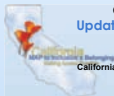


A Brief Overview of California's Early Start Program Early Intervention Services in California

Developed by
California MAP to Inclusion and Belonging...
Making Access Possible
WestEd Center for Child & Family Studies
in collaboration with the California Department of Education and the
California Department of Developmental Services
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- This document was reviewed and approved by the California Department of Education, Early Education and Support Division, as well as the Special Education Division and Department of Developmental Services, when appropriate
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Intent of This Overview

To assist **early care and education providers** in understanding the Early Start early intervention system:

- when a child in their care, birth to age three years of age, has an identified disability
- when they have concerns that a child in their care, birth to age three years of age, might have a disability, developmental delay *or be at risk for a disability*

2015 update



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California's History of Serving Infants and Toddlers

- California law since 1980
- Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act in 1982



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Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

- Federal legislation mandates special education for all eligible children
- IDEA Part B: services for children with disabilities ages three through twenty-one
- IDEA Part C: services for children birth to three years of age



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Early Start = Part C



Early Start is California's early intervention service system under Part C of IDEA



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Early Start seeks to promote and enhance a coordinated, family-focused service system for infants and toddlers from birth to age three years with a **significant** developmental delay, a disability, an established risk condition with a high probability of resulting in a delay or disability, **or be considered at high risk of having a substantial developmental delay due to a combination of biomedical risk factors**

2015 updates



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Early Start is Designed to:

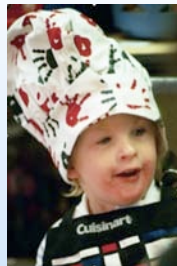
- Provide a system of referral and assessment that
 - results in individualized services
 - supports infants and toddlers and their families within their community
- Be family-focused by
 - keeping families informed about services for their child
 - supporting families and including them as collaborative decision makers



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Early Start Administration

- The California Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is the lead agency for overall administration of Early Start
- DDS collaborates with the California Department of Education, Special Education Division, in the provision of services for some children



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Eligibility Criteria

- The age at the time of the initial referral will be the age for consideration of eligibility.
- Have developmental delay of at least 33% in one or more areas of either cognitive, communication, social or emotional, adaptive, or physical and motor development including vision and hearing; or
- Have an established risk condition of known etiology, with a high probability of resulting in delayed development; or
- Be considered at high risk of having a substantial developmental disability due to a combination of biomedical risk factors of which are diagnosed by qualified personnel

2015 update



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Early Start Services

- Are designed to meet the individual needs of each infant or toddler and needs of the family
- Are provided in “natural environments”
- Are provided to families by qualified personnel
- Include transition to appropriate services at three years of age



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Natural Environment

- Any setting where typically developing children of a similar chronological age are found
- Includes home, neighborhood, child care, preschool, parks, birthday parties, informal gatherings of family and friends, etc.
- A “Natural Environment” is more than a location. It is a way of approaching service



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A Natural Environment

Is

- a location where this child would go if he did not have a disability
- where other children go who do not have disabilities
- in a part of the community where children and families without disabilities spend time when they are not being treated or tested for illness or health issues

Is Not

- a location where people usually go because they have disabilities or medical issues
- a location that was chosen because it had specialized equipment
- a location that was chosen because it was convenient for specialists who work with the child



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Early Start Services can Include:

- Assistive technology devices/services
- Audiology services
- Family training, counseling, home visits
- Some health services
- Medical services for diagnosis and evaluation
- Nursing services
- Nutrition services
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Psychological services
- Service coordination
- Special instruction
- Social work services
- Transportation services
- Speech and language services
- Vision services
- Others as determined by the IFSP Team



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Family Involvement

- Families are an integral part of evaluation and assessment
- Families participate in Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) development
- Early Start services support families and help them meet the special needs of their infants or toddlers



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Early Start Family Resource Centers (FRCs)

- FRCs throughout California (~50) receive funding to provide parent-to-parent support to families
- FRCs are primarily staffed by parents who have children with special needs
- Services are provided in a nonclinical, family-centered atmosphere
- Child care providers can also access libraries at FRCs



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Family Resource Centers

- Support the emotional and informational needs of families
- Provide referral information and outreach to underserved populations
- Support public awareness activities and family/professional collaborative activities
- Assist families with transition
- Provide support services and resources in many languages
- Are culturally responsive to the needs of families
- Provide resource, referral and outreach services



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Parents' Rights

Parents have rights and protections to ensure that early intervention services are provided to their children:

- in a manner appropriate to their needs
- in consideration of family concerns
- in compliance with state and federal statutes



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Mediation and Due Process

Parents have the right to request a mediation and due process hearing in Early Start if they have a disagreement with a regional center or LEA about:

- identification
- evaluation
- assessment
- placement of their child
- provision of appropriate early intervention services

Parents also may file a state complaint alleging a violation of federal or state statutes or regulations.



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Early Start Looks Different in Each Community – Why?

- History
- Local decision-making
- Locally available resources



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Transition at Three Years of Age

- Because Early Start (Part C) applies only to a child under three years of age, the law requires the family to be informed about the transition that will occur when the child turns three years of age
- Transition services are intended to support and prepare families and their child to exit Early Start and enter new services if needed at three years of age



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Transition Options

- Special education preschool under Part B
- and/or**
- Ongoing regional center services
- and/or**
- Community options
 - Child care
 - Private preschool or Head Start
 - Remaining at home with the family
 - Other unique options in a community



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Transitions

For more information, see the publication, **Effective Early Childhood Transitions**
<http://www.dds.ca.gov/EarlyStart/ResourceMaterials.cfm>

2015 update



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For More Information

- Websites
 - Map to Inclusion and Belonging: www.CAinclusion.org
 - Early Start: www.dds.ca.gov/EarlyStart/
 - DDS Birth to 36 Months: <http://www.dds.ca.gov/Birth36Months/Index.cfm>
 - Early Start Resources (materials at no cost) <http://www.dds.ca.gov/EarlyStart/ResourceMaterials.cfm>
 - Other: <http://idea.ed.gov>, <http://www.ideapartnership.org/>
 - Early Childhood Special Education Handbooks: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/fp/ecseries.asp>
 - Effective Early Childhood Transitions <http://www.dds.ca.gov/EarlyStart/ResourceMaterials.cfm>
- 2015 update

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