



Parent Handbook

Programs for Infants and Children
161 Klewin Street, Suite 103
Anchorage, AK 99508

907-561-8050 Phone
907-563-3172 Fax

www.picak.org



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Parent Handbook

Welcome to Programs for Infants and Children, or PIC. When you enroll in services at PIC, we will work with you to support you and your child to reach the goals you have developed. We look forward to helping you help your child learn and grow. This handbook is intended to help you understand the new vocabulary you may hear and understand your parental rights and procedural safeguards that come with enrollment in Early Intervention services.

We encourage you to read through this handbook and ask any questions you may have about any of the areas that may be new. PIC providers are here to help and support parents. Early Intervention works best when we work together to help children succeed.

What is PIC?

PIC is an early intervention program which means services provided at PIC are for infants and toddlers (under 3 years of age) who experience a development disability or delay and their parents/caregivers. PIC provides early intervention services for families living in the following Alaskan communities: Anchorage, Girdwood, Whittier, Iliamna, Newhalen, Nondalton, Kokhanok, Port Alsworth, Port Alsworth, and Iguigig.

Early Intervention programs are part of the Individuals with Disability Education Act or IDEA. IDEA is a law that provides services to infants and toddlers who experience a disability or developmental delay. It is sometimes called Part C services because it is Part C of IDEA. Part C of IDEA outlines services and rights each child/family is entitled to in order to help all children reach their developmental milestones and prepare them for future learning in school and life. For more information about IDEA and Part C please review the Parent Rights and Procedural Safeguards booklet. You may request a copy of the booklet or review it online at www.picak.org.

[Alaska Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program Parent Rights and Procedural Safeguards](#)

Mission:

Promote the growth and development of infants and toddlers who experience or are at risk for delayed development by supporting and strengthening families

Core Purpose:

- Pediatric services and therapies for children birth to 3

Core Values:

- Relationships (family- focus, team, teamwork)
- Learning (shared capacity, coaching)
- Fun (celebration, positive, play)
- Individualized (adaptable, flexible, dynamic, comprehensive continuity)
- Strengthens-based Support (compassion, edify- uplifting, coordinated, respect, culture of effective)

Envisioned Future:

Parents and their children have the knowledge and resources they need for success.

What Services does PIC provide?

PIC provides a wide array of services for children and their families may need when children are identified as having a developmental delay or a disability. Those services include:

- Service Coordination
- Developmental therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy

- Speech therapy
- Social work/behavioral health
- Vision services
- Hearing services

How services are delivered:

PIC uses a primary service provider model to provide services their child needs to grow and learn new skills. Your primary provider is your family service coordinator in addition to their area of expertise. The role of family service coordinator is an important one. Your family service provider will walk you through the processes of:

- Intake and information gathering
- Evaluation and assessment to determine your child's current developmental levels.
- Determine if your child is eligible to enroll in PIC services
- If eligible, work with you to develop your individualized family service plan or IFSP
- Coordinate all services your child needs in the community and at PIC.

Early intervention services are more than therapy for children. All children enrolled in PIC services receive service coordination which means PIC providers help families connect with both internal services and external services provided by others in the community to help children achieve their goals. PIC helps families make the needed connections that will help their child. Service coordination is what makes early intervention different from therapy alone.

What is "natural environments" and why is it important? A natural environment is any environment or place that a typically developing infant or toddler would be during their typical day. Natural environments for young children include home, childcare, parks, grocery stores and many other locations. Part C states that early intervention services must be provided in a child's natural environment. What that means to parents is that our providers come to you in your home to provide services instead of parents taking their children to a clinic for services. Natural environments also means that the most natural learning environment for a child, which is in the everyday routines and activities for your child and family. Children learn while playing, dressing, eating, reading with their parents, and all the little things families do together during the day. PIC services focus on these natural environments as the building blocks for helping children and their parents and caregivers learn in fun and interactive ways.

Your child's brain development

Did you know that your child's brain is creating more neural connections between the ages of birth to 3 years old than any other time in their life. That is why babies are able to learn so many amazing skills in such a short period of time. They learn to recognize their family, learn to move, crawl, walk and run, they learn and master a language (some children more than one language), they learn humor and develop their personality all before they are three years old. Because of this spectacular growth, Part C built into the law, timelines to ensure no time is wasted while their brains are developing so rapidly.

