CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

EARLY START INFORMATION PACKET

April 2023

Department of Developmental Services

FRANK D. LANTERMAN REGIONAL CENTER

Dear Early Start Family,

As the Executive Director of the Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center, I am pleased to welcome you to the Early Start Program. We are honored to serve the communities of Downtown and Central Los Angeles, Hollywood/Wilshire corridor, Burbank, Glendale, Eagle Rock, Pasadena, La Canada-Flintridge and La Crescenta.

At Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center, we believe that every child deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential. We know that the earlier an infant or toddler with special needs receives appropriate services the more successful we can be in minimizing or preventing future disabilities. This is why we work closely with local communities to identify and serve those children who require our assistance. Our primary goal is to help your child make significant developmental progress through early intervention services.

We recognize that raising a child with developmental needs can be challenging, and we are committed to providing resources and guidance every step of the way. Your primary partner at Lanterman Regional Center is your service coordinator. He or she is a professional with experience in the areas of child development and developmental delays and/or disabilities and is knowledgeable about services, supports and other resources. Your service coordinator plays a supportive role in your child's progress and is here to support your child's development and assist you on this journey.

I also want to introduce you to the Koch-Young Resource Center (KYRC). The KYRC provides information, education and support. It has a Help Desk to provide information and referral as well as a multilingual library collection, support groups and the ***Strong Beginnings*** program especially for toddlers. Please reach out to the KYRC at kyrc@lanterman.org or (213) 252-5600.

We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with you and your family to help your child thrive. Thank you for entrusting us with your child's care. We look forward to working together and supporting your family's journey. We are committed to working in partnership with you to support the developmental progress and the overall needs of you and your child.

Sincerely,

Srbui Ovsepyan, MA, LMFT
Executive Director

WELCOME FROM DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

The first three years of a child's life are a time of significant growth and critical development. Babies are naturally curious and begin immediately to learn about their surroundings from parents, caregivers, and other family members. Your child will be developing crucial skills like focusing their vision, reaching for items, exploring the things around them, and learning how to communicate. During this important time, some children might need additional help to achieve these milestones. Services and supports that may help your child are called early intervention services.

In California, early intervention services are provided through the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and are called Early Start. Early Start is for infants and toddlers who are showing developmental delays or are at risk for having a developmental disability.

Getting help and intervention as early as possible can make a tremendous difference in your child's development, and in some cases reduce the amount of help they need later in life. Your family's initial introduction to the system is critical and will have lifelong impact. If these first experiences are positive, you and your child are more likely to continue to engage and benefit from supports and services available in the system.

We know that easy to access service coordination and early intervention services that are delivered in the family's, preferred culture and language are key to creating those positive experiences for you and your child. This is why our vision at DDS is for the individuals and families we serve to at all time experience respect for their culture and language preferences, their choices, beliefs, values, needs and goals. We strive to always ensure that these services are delivered in a system that focuses on the individual and is made up of a network of community agencies providing high quality and equitable services.

We recognize that navigating service systems can be challenging, and some families are at risk of missing opportunities for important help. We want to empower families to get the most out of the services available to them and advocate effectively for their child.

Your child's needs will change over time and the services they need will change with them. Our goal is to support a lifelong journey that is inclusive and not limited by disability. In the following pages you will learn how the developmental services system works, what is available to you and how we can support you and your child.

We welcome your child and family to the developmental services system. We are here for you.

Warmest regards,

Nancy Bargmann, Director, California Department of Developmental Services

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WELCOME TO EARLY START SERVICES

All babies and toddlers develop differently, in the best possible way. We know that parents have questions about their child's development. Early Start was created to support young children like your child in their first 3 years of life. Its other purpose is to support loving parents and caregivers like you.

Early Start will help you make the most of your child's first 3 years of life. It will help you meet your child's unique needs. It also can help your child learn the skills that you think are most important.

Being the parent of a young child can be hard. If you are worried about your baby's development, it's easy to get overwhelmed. The good news is your baby is still the same baby you brought home from the hospital. You know more about your baby than anyone else in the world. Early Start provides a family-friendly point of contact so you can find out if your baby or toddler needs help. It will also help you get the services for your baby or toddler to develop in the best possible way. It will connect you with other parents like yourself. You can build a team of professionals who will help you support the growth and development of your child.

It is common for children to develop more slowly than usual. About 1 in every 6 children in the United States has a developmental delay. Early Start helps infants and toddlers, from birth to 3 years, who have developmental delays or disabilities. Early Start can bring you greater understanding of your child's needs to learn, grow and develop. Early Start services are intended to help eligible children learn new skills, overcome challenges, and increase success in life.

If you or your doctor think that your child may have a disability or delay, this information will help you learn about Early Start.

You can find more answers in the Frequently Asked Questions about Early Start.

WHO IS THIS PACKET FOR?

This packet is for parents and other caregivers of infants and toddlers who may have, or are known to have, developmental delays or disabilities.

Professionals and others can use this information to help support families and their young children.

Using this guide

This guide is divided into six sections to make it easier to use.

Depending on your interest, you can start reading at any section.

Part 1: General Information
Part 2: Applying to Early Start
Part 3: Navigating Early Start
Part 4: From Early Start to School
Part 5: Know Your Rights
Part 6: Contacts and Resources

PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

What is a developmental delay?

Developmental delays are common. As many as 1 in 6 children has a delay. Children develop different skills at different times. If a child is not doing things that most children can do at a certain age, they may have a developmental delay.

Developmental delays can occur in one or more of the following areas:

- Thinking and learning (cognitive)
- Talking and expressing self (expressive communication)
- Understanding language (receptive communication)
- Feeling, expressing, interacting with others (social and emotional)
- Everyday living skills like eating, dressing, caring for self (adaptive)
- Walking, moving, seeing and hearing (physical and motor development, including vision and hearing)

Early Start can help your child catch up in their skills.

> *"I wanted somebody to guide and walk me through Early Start because I didn't know where to go next and what to do."*
> *- Parent*

What is a developmental disability?

A developmental delay can also be a sign of a developmental disability. In California, developmental disabilities are considered lifelong and must exist before age 18. The following conditions are considered to be a developmental disability:

- Autism
- Cerebral palsy
- Epilepsy
- Intellectual disability
- Other conditions that require treatment similar to a person with intellectual disability

Early intervention services help babies and young children learn basic and new skills that typically develop during the first three years of life.

Who qualifies for Early Start?

Any child under 3 years of age may be eligible if they:

- Have a developmental delay of at least 25% in one or more of the following:
  - Cognitive (thinking and learning)
  - Expressive communication (talking and expressing self)
  - Receptive communication (understanding language)
  - Social and emotional (feeling, expressing, interacting)
  - Adaptive (everyday living skills like eating, dressing, caring for self)
  - Physical and motor development, including vision and hearing (walking, moving, seeing, and hearing)
- Have an established risk condition of known cause, with a high likelihood of delayed development or;
- Are likely to have a developmental delay due to a number of risks that have been confirmed by a professional

[See Glossary for more information]

- At risk or high-risk conditions may include children who: Were born very early (less than 32 weeks gestation) and had very low birth weight
- Had extensive health problems or had long hospitalizations
- Had a prenatal exposure to drugs or alcohol
- Experienced significant birth injury
- Experienced neglect or abuse

Established Risk conditions may include children who:

- Have genetic conditions that are associated with delays in development (e.g., Down Syndrome, Fragile X syndrome, among others)
- Have fetal alcohol syndrome
- Have limited hearing, vision or use of limbs

Eligibility is **NOT** dependent on

- Family income
- Immigration status

What is Early Start?

