



Early Intervention Family Service Guide

❖ For families with young children, ages birth to 3 years ❖



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Service Coordinator:

Name:

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Notes:

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●●● Purpose & Content

This *Early Intervention Family Service Guide* is written for families with young children, **ages birth to 3 years**, who are receiving *Early Start* services through the *Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center (FDLRC)*. As an overview of resources and services, this *Guide* is intended to help families create an effective partnership with the regional center as they make choices and face challenges associated with their child’s special needs. Topics covered in this *Guide* include:

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Koch-Young Resource Center (KYRC)

The *KYRC* provides information, education, and support for people with developmental disabilities, families with children who have special needs, FDLRC staff, professionals, and the general community. The KYRC is located on the first floor of the FDLRC.

HelpLine

The *HelpLine* links people to community resources related to developmental disabilities by providing information, referrals, and tailored research.

Phone: (213) 252-5600
(213) 383.1300 x5600
(800) 546-3676

Email: kyrc@lanterman.org

FDLRC Website

The *FDLRC Website* provides information about resources, programs, services, trainings, events, support groups, legislation, and more. Online resources include bilingual (English/Spanish) publications, such as the *Guide to Lanterman Regional Center*.

Website: www.lanterman.org

Library

The library contains a multimedia multilingual collection of approximately 8,000 disability-related searchable materials. It offers *Storytime* events for children that include a book reading and related kid-friendly activities.

Website: www.library.lanterman.org

Toy Loan Program

A collection of developmental toys available for loan to children receiving services from FDLRC.

Network of Care (NOC)

The *Network of Care (NOC)* contains community resources as well as regional center service providers. Some resources integrate children and adults with developmental disabilities into regular programming and activities with their non-disabled peers, while other resources may be specialized programs serving only people with developmental disabilities.

Website: www.lanterman.networkofcare.org

Peer Support Partner (PSP)

The *Peer Support Partner (PSP) Program* is a one-on-one family support program that matches families with trained and experienced family members in a variety of areas of interest. For more information, please speak with your service coordinator or contact:

KYRC HelpLine: (800) 546-3676

Website: www.lanterman.org/psm

Other KYRC Services

- ❖ Support Groups
- ❖ Education and Training
- ❖ Playgroups
- ❖ Assistive Technology

●●● Developmental Milestones

Children grow, develop, and learn throughout their lives, starting at birth. A child's development can be followed by how they play, learn, speak, and behave. Skills such as taking a first step, smiling for the first time, and waving "bye-bye" are called *developmental milestones*. Developmental milestones are a set of functional skills or age-specific tasks that most children can do within a certain age range. The following is a list of developmental milestones specific to infants and toddlers:

10 Weeks	Startle to sound. Hold up their heads. Look at objects.
6 Months	Reach for objects. Turn their heads towards sounds. Roll over. Hold toys.
9 Months	Continue to babble. Sit alone. Imitate actions.
1 Year	Take their first steps. Respond to their name. Play with a variety of toys.
18 Months	Walk alone. Build a tower of three blocks. Use up to 20 words. Enjoy interacting with caregivers.
2 Years	Begin to use two-word phrases to communicate. Walk up and down the stairs. Eat and drink independently.

Although all children develop at their own pace, infants and toddlers that do not reach certain developmental milestones may have developmental delays or disabilities. Research shows that the earlier an infant or toddler with special needs receives appropriate services, the more likely future delays/disabilities will be minimized or prevented.

●●● Early Start

Since it is important that infants and toddlers born with, or at risk for, developmental delays or disabilities receive coordinated family-centered *early intervention* services, California developed and implemented a statewide early intervention services program called *California Early Start*, or most commonly known as *Early Start*.

●●● Service Coordination

As part of the Early Start program, the regional center's *Early Intervention (EI)* unit works with families to access services and supports that help identify and treat developmental concerns in infants and toddlers. Through *service coordination*, the EI unit at the regional center ensures that clients receive coordinated, family-centered early intervention services and supports to maximize opportunities. Service coordination is carried out by a *service coordinator (SC)* assigned to each client and their family. A *client* refers to a child, minor, or adult with a developmental delay or disability that receives FDLRC services.

