



# **Understanding the roles of Special Service Providers**

## **Early Childhood Special Educator (Developmental Interventionist or DI)**

The Developmental Interventionist usually has a bachelor's degree and/or master's degree in education, special education, early childhood education, or related fields. They have experience with assessment, goal setting, and curriculum planning for children with special needs. The DI may have added responsibility for development and implementation of the IFSP, and deliver special instructional services to individual children.

## **Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)**

The speech language pathologist is knowledgeable about disorders and developmental delays in communicative development and oral-pharyngeal disabilities. Consultation with an SLP is suggested if children appear to have delays in their communication skills, fall behind their age-mates in the clarity of their spoken language, or have difficulty with eating or swallowing. SLP's can also help providers identify particular sounds to practice with children who have speech or language delays, and they can help incorporate communication-focused goals into general classroom activities. In addition, SLP's can help providers and children learn and use assistive communication devices.

## **Audiologist**

The audiologist focusus on the identification and treatment of hearing loss. Children who have chronic or frequent ear infections and those who do not appear to be developing speech and language as expected for their age can receive a hearing screening or evaluation from an audiologist.

### **Occupational Therapist (OT)**

The OT is concerned primarily with the development of functional everyday skills, play, and sensory processing skills, and motor abilities involving positioning and postural control. OT's can be helpful in suggesting environmental adaptations to promote full inclusion of children with disabilities or developmental delays and are knowledgeable about special adaptive equipment that is often available on loan through state or local agencies.

### **Physical Therapist (PT)**

The PT focuses specifically on motor development reflecting neuromotor, muscular, or skeletal deficiencies or disabilities. Physical therapists can teach Day Care providers appropriate exercises, movements, and positioning techniques to assist individual children. Consultation with a PT is suggested whenever a child appears to be having difficulty with movement skills.

### **Clinical Child Psychologist**

The clinical child psychologist is knowledgeable about family functioning and psychopathology in childhood. The psychologist may be consulted when a child appears to have difficulties getting along with other children or when a child's family situation appears to be having disruptive influence on his or her development. A clinical child psychologist may do regular developmental testing for children in the child care program and may be involved in the development and implementation of IFSPs.

### **Social Worker**

The social worker's training usually involves a broad view of children's development within a family and community context. Social workers can be helpful in identifying a family's needs for additional services that will help them provide the best possible environment for their child. Whenever a child is in state custody or in a foster care living arrangement, a social worker will be involved with the child and will be an active member of the intervention team.