The Need for Early Intervention
- Each year more than 500,000 babies are born in California.
- From January 1995-2005, the number of individuals served by DDS in the community, including children ages birth to 3, increased 68 percent (DDS Fact Book, 9th Edition, 2007).
- Of all individuals served by the developmental services system, 11.9 percent are birth to 3 years old (DDS Fact Book, 9th Edition, 2007).
- Sixty percent of persons entering the developmental services system were younger than 3 years of age (DDS Fact Book, 9th Edition, 2007).

The Demand for Early Intervention
- Each year, California Early Start serves more than 46,000 children under the age of 3 (DDS, 2005).
- California Early Start grew an average of 7.4 percent annually from 2002-2004 (DDS 2005).
- The age group of birth to 2 years of age was the segment of the intake population with the largest increase, growing from 36 percent in December 1995 to 50 percent in December 2005 (DDS Fact Book, 9th Edition, 2007).

Early Intervention Is Effective
- Years of research on the effectiveness of intervention has shown conclusively that early intervention is effective (Wolery & Bailey, 2003; Guralnick, 1997).
- Specialized services and supports, such as physical therapy, speech and language therapy, special instruction, home visits, family support, and service coordination, increase the chances a child will develop to his or her full potential (Zero to Three Policy Brief, February 2003).
- Most parents considered early intervention to have had a significant impact on their families (National Early Intervention Longitudinal Study 2007).

Early Intervention Saves Money
- Research has shown that early intervention with young children, from birth to age 5 with disabilities, benefits both children and families and assures long-term cost savings to both local educational agencies and society (National Association of School Psychologists, 2003).
Early Start is California’s system of early intervention services provided to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. It is a multiagency effort by the Department of Developmental Services and the California Department of Education that encourages partnerships between families and professionals, family support, and coordination of services. The statewide system of early intervention services is available throughout California and can be accessed through regional centers for developmental disabilities, county offices of education, local school districts, health or social service agencies, and family resource centers/networks in your community.

An important part of Early Start is the network of family resource centers (FRCs) that provide parent-to-parent contact, information about disabilities and early intervention, and assistance in accessing services. Phone contact, home or hospital visits, and support groups are all ways in which families might connect with experienced, knowledgeable parent “peers” through their local FRC.

What are early intervention services?
Early intervention services are provided based on the developmental needs of the child, the concerns and priorities of the family, and the resources available to them. Services are provided within the context of the child’s and family’s daily activities and routines. Eligible children and families may receive a variety of early intervention services; some children may need only one or two early intervention services. Early intervention services may include:

- assistive technology, including devices or services
- audiology or hearing services
- family training, counseling, and home visits
- health services necessary for a child to benefit from other early intervention services
- medical services for diagnosis and evaluation only
- nursing services
- nutrition services
- occupational therapy
- physical therapy
- psychological services
- service coordination (case management)
- social work services
- special instruction
- speech and language services
- transportation and related costs necessary for a child to receive services
- vision services
Who is eligible?
Infants and toddlers from birth up to 36 months may be eligible for early intervention services if, through documented evaluation and assessment, they are shown to:

Have a significant developmental delay in either cognitive, communication, social or emotional, adaptive, or physical and motor development including vision and hearing.

What is the definition of "significant developmental delay"?
An eligible Early Start child is considered to have a significant developmental delay or an established risk condition when he/she meets either of the following definitions:

- Is under 24 months of age at the time of the referral; must have a delay of 33 percent in one or more areas of development;
- Is 24 months of age or older at the time of referral; must have a delay of 50 percent in one or more areas of development or 33 percent delay in two or more areas of development.

Who provides services and supports?
Early intervention services are individually determined for each eligible infant or toddler and are provided, purchased, or arranged by a regional center or local education agency. Local education agencies are primarily responsible for services for infants with vision, hearing, and severe orthopedic impairments, including any combination of these solely low incidence disabilities. Regional centers are responsible for services for all other children eligible for Early Start. Family resource centers that receive Early Start funding provide parent-to-parent support, information, and referral for all families.