Service coordinators help clients and their families:

- Access information, services, & supports to enhance knowledge/skills
- Develop choices and design plans related to services and supports
- Coordinate services and supports
- Advocate for rights

●●● Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

An *Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)* is a family-centered plan detailing the Early Start services and supports a child, **birth to 3 years of age**, is to receive. A child's initial IFSP is completed within **45 calendar days** of the time the family first contacts the regional center. The IFSP is developed by a planning team, which includes:

- At minimum, the child's family and his/her SC.
- It may include other people who provide the child or family with support and services (e.g. friend, caregiver, etc.).

The IFSP identifies and documents the family's desired outcomes and states clearly how the IFSP team will work to achieve those goals. It addresses any health or safety issues and includes the following:

- ❖ *A statement of the child's present levels of physical development, including vision, hearing and health status.*
- ❖ *A statement of the child's present levels of cognitive, communication, social, emotional and adaptive development.*
- ❖ *A statement of the family's concerns, priorities, and resources related to meeting the special developmental needs of their child.*
- ❖ *A schedule of the type and amount of services and supports, including who will provide them and where they will be provided.*
- ❖ *Criteria, procedures, and timelines to determine progress.*
- ❖ *Steps to ensure a smooth transition out of Early Start at age 3.*

IFSP Meeting Checklist

IFSPs require planning and meetings with your service coordinator. To help families remember and prepare for IFSP meetings, feel free to use this checklist:

Meeting	Date & Time	Next Meeting Date & Time
Initial IFSP		
IFSP Review <i>(within 6 months of the initial IFSP)</i>		
Annual IFSP		
IFSP Review <i>(within 6 months of the annual IFSP)</i>		
Transition Meeting <i>(will occur with your local school district)</i>		
Other Meeting		

IFSP Language Interpreter and Translation

When requested, FDLRC provides families with a language interpreter at IFSP meetings and/or a translated copy of an IFSP. Examples of some of the most common languages requested include:

Arabic	Cambodian	Farsi	Russian	Tagalog
Armenian	Chinese	Korean	Spanish	Vietnamese

Please discuss the need for an interpreter prior to an IFSP meeting. Translated IFSP documents may be requested at an IFSP meeting.

IFSP Services and Supports

Early Start requires, to the maximum extent possible, early intervention services in a *natural environment* that includes the use of natural supports and generic community resources. Natural environments are settings that are typical for peers who do not have developmental delays or disabilities. These include the family home, a babysitter's home, or a community setting such as a local preschool, a neighborhood play group or a public park.

Services received are based on a child's assessed developmental needs and the family's concerns and priorities as determined by each child's IFSP. Examples of services and supports include:

Examples of Services and Supports

Service Coordination *Service coordination* ensures that clients receive coordinated, family-centered early intervention services and supports. Through service coordination, a *service coordinator* is assigned to manage your child's case and assist with accessing services.

* Please see [page 6](#) of this guide for more information regarding service coordination.

Occupational Therapy *Occupational therapy* is provided by a licensed **occupational therapist** to address fine motor, feeding, adaptive and/or sensory delays.

Physical Therapy *Physical therapy* is provided by a licensed **physical therapist** to address gross motor delays. Physical therapists address a child's ability to take part in important gross motor movement activities such as crawling, walking, maintaining balance and other physical interactions.

Speech Therapy *Speech therapy* is provided by a licensed **speech therapist** to address communication delays. The focus is on speech, language, and cognitive communication to address various types of communication concerns, such as articulation, fluency, voice, receptive and expressive language delays.

Examples of Services and Supports *(continued)*

School Transition Planning *School transition planning* is a service provided by your **service coordinator** to assist you with transitioning from Early Start to your local school district by **age 3** for all future educational services.

* Please see **pages 14-15** of this guide for more information regarding school transition planning.

Infant Development Services *Infant development services* are in-home services with a person knowledgeable in Child Development to address overall delays.

Center-Based Programs or Preschools *Center-based programs* are used for children with more global, significant delays, while neighborhood *preschools* are for children whose delays are more severe.

Generic Resources *Generic resources* are community agencies that are paid to provide specific services such as Medi-Cal, Early Head Start, and private insurance. All of these services are of no charge to the regional center.

* Please see **page 10** of this guide for more information regarding generic resources.

The *Koch-Young Resource Center* is a generic resource that provides education, information, and support for people with developmental disabilities, families with children who have special needs, FDLRC staff, professionals, and the general community.

* Please see **page 4** of this guide for more information regarding the *Koch-Young Resource Center*.

