It is easy to make a buck; it’s a lot tougher to make a difference.

Tom Brokaw

WHY EARLY INTERVENTION FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS?

Every baby is special, and some babies have extra-special needs. To help families meet their young children’s special needs, Congress created the Early Intervention Program for infants and toddlers with disabilities.

Early intervention services help young children with disabilities achieve their goals in cognitive, social/emotional, communicative, adaptive, and physical development. Services may include occupational therapy to help an infant learn to hold her bottle, physical therapy to help her learn to roll over, speech therapy to help her learn to talk or eat, or developmental therapy to help in all areas. Most early intervention services take place in the home, or in the case of working parents, at child care settings in the local community.

Through the years, early intervention services have proved to be crucial to the healthy development of infants and toddlers with disabilities, minimizing the impact of developmental delay and increasing their chances for success and a brighter future.
Statistics

Total Children Served in 2014-2015 by County
- Essex: 37
- Gloucester: 114
- King & Queen: 10
- King William: 49
- Lancaster: 25
- Mathews: 18
- Middlesex: 43
- Northumberland: 40
- Richmond: 20
- Westmoreland: 56

Race
- White: 251
- Black: 76
- Hispanic: 37
- Asian: 6
- Other: 42

Gender
- Male: 265
- Female: 147

- Medicaid (including HMO): 207
- Private insurance: 76
- Tricare: 27
- Private insurance and Medicaid: 9
- None: 5

Referrals by Source
In 2014-2015, RISP received 223 new referrals of children from the following sources:
- Physicians: 81
- Parents/family: 81
- Department of Social Services: 27
- Regional hospitals: 14
- Parent-child programs: 8
- Infant-Toddler Connection: 4
- Childcare providers: 3
- Shelters: 3
- Mental health: 2

Children Enrolled for Full Developmental Services (Part C): 324

Additional Children Screened and/or Monitored: 88

Services when Children Leave RISP
A total of 93 enrolled children were discharged from RISP during 2014-2015 to the following settings:
- Preschool special education class: 45
- No additional services needed/community preschool: 27
- Therapy only from school (speech): 9
- Moved from area (referred for continuing infant services): 8
- Private therapy: 2
- Declined services: 2

Diagnoses/Conditions of Children Enrolled for Full Services (some children are in more than one category)
- Developmental delay: 224
- Speech delay: 50
- Motor impairment (includes torticollis): 28
- Prematurity: 48
  - (extreme prematurity - less than 28 weeks): 25
- Medically fragile/health impairment: 25
- Communication disorder (includes autism): 28
- Other genetic disorders: 14
- Vision impairment: 15
- Feeding disorder: 13
- Hearing impairment: 6
- Cerebral palsy: 5
- Down syndrome: 6
- Accident: 2

Alex
How Does RISP Measure Up?

The federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requires states to report to the public a compilation of the State’s data on a required set of monitoring indicators for each local early intervention system across the Commonwealth of Virginia. Information submitted in February 2015 is posted by locality on the state Part C website (www.infantva.org). This information shows that our locality again meets requirements for compliance and targets for parent satisfaction.

One of the specific requirements is to evaluate the percent of infants and toddlers enrolled in Part C who demonstrated improved:

a. Positive social-emotional skills
b. Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, including improved language/communication.
c. Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

In the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck this past year, the percent of infants and toddlers who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 3 years of age or exited the program ranged from 106% to 116% of the State Targets for improvement in these areas. In addition, in the Annual Family Survey conducted by the Social Science Research Center at Old Dominion University asked families to rate how the program helped them a) know their rights, b) effectively communicate their child’s needs, and c) help their child develop and learn. Parent responses ranged from 95% to 104% of the State Targets with these outcomes.

Documentation from the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center indicates that:

“high quality early intervention services can change a child’s developmental trajectory and improve outcomes for children, families, and communities. And they have shown that intervention is likely to be more effective and less costly when it is provided earlier in life rather than later.”

Here is what our local families have told us:

“We have so enjoyed the time you have spent with [our son] and we have loved the progress he had made! Thank you for your wonderful work!”

“Thank you for all you have done for us and helped us get this far with [our daughter].”

“She is very aware of conversation and understands completely and follows direction. We do have a few small puzzles that she plays with from time to time. Glad you are seeing her progress as well! I have [our daughter’s] great team to thank for her progress.”

“Thank you all so very much for your help. [RISP therapists], you both have been so amazing with [our son] and in the process gave his Mama peace of mind. God bless each and every one of you.”

“I am so glad that I referred [my son] to RISP when I did. Even though I could have waited, I think he has done so well because he got the help so early.”

“They gave us hope.”

And from a recent student intern from Virginia Commonwealth University: “I still remember how wonderful my experience was there, I knew before the externship that I wanted to work with Part C but working with your team made me know for sure that it was what I wanted.”

Lillian and her family
Paul, a recent RISP graduate, faced many daunting problems at birth, and his future was uncertain at times. He was referred to RISP shortly after birth by his doctors when he first left the hospital. He needed many supports, and his family was told that even the possibility of eating by mouth was very much in doubt, as were his other skills.

With the determination and hard work of his family and his therapists, Paul continues to eat by mouth, and so much more. As his mother explained “Paul has a big loving family that is involved with him and supportive of him. Paul goes on adventures, experiencing new people, places and things”. While he has participated in traditional therapies at RISP, some of his most fun and beneficial activities and experiences have included swimming, playgrounds, horseback riding, and even roller skating, in addition to travels to beaches, national parks and many other states.