How much does it cost?
Early Start services are provided at no cost to eligible families. Early Start is funded by state and federal funds. Other publicly funded services may also be used. Private insurance is another resource that is used to fund early intervention services. Use of private insurance is required for medical therapies (occupational, physical, and speech therapies).

Are other services available?
Yes. The California Departments of Health Care Services, Public Health, Mental Health, Social Services, and Alcohol and Drug Programs are state agencies that provide services and resources that may be of benefit to children and their families. Each agency determines eligibility for the services that it provides.

Does early intervention make a difference?
Years of research on the effectiveness of intervention has shown conclusively that early intervention is effective (Wolery & Bailey, 2003; Guralnick, 1997). Specialized services and supports, such as physical therapy, speech and language therapy, special instruction, home visits, family support, and service coordination, increase the chances a child will develop to his or her full potential (Zero to Three Policy Brief, February 2003).

How do I get more information?
Visit DDS’ Early Start website at www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart or call 800.515.BABY for resource information and referral to local regional centers, education agencies, and family resource centers.

California Early Start for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families is an interagency system of coordinated early intervention services administered by the Department of Developmental Services in collaboration with the California Department of Education.
California has a long history of providing early intervention services under prior state statutes and regulations. Infant services in public schools were started in the 1960s and 1970s using a variety of local, state, and federal funding sources. California state law, since 1980, has mandated early education programs for many infants and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities.

**FEDERAL LAW**

*Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C*

California’s Early Start system of early intervention services was enhanced in response to federal legislation authorizing states to maintain and implement statewide interagency systems of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. The Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities was enacted in 1986 and reauthorized in 2004 under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; 20 U.S.C., §1431 et seq.). Federal regulations are found in 34 CFR, Part 303.1-303.654.

**STATE LAW**

*California Early Intervention Services Act*

After six years of state and local interagency planning and coordination, the State Legislature passed the California Early Intervention Services Act in 1993 (CEISA; 14 G.C., §95000 et seq.). CEISA established state authority to expand California’s early intervention service system to meet federal requirements. The California Department of Developmental Services (DDS), as the Part C lead agency, plans, develops, implements, and monitors the statewide early intervention service system in collaboration with the California Department of Education (CDE) and with advice and assistance from the State Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) on Early Intervention. The Departments of Health Care, Public Health, Social Services, Mental Health, and Alcohol and Drug Programs cooperate and coordinate with DDS and CDE in the delivery of services to children under the age of 3 and their families.

CEISA was amended in 1997 to acknowledge the provision of family support services by Early Start family resource centers such as parent-to-parent support, information dissemination and referral, public awareness, family-professional collaboration activities, and transition assistance for families.

In July 1997, the California Legislature requested that DDS convene a workgroup to examine relevant information and to develop recommendations related to the impact of implementing federal regulations under IDEA, Part C. Based on the Workgroup’s recommendations, CEISA was amended in 1998 to address state coordination and collaboration with families and communities, service coordinator competencies and caseloads, evaluation and assessment, parents’ rights, monitoring, and referral to local Early Start family resource centers.

A major milestone for Early Start occurred in 1999. California's original legislative agreement for implementation of the Part C program provided for a date when the program would cease to exist or “sunset.” That date was eliminated in the 1999 legislative session when the Legislature conferred permanent status to Early Start.

State regulations pertaining to Early Start are found in Title 17, CCR, §§52000-52175.
The State Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) on Early Intervention assists and advises the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) concerning the statewide system of early intervention services and assists DDS in achieving the full participation, cooperation, and coordination of appropriate public agencies that serve young children and their families. The ICC also serves as a forum for public input from parents, service providers, service coordinators, and others about federal, State, or local policies that support the timely delivery of appropriate early intervention services.

ICC members are appointed by the Governor. The council is comprised of parents of children with disabilities, early intervention service providers, health care professionals, state agency representatives, and others interested in early intervention. In addition, the ICC Chair may appoint additional community representatives to provide increased participation of parents, providers, and other interested parties. The ICC meets at least quarterly.

For a complete list of ICC members, please visit www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart.

