



EARLY START NEWSLETTER

April 2024



The Early Start (ES) program is California's early intervention program for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or at risk for having a developmental disability and their families. Early Start services are available statewide and are provided in a coordinated, family-centered system.

Visit Our Website

[Early Start Webpage](#)

[Early Start Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Resources for Families, Parents & Caregivers](#)

STATE INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COUNCIL (ICC) ON EARLY INTERVENTION

Mark Your Calendars for the Next Meeting!

August 1, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

August 2, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Join us via zoom!

For more information about the ICC visit:

[State Interagency Coordinating Council](#)

American Sign Language (ASL) and Spanish interpretation is provided.

EARLY START BABYLINE

If you have concerns about your child's development or would like more information about California's

Early Start program, please call

1-800-515-BABY(2229) or email:

EarlyStart@dds.ca.gov.

REGIONAL CENTER LOOK UP

Please utilize the [Regional Center Look Up](#) to locate a Regional Center in your area.

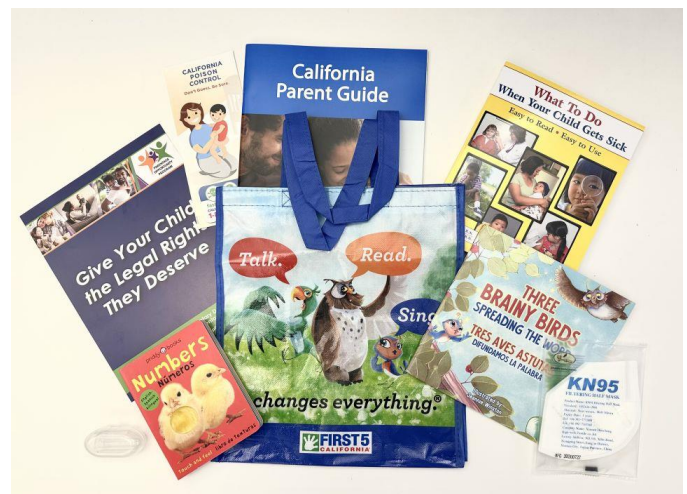
FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA

Have you heard of First 5 California's Kit for New Parents? It's filled with useful resources and information for you and your baby – and **it's free!**

The **FREE** Kit for New Parents includes the Parent Guide, Numbers Touch-and-Feel book, What To Do When Your Child Gets Sick book, and more. Kits are available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese.

Order your Kit for New Parents [here](#).

For some additional information and resources for new parents, please also visit the First 5 California's Parent Guide [website](#).



The Early Start Program welcomes you and your family. We are in this journey together.

RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES & PROFESSIONALS ⁽²⁾

2024 PART C GRANT APPLICATION PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS), as lead agency for Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part C, applies annually for the Part C Grant. This federal grant program assists states in operating a comprehensive statewide program of early intervention services for infants and toddlers (birth to three years of age) with disabilities and their families. The application, submitted each May, applies to the upcoming State budget period (beginning July 1st through June 30th of each year).

The 2024 Part C Grant Application has been posted on the DDS website for public comment according to federal requirements. DDS will accept public input on the 2024 Part C Grant application beginning March 21, 2024, through May 20, 2024. Comments on the application will be summarized by DDS and forwarded to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

Persons submitting comments on specific items in the application should identify the item, referenced by the page number, and indicate support, opposition, suggested changes, additions or deletions pertaining to the specific item. Input will be considered if received by **May 20, 2024**.

Please visit our [DDS website](#) to view all application documents. Please provide comments by email to: earlystart@dds.ca.gov.

DEAF & HARD OF HEARING RESOURCES

[LEAD-K Family Services](#) functions as the current Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program in California. Lead-K's centralized services focus on connecting families with their local school district, Early Start home visit teachers, parent mentors, Deaf coaches and other supports as outlined in an Individualized Family Support Plan.

[Language First](#) aims to educate and raise awareness about American Sign Language (ASL)/English bilingualism and the importance of a strong first language foundation for Deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children.

Additional resources to help support language development at home for Deaf and hard of hearing children:

- [The Gallaudet Children's Dictionary of American Sign Language](#)
- [Storybook Apps Global Digital Library](#)
- Children's Books with Signing Deaf Characters:
 - [Dina the Deaf Dinosaur](#), by Carole Addabbo Valentine
 - [Friends](#), by Theron Parker, illustrated by Daniel Winship
 - [My Deaf Friend Can Do Anything You Can Do!](#), by Tanesha Ausby
 - [Show Me a Sign](#), by Ann Clare LeZotte
- [Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center Resources for Families](#)



RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES & PROFESSIONALS (3)

Resources for Early Start Personnel

Publications are available to guide Early Start personnel in service coordination, service provision, evidence-based practices, and recommended competencies.

