



Texas Parent to Parent

## What is Early Childhood Intervention?



For over 30 years, Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) has provided early intervention services to Texas families with children from birth to 36 months of age who have developmental delays or disabilities. ECI professionals and families members incorporate activities into the child and family's daily activities to promote the child's development.

At Texas ECI, we know that parents are the most important person in their child's life and they know their child better than anyone. Parents are their child's first and best teacher. ECI encourages parents to join in every step of the process, from deciding on what kind of support their child and family may need to working daily with their child to help him grow and learn. Read how the Phonharath family and ECI worked together to promote Kai's development.

*After a sonogram, Sabaiphone and Phonevilay Phonharath of Fort Worth, knew their baby boy, Kai, wasn't growing as fast as typical babies but everything else seemed normal. "His brother, Kel was small, I was small, so I wasn't worried," commented Sabaiphone. Kai was born 5 weeks early and only weighed 4 pounds; therefore, he was required to stay in the neonatal intensive care unit for almost 2 months. He was an active baby but it wasn't until the doctor did a blood test that his parents discovered he had Down syndrome.*

*The hospital staff connected the family with the DARS Division for Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECI). Within a week of being home, Kai and his family had their initial appointment and within 3 weeks were receiving services. "I was very happy how quickly ECI became involved because I was very shocked by Kai's diagnosis and scared. They were very helpful to us," said Sabaiphone.*

*ECI and the family identified goals for Kai and developed a plan. One of Kai's goals was to improve his eating. He is currently on a feeding tube and only eats a little by mouth. The ECI occupational therapist showed the family oral stimulation techniques they could use to help improve his eating abilities. She taught Kai's parents to stretch his cheeks and use a "chewy tube" to help strengthen his chewing since he has minimum tongue movement. "You never pay attention to how you eat but with him his tongue only stays in the middle so that's what we are working on," said Sabaiphone. The parents have built a routine for him and he is eating and chewing more which is exactly what they wanted to accomplish.*

*Another priority goal for the family was improving Kai's motor skills. The family has been taught a lot of muscle exercises for his trunk. Kai has learned to roll and crawl but he's really been working on "cruising" furniture and walking. Kai's parents give credit to their older son Kel, for his patience and love for his brother. Kel is an active participant in his brother's daily routines. ECI staff provided guidance to the family on incorporating Kel into Kai's activities so he could help with his brother's development. Kel encourages Kai to walk by standing with their mom to get Kai to walk between them. "He is a true champion for his brother," stated Sabaiphone.*

## Texas Parent to Parent

1805 Rutherford Ln. ★ Suite 201 ★ Austin, TX 78754 ★ 866-896-6001 ★ 512-458-8600

website: [www.txp2p.org](http://www.txp2p.org) ★ Email: [info@txp2p.org](mailto:info@txp2p.org)

*Kai likes anything that vibrates, loves to bang things and is always active and never still. "ECI therapists have been very helpful in showing me what to do feeding-wise and exercise-wise so he can develop as much as he can at each stage. We are so thankful for ECI being supportive and encouraging," commented Sabaiphone.*

If you would like to learn more about how ECI helps families, watch our ["Texas ECI: Family to Family" video](#) which offers several families' perspectives on ECI services. Families share their personal experiences and explain how ECI's approach strengthened their confidence to be active participants in their child's development.

Remember anyone can make a referral to ECI. Over 28% of our referrals come from parents, other family members and friends. To locate an ECI program near you, call the DARS Inquiries Line at 1-800-628-5115 or visit <http://www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis/searchprogram.asp>.

## Texas Parent to Parent

1805 Rutherford Ln. ★ Suite 201 ★ Austin, TX 78754 ★ 866-896-6001 ★ 512-458-8600

website: [www.txp2p.org](http://www.txp2p.org) ★ Email: [info@txp2p.org](mailto:info@txp2p.org)