



NANCY BARGMANN
DIRECTOR

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Developmental Services
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GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

July 1, 2024

Leinani Walter, Executive Director
Valley Mountain Regional Center
702 North Aurora Street
Stockton, CA 95202

Dear Ms. Walter:

This letter is to convey the results of the Department of Developmental Services' (DDS) remote review of the Early Start Program at Valley Mountain Regional Center (VMRC). This review was conducted through DDS' Self-Assessment Monitoring (SAM) system on October 13, 2023, through December 4, 2023, to ensure that California meets Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requirements.

VMRC completed a self-assessment of 90 records through SAM. This consisted of 45 regular records and 45 transition records. DDS verified the documentation and the findings for each of the 90 records. DDS identified findings of noncompliance in the following areas:

- Initial assessments including a child's unique strengths and service needs in all five developmental domains (including hearing, vision, and health), must be completed prior to the initial Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP),
- Timely written notice to families for the IFSP meeting.
- Timely provision of services.
- IFSP include services to meet the child and family needs, and
- IFSP with transition steps and services were completed timely.

The details of the findings are in the enclosed monitoring report.

Required Action:

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requires the state lead agency, DDS, to verify correction of noncompliance based on the individual child level (prong 1) and the systemic level (prong 2) as soon as possible, and no later than one year from the date of this letter. A plan, signed by you, addressing the systemic level (prong 2) areas of noncompliance is required to be submitted to DDS within 30 days from the date of this letter. As part of the plan of correction, VMRC should identify and address the root cause of noncompliance on each outstanding finding. Identifying the root cause ensures that corrective actions are meaningful and effective. Please forward the required evidence of clearance on each of the outstanding

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individual findings (prong 1) as soon as it is available (if applicable). DDS will require VMRC to provide subsequent records to clear the systemic level findings. In addition, please see recommendations listed on page 6 of the monitoring report.

Thank you for your cooperation during the monitoring review of the Early Start program at VMRC and your commitment to serve children and families. If you have any questions, please contact Nathaniel Taleon, Chief, Part C Federal Reporting and Monitoring Section, at (951) 374-0174, or by email at Nathaniel.Taleon@dds.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by

MARICRIS ACON
Deputy Director
Children, Adolescents, and Young Adult Services Division

Enclosure

cc: Dr. Suzanne Devitt, Board President
Tara Sizemore-Hester, VMRC

**EARLY START MONITORING REPORT SUMMARY
VALLEY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL CENTER**

DATE OF REVIEW: OCTOBER 13, 2023 – DECEMBER 4, 2023
FINAL REPORT DATE: JULY 1, 2024

ITEMS AT 100% COMPLIANCE				
	REQUIREMENT	RECORDS IN COMPLIANCE	TOTAL RECORDS REVIEWED	COMPLIANCE PERCENTAGE
R2	Initial evaluation determined the infant's or toddler's level of functioning in all developmental domains, including hearing, vision, and health. 34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Sections 303.21, 303.24, 303.310, 303.321 and Title 14, California Early Intervention Services Act (CEISA) Section 95014	45	45	100%
R8	Early intervention services are provided in the natural environment, or the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) contains an appropriate justification when services are not provided in a natural environment. 34 CFR, Sections 303.26, 303.126 and 303.344(d)(1)(ii)	45	45	100%

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CLEARED FINDINGS

Findings cleared prior to the issuance of the report. No further action is required.

REQUIREMENT		ORIGINAL RECORDS IN COMPLIANCE	TOTAL RECORDS REVIEWED	ORIGINAL COMPLIANCE PERCENTAGE	SUBSEQUENT RECORDS IN COMPLIANCE	TOTAL SUBSEQUENT RECORDS REVIEWED	SUBSEQUENT COMPLIANCE PERCENTAGE
R1	Obtained written parental consent for evaluation/assessment. 34 CFR, Sections 303.321(a) and 303.420(a)(2)	43	45	95.56%	■	■	100%
R5	Initial IFSP meeting was conducted within the 45-day timeline. 34 CFR, Sections 303.310 and 303.342(a)	41	45	91.11%	■	■	100%
R7	The IFSP included the frequency and length for all early intervention services. 34 CFR, Section 303.344(d)(1)(i)	44	45	97.78%	■	■	100%
O3	Parental consent was obtained prior to the provision of services. 34 CFR, Section 303.342(e)	43	45	95.56%	■	■	100%