Early Start is early intervention services in California for families with infants and toddlers who have developmental delays or disabilities.

How can Early Start help my child?

Early Start supports parents and caregivers like you. It helps you connect with your child so they can learn and grow. Some of these services are provided directly to your child. You may also receive services to help you learn how to support your child's development and needs. *[See Part 3: What Kinds of Services Can I receive from Early Start?]*

What is a regional center? How can I get help with Early Start services?

Regional centers are local agencies that arrange services for children with developmental delays and their families. Regional centers have offices across the state of California. Regional centers will:

- Evaluate for a developmental delay or disability
- Determine if your child qualifies for Early Start services
- Provide case management and coordination of services
- Provide funding for therapies and services

Although all regional centers have similar programs, each regional center may do things differently to meet the needs of their local communities. It will be helpful to learn how your regional center works.

You can find your local regional center by entering your zip code into the Regional Center Look Up Tool.

"Regional center is here to make life easier. Make the journey for family members easier and simpler to navigate. We are here to support you." – Regional Center Professional / Staff Member

In some cases, Early Start services may be provided by your local school district or county office of education. Families whose children have hearing loss, a visual impairment, or a physical disability may get Early Start services through their local school district or county office of education. In some areas of California, families may receive services from both the local school district and the regional center.

Early Start through regional centers:

- Children with developmental delays or disabilities

Early Start through your local school district or county office of education:

- Children who do not have a developmental delay or disability but are:
  - Deaf or have a hearing loss
  - Blind or have a visual impairment
  - Have a physical disability

What is the Department of Developmental Services?

The California Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is the state department that directs the delivery of services for Californians with developmental delays or developmental disabilities provided by the regional centers. DDS is the lead agency for Early Start in California.

Is there a cost to me for Early Start services?

You may be asked to see if your family's medical insurance or another resource will pay for some of the services. Needed services not covered by insurance can be purchased or provided by the regional center. There are resources available to see if you are qualified for little to no cost health care services like Medi-Cal. Some families who don't receive Medi-Cal may have to pay a small fee for some services.

PART 2: APPLYING TO EARLY START

I think my child has a developmental delay or disability. What do I do?
Contact the regional center. You do not have to wait for a referral from the child's pediatrician or other doctor. Referrals can be made by anyone familiar with the child.

How do I discuss my worries with my doctor or my local regional center?
If you are worried about your baby or toddler's development, this information will help you to discuss your worries with your doctor or with your local regional center. The regional center will discuss available evaluations and work with you to complete the evaluation. Available evaluations include:

- Developmental (includes motor function, communication, information processing)
- Social
- Hearing
- Vision

The developmental evaluation looks at all areas of a child's development from communication to social and daily living skills. These are examples of behaviors that should be followed up with a developmental evaluation:

- Does not look at your face on a regular basis
- Does not respond when called by name
- Does not enjoy being held
- Is difficult to soothe
- By approximately 4 months, does not coo, babble, or smile
- Does not show facial expressions like happy, sad, angry and surprised by 9 months of age
- By the first birthday, does not wave 'bye-bye' or use other gestures
- By the first birthday, does not shake head 'no'
- By the first birthday, does not say 'mama' or 'dada'
- By the first birthday, does not play games like pat-a-cake
- By 15 months, does not show you objects they like
- Loses skills and abilities, like stops saying words or stops looking at you

These are examples of health challenges and behaviors that should be followed up with a hearing evaluation:

- Has frequent earaches
- Has ear, nose, and throat infections
- Does not react to loud noises
- Does not look up when someone is speaking or when there is a noise
- Does not respond when called from across a room even if it is for something he or she usually likes or is interested in
- Turns the same ear in the direction of a sound

These are examples of health challenges and behaviors that should be followed up with a vision evaluation:

- Has red, watery eyes
- Has crusty eye lids
- Rubs eyes frequently
- Has a hard time focusing or making eye contact
- Holds books or objects very close to the face
- Sits very close to TV when watching a show
- Closes one eye or tilts head when looking at something
- Eyes do not seem to move together
- Has eyes that seem crossed or turned

These are examples of health challenges and behaviors that should be followed up with an evaluation of motor function:

- Has stiff arms and/or legs
- Arches back or pushes away when held or cuddled
- By 4 months, does not hold head up
- By 6 months, does not roll over
- By first birthday, does not sit up or crawl using hands & knees
- By first birthday, does not pick up small objects with finger & thumb
- By second birthday, does not walk alone
- By second birthday, has a hard time holding large crayons & scribbling
- By thirty months, falls or stumbles a lot when running
- By thirty months, has a hard time turning pages in a book

These are examples of behaviors that should be followed up with an evaluation of communication:

- By 4 months, does not coo or smile
- By 6 months, does not babble to get attention
- By first birthday, does not respond to words like 'night-night'
- By first birthday, does not name people ('mama', 'dada') or objects ('bottle')
- By first birthday, does not shake head 'no'
- By second birthday, does not point to objects or does not name objects that he or she wants
- By second birthday, does not use two-word phrases ("mama go", "want juice")
- By thirty months, does not try to say familiar rhymes or songs
- By thirty months, can't follow simple directions

These are examples of behaviors that should be followed up with an evaluation of information processing:

- By first birthday, has a hard time finding an object after seeing it hidden
- By second birthday, does not point to body parts when asked for example, 'where is your nose?'
- By thirty months, does not play make-believe games
- By thirty months, does not seem to understand 'more'

Learn more about how to explain your reasons for concerns.

How is Early Start eligibility determined?

The Service Coordinator, or Intake Specialist, will ask you questions and ask if there is anyone else who will know about your child's development. This may include family members, your child's doctor, teachers, and social workers. The Service Coordinator or Intake Specialist will also gather the outcomes of the assessment. The Early Start team will meet with you to review the assessments and eligibility criteria.

Getting started: It's easy!

It starts with a phone call or a written referral to the regional center. Anyone can make a referral to a regional center. This includes your child's doctor, childcare provider, or *you*. Call your local regional center to start the process.

You can find your local regional center by

- Finding contact information for regional centers on the DDS website
- Calling the DDS helpline for Early Start 800-515-BABY (800-515-2229)
- Email: earlystart@dds.ca.gov

What happens when I call the regional center?

There are 5 steps after the first contact with the regional center. Steps 1 through 3 are called "intake".

Step 1: Referral or contact with the regional center

Aa regional center team member who will assist with scheduling evaluations and guide you through the eligibility process will be assigned to you. This person may be an intake specialist or a case manager, also known as a Service Coordinator. If found eligible for services, your Service Coordinator will coordinate and advocate for services and supports that help you and your family access Early Start services.

Step 2: Consent

You (or the person who can legally make educational decisions for a child, if a parent is not available) must sign a consent form that says you agree to have your child evaluated.