There are two timelines that are very important. Those timelines are:

- 45-day timeline: This timeline states that PIC will complete an evaluation to determine if your child is eligible for Part C service AND if they are, develop an Individualized Family Service Plan or IFSP with you within 45 days of your referral to PIC.
- Timely services: If your child is eligible for Part C services and you wish to enroll in services with PIC. Each service your child will receive will have a start date that is determined by parents and providers together. This date indicates that the service will begin on or before that start date.

Partnerships: PIC does not provide services alone; we are all partners working together to help children grow and learn new things every day.

- Families: PIC providers and parents/caregivers work together to help your child learn. PIC providers coach parents much like a coach on a sport team. PIC providers give parents/caregivers the knowledge and help them practice the skill with their children. The reason for this is that children love their parents and parents love their children. Teaching/coaching parents on ways to help their child learn a new skill means that parents can help their child even when PIC providers are not present. This way of working with young children is considered best practice and results in more time practicing and learning new skills for the child.

- **Medical community:** PIC partners with all medical providers in our community to ensure that each child who receives an evaluation or is enrolled in services at PIC is receiving care approved by their pediatrician or doctor. We work to coordinate and communicate whenever possible. Parents are asked for permission to exchange information with your child's medical provider and only with permission are we able to discuss your child's services, progress, and results.
- **School district:** Early Intervention/Part C services are provided until a child turns 3 years old and then a child may be eligible for Part B services with the local school district. PIC works with our school districts to ensure a smooth and seamless transition from Part C services to Part B services. This means PIC will start working with parents long before your child turns 3, to help determine eligibility for school district services. These school district services can include preschool services with additional support such as therapy, to continue their learning.
- **Private providers:** PIC also works with community providers and therapists when families choose to receive services with community providers instead of PIC providers. There are many reasons for families to choose a community provider such as when a child is very close to 3 years old, and it is likely they will need services after their third birthday, or it is preferred by the family to have services in a clinic rather than their home. PIC is happy to collaborate with community providers and will assist families to find a community provider if desired.

Important documents: It is important to us that parents understand their rights under Part C of IDEA and PIC policies so that we can work together. The following documents are essential for parents to understand.

- Parent rights & procedural safeguards (link to booklet)
- Consent to Bill and Billing Policy Link to Policy
- Privacy Practices (HIPAA & FERPA) Link to document
- Consent for Virtual Home Visit-policy and form
- Electronic communications-email, texts communication preferences

Please use this link to view the documents. Documents are translated into several languages: <https://www.picak.org/for-parents>

Parent Rights and Procedural Safeguards

Under IDEA Part C, parents are a valued member of your child's team and have many rights. It is PIC's responsibility to make sure parents understand their rights and know how to seek resolution if problems arise. The booklet provided to you goes into your rights in great detail. This is a summary of those rights, but families are urged to review the booklet for more information.

Overview of Procedural Safeguards (Parent Rights) Within the Alaska EI/ILP, you, as a parent, have the following rights:

- The right to a multidisciplinary evaluation and assessment followed by the development of an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) at the initial IFSP meeting, within 45 calendar days from referral.
- The right to receive evaluation, assessment, IFSP development, family service coordination, and procedural safeguards at no cost to families.
- The right to receive an evaluation, if you request and provide consent for it, at any time.
- If eligible under Part C, the right to receive appropriate early intervention services for your child and family as addressed in an IFSP.
- The right to refuse evaluations, assessments, and services.
- The right to be invited to and participate in all meetings in which a decision is expected to be made regarding a proposal to change the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child, or the provision of appropriate early intervention services to your child or family.
- The right to receive timely written notice before a change is proposed or refused in the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child, or in the provision of appropriate early intervention services to your child or family.
- The right to receive each early intervention service in natural environments to the extent appropriate to meet your child's developmental needs.
- The right to maintain the confidentiality of personally identifiable information.
- The right to obtain an initial copy of your child's early intervention record at no cost.
- The right to a copy of each evaluation, assessment, and IFSP which must be provided to you as soon as possible after each IFSP meeting.
- The right to inspect and review and, if appropriate, amend your child's records.
- The right to request mediation and/or an impartial due process hearing to resolve parent/provider disagreements.
- The right to file an administrative complaint.

