

Consumer Resource Information and Recommended Website Links for the California Newborn Hearing Screening Program and Early Start

What is the CA NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING PROGRAM?

- Statewide program to identify hearing loss in infants, first mandated in 1998, (AB2780) required all CCS paneled hospitals to provide newborn hearing screening.
- The mandate was expanded, effective January, 2008 (AB2651) requiring all general acute care hospitals that have perinatal services or intensive care newborn nurseries.
- When an infant is identified with hearing loss, families are connected with early intervention services provided through the CA Early Start Program.
- www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/nhsp/ : Website contains FAQ's regarding the program, parent and provider resources, provider directory, consumer/provider publications and more.
- FAQ's have not been updated to reflect the new mandate.

What is CA EARLY START PROGRAM?

Early intervention services to infants and toddlers, birth to 36 months of age with disabilities and their families. Mandated by federal law in 1986 and reauthorized in 2004 by Part C of the Individual Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). California enacted the Early Intervention Services Act in 1993 and in 1999 (although slated to be sunsetted) the Legislature conferred permanent status to the Early Start Program.

- Statutes pertaining to mandated early intervention services can be found at the Department of Developmental Services website: Title 14, Early Intervention Services Act:
<http://www.dds.ca.gov/Statutes/GovernmentCode.cfm>
- Anyone can make a referral to for early intervention services. The family, health care provider or concerned friend should contact the local regional center (RC) or the Early Start program through the local education agency (LEA). The family is assigned a Service Coordinator, who will help them through the process of determining eligibility and coordinating subsequent services.
- If you know an infant/toddler that may be eligible for early intervention services you may call (800) 515-BABY or e-mail earlystart@dds.ca.gov. Callers will be directed to their local RC or LEA.

- **DDS has determined that if the suspected disability is a solely low incidence disability (i.e. hearing impairment, vision impairment or severe orthopedic impairment or any combination of these) services are provided by the local education agency early intervention program. All other disabilities are served by the local regional center.**
- **An assessment by a multi-disciplinary team of qualified professionals is completed and the infant/toddler is determined eligible when a developmental delay is observed in the area of cognition, communication, social and emotional, adaptive, and/or physical, including motor, vision or hearing.**
- **In addition infants/toddlers with conditions that have a high probability for developmental delay or are at high risk because of a combination of known risk factors are also eligible.**
- **The initial Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is developed based on the assessed developmental needs, and family concerns and priorities. Outcomes based on family's priorities are identified and criteria are established to meet the outcomes. Services and appropriate service providers are determined by the identified outcomes.**
- **Mandated services include but are not limited to: audiology, hearing, speech/language services. For a complete list refer to www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart, click on related links: "What is early start" and "What early intervention services are available?"**
- **The IFSP is reviewed every six months to record progress toward the identified outcomes. An annual assessment is completed by a multi-disciplinary team to establish the current levels in all areas of development. New outcomes are identified based on the current assessment and family's concerns and priorities.**
- **Transition planning begins at two years, six months in preparation for the transition from Part C (Early Intervention) services to Part B (special education) services, if continued intervention is deemed necessary. Special Education supports and services begin at age three. Collaboration and coordination with the local education agency is required to facilitate a smooth transition for children and their families. An individualized education plan (IEP) is developed on or before the child's third birthday.**
- **www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart/: Website contains detailed information regarding eligibility, services, statutes and regulations, resource materials, training and technical assistance for the CA Early Start program.**
- **<http://www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart/ResourceMaterials.cfm>: Link to a number of informative pamphlets and brochures, including Performance Plans (2005-2007), Performance reports (2005-2007) for printing and distribution.**

What qualifications are needed to provide services to infant/toddlers and their families?

Services are purchased or arranged for by a regional center (RC) or a local education agency (LEA).

CA Code of Regulations, Title 17, Division 2, Chapter 3 – Community Services, Subchapter 2 – Vendorization:

<http://www.dds.ca.gov/Title17/T17SectionView.cfm?Section=54342.htm>

- The regulations outline the types of services and minimum qualifications for vendored regional center providers. Most providers must be licensed by the state, possess certification from their professional organization or have minimum levels of education, depending on the service being provided.
- If the service is being provided by the LEA, the provider must hold the appropriate CCTC (CA Commission on Teacher Credentialing) credential or if contracted by the RC or LEA, must meet the state requirements as outlined above. For example:
 - **Audiologist and SLP** must possess a valid license from the SLPAB or appropriate CCTC Clinical Rehabilitation Services Credential, Audiology or SLP. The credential authorizes service to children birth to age 22. (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets.html>, leaflet CL-610 Audiology or leaflet CL-879 SLP).
 - **Infant Development Specialist:** has at least one year experience working with parents and children with disabilities and has a valid license or certification in one of the following: OT, PT, Special Education, Psychology, Nursing or Speech/Language therapy OR a master's degree in child development/early childhood which includes a minimum of 15 units of formal instruction in at least one of the following areas:
 - Typical and atypical infant development
 - Infant assessment
 - Infant intervention techniques
 - Family involvement in infant treatment.
 - **Behavior Analyst** assesses the function of a behavior, designs, implements and evaluates instructional and environment modifications to produce socially significant improvements in behavior through skill acquisition and reduction of behavior. They engage in functional assessments or functional analyses to identify environmental factors of which behavior is a function. They do not practice psychology. Regional Center classify them as vendors if they are recognized by the national Behavior Analyst Certification Board as Board Certified (from CA Code of Regs, Title 17, Sec. 54342, Types of Services)

- **Teachers** who work under an LEA must possess the appropriate Educational Specialist Instruction Credential with an Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) certificate, authorizing them to serve children from birth to pre-Kindergarten.
(<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets.html>, leaflet CL-808C)