Behavioral Services The regional center provides a range of services that address behavioral concerns in young children. The center offers an orientation to *behavioral services* as well as behavior workshops that take place in **6 session intervals**. Please contact your service coordinator for more details.

●● Purchased Services

After all applicable generic resources, such as Medi-Cal, Early Head Start, and private insurance options have been pursued and exhausted, the regional center may **purchase services** that address IFSP concerns in young children.

●●● Generic Resources

A *generic resource* is any agency which has the legal responsibility to serve all members of the general public and is receiving public funds for providing those services. What they offer may be helpful to children and their families and does not require funding by the regional center. Some examples of generic resources or supports are:

- ❖ Early Head Start
- ❖ School Districts
- ❖ Family Resource Centers
- ❖ L.A. Parks & Recreation
- ❖ Medi-Cal
- ❖ Medicare
- ❖ Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- ❖ California Children's Services (CCS)
- ❖ County Medical Clinics
- ❖ County Mental Health
- ❖ County Health and Human Services
- ❖ Community Legal Services

While FDLRC does not provide funding for these resources or supports, they may be included in the IFSP developed for a client.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a federally administered cash assistance program to help the elderly, blind, and persons with disabilities that have little or no income. Children, if **younger than age 18**, may qualify for SSI if they have a physical or mental condition, or combination of conditions, that meet *Social Security's* definition of disability for children, and if their income and resources fall within the eligibility limits. A Social Security brochure regarding SSI for children may be viewed online:

<https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10026.pdf>

●● SSI Eligibility for Children

For children to qualify for SSI, families must have little or no income and resources. When determining a child's eligibility, a child's income and resources are considered as well as any income, resources, and personal information of family members living in the child's household.

To be eligible for SSI benefits, a child must be either disabled or blind. Social Security has the following strict eligibility criteria for children:

- ❖ *The child must have a medically determinable physical or mental condition(s) that very seriously limits his/her activities; and*
- ❖ *The condition(s) must have lasted, or be expected to last, at least 1 year or result in death; or*
- ❖ *The child must meet the same "blind" definition that applies to adults.*

To find out if your child is eligible for SSI benefits, please call Social Security at (800) 772-1213 or visit the following Social Security webpage:

www.ssa.gov/ssi/text-child-ussi.htm

●● Applying for SSI for Children

A family interested in applying for SSI must complete an *Application for Supplemental Security Income* **AND** a *Child Disability Report (SSA-3881-BK)*. Families may visit or call the Social Security office to schedule a **phone** or **in person appointment** to fill out the *Application for Supplemental Security Income*. The *Child Disability Report* may be obtained at a Social Security office **in person** or **online**; the report may also be completed **online**. If Social Security needs more information, they will arrange an examination or test for the child, which they will pay for. For more information on the application process, please visit:

www.ssa.gov/disabilityssi/apply-child.html

Social Security Resources

- ❖ **Phone:** (800) 772-1213
- ❖ **Online office locator:** <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>
- ❖ **Child Disability Report**
 - Online form: www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-3881.pdf
 - Online application: <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps6z/i3820/main.html>

Medi-Cal

Medi-Cal offers free or low-cost health coverage for children and adults with limited income and resources who meet eligibility requirements.

Medi-Cal covers low-income adults, families with children, seniors, persons with disabilities, children in foster care as well as former foster youth up to age 26, and pregnant women. Most applicants who apply through Covered California will receive Medi-Cal care through managed health plans.

●● The difference between Covered California and Medi-Cal

Medi-Cal provides health benefits similar to the coverage options available through Covered California, but often at lower or no cost to families.

Medi-Cal plans and Covered California plans both offer a similar set of *essential health benefits*, these consist of:

- Hospitalization
- Emergency services
- Prescription drugs
- Laboratory services
- Maternity & newborn care
- Outpatient (ambulatory) services
- Children’s (Pediatric) services, including oral and vision care
- Mental health and substance use disorder services, including behavioral health treatment
- Programs such as physical and occupational therapy (known as *Rehabilitative & Habilitative Services*) & devices
- Preventive and wellness services and chronic disease management

●● Applying for Medi-Cal

To see if a family qualifies for Covered California or Medi-Cal, they may:

- ❖ Fill out an application online: www.CoveredCA.com
- ❖ Call Covered California: (800) 300-1506
- ❖ Apply in person at a *Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)* office:

