Effective Early Childhood Transitions

A GUIDE FOR

Transition at Age Three — Early Start to Preschool

A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT OF THE
California Department of Developmental Services
and the California Department of Education

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For information about California Early Start contact the Department of Developmental Services at 800/515-BABY, visit the website at http://www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart, or email earlystart@dds.ca.gov. For education programs, visit http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/fp/ecseries.asp.

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The information in this document is a training and technical assistance guide to regulations and recommended practices for transition at age three. Throughout the guide, recommended practices and examples are encouraged, but not required. However, cited statutes and regulations are mandatory requirements. State regulations will be updated as necessary to align with the new federal regulations. When a discrepancy exists between state and federal laws or regulations, federal statute and regulation override state statute and regulation.

Federal and state regulations and statutes do change periodically. This publication will be updated as necessary. Please check back occasionally to ensure that you are using the current version of this guide (http://www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart; http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/fp/ecseries.asp; http://www.wested.org/cpei; and http://www.scoe.net/seeds/).

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Family Resource Centers Network of California
National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center
Special Education Administrators of County Offices Association
Special Education Local Plan Area Administrators of California
State Interagency Coordinating Council on Early Intervention

Introduction:

Your Practical Guide for Transition

"I may be right, but am I effective?"

Victor Bernstein, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Child Psychiatry, University of Chicago

The California Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and the California Department of Education (CDE) share responsibility for ensuring that the process for transition from Early Start to local educational agency (LEA) services at age three adheres to regulatory requirements, is a seamless process for children and their families, and is accomplished in a timely manner. DDS and CDE produced this training and technical assistance guide following an intensive collaborative process.

Effective Early Childhood Transitions: A Guide for Transition at Age Three — Early Start to Preschool is intended for the Early Start community that includes regional center and LEA service coordinators, service providers, family resource centers (FRCs), and receiving LEA providers. Service providers may include LEA infant programs and specialists, Early Head Start and Head Start programs, vendored infant development programs and individual providers, and community-based public and private preschool programs.

The guide identifies both required elements for transition and recommended practices to support families and their children as they successfully navigate transition from Early Start to other services at age three. The guide is organized by transition activities that occur from initial intake until a child and family leave Early Start services at age three. Additional resources, including references and tools for professionals involved in the transition process, are provided in the Resources section at the end of this document.

Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) addresses early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities, birth to age three, and their families. IDEA Part B addresses special education and related services for children and young adults ages three to twenty-two. Throughout the document, Part C responsibilities and activities are identified as "Early Start." Part B responsibilities and activities are identified as "LEA." Activities that are required by federal or state laws and/or regulations are noted with legal citations and reflect updated federal Part C regulations.

A Guide for Transition at Age Three — Early Start to Preschool

Informing Families About Transition

WHEN At intake and throughout Early Start eligibility.

Transition is an important element of the Early Start experience. It is presented to families as a critical program component during their earliest introduction to early intervention services. Transition involves preparation, planning, and implementation, and it begins at the initial visit with the family. Part of the service coordinator's discussions with each family is about the program's beginning and ending, including possible options available for a child at age three (such as LEA-operated special education services, community-based preschool programs, or other community resources). Service coordinators need a clear understanding of the locally agreed-upon transition procedures and community resources that are available to families.

Each infant or toddler eligible for Early Start services must have an individualized family service plan (IFSP). It is recommended that service coordinators begin informal discussions with families about transition early in the IFSP process and continue throughout Early Start eligibility. It is important to let families know at the initial visit that Early Start services are available until their child turns three. At that time, Early Start services will end, and any needed services will be provided through a different service delivery system. Topics of discussion with the family may include general information regarding transition activities, when transition planning begins, community services that are potentially available, and the supports available to access those services.

At the initial visit, review the timelines for Early Start services and assure the family that detailed conversations will continue as these timelines approach. Service coordinators may explain that federal and state regulations govern transition timelines and that activities are individualized and based on each child's and family's needs. The discussions regarding transition may be stressful for families, especially when they are just beginning Early Start services. Provide ample time for the visit and recognize that there may be many questions and concerns to be addressed during the initial conversation and over time.