Standing Committees of the ICC
Child and Family Outcomes Committee
Qualified Personnel Committee
Quality Data Committee
Policy Topics Committee

California Early Start for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families is an interagency system of coordinated early intervention services administered by the Department of Developmental Services in collaboration with the California Department of Education.
Infants and toddlers, from birth up to 36 months, with developmental delays or disabilities may be eligible to receive services through California’s 21 community-based regional centers. The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) contracts with non-profit corporations that operate regional centers.

Regional centers are the single point of entry into the service system that serves people with developmental disabilities across all ages. Regional centers provide intake, evaluation, and assessment to determine eligibility and service needs. They also provide service coordination, advocacy, information, referral, and an array of other services to eligible infants and toddlers and their families.

Early intervention services are provided, purchased, or arranged by regional centers based on the unique needs of the child and family. Early intervention services that are not available through other publicly funded agencies are generally purchased from community service providers who are “vendored” by the regional center. In specific communities, some regional centers contract with local education agencies (LEAs) to provide special instruction and other related early intervention services through their early childhood special education programs to children served by regional centers.

Regional centers coordinate with LEAs and other local agencies and organizations in evaluation, assessment, development of individualized family service plans and service provision. For children who are dually served by a regional center and an LEA, basic special education and related services are usually provided by the LEA. Either LEAs or regional centers may be designated to provide service coordination. The regional center may also provide additional early intervention services or other available State services based on the needs of the child and family.
Los Angeles County

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Main Office: Van Nuys
Field Offices: Antelope, Santa Clarita Valley

Westside Regional Center
Main Office: Culver City

Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center
Main Office: Los Angeles

San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center
Main Office: Pomona

Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center
Main Office: Alhambra
Field Office: Whittier

South Central Los Angeles Regional Center
Main Office: Los Angeles

Harbor Regional Center
Main Office: Torrance
Service Providers
California Early Start
Regional Centers by County

Redwood Coast Regional Center
Main Office: Eureka and Ukiah
Field Offices: Crescent City, Fort Bragg, Lakeport

North Bay Regional Center
Main Office: Napa
Field Office: Santa Rosa

Golden Gate Regional Center
Main Office: San Francisco
Field Offices: Marin, San Mateo

Regional Center of the East Bay
Main Office: Oakland
Field Office: Contra Costa

San Andreas Regional Center
Main Office: San Jose
Field Offices: Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz

Tri-Counties Regional Center
Main Office: Santa Barbara
Field Offices: Atascadero, Oxnard, San Luis Obispo, Santa Maria, Simi Valley

San Luis Obispo

Los Angeles
(Turning on back)

Regional Center of Orange County
Main Office: Santa Ana
Field Offices: Laguna Hills, Orange, San Juan Capistrano, Westminster

San Diego

Valleymountain Regional Center
Main Office: Stockton
Field Offices: Modesto, Stanislaus

Central Valley Regional Center
Main Office: Fresno
Field Offices: Merced, Visalia

Kern Regional Center
Main Office: Bakersfield
Field Offices: Bishop, Delano, Lamont, Ridgecrest, Shafter, Taft, Tehachapi

San Diego Regional Center
Main Office: San Diego
Field Offices: Imperial, National City, San Marcos, Santee

Inland Regional Center
Main Office: San Bernardino
Field Offices: Riverside, San Bernardino

Los Angeles County

For more information, please refer to the Central Directory of Early Intervention Resources located at www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart or call 800/837-4337.
Infants and toddlers who have vision, hearing, and severe orthopedic impairments (or a combination of these disabilities) receive individually designed early intervention services from local education agencies (LEAs) such as school districts and county offices of education. Across the state, special education local plan area (SELPAs) administrators coordinate early childhood special education programs, which include early intervention services.

Since 1980, state law included a partial requirement for early education programs to serve the number of infants and toddlers with disabilities that they served in 1980-81. LEAs also provide services to a number of additional children with multiple disabilities under the age of 3 in order to continue to qualify for their current level of state funding.

LEAs provide early intervention services including special instruction, service coordination, family support and other early intervention services identified in the child’s individualized family service plan (IFSP). LEAs also coordinate with regional centers and other local agencies and organizations in evaluation, assessment, and development of IFSPs.

