

# Population Health Clerkship: Improving Public Awareness of the Early Intervention Program at Pernet Family Health Service

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## PERNET FAMILY HEALTH SERVICE

### Mission:

"In the tradition of the Little Sisters of the Assumption, Pernet Family Health Service supports the physical, social, psychological and spiritual development of individuals and families by providing home-based health and social services that lead to long-term strengthening and enhancement of family and community life."\*

*"[We] value empowerment, so families have the tools to reach their full potential."\**

### Population:

Pernet programs reach families in Worcester and the surrounding towns. As the service is located in the low-income and culturally diverse Green-Island neighborhood, many members of the community utilize its family support services. Pernet's Early Intervention and Parent Aide resources are available to families throughout central Massachusetts.

*"We view society as one large family, we work to promote social justice and human rights for all people, gradually improve society - one person, one family, one community at a time."\**

Table 1: Neighborhood Statistics

Median Annual Family Income	Single Mother Households	Employment Status	Education Level
\$24,568	8.9%	55% are currently employed	81% have a high school education or less

### Programs:

*"Our organization has strengthened vulnerable, low income families with emergency assistance, maternal and child home health care and family support."\**

Pernet offers Early Intervention services to families with children with or at risk for developmental delays, Family Support Services for those requiring improvement with their parenting skills, Family and Community Development Program for members of the community requiring emergency assistance and enrichment services, and Maternal and Child Nursing Program for new mothers.

## EARLY INTERVENTION

### What is Early Intervention? †

Early Intervention is a cost-free, family-centered, state required service to facilitate the developmental progress for children with developmental difficulties due to identified disabilities or certain birth or environmental circumstances.



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### Who is eligible for Early Intervention services at Pernet? †

Any child up to three years of age in the Worcester area, meeting a following criterion:

1. Not reaching age-appropriate milestones in one or more of the following areas of development.

Table 2: Developmental Milestones

Gross Motor	Fine Motor	Language	Cognitive	Social
Sitting Standing Walking Running	Eating Drawing Dressing Playing	Speaking Gesturing Communicating Understanding	Learning Problem-solving Reasoning Remembering	Interacting Cooperating Bonding Recognizing

2. Diagnosed with a physical, emotional, or cognitive condition that may result in a developmental delay.
3. At risk for developmental delay due to various biological and/or environmental factors.

### What services are provided for Early Intervention? †

An Early Intervention team of certified professionals in a variety of specialties assess a child's needs and implement a tailored regimen of activities and exercises designed to improve and continually assess a child's developmental progress.

Table 3: Services Provided by Pernet Early Intervention

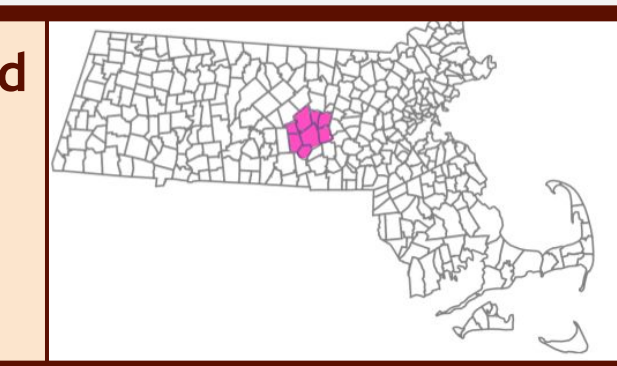
Who?	Where?	What?	How?
Parents Nurse Physical Therapist Educator, etc	Natural environment -Home, Daycare, etc	Physical therapy, Speech therapy, Occupational therapy, etc	Teaching families about the child's developmental needs and teaching ways to support learning

## OUR PROJECT

Goal: Design an Outreach Program to Extend Pernet Early Intervention Services to Community Partners

Progress Part 1: Identification of Community Partners in Catchment Area: Worcester, Leicester, Holden, Boylston, West Boylston, Shrewsbury, Auburn, Paxton

Figure 1: Cities and Towns Served by Pernet Early Intervention † †



Day Care Centers: 37

Medical Offices: 13

Progress Part 2: Development of Introductory Letter and Consolidation of Outreach Materials

Outcome: Connected with community partners to promote Early Intervention program at Pernet Family Health Services

Recommendations for next steps: Follow-up phone call and meeting with Director of Early Intervention.

Take away points: Although Massachusetts offers free EI services to all eligible children, many families are marginalized from services by lack of knowledge or structural barriers to access.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the Pernet Family Health Service Team!

Special thanks to: Sheilah Dooley, RN, BSN, MS, Executive Director; Christopher Nelson, LMHC, Director of Family Support Service; Emily Linhares, Director of Family and Community Development; Donna Jaworek, MA, CEIS, Director of Early Intervention; Hilda Benitez, Parent Aide; Ellen Cherry, Early Intervention Service Coordinator; Emily Smiley, Quality Improvement Assistant; Courtney Young, Parent Aide; Melissa Wenderoath, MEd, Early Intervention Service Coordinator; Lois Gould, MEd, LMHC, Early Intervention Service Coordinator; Jessica Kennen, RN, BSN, Early Intervention Service Coordinator

References: \*Pernet Family Health Service. (2017) 2016 Annual Report \*\*Healthy Baby Community Support Program. Retrieved from Gov.mb.ca. † Pernet Family Health Service. Retrieved from pernetfamilyhealth.org † † Map of Massachusetts Townships. Retrieved from Wikimedia.org.