

# Early Intervention Works

## Gatlin

Brighton's ECI was nothing short of heaven sent for our family. Our son, Gatlin, was a very busy, very bright toddler with a captivating personality; and he was also just a little different from his peers. I knew he had the capacity to learn more, enjoy more, and accomplish more; but the many activities we struggled with outweighed the moments of clarity, focus, and connections we shared. My mantra was OBTAIN, ENGAGE, EXPAND when Gatlin and I started this battle, and it still is today. But with the help of our loving Brighton family, we learned that we are not fighting tiny battles to win a war, but instead we have discovered how Gatlin learns right now, and the tools he needs to feel his best and be HIS best.

With the help of our team from Brighton, we have laid a foundation for learning that will carry us through a lifetime of victories for Gatlin. Not only because we have figured out what works now, but because ECI and Brighton are there to help children and their families. Our WHOLE family: aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents now understand more about Gatlin, and we owe it all to our leaders at Brighton. I can't say what the biggest take away is from our ECI journey, but it's somewhere between Gatlin's achievements (and continued progress) and the opening of our eyes and hearts to connect with him through methods that work for him.

Our journey learning about the way Gatlin learns has been a beautiful and very rewarding one with challenges and many gains. We were fortunate to have San Antonio's Brighton as our team and I will be forever grateful for the tools they instilled in our hearts, the companionship we shared and their eagerness to help Gatlin, the successes we achieved, and the resources they provided. But most of all, they empowered our family with an insight we didn't know we needed, all for the benefit of Gatlin's ability to learn.

*- Janise, Gatlin's mom*

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Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) is a statewide program for families with children, birth to three, with disabilities and developmental delays.

Families and professionals work as a team to plan appropriate services based on the unique needs of the child and family.

Research shows that growth and development are most rapid in the early years of life. Early intervention responds to the critical needs of children and families by:

- promoting development and learning;
- providing support to families;
- coordinating services; and
- decreasing the need for costly special programs.

For more information, visit <http://txchildren.org/ECI>.

**ECI focuses on working with the child and family in their natural environment, such as at home or in a child care center.**

**ECI Services must be fully funded in order to sustain a quality system that reaches children with developmental delays who are in need of services.**

**It is crucial that ECI continues to receive adequate funding to give families the support they need:**

- Without increases in funding, ECI services will not keep up with growth in the number of children needing services, or even maintain current service levels.
- If ECI service levels are not sufficiently funded, children in ECI will not receive the hours of service they need each month.

**If the ECI system is not strengthened:**

- Young children and families will not receive services in time to significantly change the child's trajectory, requiring they access additional, more costly services as the child ages.
- Other systems—such as schools, child welfare, and juvenile justice—will be called on to deal with unaddressed problems that may become more entrenched, difficult, and expensive to treat.
- Texas taxpayers will spend more on interventions later in life, which have less of an impact on a child's future success.

**Ensure families' access to developmental services that adhere to ECI's family-focused model by:**

- Preserving the ECI model—one that is developmental, evidence-based, family-centered, and cost-effective. Movement towards a medical or clinical service model must be avoided.
- Ensuring ECI is appropriated necessary funds to provide services to all children who are eligible.
- Avoiding further restricting of ECI eligibility by funding the ECI Exceptional Items in the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) Legislative Appropriations Request. Ensuring that ECI services keep up with caseload growth and provide children with the hours of service they need is key to making sure children with developmental delays and disabilities and their families can access services shown to alter their developmental trajectory.

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