For children who are dually served by a regional center and an LEA, basic special education and related services are usually provided by the LEA. Either LEAs or regional centers may be designated to provide service coordination. The regional center may also provide additional early intervention services or other available state services based on the needs of the child and the family.
# Individual Counties Served by More Than One SELPA

## Alameda
- Mid-Alameda County SELPA
- Mission Valley SELPA
- North Region SELPA
- Oakland Unified SELPA
- Tri-Valley SELPA *(Dublin, Livermore, and Pleasanton)*

## Contra Costa
- Contra Costa SELPA
- Mt. Diablo Unified SELPA
- West Contra Costa Unified SELPA

## El Dorado
- El Dorado County SELPA
- Tahoe-Alpine County SELPA

## Fresno
- Clovis Unified SELPA
- Fresno County SELPA
- Fresno Unified SELPA

## Kern
- Bakersfield City SELPA
- Kern County Consortium SELPA

## Los Angeles
- Antelope Valley SELPA
- Downey-Montebello SELPA
- East San Gabriel Valley SELPA
- Foothill SELPA
- Long Beach Unified SELPA
- Los Angeles County SELPA
- Los Angeles Unified SELPA
- Mid-Cities Service Area SELPA
- Norwalk-La Mirada/ABC SELPA
- Pasadena Unified SELPA
- Puente Hills SELPA
- Santa Clarita Service Area SELPA
- Southwest SELPA
- Tri-City SELPA *(Beverly Hills, Culver City, and Santa Monica)*
- West San Gabriel Valley SELPA
- Whittier Area Cooperative SELPA

## Riverside
- Corona-Norco Unified SELPA
- Moreno Valley Unified SELPA
- Riverside County SELPA
- Riverside Unified SELPA

## Sacramento
- Elk Grove Unified SELPA
- Sacramento City Unified School District, Special Education Department
- Sacramento County SELPA
- San Juan Unified SELPA

## San Bernardino
- Desert/Mountain SELPA
- East Valley SELPA
- Fontana Unified SELPA
- Morongo Unified School District SELPA
- San Bernardino City Unified SELPA
- West End SELPA

## San Diego
- Poway Unified SELPA
- San Diego City Unified SELPA
- San Diego East County SELPA
- San Diego North Coastal Consortium SELPA
- San Diego North Inland SELPA
- San Diego South County SELPA

## San Joaquin
- Lodi Unified SELPA
- San Joaquin County SELPA
- Stockton City Unified SELPA

## Santa Cruz
- North Santa Cruz County SELPA
- Pajaro Valley Unified SELPA

## Solano
- Solano County SELPA
- Vallejo City Unified School District SELPA

## Stanislaus
- Modesto City SELPA
- Stanislaus County SELPA

## Yuba
- Sutter County SELPA
- Yuba County SELPA
Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPAs) by County

**Individual Counties Served by One SELPA**
- Amador County SELPA
- Butte County SELPA
- Calaveras County SELPA
- Colusa County SELPA
- Glenn County SELPA
- Imperial County SELPA
- Inyo County SELPA
- Kings County SELPA
- Lake County SELPA
- Lassen County SELPA
- Marin County SELPA
- Mendocino County SELPA
- Merced County SELPA
- Modoc County SELPA
- Mono County SELPA
- Monterey County SELPA
- Napa County SELPA
- Nevada County SELPA
- Placer County SELPA
- Plumas Unified SELPA
- San Benito County SELPA
- San Francisco Unified SELPA
- San Luis Obispo County SELPA
- San Mateo County SELPA
- Santa Barbara County SELPA
- Santa Clara County SELPA
- Shasta County SELPA
- Sierra County SELPA
- Siskiyou County SELPA
- Sonoma County SELPA
- Sutter County SELPA
- Tehama County SELPA
- Trinity County SELPA
- Tulare County SELPA
- Tuolumne County SELPA
- Ventura County SELPA
- Yolo County SELPA

**Individual Counties Served by More Than One SELPA**
- Humboldt-Del Norte SELPA
- Madera-Marthiposa SELPA

For more information, please refer to the Central Directory of Early Intervention Resources located at www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart or call 800/837-4337.
Families of infants and toddlers, from birth up to 36 months with developmental delays and disabilities, can receive parent-to-parent support from family resource centers. Family resource centers receiving Early Start funding actively collaborate with local regional centers and educational agencies and help many parents, families, and children access early intervention services.