It is important to continue to provide transition information and opportunities for families to talk with other parents who are knowledgeable about the transition process. Local family resource centers (FRCs) can provide this support. Families need to understand that they are a part of a collaborative partnership with both sending and receiving agencies to ensure a smooth transition. A recommended practice strategy is to follow up conversations with written information, such as a locally developed brochure for families that describes the transition process and timelines. Additional strategies to support families throughout the transition process can be found in the Resources section.

> Transition involves preparation, planning, and implementation, and it begins at the initial visit with the family.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- Inform parents that Early Start serves infants and toddlers age birth to three.
- Share potential service options for children three years of age or older.
- Explain to the family that transition is a process and not a single event.
- Provide families with transition information in a variety of ways—for example, in writing, through discussion, with trainings, videos, and/or brochures. Document in the child's record how the information was provided.
- Encourage families to invite persons of their choice, such as other family members or a family resource center parent, to attend their transition conference.
- Provide information to the family about available family support organizations.
- Research and maintain current information regarding various program and service options available for children at age three and their families.

WHEN At intake and throughout Early Start eligibility.

It is essential that professionals know the community services and supports that are available for children and families at age three. Families will need to know how to access community services such as preschool and childcare programs, medical services, recreational programs, and family and community resource centers. Each type of service or program has unique eligibility requirements, enrollment procedures, and fee schedules. Having this information readily available will enable service coordinators to assist families in exploring services and supports that match child and family resources and needs. Additional information regarding community resources may be found in the DDS *Early Start Service Coordinator's Handbook*, Volume 2, Section 10.

Each county has a local childcare resource and referral office that will provide a listing of available preschool and childcare programs in the county upon request. Other sources for community-based programs include the *California Early Start Central Directory of Early Intervention Resources*, the local FRC, city and/or county parks departments, and social service agencies.

Preschool programs may include the following:

- California State Preschool (part-day and full-day programs)
- Head Start programs (home-based and center-based programs)
- private community preschools
- school district-operated preschools

Other community services may be provided through:

- city and/or county parks and recreation programs
- YMCA/YWCA
- community play groups
- community libraries
- faith-based organizations
- city and/or county community centers

Family Support Organizations

A number of parent organizations throughout California provide information and resources to families. These include Early Start FRCs, parent information and training centers (PITCs), and family empowerment centers (FECs). Services may include parent-to-parent support, training, and educational information. Refer to the Resources section for a list of family support organizations.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- Work with other agency partners to provide interagency trainings for all programs involved in the transition process.
- Create a mechanism for sharing information about community-wide activities and events.
- Compile and maintain an up-to-date list of community resources with contacts, eligibility requirements, and enrollment procedures to provide to families.
- Ensure that agency personnel have information about other agencies and available services in the community.

WHEN

Annually, between the regional center and the special education local plan area.

Special education local plan areas (SELPAs) may represent one or many LEAs. Regional centers may work with multiple SELPAs; likewise, some large SELPAs work with several regional centers. Regional centers and LEAs are required to develop and maintain interagency agreements annually that include transition procedures. It is important that all parties understand the specific locally agreed-upon procedures and responsibilities for the transition process to ensure smooth transitions.

The interagency agreement is a culmination of a collaborative process that assists all agencies to achieve successful outcomes for children and families. The local Part C interagency agreements between the regional centers and the SELPAs include steps to ensure smooth transitions for children and families moving from infant to preschool programs and services. Responsibilities and activities of both the sending Early Start agencies and the receiving LEA agencies are implemented throughout the transition process for each child and family [CFR § 300.124(c)].

It is recommended that all Early Start program providers, service coordinators, and LEA program providers have a copy of the current agreement. Familiarity with its contents helps to ensure that all parties understand their roles in the transition process and follow all transition steps in a timely manner. Additional information regarding interagency collaboration and how to develop effective interagency agreements can be found in the CDE *Handbook on Developing and Evaluating Interagency Collaboration in Early Childhood Special Education Programs* at http://www.cde.ca.gov (enter *Handbook on Developing and Evaluating Interagency Collaboration in Early Childhood Special Education Programs* in the search box).

