

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

1215 O Street, MS 7-40
Sacramento, CA 95814
TTY: 711
(916) 421-0061



December 15, 2022

TO: REGIONAL CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)
SPECIALISTS

The 2022 Budget Act provides ongoing resources to establish permanent, full-time IDEA Specialist positions at each regional center. The IDEA Specialist positions will serve as subject matter experts responsible for providing technical assistance on IDEA provisions to regional center service coordinators who support consumers, ages 0 to 22 years old, and their families in accessing early intervention and educational services and supports intended to address their unique needs and prepare them for inclusion, Early Start transitions, further education, employment and independent living.

The IDEA Specialist positions will collaborate with Special Education Local Planning Area (SELPA), county offices of education and/or local educational agencies (LEA) to provide trainings and education resources to regional centers and LEA staff on identifying and bridging gaps for students transitioning following their secondary school completion and regional center services and supports. Funding for the IDEA Specialists requires that these staff do not carry or manage caseloads.

Incumbents are expected to have relevant knowledge, credentials, and experience derived from prior work in a leadership capacity within the educational system, which may include:

- Demonstrated experience as a school administrator or program specialist
- Demonstrated experience in special education

The areas of expertise, training responsibilities, and duties of the IDEA Specialists will include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Developing and providing training and information to support regional center service coordinators in building expertise to guide consumers and families through various transitions, such as, from Early Start to preschool, to kindergarten, to and from secondary education. Training and information for service coordinators may include identifying and providing resources such as effective transition tools and innovative practices and being a knowledgeable and effective support for the consumer and the family in Individualized Education Program meetings.

“Building Partnerships, Supporting Choices”

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- 2) Working with regional center leadership in developing innovative and proactive approaches for successful secondary transition. This may include technical assistance to service coordinators and employment specialists in supporting individuals to explore and identify their strengths, preferences, and interests early in life (e.g., middle school years or earlier), creating a vision statement for a successful secondary transition, and developing/seeking options for further education, community activities or work opportunities aligned with their strengths and interests.
- 3) Establishing system and local education partnerships regarding transitions between regional centers and LEAs (Part C to B) and secondary transition services to post-secondary educational opportunities, employment, and/or independent living skills. Collaboration may include evaluating transition training and continued professional learning opportunities for local Part C and Part B program staff to assess inclusion practices, equitable systems, cultural and linguistic responsiveness and implicit bias training.
- 4) Staying updated with and providing guidance to regional center staff on new and changing laws, regulations, and federal policy letters.
- 5) Participating in regular calls and/or meetings with the Department of Developmental Services' IDEA Specialist.

If you have any questions regarding this correspondence, please contact Reyna Ambriz at reyna.ambriz@dds.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by:

BRIAN WINFIELD
Chief Deputy Director

cc: Regional Center Administrators
Regional Center Directors of Consumer Services
Regional Center Community Services Directors
Association of Regional Center Agencies
Maricris Acon, Department of Developmental Services
Erin Paulsen Brady, Department of Developmental Services
Ernie Cruz, Department of Developmental Services