

SANTA CLARA COUNTY
NORTH WEST SPECIAL EDUCATION LOCAL PLAN AREA

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

2.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The SELPA, county office, districts, and the Regional Center will actively and systematically seek out all children with disabilities from birth to age three to refer, assess and determine eligibility for special education services. This includes infants and toddlers and their families with disabilities who are homeless or wards of the state.

An Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed by a multidisciplinary team to identify the child needs and plan appropriate services for the child and the family. Districts and the county office will work cooperatively with the Regional Center and other appropriate public agencies to provide all necessary services.

2.2 IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL

Child find activities may include:

- (1) Assigning liaisons to local hospitals and hospitals with neonatal intensive care units.
- (2) Contacting local parent organizations and support groups.
- (3) Distributing early intervention materials to agencies and individuals providing medical, social and educational services in the community.
- (4) Community-wide health and developmental screening.
- (5) Producing and distributing public service announcements.
- (6) Producing pamphlets, brochures, and other written communication.
- (7) Making presentations to local professional groups, philanthropic organizations and other organizations established to inform and/or to serve culturally diverse populations.

Regional Centers and districts shall coordinate local child find activities with each other and other public agencies.

Primary referral sources include, but are not limited to, hospitals, including prenatal and postnatal care facilities, physicians, parents, childcare programs, districts, public health facilities, other social services agencies, and other health care providers.

Regional centers and districts shall inform primary referral sources of the following:

- (1) Eligibility criteria for early intervention services;
- (2) Types of early intervention services available through the Early Start Program;
- (3) Contact persons and telephone numbers for regional centers and districts; and,
- (4) Federal requirement that a referral shall be made to the regional center or district within two (2) working days of identification of an infant or toddler, who needs early intervention services.

The regional center, county office, or district that receives an oral or written referral for early intervention services shall ensure that:

- (1) The date of the referral is documented in the infant's or toddler's record;
- (2) A service coordinator is assigned; and,
- (3) Written notice is provided and consent is requested.

(17 CCR 52040, 52060)

2.3 EARLY START PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Early Start Program (ESP) is collaboration between the San Andreas Regional Center (SARC) and the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE). The ESP, through SCCOE or SARC vendored private infant programs, shall include services specifically designed to meet the unique needs of infants, from birth to three years of age, and their families. The primary purpose of an early education program is to enhance development of the infant in the context of his or her family. To meet this purpose, the program shall focus upon both the infant *and* his or her family, and may include home visits, group services, family involvement, and/or parent education activities. Services shall be provided in the natural (home, community) environment whenever possible.

~~Early Start Programs shall include, as program options, home-based services and group services.~~

Home-based and group services will be provided through a transdisciplinary team consisting of a group of professionals from various disciplines and the parent.

Credentialed personnel with expertise in vision and hearing will be the primary providers of services to infants and toddlers with blindness and deafness whenever possible.

The frequency of home-based services shall typically be once or twice a week, depending on the needs of the infant and the family.

Early education services may also be provided through both home visits and group settings with other infants, with or without the parent. The frequency of group services shall not exceed three hours a day for up to, and including, two days a week, and shall be determined on the basis of the needs of the infant and the family.

The frequency of home visits or parent involvement/education activities provided in conjunction with group services shall typically range from one to eight times per month.

(EC 56425-56426.2)

(1)



(4) Standardized tests or instruments.

Assessments of family resources, priorities and concerns related to enhancing the development of the infant or toddler shall be voluntary on the part of the family. The family assessment shall:

- (1) Be conducted by qualified personnel trained to utilize appropriate methods and procedures;
- (2) Be based on information provided by the family through a personal interview;
- (3) Incorporate the family's description of it-4.6 (y)10.9 (')-4 (s6/TT1 1 Tfe.2 (nha)i)6.Ie52.bo3 (7 Tfe.2 (2 (l)-4.6



2.8 DEVELOPMENT OF THE IFSP

An initial IFSP shall be developed by the regional center and/or LEA for each eligible infant or toddler, within 45 days of the receipt, by either the regional center or LEA, of the oral or written referral.

A periodic review of the IFSP shall be conducted every six months or more frequently if service needs change, or if the parent requests such a review. The periodic review may be carried out by a meeting or by other means that is acceptable to the parent and other participants.

All IFSP meetings shall be conducted in settings and at times or by means that are reasonably convenient to the parent and in the language of parent's choice unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.

Meeting arrangements shall be made with, and written notice provided to, the parent and other members of the multidisciplinary team in a timely manner to ensure attendance at the IFSP meeting.

Each initial IFSP meeting and each annual IFSP meeting shall include the following participants:

- (1) The parent of the infant or toddler;
- (2) The service coordinator; and,
- (3) The person(s) who conducted the evaluations or assessments.

