

# WHAT IS EARLY START?

A statewide interagency system of coordinated early intervention services for infants and toddlers with or at risk for disabilities or developmental delay and their families. **Regional Centers are open and accepting referrals for Early Start during COVID-19.** If you suspect that an infant or toddler has a developmental delay or atypical development then:

## Screen



A child may be eligible for early intervention services if they:

- Show a developmental delay in one or more areas of cognitive, communication, social or emotional, adaptive, or physical and motor development, including vision or hearing;
- Have an established risk condition of known etiology, with a high probability of resulting in delayed development; or
- Are considered at high risk of having a substantial developmental disability due to a combination of biomedical risk factors that are diagnosed by qualified personnel.

## Refer



- Local Regional Centers <https://www.dds.ca.gov/rc>
- Local Educational Agency <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se> (for children with solely low incidence visual, hearing, and orthopedic disabilities)
- Within 45 days, the regional center or local educational agency will:
  - Assign a Service Coordinator
  - Obtain parental consent
  - Schedule & complete evaluations
  - Develop an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) to develop strengths and services
  - Provide services in home or community setting
- Go to <https://www.dds.ca.gov/services/early-start/what-is-early-start/> to learn more about the referral process.

## Get Involved



- Collaborate with community resources in treatment planning by providing written communication;
- Participate via conference call;
- Attend IFSP meetings; or
- Provide input and receive feedback from the assessment team.
- You can be the link between families and the early intervention process! For information about family support, go to the Family Resource Centers website <http://www.frcnca.org>

## See Results



- Studies found that children who participate in high-quality early intervention/early childhood development programs tend to have
  - Less need for special education and other specialized services;
  - Greater language abilities;
  - Improved nutrition and health; and
  - Experienced less child abuse and neglect.



California Department of  
Developmental Services



For more information and/or questions regarding Early Start referrals, please contact the Early Start BabyLine at 1-800-515-BABY or email [EarlyStart@dds.ca.gov](mailto:EarlyStart@dds.ca.gov).