The inspiration for Paul’s family to help him thrive can be found in Paul’s grandmother Irene Brummett, who swam the 3.1-mile course across the York River in the Peace Frogs Bank-to-Bank Swim of the Gloucester Community Foundation this year. This beneficial Memorial Day Swim raised funds for children in the community, including those served by RISP. With her son and her granddaughter serving as spotters, Mrs. Brummett completed the swim full of her characteristic enthusiasm to help children and serve as an inspiration to all.
Katie was referred to RISP by her pediatrician as a very young infant with Down syndrome. She immediately won the hearts of everyone at RISP because of her outgoing and sweet nature and her interest in everything. She showed a true “can do” attitude, working hard to accomplish her goals. Even though children leave RISP when they turn three years old, staff members are always very happy to hear how the children are doing as they enter school and beyond. Katie’s progress in all areas continues to be amazing. Now a sophomore in high school, Katie continues to be described as very hard working, outgoing, and interested in everything. She is currently applying for part-time jobs to gain real-world experience, has a special interest in cooking, and is described as a “whiz” at the computer. Katie is a beautiful example of a young lady with the brightest of futures, and RISP is happy to share news about our special graduate.

Patrick Kiley, RISP graduate, and his father, Kevin Kiley, helped the children in RISP this year by crafting a number of durable, specially designed tables and chairs. Developed to assist children of varying abilities, these lovely tables and chairs have been very helpful for the children, giving them their own space to focus on activities and improve their skills. As demonstrated by Stephanie below, the tables and chairs are a welcome addition to early intervention for many young children.

Note that Patrick Kiley was featured in the RISP Program Report 12 years ago, as he graduated from Gloucester High School and headed off to Pennsylvania College of Technology and a future in carpentry. At that time he was also the recipient of the Courageous Spirit award, which stated that “You have accepted what is, and yet chosen to rise above it and achieve ultimate success”. Thanks again to Patrick and his family to continuing to help and inspire the children, families and staff at RISP.
FRIENDS HELPING FRIENDS

Kids First Foundation

Volunteers Dave and Terrie Dustin from Kids First Foundation helping at RISP parties and putting their mission into action. Kids First Foundation is a local community-based organization focusing on early childhood nutrition and education.

Mrs. Ida Seymour volunteers at RISP party

Awesome big sisters

Santa Tom Karrow at RISP party

C Shells entertain at RISP party

RISP volunteers and staff
The funding that makes early intervention services possible in our community comes from a wide range of public and private sources, including the Middle Peninsula-Northern Neck Community Services Board, Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, local tax dollars, reimbursement from private health insurance and Medicaid, family fees, and private contributions from many generous and caring individuals.

RISP also received a number of supportive financial grants to help provide additional services and equipment in 2014-2015. It would not have been possible to provide these needed services without the generous assistance from the following community organizations and foundations:

Anonymous
Abingdon Episcopal Church, White Marsh
Bay Quilters
Bethany United Methodist Church
Bridgepoint Diaper Ministry
Elis Olsson Memorial Foundation
Felicia and Joan’s Angel Fund
Gloria M. and Paul D. Hare Early Intervention Fund
Grace Episcopal Church, Kilmarnock
Kids First Foundation
Middlesex Kiwanis Club
Middlesex County Women’s Club
Peace Frogs Bank-to-Bank Swim Fund/Gloucester Community Foundation
William F. and Catherine K. Owens Foundation
The Samaritan Group, Gloucester
Target Store, Newport News
J. Edwin Treakle Foundation
United Way of Greater Williamsburg (Donor’s Choice)

The generous donations to RISP make a noticeable difference for families receiving early intervention. Sometimes it is a little item, such as a specialized book that pictures baby sign language or a lighted toy to help with vision. Sometimes it is a much bigger item, such as therapeutic positioning or splinting equipment that will make a big difference in a child being able to have access to typical toys or activities. Sometimes it is the donation of other needed services and “extra hands” which provide invaluable help such as toy repairs and volunteer help at program events.

Tax-deductible financial contributions to RISP are needed to help expand early intervention services to infants and toddlers with special needs throughout the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck. For additional information, please call 800-305-2229.

Donations were also received this year in loving memory of Mrs. Ida Moseley Seymour, mother of RISP staff member Judy Seymour and a former RISP volunteer. One of the contributors expressed their remembrance of Mrs. Seymour as follows: “This donation is in memory of our aunt, Ida Seymour. She was a special lady. We have many fond memories of her surrounded by the love of little children. We know she appreciated the work of the Rural Infant Services Program. We hope this donation will help you fulfill your goals.”

Support for RISP services has also come in the form of amazing talents that have been shared with the program. Very special thanks to Helen Worthington for the generous donation of her time and talents in designing and editing the RISP Program Report again this year. Thanks for the beautiful photographs from Mary Grafton Yagel, Cullen Walker, and Irene Brummett, which are used throughout the report.
RISP is a program of the public, nonprofit Middle Peninsula-Northern Neck Community Services Board where the vision is “discovering possibilities...changing lives”. As part of the statewide Infant and Toddler Connection of Virginia, RISP works toward this vision for our youngest citizens: babies and toddlers up to three years of age in the ten counties of Essex, Gloucester, King & Queen, King William, Lancaster, Mathews, Middlesex, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland. RISP has been providing a wide range of successful developmental and therapeutic services since 1983.

Each child is like a butterfly in the wind. Some fly higher than others. But each one does the best it can. Why compare it to the others? Each one is different. Each one is special. Each one is beautiful.