California’s Early Start family resource centers (FRCs) are staffed by parents who have children with special needs and provide information and parent-to-parent support. Each FRC is unique, reflecting the needs of their community. They may operate as independent sites or be based in regional centers, local education agencies, public health facilities, hospitals, or homes. Services are available in many languages and are culturally responsive to the needs of the individual family.

FRCs contracted by the California Department of Developmental Service may provide:

- parent-to-parent and family support
- peer counseling and home visits
- information and referral
- public awareness
- parent education
- support services in many languages
- transition assistance
- support services in urban and rural communities

In addition, several FRCs have newsletters, resource libraries, and websites, as well as parent and/or sibling support groups and telephone “warmlines” or “babylines.”

Visit the Family Resource Centers Network of California (FRCNCA) website at www.frcnca.org for more information.
Carolyn Kordich Family Resource Center (Carson, Harbor City, Harbor Gateway, Lomita, San Pedro, and Wilmington)

Family Focus Resource Center (San Fernando Valley, excluding Glendale and Burbank)

Family Focus Resource Center Antelope Valley (Antelope Valley, San Fernando Valley, and Santa Clarita Valley, excluding Glendale and Burbank)

Family Resource Library and Assistive Technology Center (Alhambra, Boyle Heights, City of Commerce, City Terrace, East Los Angeles, East Whittier, La Mirada, Lincoln Heights, Montebello, Monterey Park, Pico Rivera, Pomona, Rosemead, San Gabriel, San Marino, Santa Fe Springs, South Pasadena, Temple City, and Whittier)

Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center/Koch-Young Family Resource Center (Burbank, Central Los Angeles, Eagle Rock, Glendale, Hollywood/Wilshire, La Cañada, La Crescenta, Loz Feliz, and Pasadena)

Harbor Regional Center Resource Center (Artesia, Carson, Cerritos, Harbor City, Harbor Gateway, Hawaiian Gardens, Hermosa Beach, Lakewood, Lomita, Long Beach, Manhattan Beach, Norwalk, Palos Verdes, Portuguese Bend, Rancho Palos Verdes Estates, Redondo Beach, Rolling Hills Estates, San Pedro, Santa Catalina Island, Torrance, Walteria, and Wilmington)

Long Beach Family Resource Center (Lakewood, Long Beach, and Signal Hill)

The Parents’ Place (Altadena, Arcadia, Azusa, Baldwin Park, Bradbury, City of Industry, Claremont, Covina, Diamond Bar, Duarte, El Monte, Glendale, Hacienda Heights, La Puente, La Verne, Monrovia, Pomona, Rowland Heights, San Dimas, Sierra Madre, South El Monte, Temple City, Valinda, Walnut, and West Covina)

South Central Los Angeles Resource Center SCLARC (Carson, Compton, Dominguez Hills, Lynwood, Paramount, South Central Los Angeles, Southeast Family Resource Center Southwest Los Angeles, and Southwest Los Angeles)

Southeast Family Resource Center (Artesia, Bellflower, Cerritos, Hawaiian Gardens, Lakewood, and Norwalk)

Southwest Special Education Family Resource Center (El Segundo, Hawthorne, Hermosa Beach, Inglewood, Lawndale, Lennox, Manhattan Beach, Palos Verdes, Redondo Beach, Rolling Hills, and Torrance)

Westside Family Resource Center (Beverly Hills, Brentwood, Culver City, El Segundo, Gardena, Inglewood, Lawndale, Malibu, Pacific Palisades, Santa Monica, Venice, West Los Angeles, Westchester)
For more information, please refer to the Central Directory of Early Intervention Resources located at www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart or call 800/837-4337.
Earliest Start was implemented in 1993 under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to enhance and coordinate quality early intervention services for eligible infants and toddlers (birth to 3 years of age) and their families in California. The delivery of quality early intervention services envisioned by IDEA requires that personnel are qualified and appropriately trained to provide those services to eligible infants, young children, and their families.

