



What can I do here at home to help the regional center system?

Establish a relationship!

Legislators can't help you if they don't know who you are.

- Schedule regular visits with their local office – once a month, every other month.
- Be respectful of their time. Ask in advance when scheduling the meeting how much time they have to meet with you, then ask again when you sit down in the meeting.
- Get to know one person on their staff. Ask if they or anyone they know has any familiarity or relationship to a person with developmental disabilities.
- Don't ask for anything in the early days – get to know them, share information about the regional center, what you do for the regional center and what the regional center does for you.
- Ask if there's someone you should be calling/writing to in the Capitol office when issues around developmental services come up.
- Invite legislators and their staff to fun events, ribbon cuttings, open houses, schools, and programs.
- Ask the legislator to send a representative with certificates when you are honoring someone special at the regional center, schools or your agencies.
- Share the lives of people with developmental disabilities with them.
- Offer to help their office by hosting something.
- Don't always make them come to you - show up to the free events, coffee time, mobile office hours, and town hall meetings.
- When you see them in the community, acknowledge them and remind them who you are, how they may know you and where you saw them last. They meet a lot of people, but you want to be a familiar face.
- Handwrite your thank you notes and when you can, your letters as well. Always include your name and address. This helps to identify you as a constituent.



ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL CENTER AGENCIES

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REGIONAL CENTERS - WHO WE ARE...

Services

Regional centers provide and/or coordinate the following services for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families:

- Assessment and diagnosis
- Counseling and family support
- Lifelong individualized planning and service coordination
- Develop an individual program plan to outline service and support needs
- Assistance in identifying and coordinating publicly available community resources
- Advocacy for the protection of legal, civil and service rights
- Early intervention services for at-risk infants and their families
- Planning, placement, and monitoring for 24-hour out-of-home care
- Community education about developmental disabilities

How is eligibility defined

The term **developmental disability** refers to a severe and chronic disability that is attributable to a mental or physical impairment.

It must be a substantial disability that occurs before the 18th birthday and be expected to continue indefinitely.

Also, the disability must be due to one of the following conditions:

- Mental retardation
- Cerebral Palsy
- Epilepsy
- Autism
- A disabling condition closely related to mental retardation or requiring similar treatment.

We are long-term care system providing services and supports to a person diagnosed with a developmental disability from BIRTH to DEATH.

Infants and toddlers (age 0 to 36 months) who are at risk of becoming developmentally disabled or who have a developmental delay may also qualify for services through intensive intervention services through the state/federal Early Start Program.