



What To Know

Our Mission

To serve and empower persons with developmental disabilities and their families to achieve their goals with community partners.

Many parents have questions and concerns about their baby's growth and development, even when everything goes well.

But, if there have been serious problems during pregnancy, around the time of birth, or in the first few days or weeks of life, parents wonder and worry about whether their baby will be all right.

California Early Start is a program designed to ensure that eligible infants, toddlers, and their families receive evaluation and assessment of their current functioning and coordinated services early enough to make a difference in development.

How Can Early Start Help?

The program brings together resources and services to help infants and toddlers grow and learn and provides support to families to enhance their child's development. The services are planned and delivered to help prevent or lessen the need for special services later and to assure the child is off to the best start possible.

What Is Early Intervention?

Early intervention involves promptly identifying delays and risk factors and providing assistance to eliminate or minimize problems resulting from them. The services are designed to meet the developmental needs of each child and the needs of the family related to the infant's or toddler's development.



Expected Development Chart

Smiling	Birth to 2 months
Rolling over	3 to 4 months
Sitting alone	5 to 6 months
Pull to stand	7 to 9 months
Standing	10 to 12 months
Walking	13 to 15 months
Talking words	16 to 18 months
Talking sentences	24 months

For additional information or to apply for California Early Start or Regional Center services, please contact:

San Diego County

Early Start Intake: (858) 496-4318

Regional Center Intake: (858) 576-2938

Imperial County

Early Start & Regional Center Intake:
(760) 355-8383

California Early Start is a federally funded program through Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

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Early Start



S|D|R|C

San Diego Regional Center

Serving Individuals with Developmental Disabilities
in San Diego and Imperial Counties



Early Start Eligibility

Infants and toddlers, birth to age three years, are eligible for SDRC Early Start if they require early intervention services due to **one** of the following:

1 Developmental Delays

Infants and toddlers who are determined to have a significant difference (at least 25%) between the expected level of development for their age and their current level of functioning in the following six areas:

- Cognitive
- Physical/Motor
- Expressive Communication
- Receptive Communication
- Social/Emotional
- Adaptive Skills

2 Established Risk

When an infant or toddler has a condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay. An example is a child born with Down syndrome.

3 High Risk of a Developmental Disability

With two or more of the following factors:

- Less than 32 weeks gestation and/or birth weight less than 1500 grams
- Assisted ventilation for 48 hours or longer during the first 28 days of life
- Small for gestational age
- Asphyxia neonatorum
- Severe and persistent metabolic seizures during the first three years of life
- Multiple congenital anomalies
- Neonatal seizures or nonfebrile seizures during the first three years of life
- CNS lesion or abnormality



- CNS infection
- Biomedical insult (injury, accident, or illness) which may affect the developmental outcome
- Prenatal exposure to teratogens
- Prenatal substance exposure, positive tox screen or withdrawal
- Fetal alcohol syndrome
- Clinically significant failure to thrive
- Persistent hypertonia or hypotonia

OR the parent of the infant/toddler is a person with a developmental disability

The Regional Center's Role

- Provide service coordination
- Coordinate or arrange for evaluations to determine eligibility for Early Start services
- Completes assessments for service planning
- Develop an Individual Family Service Plan
- Monitor services and provide periodic reviews and assessments of the plan

The Individual Family Service Plan

An Individual Family Service Plan (**IFSP**) is a family-focused outcome-oriented plan built upon a family's natural supports. It addresses family concerns, the child's developmental needs, and the family's requirements for meeting those needs.

Available Resources for Early Intervention

Resources are unique to each family, depending on their need. Generic resources include but are not limited to Medi-Cal, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), In-Home Support Services (IHSS), California Children's Services (CCS), and Tri-West.

Families must use their private insurance or health care plan for ANY COVERED benefit for Early Start services identified in the IFSP.



The Service Coordinator's Role

A service coordinator is assigned to work with the child and family when they are referred for evaluation and assessment. They will be the primary point of contact for coordinating services and providing assistance to the child and family.

The service coordinator is responsible for planning the development of the IFSP and reviewing it with the family and service providers every six months.

As the child approaches their third birthday, the service coordinator, with the IFSP team, will develop a plan to transition out of the Early Start Program by age three.

What Happens at Age Three Years?

By age three, those toddlers who are not developmentally disabled are referred to community resources for other services as needed.

Toddlers who are found to be developmentally disabled by or before their third birthday continue to be eligible for services and are referred to a case management unit in their geographic area for ongoing support and assistance.

Eligibility for services through the San Diego Regional Center is defined through the Lanterman Act. It includes individuals who have the following conditions: intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, Down syndrome, and other conditions requiring services similar to those needed by individuals with an intellectual disability.