In addition to the rights noted above, you are entitled to be notified of specific procedural safeguards under Part C. These rights can be found on the State of Alaska EI/ILP Website, or a paper copy can be provided for you.

Billing Policy

PIC and all early intervention programs across the state are required to bill private insurance, Medicaid, and Tricare for any services provided. However, PIC is also required to get consent from parents to bill insurance companies, private and public. With your permission, PIC can bill for some services. Giving permission to bill your insurance means that PIC will accept any payment from them as payment in full for the service. PIC will not bill parents for co-pays, deductibles, or co-insurances. Parents will not receive a bill from PIC for any service. Please read our billing policy for more information.

[PIC Billing Policy](#)

[Billing Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Confidentiality/HIPAA

PIC values confidentiality and provides you with a statement explaining how your child's/families' information is protected. Your child and family's information is shared with others, only with your permission. Your provider will ask you who you would like us to exchange information with about your child's development and services. PIC will request permission to exchange information with your child's pediatrician or primary healthcare provider so that all services are with their guidance and approval. Other entities to exchange information include specialists (cardiologist, nutritionist), community therapists, school district, childcare provider, extended family, and others who are involved in your child's care.

There are a few circumstances, that by law, require PIC to disclose information without permission. Please see our confidentiality policy for more information.

[PIC Privacy Practices](#)

Health and Safety: Virtual Services

PIC values the health and safety of our clients and our staff. PIC staff will conduct health screenings before each home visit. The reason for the health screening is to verify your household is ready for a home visit without illnesses. PIC providers visit several families each day and it is important to ensure, as much as possible, that our provider will not be exposed to colds, flus, or viruses, that they will then bring to the next home. In addition, all PIC providers perform health screenings each day. PIC providers will not come to your home if they are feeling ill or are experiencing symptoms of cold or flu. PIC providers are not able to come to your home when there is a family member who is ill. You will be asked in the health screening about the health of a member of your family.

In the event that home visits are not possible due to illness, you may be offered to have your visit be completed virtually. PIC has been using Zoom for several years to provide services when in-person services are not appropriate. The virtual services would require you to have a device such as a tablet, phone, or computer and an internet connection. Parents can request or refuse virtual services.

There are other times when in-person visits are difficult, including weather related travel advisories. During winter, there are days when snow storms or other adverse weather creates a safety hazard for PIC staff driving on the roads. During these adverse weather conditions, PIC staff may be directed to move to virtual services for their own safety. Again, parents may be asked if services can move from in-person to virtual. Parents can refuse virtual services.

Virtual Services:

PIC has learned that there are some situations where virtual services or those provided through ZOOM have particular benefits. During the pandemic, all PIC services were provided in this way. Parents and their child were at home while PIC providers were on their computers in their home. Providers were able to observe parents with their children and coach parents to interact with their children in different ways. Although not always ideal, many parents reported that they may have learned more because they needed to learn in the moment.

In addition, some sessions, such as IFSP development meetings, transition conferences, and other service coordination type appointments often work well with ZOOM because more family members are able to call in. In-person meetings require people to leave work or exclude extended family members who live far away from important discussions.

PIC will offer to provide some of your child's appointments using ZOOM when appropriate. As parents, you can request virtual visits or refuse them.

What to Expect

Referral/Intake:

PIC receives referrals from many different places, but parents and pediatrician/physicians are our top two referral sources. Parents can make a referral when they are concerned about their child's development. PIC also receives referrals from childcare providers, hospitals, and child protective services or OCS.

When a referral is received, PIC will contact the parent within a few days, often the same day, to gather some information and prepare for a direct service provider to contact the parent to arrange an intake visit. During the intake visit, the provider will learn about your concerns and priorities for your child. You will also review necessary paperwork and sign documents so that PIC providers can schedule an evaluation.

Evaluation:

PIC evaluations are comprehensive and evaluate all areas of a child's development. Including:

- Gross motor-how a child moves like crawling and walking
- Fine motor-how a child uses their hands
- Communication-how a child understands and uses language
- Cognition-how a child thinks and solves problems
- Self Help-how a child gets their needs met (eating, dressing)
- Social emotional development-how a child engages with others and behavior
- Vision and hearing-is your child seeing and hearing well

The evaluation is completed by two different disciplines or specialists. This is your evaluation team, and they will work with you to determine the skills your child is doing well and those that are not yet mastered and still developing.