Wilshire Department of Public Social Services 2415 W. 6th St. Los Angeles, CA 90057 (310) 258-7400 or (626) 569-1399	Metro North Department of Public Social Services 2601 Wilshire Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90057 (866) 613-3777 or (626) 569-1399
Metro Special Department of Public Social Services 2707 S. Grand Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90007 (866) 613-3777 or (626) 569-1399	Glendale Department of Public Social Services 4680 San Fernando Rd. Glendale, CA 91204 (818) 701-8200 or (626) 569-1399
Metro Family Department of Public Social Services 2615 S. Grand Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90007 (213) 744-6601 or (310) 258-7400 or (626) 569-1399	Pasadena Department of Public Social Services 955 N. Lake Ave. Pasadena, CA 91104 (866) 613-3777 or (626) 569-1399

For a comprehensive list of the DPSS offices in Los Angeles County, please visit:

<http://dpss.lacounty.gov/dpss/maps/maps.cfm?program=medical>

Transportation

Transportation plays an important role in assisting families and their children with disabilities to travel and live independently. Depending on where a family lives, the destination, and physical needs, transportation choices might include public transportation, paratransit, and accessible taxi services. Some of the transportation options available in L.A. County are listed below.

Metro

Metro strives to ensure that its services are accessible to all customers with disabilities and their families. For more information, please contact Metro at:

- ❖ Website: www.metro.net/riding/riders-disabilities
- ❖ Customer Service: (800) 464-2111
- ❖ Reduced Fare Office: (213) 680-0054

MetroLink

MetroLink is committed to providing safe, comfortable commuter rail service to all passengers with disabilities and their families. Please contact them for more information:

- ❖ Website: www.metrolinktrains.com/howtoride/page/title/accessibility
- ❖ Customer Service: (800) 371-5465

Access Services

Access Services is the federally mandated ADA paratransit service provider for L.A. County available to individuals with disabilities and their families. It is comparable to fixed-route service and offers curb-to-curb service during hours when local bus service is provided. To learn more about their services and/or to register, please contact Access Services at:

- ❖ Website: accessla.org
- ❖ Phone for Non-Registered Customers: (800) 827-0829
- ❖ Phone for Registered Customers: (800) 883-1295

Southern California 511

To learn more about other forms of public transportation available in your area, please contact *Southern California 511*, a free traveler service that provides transit planning and commuter information:

- ❖ Website: www.go511.com/transit/accessible_services.aspx
- ❖ Phone: 511
- ❖ Mobile App: Go511

Early Head Start

Early Head Start is a comprehensive early education program for low-income infants and toddlers (**ages birth to 3**) and their families as well as for pregnant women and their families. These early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family support services may be provided in the family home (home-based), a licensed family child care home, and/or a center.

In addition to comprehensive early education services, other services include providing and linking families with health, mental health, disability, nutrition, and social services. Early Head Start has a strong parent involvement component and services specifically designed for pregnant women.

To learn more about the Early Head Start program, please speak with your service coordinator and/or visit this website:

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc>

●● Applying for Early Head Start

Eligibility for Early Head Start is based on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Poverty Guidelines. To apply or to determine eligibility, please contact the local Early Head Start program for more information.

Early Head Start

❖ Phone: (866) 763-6481

❖ Online Head

Start locator: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/about-ehs#enroll>

School District: Transitioning from Early Start at Age 3

The primary goal of the Early Start program is to provide intensive services early in the life of a child with the expectation that these services will allow the child to “catch up” developmentally to the point that he/she no longer needs regional center services.

A majority of children who participate in Early Start do catch up and graduate out of the regional center. However, some children may still have delays that qualify them to receive *special education services* from the *school district*, but not the regional center. Finally, some children may continue to have diagnosed conditions that qualify them for ongoing regional center services in addition to school services.

The decisions about what, if any, continuing services your child will be eligible for are made during a formal *school transition* process that begins when your child is **2 ½ years old**.

●● Transition Planning Meeting

When a child is **30 months old**, families participate in a *Transition Planning Meeting* with representatives of the school district and a FDLRC service coordinator. This meeting introduces families to the different kinds of school services. It is intended to address the necessary steps to support your child and family during the transition out of Early Start into school services or other community programs.

Transition Steps Include:

- A review of the current IFSP that guides your child's FDLRC services.
- Agreement on assessments that will be needed to give the school district the information it needs to meet your child's service needs.
- A discussion of who will complete the assessments with a timeline.
- A timeline and steps for developing an *Individualized Education Program (IEP)* for your child, if eligible for special education services.
- The range of classroom options that may be available for your child if he/she receives special education services.