If requested by the parent, each initial IFSP meeting and each annual IFSP meeting shall include the following participants:

- (1) Other family members
- (2) An advocate or person outside of the family.

Each IFSP meeting shall include persons who will be providing services to the infant or toddler and family as appropriate.

(17 CCR 52102, 52104)

2.8.A Contents of the IFSP

The IFSP must be in writing and contain:

1. A statement of the infant's or toddler's present levels of development in the following areas:
 - a. physical development,
 - b. cognitive development,
 - c. communication development,
 - d. social or emotional development, and
 - e. adaptive development.e.

- (3) The district of residence will hold an IEP meeting before the third birthday that ensures smooth and effective transition to a preschool program so that the child is in their preschool program on their third birthday. The IFSP transition planning meeting will be convened among the ESP service coordinator, the family, and the district at least 90 days (and at the discretion of all parties, up to 6 months) before the child is eligible for the preschool services, to discuss the transition steps and timelines, dates for transition activities and any such services that the child may receive.
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When standardized tests are considered invalid for children between the ages of three and five years, alternative means, for example, scales, instruments, observations, and interviews shall be used as specified in the assessment plan.

(EC 56441.11, 56441.6, 56426.6)

2.10.C Eligibility

The special education eligibility criteria listed in Chapter 1 shall apply to preschool children, between the ages of three and five years. A preschool child qualifies as a child who needs early childhood special education services if the child meets the following criteria:

1. Is identified as having one of the following disabling conditions, or an established medical disability:
 - a. autism
 - b. deaf-blindness
 - c. deafness
 - d. hearing impairment
 - e. intellectual disability
 - f. multiple disabilities
 - g. orthopedic impairment
 - h. serious emotional disturbance
 - i. specific learning disability
 - j. speech or language impairment in one or more of voice, fluency, language and articulation
 - k. traumatic brain injury
 - l. visual impairment
 - m. established medical disability
2. Needs specifically designed instruction or services.
3. Has needs that cannot be met with modification of a regular environment in the home or school, or in a community setting.

Established medical disability is defined as a disabling medical condition or congenital syndrome that the IEP team determines has a high predictability of requiring special education and services.

(EC 56441.11, 56440, 56333-56339; 5 CCR 3030, 3031)

2.10.D Individualized Education Program

The requirements for developing, implementing, and reviewing IEPs described in Chapter 2 are applicable to preschool children, age three to five.

An early education program for preschool children with disabilities shall include specially designed services to meet the unique needs of preschool children and their families. To meet this purpose, the program focus is on the young child and his or her family and shall include both individual and small group services, which shall be available in a variety of typical age-appropriate environments for young children, including the home, and shall include opportunities for active parent involvement.

A preschool teacher, who has observed the child in an appropriate preschool environment, will be a member of the IEP team.

~~The IEPs of preschool children will describe how the disability affects the child's participation in appropriate activities.~~

~~*(EC 56441.2)*~~

2.10.E Services for Preschool Children with Disabilities

Services serving preschool children with disabilities and their families shall be provided in coordination with other state and local agencies.

Services will be provided at public expense, under public supervision and without cost to the parents.

Early education services for preschool children may be provided to individuals or small groups and shall include:

1. Observing and monitoring the child's behavior and development in his or her environment.
2. Presenting activities that are developmentally appropriate for the preschool child and are specially designed, based on the child's exceptional needs, to enhance the child's development. Those activities shall be developed to conform to the child's IEP and shall be developed so that they do not conflict with his or her medical needs.
3. Interacting and consulting with the family members, regular preschool teachers, and other service providers, as needed, to demonstrate developmentally appropriate activities necessary to implement the child's IEP in the appropriate setting, and necessary to reinforce the expansion of his or her skills in order to promote the child's

educational development. These interactions and consultations may include family involvement activities.

4. Assisting parents to seek and coordinate other services in their community that may be provided to their child by various agencies.
5. Providing opportunities for young children to participate in play and exploration activities, to develop self-esteem, and to develop pre-academic skills.
6. Providing access to various developmentally appropriate equipment and specialized materials.
7. Providing related services that include parent counseling and training to help parents understand the special needs of their children and their children's development.

Appropriate settings for these services include any of the following:

1. The regular public or private nonsectarian preschool



related services, the number of children per instructional adult shall be less than one to six for preschool children with disabilities in general.

Group services for children, identified as severely disabled, shall not exceed an adult-to-child ratio of one to five.

Duration of group services will not exceed four hours, unless determined otherwise in the child's IEP.

(EC 56441.5)

2.10.G Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten or First Grade

As the preschool age child approaches the age to enter the elementary school environment, the child's preparation is geared toward readiness for kindergarten and later school success.

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