Step 3: Eligibility Evaluations and Needs Assessment

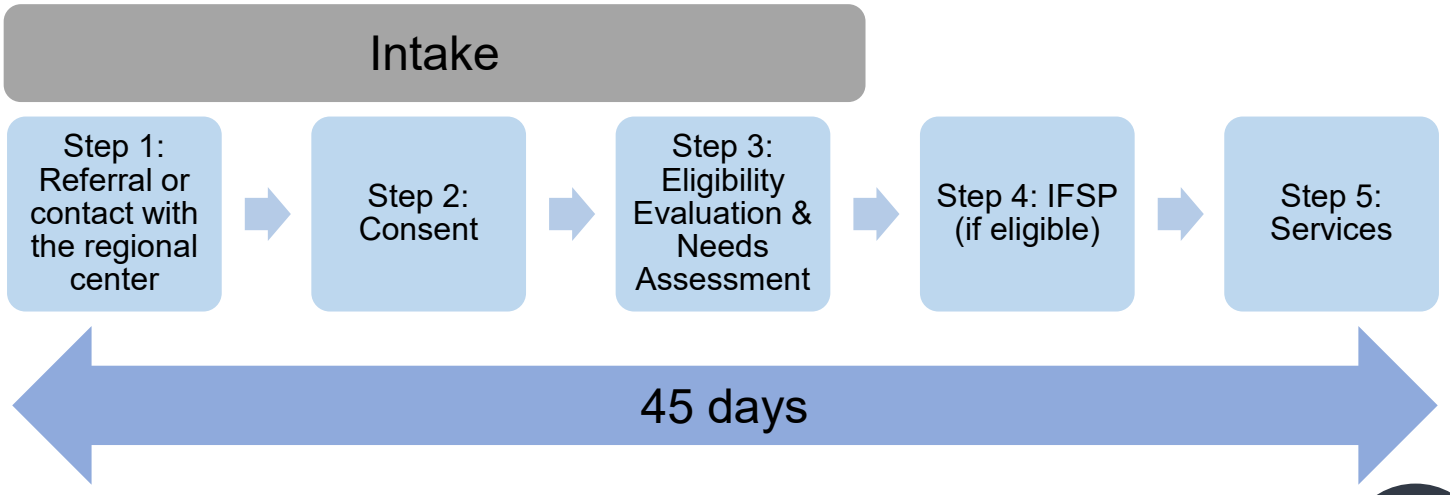
Once consent is obtained, your child will be evaluated to determine if they are eligible for Early Start services. The person conducting the evaluation will describe what happens at every step of the process. In some cases, additional assessments may be completed to help determine the services to best support you and your child. *[See Part 1: Who qualifies for Early Start?]*

Step 4: Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

If your child is eligible for Early Start services, you and your Service Coordinator will develop an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). This plan will include your child's strengths and needs, your concerns, and the Early Start services your child will receive. *[See Part 3: What is an IFSP?]*

Step 5: Services

Once the IFSP is developed, the Early Start services will start. You will work with your service coordinator to decide on the best services for your child that fit your family needs. The services should occur in "natural environments". These are familiar places like your home or other community settings.



All five steps must be completed within 45 days of the first contact with the regional center. If the regional center is not responding within this time frame, you should continue calling your Service Coordinator or Intake Specialist and writing down the dates of your calls. You should also write down what the Service Coordinator or Intake Specialist told you to document your contact with the regional center. If the regional center delays this process, you can file a complaint with the regional center director and/or with DDS. *[See Part 5: Know Your Rights]*

The story of Max is a short video that describes the intake process:
https://youtu.be/VMCj9SCtEU0

"When families go through intake they're in a time of incredible stress and transition. Parents are overwhelmed in the beginning because they're dealing with all this new information. Some families may have language barriers and need support in their language."
– Family Advocate

Is there helpful information I should share with the regional center?

The regional center uses information about your child and your family to see if your child is eligible for Early Start services. It also uses information to see what services you and your child need. All information about your child is helpful. You can provide valuable information to help the regional center understand your child's strengths and needs, and your concerns as a parent. You can also provide information from other sources.

For example:

- Information about the pregnancy and birth
- Any hospital and/or medical records
- Any evaluation reports (e.g., screening results, evaluations done by a psychologist or a physical therapist)
- Reports or concerns from Early Head Start, Home Visitors, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), or Day Care

All the information you provide is confidential. It won't be shared with anyone without your permission.

During an evaluation, a child development expert will describe the evaluation process to you. The expert may be a child psychologist, a speech and language pathologist, an occupational therapist, or another child development professional.

During the evaluation, this person may:

- Play with your child as part of the assessment to identify his/her abilities
- Observe you playing and interacting with your child
- Ask you questions about your child, your family, and the pregnancy and birth

The outcomes of the assessment will be compared to other children of the same age who do not have developmental delays or disabilities.

Are there others who can help me?
You can receive help from:

Family Resource Centers: your Service Coordinator or Intake Specialist will ask you for consent to share your contact information with a center in your area. These are centers that may be staffed by parents of children with disabilities. They can give you resources and support. They can connect you with other families who are going through the same journey as your family. They know a lot about:

- What it feels like to be worried about your child
- Early Start
- Other local resources that can help you and your child
- Different developmental delays and disabilities

Throughout California there are Family Resource Centers. You can also find more information on the DDS website.

Baby Line: this is a hotline that can provide information about Early Start

- 800-515-BABY (800-515-2229)

211: Many counties in California have a 211 hotline.

- 211 can provide resources for many different types of needs, including referrals for infants and toddlers. You can contact them by dialing "211" or going to their website.

Help Me Grow (HMG)

- Your county may have a Help Me Grow program. HMG provides information and resources to parents of children aged birth – 5. You can see if there is a local HMG by visiting their website.

Your local school district or county office of education

- Some children receive Early Start services through their school district or county office of education instead of the regional center. Schools may provide Early Start services to children who only have:
  - vision
  - hearing
  - severe orthopedic impairment
  - any combination of these impairments
- If your child has any or all of these conditions, your local regional center will help you connect with your school district for Early Start services.

My child is not eligible for Early Start services at this time. What are my options?

Find other programs: You can ask your Intake Specialist or Service Coordinator about other programs that can help your child.

- You can contact your local Family Resource Center for information about other programs *[See Part 6: Contacts and Resources]*

Dispute Resolution: If you don't agree with the decision regarding your child's eligibility, you can dispute the decision. The form to file a dispute resolution will be included with your denial letter. You can dispute by choosing any of the following:

- Request a mediation conference; or
  - A mediation conference is an informal way to resolve a disagreement with the regional center with the help of a neutral party.
- Request a due process hearing; or
  - A due process hearing is where a judge decides if the regional center made a mistake in their decision.
- File a state complaint.
  - A state complaint is a written complaint submitted to the California Department of Developmental Services.

Re-apply: You can apply again later if your child still needs help.

Eligibility is **NOT** dependent on

- Family income
- Immigration status

If your child is not eligible for Early Start, the regional center will provide resources for other available programs in the area that may be able to help you.

More information can be found in the Parents' Rights: An Early Start Guide for Parents (revised 2010).

PART 3: NAVIGATING EARLY START

My child qualifies for Early Start services. What is next?

To get Early Start services, you will work with your Service Coordinator. You are assigned a Service Coordinator once your child is found eligible for Early Start services.

How can the Early Start Service Coordinator help me?

You and your Service Coordinator are a team. Your Service Coordinator is your link to Early Start services. Your Service Coordinator will coordinate and advocate for Early Start services and supports for your child and family.