●● Continuing Regional Center Eligibility

When your child turns **33 months**, an FDLRC multidisciplinary team will review your child's history, progress, and development in the following five areas:

- 1 *Cognitive*
- 2 *Physical*
- 3 *Communication*
- 4 *Social emotional*
- 5 *Adaptive*

If the team determines that your child satisfies the more stringent eligibility criteria for continuing regional center services, your child will be transferred to a new service coordinator in one of Lanterman's *School-Age* units at **age 3**. Your current service coordinator will work with the new service coordinator to ensure a smooth transition. Examples of more stringent eligibility criteria include:

- ❖ *Autism*
- ❖ *Epilepsy*
- ❖ *Disabling conditions closely related to an intellectual disability or requiring similar treatment. A developmental disability does not include other conditions that are solely attributable to a psychiatric, physical or learning disability.*
- ❖ *Cerebral palsy*
- ❖ *Intellectual disability*

●● Eligibility for School Services

If your child is diagnosed with a condition that qualifies for continuing FDLRC services, he/she will most likely be eligible to receive special education services through the school district. FDLRC will continue to provide service coordination, but other needs will be met through the school district.

If your child has progressed to the extent that he/she is no longer eligible for FDLRC services, he/she may still be eligible for school services. To determine if your child is eligible for these services, the school district will conduct its own assessment of your child's growth and development.

Finally, if your child has progressed to the extent that he/she is ineligible for both FDLRC and school services, your service coordinator may still recommend generic resources where he/she can receive enrichment experiences until entering school at age 5.

Please note that eligibility requirements for ongoing regional center services and special education services differ from one another, therefore, it is possible to be eligible for one service and not the other.

●● Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Prior to your child's 3rd birthday, but following the Transition Planning Meeting, the school district will convene an initial *Individualized Education Program (IEP)* meeting. The IEP is a planning document used by the school to describe the types of *special education services* that your child will receive.

The IEP is a written plan that guarantees children will receive services determined by a *multidisciplinary team* to be necessary and appropriate for their educational progress. The IEP includes:

- ❖ An eligibility statement and an evaluation/review timeline
- ❖ A child's present level of performance and functioning
- ❖ Annual goals and short-term objectives
- ❖ A description of the child's placement
- ❖ A description of the child's regular school program inclusion
- ❖ Related services that the child will receive

The IEP multidisciplinary team includes:

- The child's parent(s)/ guardian(s)
- 2 teachers: 1 general education and 1 special education
- School district representative with authority to commit IEP resources
- Someone qualified to explain assessment results
- It may also include the child, SC, psychologist, early intervention teacher, specialist, family member(s), friend(s), advocate(s), etc.

●● Resolving IEP Disagreements

Parents who disagree with the terms of an IEP or are concerned about a school's handling of an IEP have the following options:

- Contact KYRC for workshop and support group information
[KYRC HelpLine: \(800\) 546-3676](#)
- Work with the IEP multidisciplinary team to find a solution
- Speak to a Los Angeles Unified School District administrator by calling:
[Complaint Response Unit/Parent Resource Network Hotline: \(800\) 933-8133](#)
- Ask your SC for information regarding rights and legal referrals
- Request a due process hearing by mailing a request to:
[Special Education Hearing Office | 3200 Fifth Avenue | Sacramento, CA 95817](#)
- File a complaint against the school district. To learn more, visit:
[Disability Rights California: www.disabilityrightsca.org](#)
- For information about rights, dispute resolution, and complaint filing, visit:
[California Department of Education, Special Education Division, Procedural Safeguards Referral Service: www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/sed](#)

●● Local School Districts

To facilitate a smooth school transition, below is a list with all of the local school districts in FDLRC's catchment area:

Los Angeles Unified School District

333 S. Beaudry Ave., 17th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017
(213) 241-4713
Fax (213) 241-8442
home.lausd.net

Burbank Unified School District

1900 W. Olive Ave.
Burbank, CA 91506
(818) 729-4449
Fax: (818) 729-4483
www.burbankusd.org

Glendale Unified School District

223 North Jackson St.
Glendale, CA 91206
(818) 241-3111 Ext. 205
Fax: (818) 548-7237
www.gusd.net

Pasadena Unified School District

351 S. Hudson Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91109
(626) 396-3600 Ext. 88600
Email: www.pusd.us

La Canada Unified School District

4490 Cornishon Dr.
La Canada, CA 91011
(818) 952-8397
Fax: (818) 952-8394
www.lcusd.net

Foothill SELPA (Serving Burbank, Glendale, & La Canada Unified Schools)