[Early Start Personnel Manual](#): A guide for planning and implementing professional development in support of Early Intervention Services.

- [Early Start Statutes and Regulations \(Blue Book\)](#)
- [Effective Practice in Providing Family Support Guide](#)
- [Service Coordinator Handbook](#)



Early Start Institute:

Early intervention professional development is now more accessible and interactive than ever before.

The Early Start Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) offers interactive, facilitated learning both online and in-person to provide the foundational knowledge and basic skills early intervention personnel need to build their capacity to improve outcomes for children and families in Early Start. Please visit [Early Start Online](#) to access these courses.

Looking for training opportunities that are eligible for reimbursement through the Early Start Providers Training Initiative?

Visit the [list of trainings and webinars approved for reimbursement](#) through an Early Start provider training initiative funded by the Department of Developmental Services. This page lists approved training and webinars and includes a link for submitting a training or webinar for consideration for reimbursement. Please email EarlyStart@dds.ca.gov if you have additional questions.



The [Early Start Neighborhood](#) provides a “home base” for Early Start Professionals, and partners seeking training, technical assistance, and resources on early intervention, and evidence-based practices.

2024 EARLY START PARTNERS SYMPOSIUM

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS), with support from WestEd Center, will host the 2024 Early Start Partners Symposium (ESPS) on July 17th and 18th. The event will be held in-person at the Berkeley Marina Doubletree Hotel, in Berkeley. There will be a Practicum Day for Service Coordinators only on July 16th.

The ESPS is a comprehensive professional development event open to Early Start partners, including service coordinators, service providers, and family support professionals. There is a nominal fee due to limitations in capacity, but reimbursements are available. DDS, through WestEd, will provide reimbursement for registration fees to the attendees after the event. Additional details for the event, registration, and reimbursement process will be provided in the near future. Please email EarlyStart@dds.ca.gov if you have any questions.



RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES & PROFESSIONALS (4)

RESOURCES FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

The Cerebral Palsy Guide: Veteran resources for families with special needs.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers benefits to service members who have children with special needs. However, many military families are unaware of these benefits and may miss out on accessing much-needed support. Some VA benefits include tax-free monthly payouts, Survivors Pensions, and free or reduced-cost health care. Private medical, financial, and emotional support resources are also available. Learn more about resources that can help you and your family by accessing the [Cerebral Palsy Guide](#).

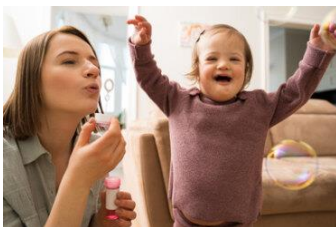
Military One Source Resources

[Military OneSource](#) (www.militaryonesource.mil) is a Defense Department funded program and 24/7 connection to information, answers and support for you and your family.

Military OneSource offers a range of resources to support families with special needs, including assistance with special education, financial planning, childcare and much more. If you are eligible, you can call 1-800-342-9647 to connect to resources anytime.

Childcare Assistance for Military Families

Military families may be eligible for Department of Defense childcare fee assistance to help pay for childcare providers in the community if unable to access care on an installation. Find more information about [Military Childcare Fee Assistance Programs online at Childcare.gov](#).



LEARN THE SIGNS, ACT EARLY!

The Centers for Disease Control offers many free resources, including checklists and tip sheets on topics, such as: How to Help Your Child and Talk with the Doctor, and much more, through their [Learn the Signs, Act Early](#) program.



RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES & CHILDREN EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center

Enhance your knowledge around family homelessness and the McKinney-Vento Homelessness Assistance Act's [definition of "homeless"](#) as it refers to children and youth. Review other relevant federal regulations for Head Start, Early Head Start, and Childcare and Development Fund (CCDF) subsidized programs by visiting the [Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center](#).

National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness

There are supports for children and families experiencing homelessness. It is important that families remain engaged with the social supports programs that exist to help the child develop and receive the services that they need. For additional resources please visit this article regarding [Caring for the Health and Wellness of Children Experiencing Homelessness](#).

[Food Bank Resource Throughout California](#)

HELP FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

National Parent Helpline

The [National Parent Helpline](#) is staffed with trained advocates who can offer emotional support, advice, and a listening ear when you need it. To access the hotline please call 1-855-427-2736.

Healthy Families America

[Healthy Families America](#) (HFA) is a national program of Prevent Child Abuse America. HFA is designed to help parents facing challenges such as single parenthood, low income, and childhood history of abuse. Through home visits and check-ins, HFA supports parents with children between the ages of 0-5. Please also call 1-312-663-3520 for additional information.

RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES & PROFESSIONALS ⁽⁵⁾

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS NETWORK OF CALIFORNIA (FRCNCA)

The Access to Care Family Survey

The Family Resource Center Network of California (FRCNCA) helped to facilitate the distribution of the Access to Care Family Survey, a collaborative effort funded by the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health. The collaborative effort involved researchers from University of California San Francisco (UCSF), Tali Klima from Practical Research Solutions, Children's Specialty Care Coalition (CSCC), and California Children's Hospital Association (CCHA).

Through the FRCNCA and individual Family Resource Centers (FRCs), the survey reached caregivers whose children had recent specialty care appointments. With 646 responses statewide, the survey captured diverse experiences. The findings will inform advocacy efforts by the Children's Specialty Care Coalition in 2024 to enhance access to services for children and families with chronic health conditions.

For more information on this topic please see the results from a survey of large pediatric institutions in California [here](#).



The [FRCNCA](#) ensures that staff at Early Start Family Resource Centers (FRCs) have access to professional development and connections with professionals in the field. To find the FRC near you, check out the [FRCNCA map](#).

TRANSITION TIME

Is your child turning 3 in April, May or June? If so, talk to your service coordinator to begin planning your child's transition for after Early Start.

To learn more about the transition process, please watch the "[Max Turns 3](#)" video. This video is also accessible in [Spanish](#). Both videos contain sign language insets.

For additional resources please visit:
[Early Start Program Frequently Asked Questions for Parents & Providers](#)

[DDS Early Start Information Packet for Consumers & Families](#)

(Available in English, Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Tagalog and Vietnamese)

FAMILY STORIES VIDEO SERIES

A wide variety of resources are available for families on the [DDS Early Start Website](#). Also, please view our [Family Stories](#) video series. These videos are personal stories of families receiving Early Start services.



DARBY'S LEGACY

On August 21, 2017, Darby Jean was born with Trisomy 13 (Patau Syndrome). Her syndrome led to medical complications and developmental delays. While Darby received great care in the hospital, her parents struggled to get her timely services and supports post-discharge. Darby's experience shone a light on ways California's service delivery system for medically fragile children can be improved. Read about the best practices of supporting families of infants and toddlers who have exceptional medical needs in [Darby's Legacy](#).

RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES & PROFESSIONALS ⁽⁶⁾

HEALTH & SAFETY

Safely Engaging with Law Enforcement

Children with developmental delays and or disabilities, like all of us, are likely to encounter law enforcement officers at some point in their lives. [The Organization for Autism Research \(OAR\)](#) has provided some strategies that can be used to safely engage with law enforcement officers and help keep our kids safe.

Plan Ahead: Creating Your Safety Plan

Running or wandering away from caregivers is common in autistic children and adults. The first step toward safety is creating a good plan for it. Healthline provides some great tips to help keep your kids safe.

Dental Visit Tips for Infants or Toddlers with Developmental Delays and or Disabilities

This resource provides ideas to help make a dental visit easier for kids with developmental delays and or disabilities. There is a short article and a video from Dr. Mary Barbera to help support you and your child during a dental visit. The following resources can also be used to help show your child what is going to happen while visiting the dentist.

Social Narrative Stories

[Visit to Dentist's Office](#)

[Going to the Dentist](#)

Videos

[A Trip to the Dentist](#): a Sesame Street video

[Let's Go to the Dentist](#): a social story video

SPRING FUN

With Spring being around the corner, getting your family member out in the community will be fun and helps develop their social skills. Here are some [ideas](#) on the benefits of getting them involved in different social programs.



California Children's Services (CCS) Program

The state of California CCS program provides additional services for children, under age 21, who have CCS eligible medical conditions. Common examples of eligible conditions include sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, and aplastic anemia. Search for your [local CCS](#) office.

Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program

The WIC program is available for women (pregnant, breastfeeding, post-partum) and children up to five years old may qualify. For tips on good nutrition practices and eligibility requirements visit [California WIC](#).



DDS AUTISM SERVICES BRANCH

This DDS Autism Services Branch is another wonderful free resource for individuals, professionals and families. This branch within DDS specializes in answering questions relating to a new or established Autism diagnosis. They offer both a toll-free Helpline and email address for families, providers, and other stakeholders to ask **questions** or receive further assistance relating to Autism.

DDS Autism Helpline

(833) 815-2337

Autism@dds.ca.gov

MEDI-CAL FOR KIDS & TEENS

Medi-Cal for Kids & Teens provides free services to keep your child healthy from birth to age 21.

These services include check-ups, shots, and health screenings. Also included are treatments for physical, mental, and dental health problems.

For more information on additional Medi-Cal services and how to enroll please visit the [California Department of Health Care Services](#) website.