Your Service Coordinator can:

- Help you get ready for your IFSP meetings
- Help you get the services and supports listed in your IFSP
- Help you access services through your insurance, county, or other resources

You can ask for a different Service Coordinator if you don't feel that this person is a good match for your family.

"Parents need to know what services are available. We just want a detailed explanation of Early Start services and all the possibilities."
– Parent

What is an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)?
The IFSP is a written plan for providing services to your child and family after your child has been found eligible for Early Start services.

How is the IFSP developed?
The IFSP is developed by a team at an IFSP meeting. The team members include you, your other family members, your Service Coordinator, and the people who assessed or are providing services to your child. You are the most important member of the IFSP team. You can also invite other people, such as a doctor, or a friend for support. You can also invite an advocate to help you express your views, wishes and help you stand up for your rights, if you feel this is needed.

The IFSP includes information about:

- Your baby or toddler's development including
  - Strengths (what they do well)
  - Concerns (what is delayed or hard for them)
  - Resources (private insurance, other public benefits, extended family, etc.)
- With your agreement, your resources, concerns, and goals may also be included
- Outcomes: goals for your child and how progress will be measured

An IFSP will have information about services:

- What services will be provided
- Who will provide the services
- When they will start
- Where they will be provided, which could be through remote electronic communication if that is your family's preference
- For how long and how often the services will be provided
- Who will pay for them
- Transition out of Early Start: how you will be supported when your child is turning three

How are services determined?
The services you request must match your child's specific needs. So, while you can request certain services, you have to describe your concerns, and how the services would help your child's development and your goals. You should discuss your child's needs regularly with your Service Coordinator. The Service Coordinator can help identify and get the needed services and supports.

Some of the services you receive may be called generic services. These are services that will be paid for by other systems (like your insurance) and not by the regional center.

Can the IFSP change?

The IFSP can and should change as your child develops new skills or if your family has new concerns regarding your child's development. You can request to change the IFSP after you have signed it. The IFSP can be changed at any time when there is a need to do so.

IFSP timeline

Your first IFSP, including evaluating your child's skills and identifying services, must take place **within 45 days of your first contact with the regional center**. After that, you will have an IFSP review at least every three months. These meetings are important because very young children grow and change quickly. This means that your child's and family's needs may change quickly as well. You can also have an IFSP meeting anytime there are new needs, or if something changes.

What kinds of services can I receive from Early Start?

Early Start can provide a wide range of services. The services you and your child get depend on the needs of your child. Children may get different services because they have different needs. *[See Glossary for definitions of these services]*

Here are some of the common services provided by qualified professionals:

- assistive technology
- audiology
- family training, counseling, and home visits
- feeding therapy
- health services
- infant development services
- medical services for diagnostic/ evaluation purposes only
- nursing services
- nutrition services
- occupational therapy
- physical therapy
- psychological services
- service coordination (case management)
- sign language and cued language services
- social work services
- specialized instruction
- speech and language services
- transportation and related costs
- vision services

"Get prepared for your IFSP meeting. Write down your thoughts on questions such as: What are your child's needs? What are your concerns? What are some things that can help your child and your family?"
– Family Advocate

Signing the IFSP

- Before your child's services can begin, you must sign the IFSP
- The services you agree with can start once you sign the IFSP
- Before you sign, and if you disagree with anything in the IFSP, there are things you can do to settle your disagreement

What can I do if I don't agree with the IFSP?

Mediation

- You can ask for a meeting to discuss your disagreements with a neutral "mediator" to help resolve the disagreement
- Information about mediation can be found on the DDS website

Due Process

- You can ask for a "due process hearing".
- Information about due process hearings can be found on the DDS website.

State Complaint

- You can also file a "state complaint" if you think there has been a violation of federal or state laws and regulations.
- Information about filing a complaint with the state can be found on the DDS website.

More information can be found in the Parents' Rights: An Early Start Guide for Parents (revised 2010).

[See Part 5: Know Your Rights]

"Helping families understand all the services that are potentially available is really important. How these services connect to their child's need…If there is a need, we have something that we can support them with."
– Regional Center Professional / Staff Member

PART 4: FROM EARLY START TO SCHOOL

What are my options when my child turns 3?

Early Start ends at age 3. This is called transition. Although transition happens at 3 years old, you and your Service Coordinator will start preparing for it at least 6 months earlier.

Below you will see the different stages to prepare you for the journey through Early Start and beyond. Many of these services require an assessment to see if your child is qualified.

Stage in Life	Birth to Age 2	Ages 3 to 4	Ages 5 to 21
Provided through the Education System	Early Intervention	Special/Early Education	Special/General Education (K-12)
Provided through the Regional Center System	Early Start*	Provisional Eligibility for Lanterman or Lanterman*	Lanterman*

**Your child may qualify for Lanterman Services at any age and services will continue for life.*
*[*See Glossary for definitions*]*

Planning for transition

At least 90 days before your child turns 3, you and your service coordinator will meet someone from your child's school to put together a transition plan. This is called a transition planning conference. This plan will include:

- The steps to getting special education services, if needed
- Whether your child will continue to be eligible for regional center services and/or
- If your child is eligible for Generic Services like:
    - Local community programs (Head Start, State Preschool, First 5, Help Me Grow, etc.)
    - Health Insurance
    - Privately funded

Some children will continue to be eligible for regional center services, but others will not.

At age 3, your child may be on one of three paths:

- Your child may be eligible for both regional center and special education services from the school district. The school provides services for educational benefit only while the regional center provides services to support the person's participation in home and community life. Your child will now have two plans: an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for school and an Individual Program Plan (IPP) for the regional center.
- Your child may be eligible for special education services or for regional center services. Then your child will have either an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for school only or an Individual Program Plan (IPP) for the regional center.
- Some children may not clearly meet eligibility for regional center services at age 3 but may qualify for services with the regional center under provisional eligibility.
- Your child may no longer have a significant developmental delay or disability and thus, will not be eligible for regional center or special education services.

On any of these paths, your child could receive generic services and participate in local community programs at the same time, alongside his or her peers with and without disabilities. Your Service Coordinator will help you find and access these programs when you develop your transition plan. Please review the next few pages for more information.

Eligible for on-going regional center services

The eligibility for regional center services changes at age 3. So does the program's name. The program that provides services for people with developmental disabilities is called 'Lanterman Act services'. Eligible diagnoses for Lanterman Act services include:

- Autism
- Cerebral Palsy
- Epilepsy
- Intellectual disability
- Conditions similar to an intellectual disability or needing similar treatment
    - *Also called the 5th category*

And the disability causes substantial difficulty in the person's everyday life in at least three areas of functioning. *[See Part 1: Who is eligible for Early Start?]*

In some cases, children may meet eligibility for Lanterman Act services before they turn 3 years old. (e.g., a child with Down syndrome, Fragile X syndrome)

Provisional eligibility

Some children may not clearly meet eligibility for Lanterman Act services at age 3, but may qualify for provisional eligibility. The child might not have an eligible diagnosis yet, or they may not have a substantial enough disability.

