



## A New Playground

When your child turns three it is a big transition, not just in learning and development, but in support services. This brochure covers the transition process and options that may be available to your child when Early Start ends.

## The Transition Process

Planning for transition typically starts 6 months before your child turns 3. Transition planning is required by Early Start regulations to ensure that there is a plan of support in place to prepare you and your child for a change in service delivery when Early Start ends at age 3. Your Service Coordinator will schedule a transition conference to discuss your plans for your child as his/her third birthday approaches. At this meeting you will review the wide variety of options that are available to all children in your community. Special education and regional center services after age 3 will also be discussed. The transition conference is your opportunity to request information, discuss your child's strengths, progress towards goals, and current needs and ask for more information about the transition process.

To assist with a discussion about special education, a representative from your local school district will be invited to the transition conference to explain the various options and eligibility criteria. Your Service Coordinator will explain to you how services and eligibility through the regional center will change at age 3. To support you during this meeting, you may invite anyone you would like including your early intervention team, or a parent from the Family Resource Center, or any other agency involved with your family.

Your transition plan will contain some very important information with regard to assessments for school services and the regional center, as well as dates and time lines for these assessments. During the whole

transition process, your Service Coordinator will be available to answer questions you may have. The Family Resource Center is also available to provide parent-to-parent support. We refer to this as a "process" because it may take up to six months, with many steps along the way.

## Programs Available to all 3 Year Olds

Programs may vary slightly from region to region and are typically available to all children. Some may have enrollment fees, financial or other eligibility criteria. Your Service Coordinator will be able to assist you in finding local resources.

- Community Programs, such as Parks and Recreation, gymnastics, local libraries, and Neighborhoods for Learning (NfL) offer a range of activities for your child and family.
- Community Preschool Programs offer classes, some of which may require parent participation.
- Head Start is a federally funded preschool program primarily available to children from low-income families. Priority is given to children with special needs (<http://caheadstart.org/Cluster4.html>).
- State Funded Preschool Programs are operated by some local school districts and other public agencies. These are typically half-day preschool programs and parent involvement is encouraged ([www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov)).
- First 5 California offers a range of services in all counties that are tailored to the needs of local communities. Some of their programs may include preschool (Neighborhoods for Learning), Family Resource Centers, early learning activities, access to health services, dental treatment, mental health services, and parent education ([www.ccfca.gov](http://www.ccfca.gov)).
- Private Preschools are available to your child with a fee for tuition. Private preschools are not typically

designed to serve children with special needs, but they are required by law to make accommodations for these children.

## Eligibility at Age 3 for Special Education and Regional Center Services

Some children who transition from Early Start may continue to need supports and services. Your child may qualify for services through the School district and/or the regional center. If your child qualifies for special education, it does not mean that she/he automatically qualifies for regional center services. Each agency has its own assessment process and eligibility criteria. More detailed information can be found in your Transition Handbook which will be given to you by your Service Coordinator and is also available on the Internet at [www.dds.ca.gov](http://www.dds.ca.gov) and [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov).

## Remember to Ask Questions

You will have an opportunity to ask questions throughout the transition process. Great resources include:

- Your Service Coordinator
- The School district
- Family Resource Centers
- Early Start Providers

## Common Acronyms/Abbreviations

- IFSP: Individualized Family Service Plan
- IEP: Individualized Education Program
- IPP: Individual Program Plan
- NfL: Neighborhood for Learning (Ventura County)
- CDR: Child Development Resources
- DDS: Department of Developmental Services
- CDE: California Department of Education
- LEA: Local Education Agency

- SELPA: Special Education Local Plan Area
- IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

## Special Education Eligibility

Your child may be eligible for special education. Your child's disability must impact her or his school performance. If your child is eligible, a plan for education should be in place by age 3. There is a wide range of services available depending on your child's unique needs. You will be part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team that decides which services best meet your child's needs. These services will be documented in an IEP. There is no cost for special education.

