



# TRI-COUNTIES REGIONAL CENTER

Enhancing the Quality of Life for Persons with Developmental Disabilities

## Policies & Guidelines

Policies and Guidelines - 10601

### SERVICE POLICY GUIDELINES

#### Behavior Intervention Services

Tri-Counties Regional Center enhances the quality of life for persons with developmental disabilities by working with individuals and their families to secure assessment and treatment supports and services that maximize their opportunities and choices for living, learning, working, and pursuing recreational activities in their community.

Tri-Counties Regional Center will coordinate, support and advocate for individuals to obtain appropriate behavior intervention services in their community. Tri-Counties Regional Center works with and advocates within the communities it serves to develop and identify appropriate behavior intervention services provided by professionals experienced with and sensitive to the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. Such services maximize the potential for individuals to develop, and/or prevent deterioration, in areas of their development.

Behavior intervention services are prescribed assessments or treatments provided directly by, or under the supervision of, a qualified licensed or certified professional trained in behavior management. This service is intended to assist persons served and parents or care givers when the individual exhibits maladaptive, harmful, socially unacceptable, or developmentally unacceptable behaviors. Behavior intervention services use specialized methods of teaching important social and adaptive skills and of training family members, or primary care givers, in the effective use of positive behavior management skills. All parents or care givers will be expected to attend a brief orientation to behavior intervention services by Tri-Counties Regional Center staff before services commence. Tri-Counties Regional Center endorses only the use of non-aversive behavior intervention techniques which are evidence-based.

Access to specialized behavior intervention services directly related to the developmental disability of the individual may be necessary for the functional ability of some individuals. Tri-Counties Regional Center may authorize funding for behavior intervention services when an individual exhibits maladaptive, harmful, socially unacceptable, or developmentally unacceptable behaviors that constitute a danger or have a significant adverse effect on their participation in school or work, on family functioning, or on residential options.

The period, frequency and total amount of behavior intervention services is determined by the Planning Team, including a Tri-Counties Regional Center psychologist or physician and service provider. The provision of behavior intervention services is based on the needs of the individual or family as determined by an initial or follow up behavioral assessment. Typically, the behavior intervention service is time limited to achieve both behavioral goals for the individual and training goals for the family or care givers. In addition, the Planning Team may determine that periodic support is needed on a consultative basis to ensure the continued success of past intervention services. The intent for provision of such consultative services is to offer guidance and preventive intervention.

In some situations, intensive family support provided in the form of behavior intervention services may be required to address persistent aberrant behaviors of their children. These behavior intervention services may be offered when the parent or care giver participates as the primary agent of change. The intent for provision of such behavior intervention services is for the parent or care giver to be provided with technical supervision



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and support. Before intensive behavior intervention services begin, the parent or care giver is expected to attend a group parent training program that explains intensive behavior intervention, expectations of service provision, and the parent participation necessary for the intensive services to be successful. Review of the intensive behavior intervention services is expected to take place at least every six months through the planning team process involving the parent, Tri-Counties Regional Center service coordinator and clinician, and the service provider. The purpose of the review is to assure the satisfaction of the parent, the quality assurance of the service provision, and the effectiveness of the behavior program.

When the need is directly related to, or is the direct result of, a developmental disability and all generic and private resources, including private medical insurance, deny a necessary service, Tri-Counties Regional Center may authorize funding for the purchase of specialized behavior intervention services recommended by the Planning Team. For persons with a diagnosis of Autism or Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD), SB 946, effective July 1, 2012, requires privately funded health insurance plans to cover behavioral intervention treatment, including applied behavioral analysis (ABA). Tri-Counties Regional Center staff will support the person and family through their insurance company's process for accessing SB 946 services. When the insurance company approves services, the Tri-Counties Regional Center service coordinator will work with the family to request that the health plan waive any co-payments. If this is not possible, Tri-Counties Regional Center will offer to pay any co-payments for SB 946 services directly to the provider, using a service code that maximizes federal funding. Co-payments will be capped at a level that assures cost-effectiveness.

For persons in public school programs and individuals who reside in Level 4 behavior facilities or in health care facilities, behavior intervention services are expected to be provided as part of the individual's program, rather than as a separately funded service. Tri-Counties Regional Center service coordinators will actively advocate with local education agencies and health care facility providers to ensure the delivery of required and mandated services.

Services for children that the Tri-counties Regional Center clinical team suspect of having autism should begin as soon as eligibility for regional center services has been determined and the IFSP or IPP has been developed. The IFSP or IPP may include the need for intensive services. Tri-Counties Regional Center will coordinate services and supports with other public agencies, including the schools, which have a legal responsibility to serve children with autism or other developmental disabilities. Services for children with autism should be systematically planned and involve developmentally appropriate activities that target specific objectives. They should also have a strong and continuous parent training component.

Children up to three years of age suspected of having autism, served under the California Early Intervention Services Act's Early Start program, should receive a total of up to 25 hours per week of intervention. Included in this total are services from all agencies, including Tri-Counties Regional Center as necessary, that address the core deficits associated with autism. It does not include services that address other needs which are not specific to autism, such as physical therapy and California Children Services (CCS) services.

Starting at three years of age, preschool children eligible for regional center services with a diagnosis of autism under the Lanterman Act should have the school as their primary program of educational intervention. Up to 15 hours per week of Tri-counties Regional Center funded services that address the core deficits associated with autism may be used to supplement the school program. This does not include services that address other needs which are not specific to autism, such as physical therapy and CCS services.



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By seven years of age, children with autism should be enrolled in a school program with approximately 30 hours per week of educational instruction. Up to 10 hours per week of Tri-Counties Regional Center funded services that address the core deficits associated with autism may be used to supplement the school program. This does not include services that address other needs which are not specific to autism, such as physical therapy and CCS services.

Tri-Counties Regional Center will advocate for and work with individuals and their family members to ensure that generic and private service providers discharge their obligations to meet the needs of persons with developmental disabilities. It is the financial responsibility of individuals or their families to pay premiums and meet any required deductible amount or co-payment liabilities, except as noted above for SB 946 services, as determined by generic resources and/or private insurance carriers. Except as legally prohibited by the terms of a Special Needs Trust, trust funds established for the care or benefit of a person served are considered a private resource, and therefore it is expected that this source of funds be used prior to regional center funds.

If a generic or private resource initially denies a required behavior intervention service that Tri-Counties Regional Center has determined to be their responsibility, that denial will be considered for appeal and/or referral to the Department of Managed Health Care for an independent medical review. Tri-Counties Regional Center may authorize funding for a behavior intervention service while the individual or family member pursues coverage or appeals a denial of service by a generic or private resource, including private health insurance, under the following circumstances:

- The Planning Team will make the determination that the service is required to protect the individual's health and safety, or that a prolonged wait for the service will have an irreversible impact on the individual's health and safety; and
- The Planning Team will consider the individual's risk for regression and the capacity of the individual to regain any loss of function or ability if the service is not provided in a timely manner.

Tri-Counties Regional Center will not authorize funding of any behavior intervention service that is considered experimental, optional or elective in nature. The expected result from the provision of a behavior intervention service must meet measurable outcomes as stated on the person's Individual Program Plan. The provision of behavior intervention service must be both clinically and fiscally an effective use of public funds.

### Exception Policy:

Tri-Counties Regional Center recognizes that some individual needs are so unique that they may not be addressed in this Service Policy and may require an exception. Such requests for an exception to a Service Policy will be made through the Planning Team process.