Children can still receive Lanterman Act services if they meet the conditions for provisional eligibility:

- Child is 3 or 4 years old
- The disability is not only physical in nature
- Child has significant limitations in two of the following areas of life activities:
    - Dressing and feeding (Self-care)
    - Listening and talking (Receptive and expressive language)
    - Learning, thinking and problem solving (Cognitive milestones)
        - draws a circle when you show how
        - avoids touching hot objects, like a stove, when you give a warning
    - Walking and moving (Mobility)
    - Making choices, telling you what your child wants (Self-direction)

Children who receive services through provisional eligibility can receive them until age 5. At that time, they will have to meet the eligibility for Lanterman Act services. If they don't, the Lanterman Act services will end.

There is more information about Lanterman Act services and provisional eligibility in the *Welcome to Lanterman Act Services* information packet.

Eligible for special education services

- Many children who are not eligible for Lanterman Act services are eligible for special education services.
- Most children who are eligible for Lanterman Act services are also eligible for special education services.
- Starting at age 3, eligible children will receive most of their services through special education. This is true even if your child is not attending a pre-school program.
- Your child's services will be planned in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting.
- This will happen around the time of your child's 3rd birthday.

Not eligible for regional center or special education by Age 3

- Some children do not qualify for Lanterman Act services or special education services after they turn 3 years old but may qualify for Provisional Eligibility.
- Often these are the children who received Early Start because they were at risk of a developmental disability, but they have caught up with other children their ages in development.
- Some children may still need help, but their needs are not significant enough to be eligible for Lanterman Act services or special education.
- Your Service Coordinator can help you explore resources in your community to support your child's developmental needs.

The regional center can help you connect to services, even if your child will not be eligible for Lanterman Act services.

PART 5: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

As a parent, you have rights in the regional center system that include:

- Evaluation and assessment
- IFSP
- Confidentiality and access to records
- Prior Written Notice or Notice of Action
- Disagreement with regional center

Evaluation and assessment

You have the right to:

- Request an evaluation for your child
- Have the evaluation process explained to you
- Consent to an evaluation
- Refuse an evaluation
- Participate in your child's evaluation
- Be a part of any discussion about your child's eligibility and/or services

In addition, the evaluations must:

- Be in the language of your choice
- Be appropriate for your child
- Be conducted by a professional who is qualified to do that evaluation
- Be conducted in settings that are familiar to your child
- Include a review of other records and evaluation reports
- Cover all areas of development

"It would be nice to know that we have the right to have this information, that it's there for us, that it's available for us in any way, shape or form, that it should be easily understandable to all of us."
– Parent

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

You are an equal and valued member of your child's IFSP team. This means you have a right to:

- Attend the IFSP meeting and help develop the IFSP document
  - The IFSP meeting cannot occur without you
- Invite people to the meeting, such as other family members, friends, service providers and advocates, etc.
- Consent to the IFSP
  - Services cannot begin without your written consent
  - You also have the right to change your mind
- Have services provided in "natural environments" – places that are familiar to your child, like your home
  - If the service can't be in a natural environment, you must be told why
  - You can receive services through remote electronic communication such as telehealth video calls (such as Zoom or Skype)
- Have your child's IFSP shared with other agencies, only with your permission
- Receive a "Notice of Action"
  - This means you will receive prior written notice if the regional center denies or changes a service
- Have the IFSP explained or translated into your language of choice
  - You can have the document translated into your preferred language and/or have an interpreter present at the review meeting

Confidentiality and access to records

Your child's regional center records are confidential and must be kept safely. This is part of a law called the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). These records cannot be shared with anyone without your permission. You have the right to have this law explained to you.

You can ask your Service Coordinator for a copy of the records. It is a good idea to do this in writing. If you ask for the records, you must receive a copy **within 5 business days**.

You can also ask to meet with the Service Coordinator to discuss the records. That meeting must take place **within 5 business days**. If you feel there is incorrect information in the records, you have a right to ask for that information to be changed or removed. The IFSP team must agree with the change in order for it to be updated.

Prior Written Notice or Notice of Action

Sometimes you and your regional center may not agree. If this happens, the regional center must give you a prior written notice. For example, you and your regional center may not agree about your child's eligibility for Early Start services. Or, you and your regional center may not agree about the type of or amount of services your child receives or where those services are provided.

The Notice of Action tells you what the regional center wants to do. It must tell you the following:

- The action the regional center will take
- The date the action will occur
- The reason for the decision including the facts and the law or policy that supports that decision
- Information about how to appeal the decision

Disagreement with the regional center

Although you, your Service Coordinator, and the regional center are a team, there may be times when you disagree. This may happen if the regional center:

- Says your child isn't eligible for Early Start
- Suggests services you don't want or don't think your child needs
- Denies or refuses to provide the services you want or think your child needs
- Wants to change or stop services you think your child needs

The regional center must provide Prior Written Notice of what they want to do. You can then choose how to settle your disagreement.

Often the best way to solve a disagreement is by talking with your Service Coordinator. There may have been a misunderstanding, or you may want to provide new information about your child. Your Service Coordinator can also help you understand what the regional center can and can't provide. Although this should not delay services, you may have to try getting a generic service first. This is when the service is paid for by another system like your medical insurance or the school district.

If you don't want to talk to your Service Coordinator or talking hasn't worked, you can choose other options. Your child's services will continue while you are settling your dispute. This is called "**stay put**". Your options for dispute resolution include informal and formal options.

Informal options:

Writing or talking to your Service Coordinator's supervisor, Early Start director or regional center leadership.

Appealing the decision.

- You can ask the leadership of the regional center to review the situation and reverse the denial

Formal options:

Ask for a Mediation Meeting.

- At a Mediation Meeting, someone who is impartial, called a 'mediator', helps you and the regional center reach an agreement
- The mediation session must occur within 30 days of a mediation request

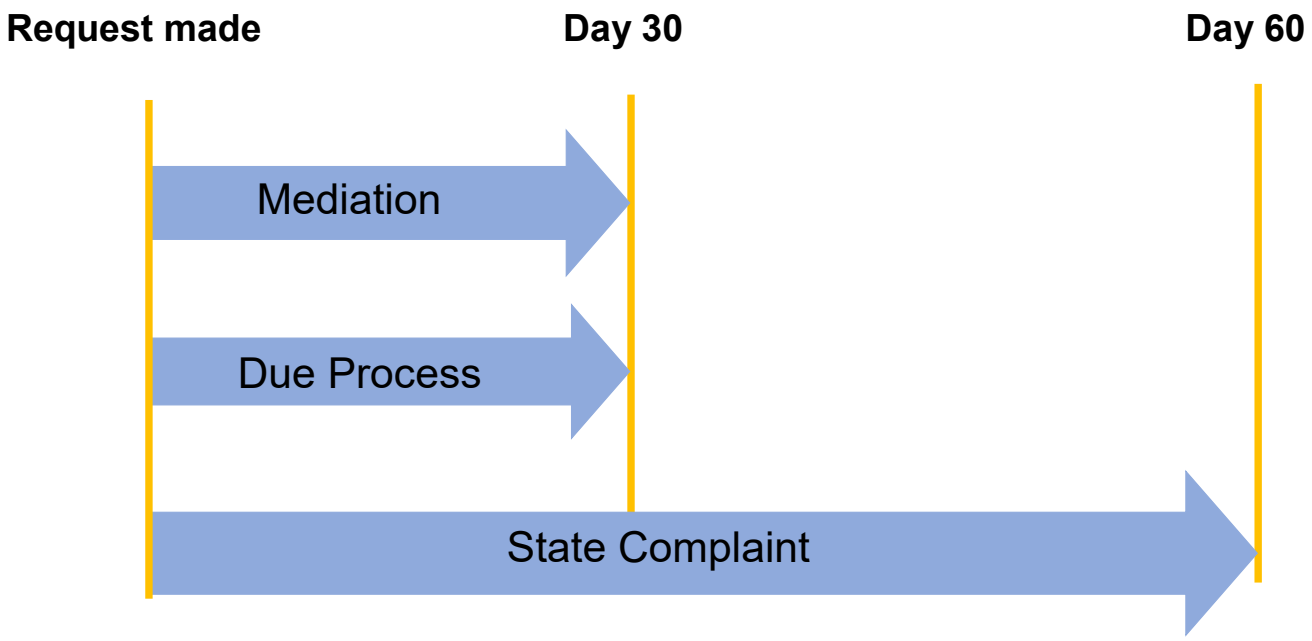
Ask for a Due Process Hearing.

