

April 24, 2025

Dr. Omar Noorzad, Executive Director
Tri-Counties Regional Center
520 East Montecito Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93103

Dear Dr. Omar Noorzad:

This letter is to convey the results of the Department of Developmental Services' (DDS) review of the Early Start Program at Tri-Counties Regional Center (TCRC). This review was conducted through DDS' Self-Assessment Monitoring (SAM) system from November 8, 2024 through January 8, 2025 to ensure that California meets Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requirements.

TCRC 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:

- Parental consent must be obtained prior to conducting evaluations/assessments,
- Location for all Early Intervention Services must be identified on the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP); and,
- Timely notification to the Local Educational Agency (LEA) must be sent at least 90 days prior to the child's 3rd birthday.

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 of the date of this letter.

As part of the plan of correction, TCRC 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 individual findings (prong 1) as soon as it is available (if applicable). DDS will require TCRC 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 TCRC and your commitment to serving children and families. If you have any questions, please contact Reyna Ambriz, Early Start Branch Manager, at (916) 651-0364, or by email at Reyna.Ambriz@dds.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

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

Enclosure

cc: Shawna Hall, Board President, TCRC
Amy Drown, TCRC
Eulalia Apolinar, TCRC

**EARLY START MONITORING REPORT SUMMARY
TRI-COUNTIES REGIONAL CENTER**

DATE OF REVIEW: NOVEMBER 8, 2024 - JANUARY 8, 2025

FINAL REPORT DATE: April 24, 2025

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%
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, CEISA Section 95014	45	45	100%
R5	Initial IFSP meeting was conducted within the 45-day timeline. 34 CFR, Sections 303.310 and 303.342(a)	45	45	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)	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
R4	Written notice of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting. 34 CFR, Section 303.342(d)(2)	43	45	95.56%	█	█	100%
R6	Timely provision of services 34 CFR, Sections 303.344(f)(1) and 303.420(b)(2) Title 17, California Code of Regulations (CCR), Section 52109(b)	42	45	93.33%	█	█	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%
R8	Early intervention services are provided in the natural environment or the 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)	44	45	97.78%	█	█	100%
T1	The IFSP included timely transition steps and services. 34 CFR, Sections 303.209(d) & (e) and 303.344(h)	44	45	97.78%	█	█	100%

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NONCOMPLIANCE

Tri-Counties Regional Center 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
R1	Obtained written parental consent for evaluation/assessment. 34 CFR, Sections 303.321(a) and 303.420(a)(2)	40	45	88.89%		X
O4	Location of all services is specified on the IFSP. 34 CFR, Section 303.344(d)(1)(iii)	40	45	88.89%		X
T2	Timely notification to Local Educational Agency (LEA). 34 CFR, Sections 303.209(b) and 303.401(d)	40	45	88.89%		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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RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- Prior written consent for evaluation/assessment,
- Location of all early intervention services identified on the IFSP; and,
- Timely notification to the LEA.

For further information, the department encourages TCRC 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: <https://earlystartneighborhood.org/resources/resources-for-early-start-personnel/service-coordination-handbook/>
- IFSP Resources through the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center: <https://ectacenter.org/topics/ifsp/ifspprocess.asp>
- Educational & Developmental Intervention Services - IFSP Process Guidance Handbook: <https://ectacenter.org/eco/assets/pdfs/EDISIFSPProcessGuidanceHandbook.pdf>

As required by 34 CFR, Sections 303.321(a) and 303.420(a)(2), Section 303.344(d)(1)(iii), and 303.209(b) and 303.401(d).