



Early Intervention Clinic (EIC) Frequently Asked Questions

Below are some questions you may have thought when attending CSLOT's EIC with your child. Please take the time to read over our responses. Let us know if you'd like more clarification on any of these topics. Please understand that you can speak with any of the therapists at any time (not just dedicated meetings). We are interested in hearing your thoughts about which elements of the program are or aren't working well for your child. It is our wish that parents receive ongoing knowledge and support about ways they can help their children develop and grow.

Why can't I tell my child to say the word the teacher is waiting for?

When the therapist prompts the child and waits for him/her to respond, she is giving the child an opportunity to independently make a request or answer a question. If the parent whispers in the child's ear what to say, then even though the child may imitate, he is not communicating independently. The idea is to make the child the communicator, with support from the therapist. It can be hard to wait that extra time to allow your child a chance to speak or sign, but when he does respond on his own, he will feel empowered and learn that the words or signs he uses make a difference.

Will using sign language replace speaking?

No. Some children are not yet at a developmental stage to use words. Sign language just gives them a way to communicate with you now. Signs serve to decrease frustration for both the child and the parents. Eventually, signing leads to speaking. It will not take the place of speaking.

Will using picture icons replace speaking?

No. In the same way that signing works, picture icons serve as another visual cue to help your child communicate and decrease frustration. Eventually, use of picture icons leads to speaking.

Why won't my child speak in group? I know he/she knows how to say that!

Sometimes children have performance anxiety to speak in front of other children or adults. If your child feels he/she is put on the spot to respond "in the moment", a natural response may be shyness. This is why it is important that we as adults respond to children when they communicate spontaneously. By doing this, we show them that their words mean something and they can make choices by using words, even if it's not "in the moment."



Why does the teacher/therapist sing the same songs over and over again during circle time?

Repetition is an important way that children learn. You may have noticed your child wanting to read the same book or play with the same toy over and over again. In the same way, his/her familiarity with songs and the class routine helps him/her to master the language and cognitive tasks involved. Each time a song is resung, your child has an opportunity to better learn the sounds, gestures, and vocabulary that are part of that song.

Why are some children being offered picture icons and others aren't?

Some children are at a lower level and aren't yet able to use their words to request.

Why are some children encouraged to repeat 2-3 words together and other children are given the snack for just using sign language or making just one sound?

Each child's goals and ways we target them depend on the child's skill level. If the child isn't using any words, we may use picture icons as a means to communicate. If the child is already using single words, we will encourage two words together. If he/she uses two words, we'll encourage three, etc.

Why does my child sometimes not receive a snack from the therapist/teacher? I know he/she is hungry!

During snack time, we wait for the child to show a natural interest in the food. For example, if a child is looking at a snack or raising his hand, the therapist may respond by prompting him to communicate at his current level. The adult could shake a snack or show it to the child to elicit a request. However, if the child still does not show interest, we follow their lead and do not force him to request something he doesn't want.

Why are you working on gross motor and fine motor skills when my child doesn't have problems in these areas?

As part of our EIC program design, we work on all of these areas of development. There is a strong correlation between movement and the use of language. Strengthening the body and improving balance and core stability will help your child build speech and language.

Why do some parents leave the room and others stay in the room with their children?

The idea of gradual separation relates to "independence training". By having parents of some children leave the room for a period of time, we are preparing the children for separation during preschool. Some children are not yet at a developmental stage where



they are ready to separate, and that is okay. We also encourage parent participation, either directly in the group or through observation.

Will it disturb the group if I let my child cry? Is it ok for me to leave my child when he/she is crying?

We determine our response to a crying child on a case by case basis. All children cry some times. It is healthy to allow your child to cry at times in order to build independence and teach the child to cope. However, children at this age also need emotional support and security. Receiving the comfort of a trusted adult is also beneficial for a child's development.

Why do other seem to get children get more attention than my child?

This goes back to the idea of independence training. Some children are more accustomed to the group routine and may require less guidance. Others are at a more basic level and may have greater needs to help them in transitions between activities, or help them regulate their emotions when they are upset or excited.

Why do the aides sometimes lead circle/group instead of the therapist?

Part of the therapists' responsibilities are to test children in preparation for IFSP meetings. Unfortunately, due to the busy nature of their schedules, most often this testing cannot be done outside of group time. Other times, the therapist may be collaborating with a parent during group time. Our aides are well trained and supervised to effectively lead circle and group activities when the therapist is unavailable.

Why does my child have to wait his turn during gross motor activities?

By giving each child a turn, we can individually teach the gross motor obstacle course for the day. It also gives the therapists a better sense of motor skills of each child, and to determine which children need extra support to safely use the equipment.

Why doesn't the therapist "make" my child speak?

No one can make another person speak. We target therapy to the level the child is currently at and provide maximal opportunities and support for their participation.

Why are seatbelts used?

Rifton chairs with straps help promote focus, security, and posture. Most children grow to enjoy the independence of buckling the seatbelt themselves.



When and how much do I prompt?

Please refer to September, October, and November 2008 ECHO articles on the prompting hierarchy.

What do you do when children are aggressive - what is the discipline method used?

Children with decreased language can easily become frustrated and may resort to physical ways of communicating. The therapists and aides work together to redirect these behaviors so they can be expressed in a functional way. Gentle interaction, hugs, and friendship between children are promoted.

Will it hurt my child if he/she doesn't continue with the same staff every day until he/she turns three?

All members of our staff are trained to use the same approaches with children to promote relationships and emotional development. Therefore, it won't harm your child if there are any changes to the staff.

The other kids in this group seem to have a lot more words than my child. Is this the right group for him/her?

Yes. Other children with higher language development will provide a strong language model for children who are weaker in these skills. The therapists and aides work together to design approaches that are individualized for each child.

Why do some children in the group also receive individual therapy services?

The therapists informally evaluate children's progress on an on-going basis through observation over time. If a child isn't progressing steadily, and there seems to be a particular area of weakness, the therapist may request additional services to be approved through the regional center. Group services do not necessarily result in individual services, and individual services do not always result in group services. Most often case managers require 3 months of trying the therapy recommended on the IFSP before authorizing additional services. If a therapist recommends the addition of any individual therapy, it must be approved by the regional center before therapy can be scheduled.

What will happen when I have the transition meeting and my child exits the program? Will he/she still receive services?

The purpose of the transition meeting is to prepare your child to exit from California's Early Start program (birth to three) and enter into the public schools system in your district. The transition meeting usually occurs 3 months before a child turns 3 years old. It is run by the case manager / service coordinator. The therapist is not usually present



unless the transition meeting happens to correspond with a 6-month review or annual review of the IFSP goals. During the transition process, your child will be evaluated separately by the school district in which you reside. Many school psychologists and therapists consult with the CSLOT therapists about how a child is performing. While the school districts take into consideration the therapist's recommendations, it is no guarantee that the child will receive therapy services once he reaches the public schools. Please speak with your case manager about the details of the transition process.