- You and the regional center meet with a judge who decides if the regional center should reverse their decision
    - If you ask for a due process hearing, the judge must make a decision within 30 days of your request
    - You can file a request for due process, but you can also ask for informal options or mediation while you are waiting for the hearing
    - In some cases, you might be able to resolve the disagreement before the hearing
    - If you can't reach an agreement with the regional center before the hearing, the timeline doesn't change
    - Everything still must happen within 30 days of your request for due process

Filing a complaint with the state. If you think the regional center didn't follow the law, you can ask DDS to review the situation.

- The state has 60 days to review your complaint
- You can file a complaint up to 1 year after the disagreement (in some cases longer)
- If you are seeking reimbursement for services that should have been provided, or corrective action, then complaints can be made up to 3 years after the disagreement

[See Glossary for definitions]



Who can help me with an appeal or complaint?

It is a good idea to talk to an advocate or attorney before filing a complaint, asking for mediation, or filing a request for due process. There are agencies that can help you understand the law and your rights. They may also be able to represent you if needed.

These are some agencies that can help you:

- Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA): This is a program of Disability Rights California. They can provide legal advice and representation. There is a OCRA attorney for each regional center's geographic area.
- Disability Rights California (DRC): This is an agency appointed by the federal government to protect and advocate for the rights of Californians with disabilities. They can help you understand the law and your rights.
- The State Council for Developmental Disabilities (SCDD): This is a federally funded program that supports people with disabilities. They can help you learn about the regional center system and can advocate for services. There are 13 local offices throughout California.

[See Part 6: Contacts and Resources]

PART 6: CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

Contacts

To locate your regional center, visit the DDS website and type your zip code in the search window.
To search Los Angeles County zip codes, click the 'LA County' tab.

Use this list to keep your regional center's contact information in one place:

Important Contact Information

My Regional Center

Name: Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center

Phone: 213-383-1300

General Email: www.lanterman.org

My Service Coordinator

Name:

Phone:

Email:

My Service Coordinator's Manager

Name:

Phone:

Email:

My Local Family Resource Center

Name: Koch-Young Family Resource Center

Phone: 213-252-5600

Email: kyrc@lanterman.org

Website: kyrc@lanterman.org

The Department of Developmental Services

Website www.dds.ca.gov

Early Start Information

Baby Line: 800-515-BABY (800-515-2229)

Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy

State Offices

Website www.disabilityrightsca.org

Northern California: 800-390-7032 (TTY: 877-669-6023)

Southern California: 866-833-6712 (TTY: 877-669-6023)

My Local Office of Client's Rights Advocacy

Phone: 213-213-8180

Email: www.disabilityrightsca.org/what-we-do/programs/office-of-clients-rights-advocacacy-ocra

Disability Rights California

Website www.disabilityrightsca.org

Phone: 800-776-5746

TTY call: 800-719-5798

State Council on Developmental Disabilities

Website www.scdd.ca.gov

Phone: (916) 263-7919

Toll Free: (833) 818-9886

My Local Office of State Council on Developmental Disabilities Phone: 818-543-4631

Email: losangeles@scdd.ca.gov

Local Resources

Resource Link	Contact	What Will I Find Here?
Local Resources		
Early Head Start - EHS	Eligibility for Early Head Start is based on the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Proverty Guidelines. Applying for Early Head Start Phone: (866) 763-6481 https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/about-ehs#enroll	Early Head Start is a comprehensive early education program for low-income infants and toddlers (ages birth to 3) 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. Other services include providing and linking families with health, mental health, disability, and nutrition, and social services.
Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and School Districts	California Department of Education Email: https://www.cde.ca.gov Phone: (916) 319-0800	A local entity involved in education including to school districts that provide public elementary and/or secondary education to students within a specific boundary.
Foothill Special Education Local Planning (SELPA)	Dr. Debra Rinder, SELPA Administrator Email: ddrinder@gusd.net Phone: (818) 246-5378	Serving Special Education students and their families in Burbank, Glendale, La Crescenta, and La Canada USD.
Medi-Cal	Applying for Medi-Cal To see if a family qualifies for Covered California or Medi-Cal, they may: 1. Fill out an application online: www.CoveredCA.com 2. Call Covered California: (800) 300-1506	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

	3. Apply in person at a Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) office: Wilshire: (DPSS) office 2415 W. 6th St. Los Angeles, CA 90057 (310) 258-7400 Glendale: (DPSS) office 4680 San Fernando Rd. Glendale, CA 91204 (818) 701-8200 Pasadena: (DPSS) office 955 N. Lake Ave. Pasadena, CA 91104 (866) 613-3777	youth up to age 26, and pregnant women. Most applicants who apply through Covered California will receive Medi-Cal care through managed health plans.
Children Hospital of Los Angeles (CHLA)Pediaticians in FDLRC Catchment Area	Children Hospital of Los Angeles (CHLA) Email: www.chla.org Phone: (323) 660-2450	A Pediatric Hospital treats children throughout Southern California.
Help Me Grow LA (HMGLA)	Heather Little. M.Ed System Director Email: heather@first5association.org Phone: (510)227-6967	A locally developed resource and referral system designed to share resources, tools, and best practices help families learn about and find their way around CA's early childhood system and care.
Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	Local resources: California Email: www.myfamily.wic.ca.gov Phone: (800) 852-5770	Helps families across the state by providing nutrition education, breastfeeding support, health foods, and referrals to health care and other community services.
Pediaticians in FDLRC Catchment Area	Pediatrics Phone: (424) 443-5600	A care network of pediatricians that work with the whole family to design treatment plans and provide the knowledge and support that is needed to care for a child.

