During regular IFSP reviews every six months.
- At the annual IFSP update.
- Any time you or the team feels that changes to the plan might be needed.

If your child is making fast progress, or if new challenges come up, an IFSP update can happen anytime.

Your voice matters most

As a parent or caregiver, you are the expert on your child. You see things the Birth to 3 Program early intervention team may not. Your observations help shape the services your child receives.

Be sure to:

- Share what you notice during everyday routines.
- Talk about changes in your child's abilities or interests.
- Ask questions if you don't understand something.
- Let the team know what's working—and what isn't.

The more the team knows about your child, the better the Birth to 3 Program can support your child and family.

If you have questions about your child's development, ask your primary service provider or any member of the IFSP team. ❖

What is an early intervention (EI) team?

An early intervention (EI) team is a group of people who work together to understand a child's needs. This team includes the child's parent or caregiver, a service coordinator, and qualified professionals. They help evaluate or assess the child's development.



Your child's story helps guide their journey

Assessment is not just about numbers or checklists. It's about understanding your child's world—and using that knowledge to help them thrive. Your input, combined with observations from others who care about your child, helps build a strong foundation for learning and development.

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Family spotlight: Tyson's journey in the Birth to 3 Program

When Tyson's family first connected with the Birth to 3 Program in St. Croix, Wisconsin, they weren't sure what to expect. Like many parents, they were navigating the uncertainty that can come with a child's developmental delays. They found a team of people who truly cared—and who would become partners in helping Tyson grow stronger every day.

Getting started with support

Tyson was referred to the Birth to 3 Program by his pediatrician after missing a key milestone—sitting up on his own—at 9 months old. At the time, he was experiencing low muscle tone and left-sided weakness, and his gross motor score was 9 out of 100.

That's when his journey with his occupational therapy team began. Lindsay, Tyson's lead occupational therapist, and Kathryn, an occupational therapy student, started working with him in his home—creating a safe and familiar space for him to learn and grow. As Tyson grew more comfortable, therapy sessions transitioned to his daycare, allowing him to practice new skills in the environment where he spent much of his day.

Real progress, real joy

Thanks to Tyson's hard work, and the dedication of his therapy team, he has made incredible progress. In just one year, he's gone from needing help to sit up to crawling, standing, and now walking confidently!

His therapists didn't just show up for therapy sessions. They stayed connected with his family, sending text updates, sharing ideas to try at home, and helping his mom explain Tyson's progress to his doctors. His daycare team was included too, using strategies the therapists suggested so Tyson could keep building his strength and skills during the day.

A TEAM APPROACH

The Birth to 3 Program works with your family to provide support where it's needed most. Tyson's therapists worked with his family and daycare teachers, making sure everyone knew how to support his development. This team-based approach helps children thrive—both at home and in the community.

A message from Tyson's family

"Having a young child with delays can be scary. The care and compassion we've experienced with every interaction in the Birth to 3 Program has been incredible. Tyson's therapist is truly invested in his success.

In just his first six months, we saw so much progress—and we know the Birth to 3 Program is the reason. Tyson has a team cheering him on, and we feel so supported. This program has been life-changing for us." ❖



Tyson with his therapists, Lindsay and Kathryn

The Birth to 3 Program wants your family stories and photos!

The All in for Kids newsletter is for families. We want to feature your photos and experiences for other readers to enjoy! You can share things like:

- A positive interaction with the Birth to 3 Program.
- An example of how the Birth to 3 Program has helped your family or child.
- A photo or story of an activity you did with your child.
- A photo of artwork or something else your child has made.

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Email your family story or photo to dhsbirthto3@dhs.wisconsin.gov with “All in for Kids” in the subject line. You can also send ideas for stories you would like to see in the newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you! ❖

Partner highlight: Family Voices of Wisconsin

Partner Highlight is a recurring feature in our newsletter, putting a spotlight on some of the organizations that families might want to know more about.

Navigating systems like health care, early intervention, and education can sometimes feel overwhelming, especially when you are just starting out. That’s where Family Voices of Wisconsin can help.

Family Voices of Wisconsin (FVW) is a family-run, statewide nonprofit organization that’s been helping families like yours for 30 years. Their mission is to empower families to navigate services, advocate for their children, and build the confidence to take on leadership roles in their communities.