1700 E. Mountain St.
Glendale, CA 91207
(818) 246-5378
Fax: (818) 246-3537
www.foothillselpa.org

●● Self-Determination Program (SDP)

Self-Determination Program (SDP) was signed into law in 2013. SDP provides clients and their families with more freedom, control, and responsibility in choosing services and supports to help them meet objectives. ***This program is applicable for clients who meet the more stringent over age 3 eligibility criteria.***

Once the *Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waiver* application is approved, the *Department of Developmental Services (DDS)* will randomly select 2,500 enrollees to participate in the first 3 years of the SDP; ***74 of the initial 2,500 enrollees will be FDLRC clients.*** In order to be eligible to participate in the SDP, FDLRC clients are required to:

- ❖ *Attend an informational meeting at FDLRC; and*
- ❖ *Ask to be added to an interest list at FDLRC.*

For more information, please contact your SC or:

- Visit the FDLRC website at: <http://lanterman.org/self-determination>
- Visit the SDP website at: www.dds.ca.gov/SDP
- Send an email to: selfdetermination@lanterman.org

●●● Family Cost Participation Program (FCPP)

The *Family Cost Participation Program (FCPP)* is a state program that assesses cost participation to parents of minors who receive at least one of these regional center services: day care, respite, and/or camping. The FCPP applies to families who meet the following criteria:

- ❖ *The regional center client is **birth through 17 years old***
- ❖ *The child lives in the parents' home*
- ❖ *The child is not eligible for Medi-Cal*

* *Please contact your SC if you have questions regarding FCPP.*

●●● Annual Family Program Fee (AFPF)

Parents with an adjusted gross family income at or above 400% of the *federal poverty level (FPL)* receiving qualifying regional center services for their children, ages **birth to 18**, are assessed an *Annual Family Program Fee (AFPF)*, as required by the *Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 4785*. Families are assessed an AFPF **yearly**, regardless of the number of children in the household receiving services. The following families are exempt:

- ❖ *Families receiving services through Medi-Cal*
- ❖ *Families that have been assessed a cost under the FCPP as described above.*

An assessment of the AFPF takes place at the time the IFSP is developed. Families send their AFPF payments directly to the *California Department of Developmental Services*. Parent may be exempt from AFPF if:

- ❖ *A catastrophic loss temporarily limits the ability to pay*
- ❖ *An extraordinary event impacts the ability to pay*
- ❖ *The care/supervision needs of the child impacts the ability to pay*
- ❖ *An exemption is necessary to maintain the child in the family home*

* *Please contact your SC if you have questions regarding AFPF.*

●●● Mediation, Hearings, and Complaints

Families participating in the Early Start program have rights and protections. If service disputes or possible federal/state law violations arise, there are several processes in place to help resolve disagreements.

FDLRC makes every effort to find the appropriate services to support families. However, if service disputes arise over the nature, scope, or amount of services, please discuss with your SC. If an agreement is not reached, families may also speak to a regional manager regarding the issue. If further negotiation is required, an IFSP meeting may be requested.

When FDLRC makes a determination on services, a written notice is provided as follows:

- 1) **30 days** prior to any change or termination of *existing services*, or
- 2) **Within 5 days** if a *new service* is denied

These notices include FDLRC's intended action, (legal) reasoning, effective date, and information about appeals and advocacy assistance. Once a family receives a written notice, there are several processes in place to appeal the decision.

If after receiving a written notice a family is unsatisfied with the outcome, they may appeal the decision by requesting a *mediation conference*, *due process hearing*, and/or filing a *complaint*.

Mediation Conference

A *mediation conference* is a voluntary process intended to informally resolve disagreements between families and the regional center regarding eligibility, assessment, and services. Mediation can be requested as a first option or at any time during a due process hearing or complaint process.

A parent may request a voluntary mediation conference by submitting a *Mediation Hearing Request* form (*DS 1808*,) which is available at the regional center or online at:

www.dds.ca.gov

In lieu of the form, parents may send a signed *letter of request* to the *Office of Administrative Hearings* along with all pertinent information. For more information regarding the Office of Administrative Hearings, please visit:

www.dgs.ca.gov/oah/Home

Due Process Hearing

The *due process hearing* is intended to address the same types of issues that are addressed by a mediation conference. A parent may file a request for a due process hearing by filing a *Due Process Hearing Request* form (DS 1802), which is available at a regional center, local education agency (LEA), or DDS or online at:

www.dds.ca.gov

The Office of Administrative Hearings also accepts a signed letter of request along with all pertinent information.

