

**When you have questions
about your child's
development**



A FAMILY INTRODUCTION TO

CALIFORNIA

EARLY START

***for Infants
and Toddlers
with Disabilities
and Their
Families***



With Early Start...We Can Make a Difference

The first three years of life is a significant period of growth for all children. As infants become aware of their world, they begin to explore, reach out to others, and communicate. During this time, infants or toddlers who may have a developmental delay or disability need special help to reach their full potential.



Services and supports that can help your child are called early intervention services. More than 50 years of medical and educational research shows that these services, which are based on the individual needs of your child and family, can make a profound difference in a child's future. You, as the parent, work together with professionals to decide which early intervention services may be best for your child.

The earlier children who may be at risk of a disability receive special services, and the sooner their families receive support regarding their child's development, the farther they will go in life.

How To Begin

With the very first phone call for early intervention services, you can begin to get information and resources to answer your questions.

You know your child's abilities and frustrations. Yet, you may not have the information you need to effectively assist your child's growth and development. By working closely with you and your family, early intervention professionals and other staff who work with families can help you address your concerns, identify your needs and resources to address those needs, and set a course of action.

Taking the First Step

If you are concerned about your child's development, the first step is to have your child referred for evaluation and assessment. You can refer your child or you can have your child's physician or another professional make the referral for you. You will be assigned a service coordinator who will help you through the process.

Evaluation services are available to children with special needs who may be eligible for Early Start services through your local education agency or regional center. During the assessment process, your child's motor skills, communication development, learning skills, social interaction, and emotional development will be evaluated.



Setting a Course of Action

Once the evaluation and assessment process is completed and your child is determined eligible for Early Start services, an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is developed for your child and family. By working closely with you, early intervention professionals ensure that services, community supports, and parent-to-parent resources are brought together to meet your child's unique needs and the needs of your family to support your child's development.



Accessing Services

Early intervention services under Early Start are provided by regional centers and local education agencies throughout California. Services are provided based on assessed need and delivered within your child's everyday routines, activities, and places. These include:

- ▼ assistive technology devices/services
- ▼ audiology (hearing) services
- ▼ family training, counseling, and home visits
- ▼ some health services
- ▼ medical services for diagnostic or evaluative purposes only
- ▼ nursing
- ▼ nutrition counseling
- ▼ occupational therapy
- ▼ physical therapy
- ▼ psychological services
- ▼ respite
- ▼ service coordination (case management)
- ▼ social work services
- ▼ special instruction
- ▼ speech and language services
- ▼ transportation services
- ▼ vision services
- ▼ others as needed



**THE EARLIER WE START,
THE FARTHER THEY'LL GO**

Because all babies are different, they rarely do the same thing at exactly the same age. As a result, it's not unusual for families to have questions or concerns about their child's development. You may wonder:

Why isn't my son sitting up?

Why isn't my daughter crawling?

Why can't anyone understand what my son is saying?

Is my child's hearing/vision normal?

When should my son begin to eat solid food?

It's important to keep in mind that all children develop differently and at their own pace. If you have concerns about your child's development, call your health care provider, community health clinic, or 800/515-BABY for early intervention services in your area. You can also visit our website at www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart or e-mail us at earlystart@dds.ca.gov.



**Call
800/515-BABY**
or visit
www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart
e-mail:
earlystart@dds.ca.gov

For more information, call your local regional center, education agency, or family resource center.

REGIONAL CENTER

PHONE

LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY

PHONE

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

PHONE

California Early Start is an interagency system of coordinated services administered by the Department of Developmental Services, Children and Family Services Branch in collaboration with the Department of Education, Education Equity, Access and Support Branch, Special Education Division.



Department of Developmental Services,
Children and Family Services Branch
1600 9th Street, Room 330
P.O. Box 944202
Sacramento, CA 94244-2020
800/515-BABY



Department of Education,
Special Education Division
515 L Street, Room 270
P.O. Box 944272
Sacramento, CA 94244-2720
916/445-4613