

DEVELOPMENTAL SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONISTS (DSI)

Special instruction is complementary, not duplicative, to other early intervention services (Childress, 2004). The services provided by a DSI go beyond child-centered teaching and general parent education and requires a distinct set of knowledge, skills and experience. Due to the specialized nature of their work, DSIs must be qualified professionals, who in Arizona, hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Special Education, Early Childhood, Family Studies or a closely related field with review of coursework and approval by DES/AzEIP.

DSIs must have knowledge and skills in:

- Federal IDEA (Part C) requirements;
- Typical and atypical patterns of infant/toddler development and learning in all domains;
- Functional assessment of development across domains;
- Developmental disabilities in the birth-to-three population; and
- Specialized instructional strategies to help young children learn.

DSIs also must have foundational competencies in:

- Promoting caregiver-child interaction;
- Facilitating the capacities of families to adapt routines and activities to support child learning and interaction;
- Integrating all areas of development for a holistic view of the child;
- Utilizing adult learning approaches to support the caregiver's competence and confidence in meeting the child's needs;
- Understanding how cultural diversity affects family interactions and intervention practices; and
- Using effective teaming practices to collaborate with families and other professionals within and across agencies.



DSI Role on a Team:

- Collaborate with other team members to “enhance the confidence and competence” of caregivers of young children through assessing a child and family's priorities, resources and concerns and assisting a family to develop a plan to achieve functional participation based outcomes.
- Share your expertise as applicable with families, other team members and during team meetings.
- Facilitate family support and services through flexible, individualized and responsive interaction with the family and team.
- To learn more check out the Division for Early Childhood's June 2014 statement [here](#).