For more information about Early Start

Resource Link	Contact	What Will I Find Here?
California Resources		
A Resource Guide for Parents of Infants and Toddlers Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing	California Department of Education	A brief introduction to the complete Resource Guide that contains comprehensive information from the parents' perspective about the languages, communication tools, and educational approaches used in Deaf Education
Reasons for Concern That Your Child Or A Child In Your Care May Need Special Help	California Department of Education in collaboration with Department of Developmental Services	A 2-page, detailed information sheet with facts on your child's development
The Central Directory of Early Start/ Early Intervention Resources	California Early Intervention Technical Assistance Network (CEITAN) Phone: 916-492-4012	Includes information on where to get help, who is eligible, how to be referred to Early Start, and who provides Early Start services
Early Start Resources	Department of Developmental Services – Early Start Phone: 800-515-BABY Email: earlystart@dds.ca.gov	Many Early Start resources including frequently asked questions (FAQs) and a regional center Lookup Tool to find Early Start services near you
Early Start Frequently Asked Questions	Department of Developmental Services – Early Start	Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about Early Start
Information on the rights of families	Disability Rights California Phone: 800-776-5746 TTY call: 800-719-5798	Information on the rights of families when accessing and using Early Start, including eligibility and transition; and state laws on how Early Start services should be provided

Resource	Contact	What Will I Find Here?
California Resources (Continued)		
Early Start Family Resource Centers	Family Resource Center Network of California Phone: 916-993-7781 Email: info@frcnca.org	Links to all 47 Early Start Family Resource Centers and a glossary of terms
Resources in Special Education (RiSE) Library (Parents Helping Parents)	https://www.php.com/public-specialty-library/ Phone: 855-727-5775	A **resource library** through the California Department of Education and Parents Helping Parents Family Resource Center. It has books and online information about Early Start.
National Resources		
Resource Library	Center for Parent Information and Resources Phone: 973-642-8100	Information about early intervention and special education for the entire United States but not specific to California

For more Information about transition from Early Start

Resource	Contact	What Will I Find Here?
California Resources		
Handbook on Transition from Early Childhood Special Education	California Department of Education Phone: 916-319-0800	Provides information and resources to navigate the transition from Early Start to special education for preschool-aged children
Effective Early Childhood Transitions: A Guide for Transition at Age Three — Early Start to Preschool	Department of Developmental Services Phone: 800–515–BABY (800–515–2229) Email: earlystart@dds.ca.gov	The guide identifies both required elements for transition and recommended practices to support families and their children as they successfully navigate transition from Early Start to other services at age three

Resource	Links & Contact	What Will I Find Here?
California Resources (Continued)		
Transitioning out of Early Start: From the IFSP to IEP/ IPP	Parents Helping Parents Phone: 855-727-5775	A video on transition from Early Start
Early Intervention	State Council on Developmental Disabilities- San Bernardino Office Phone: 909 890-1259 Email: sanbernardino@scdd.ca.gov	A handout that covers the transition process and timeline
First 5 California	Phone: 916-263-1050 Email: info@ccfc.ca.gov	First 5 California is dedicated to improving the lives of California's young children and their families through a comprehensive system of education, health services, childcare, and other crucial programs
Help Me Grow	Heather Little, M.Ed Systems Director 510-227-6967 heather@first5association.org	A locally developed resource and referral system that identifies a family's child development needs, provides the care coordination necessary to ensure the best and most timely access to appropriate services and programs designed to share resources, tools, and best practices for early identification of special needs. The programs help families learn about and find their way around California's early childhood system of care.
2-1-1	Phone: 211	2-1-1 is a free information and referral service that connects people to health and human services in their community 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

For more information about school age and adult services

Resource	Links & Contact	What Will I Find Here?
California Resources		
Family Involvement & Partnerships	California Department of Education Phone: 916-319-0800	Resources and support for parents, guardians, and families of children with disabilities
Regional Centers	Department of Developmental Services Phone: 833-421-0061 Email: info@dds.ca.gov TTY: 711	Information about the regional centers and other information on developmental disabilities
Special Education	Disability Rights California (DRC) Phone: 800-776-5746 TTY: 800-719-5798	General resources about special education
Find Your Parent Center in California	Center for Parent Information and Resources Phone: 973-642-8100	Links to the Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) and Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs). PTIs and CPRCs provide information, resources, and training about special education (including Early Start). Use this link to find the center that serves your area
National Resources		
Parents & Families	U.S. Department of Education Phone: 202-245-7459	Resources for families about special education for the entire United States but not specific to California

Healthcare and social services

Resource	Links & Contact	What Will I Find Here?
California Resources		
Medi-Cal for Individuals	Department of Health Care Services Medi-Cal Helpline: 800-541-5555 Phone: 916-636-1980	Information about Medi-Cal
Resource	**Links & Contact**	**What Will I Find Here?**
California Resources (Continued)		
Department of Social Services	Department of Social Services Phone: 916-651-8848	Information about a variety of services including In-Home Supported Services
National Resources		
Social Security Administration (Federal)	Social Security Administration Phone: 800-772-1213	Information about Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security

For more information about your rights

Resource	Links & Contact	What Will I Find Here?
California Resources		
Parents' Rights	California Department of Education Phone: 916-319-0800	Information about rights and procedural safeguards
Parents' Rights: An Early Start Guide for Families	Department of Developmental Services Phone: 800–515–BABY (800–515–2229) Email: earlystart@dds.ca.gov	Includes state and federal laws and regulations that govern Early Start in California
Special Education Rights and Responsibilities (SERR)	Disability Rights California (DRC) Phone: 800-776-5746 TTY: 800-719-5798	How to become eligible for special education, how to request and advocate for special education services, and what to do if you disagree with school districts

Resource	Links & Contact	What Will I Find Here?
California Resources		
Rights Under the Lanterman Act (RULA)	Disability Rights California (DRC) Phone: 800-776-5746 TTY: 800-719-5798	Help with understanding rights to supports and services under the Lanterman Act, rights with the regional center and service providers
State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD)	Phone: 916-263-7919 Toll Free: 833-818-9886 council@scdd.ca.gov	SCDD is established by state and federal law as an independent state agency to ensure that people with developmental disabilities and their families receive the services and supports they need. Through advocacy, capacity building and systemic change, SCDD works to achieve a consumer and family-based system of individualized services, supports, and other assistance.

GLOSSARY

American Sign Language (ASL):
ASL is a visual language that is expressed by movements of the hands and face.

Assistive Technology:
Any item, piece of equipment, or means used to increase, maintain, or improve the skills of children or adults with disabilities.

Audiology Evaluation:
A hearing evaluation performed by an audiologist.

Audiologist (Hearing Doctor):
A specialist who is trained to understand how hearing works and can measure hearing loss or figure out problems with balance and work with you to solve problem.

Autism (also called Autism Spectrum Disorder or ASD):
A developmental disability that affects how a child interacts with other people, communicates, learns, and behaves.

Advocate:
An advocate is someone who represents another person's interests. This person may help and support when needed, like attending a meeting or writing a formal request letter, as well as give suggestions. Anyone can be an advocate, but this person is not an attorney and does not offer legal advice.

Advocacy:
The act of supporting a child or family's interests and rights.

Audiology:
Identifying and providing services for children with hearing loss and prevention of hearing loss.

At-Risk:
A term used for children who may, in the future, have problems with their development that may affect learning and development.

Assessment:
The initial and ongoing procedure used to identify:

- A child's unique needs and strengths and the services appropriate to meet those needs.
- The resources, priorities and concerns of the family and the supports and services necessary to enhance the family's capacity to meet the developmental needs of their infant or toddler with a disability.

Assessment Team:
A team that gathers information for decision-making. In addition to parents, this team can include a Psychologist, Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Nurse, and/or Teacher.

Cerebral palsy (or CP):
A developmental disability that affects how a child is able to move, balance, and control their muscles.

Childcare:
Caring for children while their parents or adult caregivers are at work, in training, or doing other things.

California Children's Services (CCS):
A state program for children with certain diseases or health problems. Through this program, children up to 21 years old can get the health care and services they need. CCS will connect you with doctors and trained health care people who know how to care for your child with special health care needs.