The due process hearing is completed within **30 days** from the time the Office of Administrative Hearings receives the request. The decision from a due process hearing is final unless it is appealed to the Superior Court in the appropriate jurisdiction.

State Complaint Process

In general, a *State Complaint Process* is used if the regional center, LEA or private service receiving Early Start funds has agreed to something and it is not carried out, or if a family believes one of these agencies is in violation of a federal or state law governing California's Early Start program. The complaint may be filed directly with DDS using the *Early Start Complaint Investigation Request* form (DS 1827), available online:

www.dds.ca.gov

DDS is required to investigate any allegations and issue a written decision to all parties within **60 days** of receipt of the complaint. The written decision will address each allegation and include findings, conclusions, reasons for decision, any required corrective actions to be taken, and provisions for technical assistance.

A complaint must be withdrawn if a parent making a complaint agrees to participate in mediation within the 60-day complaint investigation period.

Consumer Rights Complaint

If a family believes that FDLRC or a provider has violated or improperly withheld a right to which they are entitled to under the law, an SC should be contacted to negotiate a resolution. If the issue remains unresolved, a client's family may file a DDS *consumer rights complaint* (also known as a "4731" complaint).

FDLRC investigates all complaints and provides written proposed solutions within **20 working days**. If the proposed resolution is unsatisfactory, the complaint may be referred to the director of DDS within **15 working days**. For more information or to file a complaint, please contact:

Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center (FDLRC): Executive Director 3303 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 700 Los Angeles, CA 90010 Phone: (213) 383-1300	Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) Director of DDS 1600 9th Street, Room 340 (MS 3-9) Sacramento, CA 95814 Phone: (916) 651-6309 Website: www.dds.ca.gov/complaints/complt_cr.cfm	Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA) Client's Rights Advocate 350 S. Bixel St., Suite 290 Los Angeles, CA 90017 Phone: (213) 213-8180
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Whistleblower Complaint

FDLRC requires employees, vendors, and contractors to observe high standards of business and personal ethics. Should suspicions, concerns or evidence of illegal, unethical, improper activity arise, individuals may file a *whistleblower complaint* without fear of retaliation.

Whistleblower complaints must be filed in good faith. Complaints may be filed anonymously and are kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation. Complaints contain a statement of the alleged improper activity and any supporting evidence. For more information or to file a complaint, please contact:

Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center

Director of Human Resources, Executive Director, or President of the Board

3303 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 700 | Los Angeles, California 90010

Phone: (213) 383-1300

Website: www.lanterman.org/transparency_accountability/documents/whistleblower-complaint-policies-dds-and-lanterman

Department of Developmental Services

Community Services Division

1600 9th Street, Room 340 (MS 3-9) | Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: (916) 651-6309

Website: www.dds.ca.gov/complaints/Complt_WB.cfm

Disability Rights of California (DRC)

As part of *Disability Rights California (DRC)*, the *Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA)* provides advocacy services to regional center clients and their families. OCRA designates a *Clients' Rights Advocate (CRA)* to each regional center to help with legal problems, denials of rights, and trainings.

**Disability Rights California
Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA)**

Address: 350 South Bixel Street, Suite 290 | Los Angeles, CA 90017
Phone: (213) 213-8000 | **Fax:** (213) 213-8001
Website: www.disabilityrightsca.org

CRA: Hannah Liddell, CRA & Ada Hamer, Assistant CRA
Address: 350 South Bixel Street, Suite 290 | Los Angeles, CA 90017
Phone: (213) 213-8180 | **Fax:** (213) 213-8021
Email: Hannah.Liddell@disabilityrightsca.org

OR

Ada.Hamer@disabilityrightsca.org

State Council of Developmental Disabilities (SCDD)

The *State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD)* advises clients and their families on the appeal process if services are denied.

State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD)

Address: 411 N. Central Ave. Suite 620 | Glendale, CA 91203
Phone: (818) 543-4631 | **Fax:** (818) 543-4635
Email: losangeles@scdd.ca.gov | **Website:** www.scdd.ca.gov/



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