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T2	Timely referral to Local Educational Agency (LEA). 34 CFR, Sections 303.209(b) and 303.401(d)	43	45	95.56%	■	■	100%
T3	Transition Conference occurred in a timely manner and the LEA was invited to the transition meeting. 34 CFR, Section 303.209(c)(1)	41	45	91.11%	■	■	100%

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NONCOMPLIANCE

Valley Mountain Regional Centers must clear findings on both the child-specific and systemic levels. Systemic level findings must be cleared as soon as possible but no later than one year from the final report date. **A Plan of Correction and subsequent review are required to clear these items.**

REQUIREMENT		RECORDS IN COMPLIANCE	TOTAL RECORDS REVIEWED	COMPLIANCE PERCENTAGE	PRONG 1 (CHILD-SPECIFIC)	PRONG 2 (SYSTEMIC)
					OUTSTANDING	OUTSTANDING
R3	Initial assessment for service planning identified unique strengths and service needs in all five developmental domains, including hearing, vision, and health, prior to the initial IFSP. 34 CFR, Sections 303.21, 303.24, 303.310, 303.321 and Title 14, California Early Intervention Services Act (CEISA) Section 95014	38	45	84.44%	X	X
R4	Written notice of the IFSP meeting. 34 CFR, Section 303.342(d)(2)	42	45	93.33%		X
R6	Timely provision of services. 34 CFR, Sections 303.344(f)(1) and 340.420(b)(2) Title 17, California Code of Regulations (CCR), Section 52109(b)	39	45	86.67%		X
O1	IFSP includes services necessary to meet needs of child & family. 34 CFR, Sections 303.344(d)(1) and (e)	44	45	97.78%	X	X
T1	The IFSP included timely transition steps and services. 34 CFR, Sections 303.209(d) & (e) and 303.344(h)	44	45	97.78%		X

Key:

R – “Regular” corresponds to the Regular Review Tool item, followed by the number of the Regular Review Tool item (ex.- R1 refers to the Regular Review Tool item number 1).

T – “Transition” corresponds to the Transition Review Tool item, followed by the number of the Transition Review Tool item (ex.- T3 refers to the Transition Review Tool item number 3).

O – “Other” refers to an additional finding, not included in the Regular or Transition review tools.

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OUTSTANDING INDIVIDUAL FINDINGS (PRONG 1)

#	UCI	Item 3 Assessment	Other 1 Necessary Services
4	██████	X	
13	██████	X	
16	██████	X	
17	██████	X	
19	██████	X	
24	██████	X	X
38	██████	X	

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering what is outlined above, DDS recommends VMRC to align practices/procedures related to:

- Timely evaluation and assessments
- Timely written notice to families for the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting
- Timely provision of services
- Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) include services to meet the child and family needs
- Timely transition steps and services

For further information, the department encourages VMRC to further review available technical assistance resources related to the IFSP. These resources include but are not limited to:

- Early Start Service Coordinator's Handbook: [Service Coordination Handbook – Early Start Neighborhood](#)
- IFSP resources through the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center: [ECTA Center: Individualized Family Service Plan \(IFSP\)](#)
- Educational and Developmental Intervention Services – IFSP Process Guidance Handbook: [EDISIFSPProcessGuidanceHandbook.pdf \(ectacenter.org\)](#)

As required by 34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Sections 303.24, 303.310, 303.321, 303.342(d)(2), 303.344(f)(1), 340.420(b)(2), 303.344(d)(1) & (e), 303.209(d) & (e), 303.44(h), Title 17, California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 52109(b), and Title 14, California Early Intervention Services Act (CEISA) Section 95014.