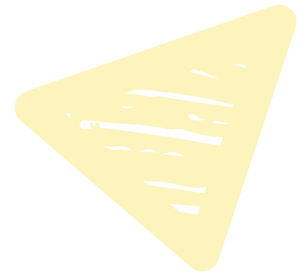
Their work is centered around one important idea: **Families are the experts on their children.**

Family Voices and the Birth to 3 Program

Many staff members at FVW have firsthand experience with Wisconsin’s Birth to 3 Program. They understand what it feels like to have questions, worries, and hopes for your young child—and they know how important it is to have clear information and caring support.

FVW offers several resources just for families involved in the Birth to 3 Program:

- **Wisconsin’s Birth to 3 Program: A Family Perspective** fact sheet helps explain what early intervention is all about from a family’s point of view.
- **Birth to 3 Program videos** cover why early intervention matters and why learning in natural environments (like your home, daycare, or playground) is so important.



WHO IS Family Voices of Wisconsin?

FVW is part of Wisconsin’s network of agencies supporting children with special health care needs. They are also the state’s Family-to-Family Health Information Center and the Wisconsin affiliate of the national Family Voices organization.

Learn more at familyvoiceswi.org



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- Their **online resource library** includes fact sheets, videos, and tips on everything from Medicaid to partnering with doctors to help families feel confident and informed.
- Visit the resource library here: familyvoiceswi.org/resource-library

How Family Voices supports families

In addition to printed and video resources, FVW hosts free learning sessions throughout the year. These sessions help families understand important programs, learn advocacy skills, and connect with others.

Some sessions especially helpful for families of young children include:

- **Did You Know? Now You Know!** A beginner-friendly session that covers programs like Medicaid, private insurance, and long-term supports for children with disabilities and special health care needs.
- **Early Choices Matter.** A learning opportunity focused on the importance of early support and advocacy.

Most sessions are available live (in person or over Zoom) and on-demand for whenever fits into your family's busy schedule.

Partnering to strengthen families

FVW believes that when families have the right tools and information, children thrive. Whether you're new to the Birth to 3 Program or looking for ways to advocate for your child's future, Family Voices is a trusted partner here to walk with you every step of the way.

Stay connected!

Sign up for Family Voices' email updates about upcoming sessions and new resources: familyvoiceswi.org/connect. ❖

Looking for ways to connect with other families?

Family Voices also offers opportunities like:

- **Wisconsin Family Leadership Institute (WiFLI):** Advocacy training for parents and caregivers.
- **Advocacy for Change:** An annual event where families meet with state lawmakers.
- **Circles of Life Conference:** A family-friendly statewide gathering with workshops, a teen program, and fun activities!

Learn more at familyvoiceswi.org.

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Helpful resources for families

Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers Declared 2025 the Year of the Kid: "If We Want to Improve Our Kids' Outcomes, Then We Have to Shorten the Odds." The Governor's 2025-27 Executive Budget declaration builds on the administration's commitment to doing what's best for kids, bolstering youth mental health, ensuring safe drinking water in schools and communities, and more.

View the press release here: content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIGOV/bulletins/3ce3a56 ❖

Learn more about the Birth to 3 Program

The First 1,000 Days brochure gives an overview of the program dhs.wi.gov/library/collection/p-02928.

The Birth to 3 Program Services at a Glance guide explains the supports and services available: dhs.wi.gov/library/collection/p-03011.

The Early Intervention Services for Infants and Toddlers with Delays and Disabilities in Wisconsin booklet helps you understand how early intervention helps your family and child learn and grow together: dhs.wi.gov/library/collection/p-03022.

Previous issues of the All in for Kids newsletter: Birth to 3 Program are available online: dhs.wi.gov/library/collection/akidsb-3-2024. ❖

JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST

For faster delivery, sign up to get the electronic version of this newsletter and other emails about the Birth to 3 Program. Go to dhs.wi.gov/aboutdhs/alerts.htm and scroll down and click the Birth to 3 Program Information for Families link.

Don't forget to tell your family and friends in the Birth to 3 Program to sign up as well!

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All in for Kids: Birth to 3 Program is a newsletter published by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services for children and families in the Wisconsin Birth to 3 Program.

The Wisconsin Birth to 3 Program is an early intervention program committed to serving children under the age of 3 with developmental delays and disabilities and their families. The program partners with families to assist the child's development and support the family's knowledge, skills, and abilities as they interact with and raise their child. For more information, visit dhs.wi.gov/children/index.htm.

Para leer este boletín en español, visite dhs.wi.gov/library/collection/akisb-3-2025.

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