

**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES**

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December 13, 2022

TO: REGIONAL CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: REGIONAL CENTER PERFORMANCE MEASURES – EARLY START,  
TIMELY ACCESS TO EARLY START SERVICES

The Department of Developmental Services (Department) worked with the Regional Center Performance Measures (RCPM) Workgroup consisting of representatives from all aspects of the developmental disabilities services system to develop performance incentives and measures to promote improvements in consumer outcomes and regional center performance. This voluntary RCPM program has six focus areas identified by the Workgroup, including: Early Start, Employment, Equity and Cultural Competency, Individual and Family Experience and Satisfaction, Person-Centered Services Planning, and Service Coordination and Regional Center Operations. Each focus area has one or more performance measures tied to specific desired outcomes, with corresponding performance targets and incentives.

**Overview**

The purpose of this directive is to provide information regarding the Timely Access to Early Start Services measure in the Early Start focus area of the RCPM program. Full descriptions of the focus areas, measures and incentives can be found [here](#). Each performance measure and incentive is an opportunity for regional centers to demonstrate performance above the minimum expectations established through statute or regulation. While participation in the program is voluntary, all regional centers are encouraged to provide high quality service that is responsive to the priorities established by the statewide stakeholder Workgroup. The performance measure addressed in this directive assesses the number of days from receipt of referral to the completion of Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP). The incentive associated with this measure is a pay-for-performance incentive, as described below.

**Performance Measure and Desired Outcome**

The desired outcome of this measure is for children and families to have timely access to Early Start services, minimizing the impact of developmental delays.

**“Building Partnerships, Supporting Choices”**

### **Performance Measure Data**

To meet the requirements of this measure, the data source that will be used is the Early Start Report (ESR), specifically the date of referral in field 9a and the IFSP date in field 11, which for the purposes of this measure represent the referral date and completion of the IFSP, respectively. Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22 ESR data will be used to establish a baseline. By January 16, 2023, the Department will provide regional centers with draft data and regional centers will have the opportunity to review the data and address anomalies by March 16, 2023. IFSP records with properly documented exceptional family circumstances will be factored into the calculations for the performance incentives. Data used for this measure is subject to validation by the Department and must meet the data definitions below.

### **Definitions**

- *“Date of Referral”* means the date the regional center receives a referral for the child, including third party referrals and self-referrals. Referral information that will begin the timeline includes, the child’s name, date of birth and parental contact information.
- *“Federally required 45-day timeline”* means that the evaluation, assessment and initial IFSP is completed within 45 calendar days from the receipt of the referral.
- *“IFSP date”* means the date the written plan for providing early intervention services to an infant or toddler is completed. The IFSP must be based on evaluation to determine eligibility and assessment to determine appropriate services and is developed in accordance with the IFSP procedures outlined in 34 Code of Federal Regulations, Sections 303.342, 303.343 and 303.344.
- *“Exceptional Family Circumstances”* as defined in California Code of Regulations, Title 17, Section 52000(b)(18), means events beyond the control of the regional center or local educational agency. These include, but are not limited to, the infant's or toddler's or parent's illness, the infant's or toddler's and parent's absence from the geographical area, inability to locate the parent, or a natural disaster. Delays caused by the failure to obtain copies of existing records or other administrative events do not constitute exceptional circumstances.

### **Incentive**

The first year of the Timely Access to Early Start Services measure (FY 2022-23) will focus on data collection to establish baseline data. Subsequent phases will result in a pay-for-performance incentive based on performance against an improvement target that will be defined and communicated at a later date. Future measurement will rely on accuracy of the baseline data collected in this first year. Therefore, it is important to establish the foundation, including a routine data reporting system and standardized definitions of key dates and timelines during FY 2022-23.

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Details of incentive payments for subsequent phases of this measure will be provided in future directives from the Department. If you have any questions regarding the RCPM or the Early Start focus area, please email [RCMeasures@dds.ca.gov](mailto:RCMeasures@dds.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

*Original Signed by:*

BRIAN WINFIELD  
Chief Deputy Director

cc: Regional Center Administrators  
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