Early Start’s Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) provides the framework for coordinating the delivery of personnel development activities throughout California. Preservice preparation, inservice training, and technical assistance are essential CSPD components delivered at the state and local level through a variety of personnel development activities. Needs assessments, recruitment and retention, and evaluation of CSPD efforts are additional elements of Early Start’s system of personnel development.

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) contracts with the California Early Intervention Technical Assistance Network (CEITAN), a project of the WestEd Center for Prevention and Early Intervention, for CSPD activities. Under the direction of DDS, CEITAN facilitates the implementation of Early Start’s statewide CSPD and provides institutes, training, and technical assistance to agencies and programs regarding Early Start.

For more information, visit the DDS Early Start website at www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart or call 800.869.4337 for information about CEITAN.
Early childhood from birth to age 5 is a dynamic period of development. Early childhood intervention contributes to positive outcomes for children and families.

Family is the single most important influence on the growth and development of a young child. Early childhood intervention recognizes the centrality of the family and supports the child’s relationships with parents and other primary caregivers.

Family and professional partnerships contribute to quality service delivery systems. Effective partnerships are based on mutual trust; are developed over time; and support families as active participants and decision-makers for their children.

Every young child with disabilities or other special needs and every family has strengths. Early childhood intervention teams identify the strengths of the child and family and help to enrich existing formal and informal resources and supports.

Culture, language, and value differences among families are respected. Early childhood intervention services are individualized, flexible, respectful, and responsive.

Teachable moments occur in everyday activities and in a variety of settings. Early childhood intervention promotes practices that appropriately include young children with disabilities and their families in family activities and settings where young children without disabilities and their families come together.

Interagency and interdisciplinary partnerships improve the experiences of children and families. Coordination among agencies, providers, and disciplines creates early childhood intervention systems that are cost-effective, comprehensive, cohesive, and easily accessed.

Validated, evidence-based research guides practice. Quality early childhood intervention services are based on research and outcome-driven practices.

Effective systems of personnel development provide opportunities for building skills, supporting mentors, and fostering leadership.

*These messages were developed by the Training and Technical Assistance Collaborators (TTAC), an interagency partnership in California dedicated to delivering quality personnel development activities for personnel who serve children birth-5 with disabilities and other special needs and their families. We believe early childhood intervention T&TA activities that are guided by these messages promote positive outcomes for young children and their families.

For more information, e-mail ttac@wested.org
California Early Start for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families is an interagency system of coordinated early intervention services administered by the Department of Developmental Services in collaboration with the California Department of Education.

March 2011
800.515.BABY
www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart

Facts at a Glance

Child Find & Public Awareness

With Early Start... We make a difference

Early Start has a comprehensive interagency child find system that ensures all infants and toddlers who may be eligible for early intervention services are located, identified, and referred to the appropriate agency for evaluation for services. Child find activities are conducted at the state level by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and at the local level by regional centers, Early Start Family Resource Centers, and local education agencies.

Public awareness activities promote child find by focusing on early identification and timely referrals. Early Start has a variety of materials and products to support child find, public awareness, and outreach. These materials ensure appropriate referrals, increase the community's knowledge and understanding of early intervention services, and support the families' role in early intervention.

Early Start family resource centers (FRCs) participate in public awareness activities that include community outreach, information dissemination, and referral. FRCs also assist families with how to access the early intervention service system.

Early Start Resources (ESR), a WestEd Center for Prevention and Early Intervention project, under contract with DDS, facilitates implementation of Early Start's public awareness activities including targeted outreach to hard-to-reach populations. At the direction of DDS, ESR produces and disseminates a variety of public awareness materials and products that promote Early Start such as the Early Start Central Directory of Early Intervention Resources. Multilingual materials are also available.

For more information, visit DDS' Early Start website at www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart, or call Early Start Resources at 800.869.4337 for free product information, including multilingual resources, on early intervention.