Consent:
The permission a parent gives to a program or agency, generally in writing. Consent is always voluntary, and a parent may cancel it at any time

Communication:
Is more than talking! It is any form of message sent from one party to another, through sounds, words, or physical hints, like body language.

Confidentiality:
The right that personal information about a child and family is not released without your permission or only when permitted or required by law. Consent to share information is always voluntary, and a parent may cancel it at any time.

Developmental:
The steps or stages in the growth of a child.

Developmental Delay:
Refers to a child that is slower to gain the skills expected of him or her, compared to others of the same age.

Developmental History:
An account of the progress of a child in learning as they grow in skills, such as sitting, walking, or talking.

Developmental Milestone Skills:
Skills typically reached at specific ages.

Developmental Tests:
Tests that measure a child's development compared to the development of other children at the same age.

Disability:
A developmental delay or physical or mental condition which is very likely to result in a child having a developmental delay.

Early Intervention:
A set of services and supports delivered as early as possible to prevent long-term difficulties.

Eligibility:
The requirements a child must meet to be able to receive services from the program.

Epilepsy:
A developmental disability that affects activity in the brain and causes seizures.

Established Risk:
A term used for a child who has a condition with a known cause, and who may, in the future, have problems with their development that may affect learning and development

Evaluation:
Collects information about a child's learning needs, strengths, and interests. An evaluation is part of the process of determining whether he/she qualifies for a program or service.

Family Training, Counseling, and Home Visits:
Services to help the family of an infant or toddler in understanding the care needs of the child and enhancing the child's development.

Feeding Therapy:
Helps children learn how to eat or eat better, particularly for infants and children who have trouble eating, chewing, feeding, sucking, and swallowing.

Feeding Therapist:
Provides feeding therapy and are usually Occupational Therapists or Speech and Language Pathologists.

Family Support:
Anything that helps a family. This help may include advice, information, or helping a parent understand what options may be available.

Family Resource Center:
A place where families of young children who are at risk or have a developmental delay or disability can get information, support, and information from other parents and families.

Fine Motor:
In physical development, the use of the small muscles of the body, most commonly the hands/fingers. Like pinching, picking up an item, holding a pencil, or buttoning clothing.

Generic Services and Supports:
Resources that may be available to all children from local, State and/or Federal agencies. These include services such as Medi-Cal, Social Security, and school programs like Head Start.

Gross Motor Skills:
The use of large muscle groups of the body, arms, or legs, as in sitting up, walking, balancing, or throwing a ball.

Health Services:
Health-related services are services necessary to allow a child to benefit from other early intervention services.

Home-based Service:
Any service or therapy that is provided in the home.

Home Visits:
Visits to your home by a professional for the purpose of planning and providing early start/intervention services.

Infant Development Services:
Services and activities that promote the infant's or toddler's development of skills in a variety of developmental areas.

IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan):
A written plan for the child's and family's services that the family develops with a team.

Intellectual disability (or ID):
A developmental disability that affects a child's ability to learn and function in daily life (take care of themselves).

Individualized Education Plan (IEP):
A written plan for a child's special education services.

Infant:
Birth to one year old children. Sometimes regarded as infants up to 18 months or until the child is walking when a child then is called a toddler.

In-Home Respite:
Is designed to give the family a break from the care of the child and is provided in the family home.

Interpreter and Translator Services:
May provide language interpretation at meetings, and/or translation of written communication (IFSP), from English into the primary language of the family.

Mediation:
A meeting to resolve disagreements between parents (you) and a regional center.

Medi-Cal:
California's Medicaid health care program. This program pays for a variety of medical services for children and adults with limited income and resources, or with specified life situations. Medi-Cal is supported by federal and state taxes. You can apply for Medi-Cal benefits regardless of sex, race, religion, color, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, or veteran status. If you are found (or determined) eligible, you can get Medi-Cal as long as you continue to meet the eligibility requirements.

Medical Services (for diagnostic/evaluation purposes only):
Services provided by a licensed physician for diagnostic or evaluation purposes to determine a child's developmental status and need for early intervention services.

Motor Development:
Also known as motor skill development is how a child develops physical skills in using their body and body parts.

Motor Skills:
The ability to move and coordinate the body. There are two broad types of motor skills that young children develop:

- Fine motor skills using the smaller muscles like picking up and putting down objects, clapping hands, using fork and spoon, feeding themselves finger food
- Gross motor skills for example, crawling, climbing, kicking, and skipping

Natural Environment:
Places or settings that any young child and his or her family go to in any day. This may include the home, a preschool, or other community location, such as a local park or library.

Nursing Services:
Services to help prevent health problems and promote health and development and may include the administration of medications and treatments prescribed by a doctor.

Nutrition Services: (see feeding)
Assist in the development and monitoring of appropriate plans to address the nutritional needs of children.

Occupational Therapist (OT):
Experts in fine motor skills, eye hand coordination, sensory processing, lip, and tongue ties and feeding issues.

Occupational Therapy:
A service provided by a licensed occupational therapist who assists children with fine motor activities and everyday tasks like eating, dressing, and hand use.

Out of Home Respite:
Services that provide a break from the care a child needs and are provided outside of the family home.

Peers:
Other children who are the same age or may be of the same development level. They are not necessarily friends. It's important for children to have contact with peers for their social learning and developing social skills.

Psychological Services:
When a psychologist assesses or tests a child's development and interprets the test results.

Physical Therapist (PT):
Experts in gross motor skills, focusing on mobility such as rolling, crawling, walking, and climbing. They also can help with sensory-motor coordination.

Physical Therapy:
A service provided by a licensed physical therapist who assists children with gross motor activities and everyday tasks like crawling, walking and jumping. They also can help with sensory-motor coordination.

Physical Disability:
A disability that impacts a person's physical development.

Provisional Eligibility:
If a child who is three or four years of age (or approaching three years of age) and does not show signs of a developmental disability, provisional eligibility is intended to avoid delays and reduce gaps in regional center services to children at a particularly vulnerable time in their development.

Service Coordination (Case Management):
Service coordinators assist and help an infant or toddler with a disability and the child's family to receive the services they need.

Sign Language and Cued Language Services:
These services include teaching sign language, cued language, and auditory/oral language and providing sign and cued language interpretation.

Social Work Services:
Provide individual and family-group counseling with parents and other family members, and provide appropriate social skill-building activities with the infant or toddler and parents

Specialized Instruction:
Play-based learning. Tailored lessons are planned by an infant professional to teach you how to guide your child in fun learning experiences to achieve goals.

Speech Language Pathologist (SLP):
Experts in expressive and receptive communication, what children say or sign, and what children understand.

Speech/Language Therapy:
Services to support the development of communication skills. To help children improve communication and social function skills provided by a Speech Therapist or Speech-Language Pathology Assistant.

Therapy:
Regional centers can provide therapies specific to children specialized needs. These therapies may include Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Speech Therapy

Transition:
The process where the children at age 3 will move from Early Intervention services to other early childhood supports or services, such as the Preschool Special Education Program or community programs.

Transportation and Related Costs:
Regional centers may offer a variety of options to help families access the community when they are unable to do so on their own.

Vision Impairment:
A loss in vision that, even with correction, affects a child's ability to see. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

Vision Services:
Evaluation and assessment of visual functioning, including the diagnosis of specific visual disorders, delays, and abilities that affect early childhood development.