Families are encouraged to start planning for special education early. The formal planning process starts at the transition conference. At this conference you will have an opportunity to share your concerns and ask questions regarding your child's development with a representative from the local school district. The representative will discuss the options that may be available to your child through the public school system should your child qualify for special education.

## Regional Center Eligibility

The Lanterman Act defines eligibility for regional center services after 3 years of age. To qualify, your child must have a developmental disability that can be expected to continue indefinitely and constitutes a substantial disability. Developmental disabilities that may qualify for services are intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, autism and epilepsy. If you think your child may be eligible, your Service Coordinator will start the eligibility process. Once your child has been assessed and all the information has been reviewed with you and the regional center's clinical team, you will be notified of eligibility status.

If your child is eligible, your Early Start Service Coordinator will arrange for your child's case to be transferred to a Service Coordinator on the children's team. Both Service Coordinators will meet with you to develop a new plan called the Individual Program Plan (IPP).

## Family Resource Centers

Family Resource Centers work in partnership with regional centers to help meet the needs in their communities. These centers provide a vital network of parent support, including a way for parents to connect with other parents in similar situations. They offer a variety of supports that include information and referral, peer support, home visits and parent education. They also publish regular newsletters and calendars of local support groups and events, with information about clubs, social programs, classes, support groups, and other community resources.

- San Luis Obispo County - Parents Helping Parents Family Resource Center (805) 543-3277
- Santa Barbara County - Alpha Resource Center (805) 683-2145
- Ventura County - Rainbow Connection Family Resource Center (805) 485-9643

## Statutes & Regulations

Learn more about how regional centers and school districts work according to statutes and regulations here:

- Title 17, California Code of Regulations (CCR), Chapter 2, Section 52112 ([www.dds.ca.gov](http://www.dds.ca.gov)).
- Before age 3, Title 17, California Code of Regulations guides Early Start services. After age 3 services are guided by the Welfare and Institution Code, Lanterman Act ([www.dds.ca.gov](http://www.dds.ca.gov)).
- California Education Code, Section 30
- ([www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov)).

## Mission

TCRC provides **person and family centered** planning, services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities to maximize **opportunities and choices** for living, working, learning and recreating within their **community**

## San Luis Obispo County

### Atascadero

7305 Morro Rd., Suite 101  
Atascadero, CA 93422

(805) 461-7402 *phone*

(805) 461-9479 *fax*

*Parents Helping Parents FRC*

(805) 461-7415 *phone*

### San Luis Obispo

3450 Broad St., Suite 111  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

(800) 456-4153 *toll free*

(805) 543-2833 *phone*

(805) 543-8725 *fax*

*Parents Helping Parents FRC*

(805) 543-3277 *phone*

## Santa Barbara County

### Santa Barbara

520 East Montecito St.  
Santa Barbara, CA 93103

(800) 322-6994 *toll free*

(805) 962-7881 *phone*

(805) 884-7229 *fax*

*Alpha Resource Center*

(805) 683-2145 *phone*

### Santa Maria

1234 Fairway Dr., Suite A  
Santa Maria, CA 93455

(800) 266-9071 *toll free*

(805) 922-4640 *phone*

(805) 922-4350 *fax*

*Alpha Resource Center*

(805) 347-2775 *phone*

## Ventura County

### Oxnard

2401 E. Gonzales Rd., Ste 100  
Oxnard, CA 93036

(800) 664-3177 *toll free*

(805) 485-3177 *phone*

(805) 988-9521 *fax*

*Rainbow Connection FRC*

(805) 485-9643 *phone*

### Simi Valley

2635 Park Center Dr., Ste A  
Simi Valley, CA 93065

(800) 517-2524 *toll free*

(805) 522-8030 *phone*

(805) 522-8142 *fax*

*Rainbow Connection FRC*

(805) 823-2325 *phone*



**Tri-Counties  
Regional Center**

**Person Centered in All We Do**

*Mission:* TCRC provides person and family centered planning, services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities to maximize opportunities and choices for living, working, learning and recreating in the community.