You will receive a full report of the evaluation and your provider will go over the results and make appropriate recommendations.

Eligibility for Part C

The evaluation gives us a lot of information about your child's strengths and also challenges meeting their developmental milestones. Your provider will review the results of the evaluation with you and use that evaluation and the information you have shared to determine if your child is eligible for services at PIC.

To be eligible for PIC services, a child must demonstrate a significant delay in his or her development. A 50% delay is required to qualify on test scores alone. That means a child who is 24 months old has skills in one or more areas of development that look more like a child who is 12 months old. However, a child may also qualify if they have a diagnosis that is likely to result in a developmental delay as they grow. An example is a child who has been diagnosed with Down Syndrome. As an infant, they may not yet be showing significant delays but as they grow older, we know that children with Down Syndrome have delayed development due to that diagnosis.

If your child is not eligible for PIC service but does have delays that would benefit from therapy, your provider will share with you a list of providers in the community who can help your child gain the skills they need.

Enrolling in Services at PIC: Create an IFSP

If your child is eligible for services at PIC and you decide to enroll in services, you and your provider will create an Individualized Family Service Plan or IFSP. The IFSP is a written document that pulls together all the information gathered during intake and evaluation. The IFSP is a legal document that is required when enrolling for services. The information included in the IFSP includes:

- Current level of functioning
- Goals to be addressed during visits
- Services
 - Types-Service Coordination, Therapy (Developmental, Physical, Occupational, Speech, and Social Work)
 - Frequency-how often services will happen
 - Where services will be delivered-most services happen in families' homes
- Your consent to provide services. Parents must sign and agree to the services listed on the IFSP before any services can begin.

The IFSP will be in effect for no more than 1 year. During that year, it can be reviewed and revised as many times as is needed but required to be reviewed as least every 6 months. Parents can request a review or revision at any time. Your provider will let you know when the IFSP will need to be reviewed. However, often the IFSP is reviewed more frequently to update the goals for your child as they gain new skills and priorities may change.

Transitions from Part C services at PIC to Part B Services with the Local School District or other community services

PIC services end when a child turns three years old. PIC will prepare both parents and children for the transition starting when your child is 24 to 30 months old. Our goal is to have all new services in place before your child turns 3.

Transition includes three important steps:

1. Notification-PIC will notify the school district that your child may be eligible for school district services when he or she turns three. Parents have the right to opt out of this notification by signing a form that your provider will discuss with you. If you don't want your contact information to be shared with the school district, you must sign the opt out form before your child turns 29 months old.
2. Transition Plan-Your PIC provider will review the general timeline and steps for transition out of PIC services. This plan must be completed by the time your child turns 30 months old. This is the beginning of exploring all the different options that may be available to your child. Options include school district preschool programs, head start programs, private therapy, private childcare and others. Together you and your provider will explore which options may be appropriate for your child.
3. Transition Conference/90 Day Conference-This is the formal meeting between parents, PIC providers, and in most cases the school district. During this meeting, specific details will be worked out like when and where your child will receive their evaluation to determine eligibility and appropriate preschool placement options. In addition, if parents have any questions about important matters such as riding the bus, or how the school your child would be attending is selected. This is a very important meeting for you and your child. Parents can invite anyone they wish to this meeting. At the very least, the parent and the PIC provider must attend.

Raintree Electronic Health Record

PIC uses an electronic health record to keep all our client's health information. It is important to us to ensure all client information is secure and families have access to the documents they need. PIC uses Raintree for all our client records. Parents will be able to sign documents online and will receive emails from PIC to access documents when they are ready. If you are having difficulty with this process, PIC staff can assist you through the process. If you prefer paper documents, PIC will provide these to you upon request.

If there is a problem/file a complaint–What to do

PIC and all our providers work in close partnership with families to provide high quality interventions and services. However, we understand that despite our best efforts, problems may happen. PIC is committed to resolving any problem so that families can focus on helping their children. Parents are encouraged to contact the PIC office if you are not happy with any aspect of your child's or family's services. PIC will work to understand the difficulty and seek a solution. If a solution can is not reached, PIC will connect parents to officials at the EI/ILP state office to make a formal complaint and seek resolution through mediation or other means. Please see the conflict resolution section of the Parent Rights and Procedural Safeguard booklet. For convenience the link is here: [Alaska Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program Parent Rights and Procedural Safeguards](#)