

The Early Start Team

Parents are the most important members of the early intervention team. Parents and professionals work together to assist infants and toddlers (0-3 years) with special needs in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties. Agencies represented on the Early Start Team are:

- Tri-Counties Regional Center
- County Education Offices
- Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPAS)
- California Children Services
- Health Care Services/Health Departments
- Department of Social Services
- Alcohol and Drug Programs
- Mental Health Services
- Private Agencies and Providers

Family Resource Centers

Also included in this team are family resource centers and parent support networks. They consist of families who have children with special needs and who have had experiences similar to yours. These parents want to offer the kind of help only another parent can. If you would like to talk to another parent, use the lending library, or find resources, call:

Parents Helping Parents
(SLO County) 805-549-8148

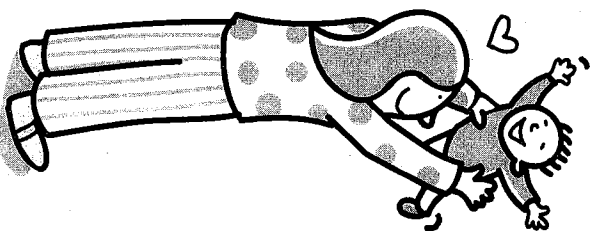
Family First
(S.B. County) 805-683-2145

In addition to the parents and professionals listed, we hope that you will make your pediatrician or family doctor a part of the early

intervention team too! Parent-professional partnerships are the cornerstone of family-centered care in early intervention.

The Early Start Program

- Services for young children are family-centered and based on family concerns, priorities and resources.
- Services for young children respect family values, culture, language and ethnicity.
- Families should decide the nature and level of their involvement with services.
- Services for young children are provided where the child is most comfortable — usually the home.
- Families are best served when there is a partnership with agencies and professionals.
- Working together as partners enhances availability of services and reduces confusion and duplication.
- Working together helps families discover how to find services and solve problems independently.
- All information about a child is strictly confidential and is shared with Early Start team members only with written parent consent.



An Introduction to the

Early Start Program

Santa Barbara and
San Luis Obispo Counties

Your Baby's Development

Babies develop at different rates and in different ways. Every baby is unique. If your baby was born with a condition that requires special care, you may be worried about his or her development. You may be concerned if you or your baby had problems during pregnancy or delivery, or if your baby was born prematurely. There may have been no concerns at the time of birth, but you may have questions about your child's development now. If you or your doctor suspect that your baby's development is slower than average, there is help available.

Warning Signs of Developmental Problems

Delay in an infant or toddler's development may relate to many factors, often in combination. Some possibilities include:

- Delayed development in one or more areas such as sitting, walking or talking.
- Problems due to premature birth.
- Serious illness early in life.
- Significant problems with eating or muscle coordination.
- Identified conditions such as Down Syndrome or cerebral palsy.
- Baby's parents need special assistance due to their own physical, emotional or intellectual condition.

What is Early Intervention?

Early intervention is a combination of services offered to children (0-3 years) and their families to meet the educational, developmental, health, and social needs necessary for the early growth.

In California, these services are called "Early Start." Every infant or toddler and family in Early Start will have an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) completed within 45 days of referral to the program. The sooner you apply for services for your child, the sooner your child can be helped to reach his or her fullest potential.

Early Intervention Services

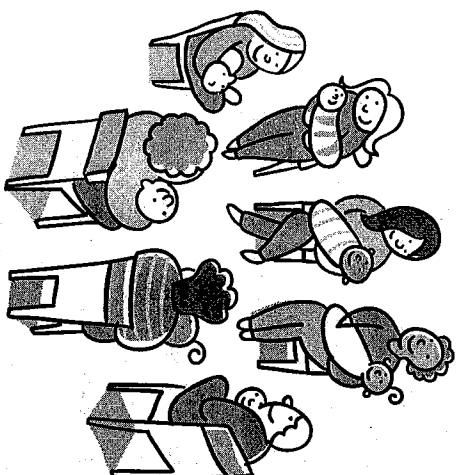
Early intervention services may include, but are not limited to:

- Medical and diagnostic services for special problems such as with vision, hearing, physical development or behavior.
- Early childhood educational programs in your home or at a center.
- Physical, occupational and/or speech therapy.
- Coordination of services for family support.
- Family resource centers for parent-to-parent support.
- Respite care.
- Parental counseling.

Referral to the Early Start Program

If you have concerns about your child's development, you may call Tri-Counties Regional Center (800-322-6994) for information about services for children under three year of age.

You may also ask your doctor, a public health nurse, social worker or other health professional for help in making a referral to Early Start. In most cases there are no costs to the family for early intervention services.



Tri-Counties Regional Center

Tri-Counties Regional Center is the single entry point for the Early Start Program in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties, although your family may receive services from a number of agencies. To get started call:

North San Luis Obispo County

805-461-7402
800-771-6898

South San Luis Obispo County

805-543-2833
800-456-4153

North Santa Barbara County

805-922-4640
800-266-9071

South Santa Barbara County

805-962-7881
800-322-6994