The interagency agreement is a culmination of a collaborative process that assists all agencies to achieve successful outcomes for children and families.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- Develop an agreement through an interagency approach between representatives from Early Start programs, LEA programs, and the regional center regarding transition practices. This provides agencies the opportunity to identify what is working and what changes are needed to improve practices and procedures. This may include but is not limited to:
  - procedures for invitation, including timing and location;
  - procedures for notification/referral, including late referrals;
  - identification of procedures to coordinate the exchange of information between agencies;
  - clear definition of roles and responsibilities for transition;
  - procedures for children whose third birthdays occur during school breaks;
  - definition of LEA timelines and responsibilities for attending the transition conference and performing evaluations of children, including the use of current Early Start evaluations, assessments, and IFSPs.
- Be familiar with the local Part C interagency agreement, ensuring that local transition planning procedures that were developed by LEAs and Early Start agencies are followed.
- Change interagency procedures if they are no longer effective when the interagency agreement is reviewed each year. Changes are negotiated between the parties involved.
- Obtain or create locally developed transition materials. Early Start and LEA programs work together to review and update them as necessary.
- Work with other agency partners to provide interagency trainings for all programs involved in the transition process.

WHEN The child is between 24 and 30 months of age.

In planning for transition, it is a recommended practice for the service coordinator to talk to the family about the process and steps to prepare for the transition to Part B services. When a child is between the ages of 24 and 30 months, the Early Start service coordinator explains to the family that a transition conference will occur no later than 90 days before the child's third birthday. The conference may occur up to nine months before the child's third birthday, at the discretion of all parties. Let the family know that the LEA representative will be invited to attend the transition conference. Mention in the conversation that a notification/referral to the LEA will take place no later than 90 days before the child's third birthday.

California has determined that all children served in Early Start are potentially eligible for LEA special education and related services at age three. Therefore, all children must be referred to Part B services. Service coordinators are required to make a notification/referral to the family's school district of residence. This process assists LEAs to meet federal and state child find obligations and to project future allocation of resources. It is a recommended practice to inform families of this requirement during transition planning discussions. The service coordinator makes arrangements to schedule the meeting, including time, place, and date, at the convenience of the family. This must be coordinated and agreed upon with the family and appropriate agencies. Additionally, no later than 90 days before the child's third birthday, DDS must provide notification/referral to the state education agency (SEA), which is CDE.

Transition Conference Invitation

The written invitation is sent, as soon as possible but no later than two days before the meeting, to the family, LEA representative, Early Start service providers, family members, and others whom the family might request. The family may decline the transition conference with the LEA. If this occurs, the service coordinator documents this detail on the transition IFSP. A sample Notice of Transition Conference form is located in the Resources section.

"Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now."

Alan Lakein

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- Provide information to families about the local transition process—for example, verbally, in written form, or through video, workshops, or other means.
- Share with the family that the FRC provides transition support during transition planning.
- Provide the family with a transition checklist to help them prepare for upcoming transition activities. Refer to the Resources section for the Family Transition Activity Checklist.
- Develop letters to provide notice of transition in various languages.
- Include a transition outcome in the IFSP after the child is 27 months of age that references a smooth and timely transition by age three.
- Address parent questions about the transition process. Transition steps and activities may need to be explained in a variety of ways—verbally, with written information, and/or through FRC-sponsored parent trainings—to ensure that parents understand the process.
- Discuss options at three years, including preschool special education services for eligible children, regional center services for eligible children, and/or community-based private and public services and supports as needed.
- Work with the LEA to establish a range of dates and times to present to the family for the transition conference meeting.

WHEN No later than 90 days before the child's third birthday.

No later than 90 days before the child's third birthday, the Early Start service coordinator, whether he/she works for a regional center or LEA, must send a referral to the child's and family's school district of residence. This requirement applies equally to **all** referrals, including those made by a school district that provides Early Start services and will potentially provide LEA Part B services to the same child [34 CFR § 303.209(b)(1)(i)]. Additionally, DDS must provide notification/referral to CDE no later than 90 days before the child's third birthday.

The district of residence is defined as the school district where the child and family reside. If the child is in foster care, the location of the foster care placement determines the district of residence. If the child is placed in a non-public school, the family's residence is the district of residence.

The notification/referral must be in writing and contain the following contact information:

- child's name;
- date of birth;
- parent contact information, including name, address, and telephone number.

The notification/referral may also include:

- the Early Start service coordinator's name and contact information;
- language spoken by the child and family.

The receiving LEA must maintain documentation of the written notification/referral and develop an assessment plan within 15 calendar days describing evaluations and assessments that will be conducted in the areas of suspected disability.

In accordance with guidance of the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), the disclosure of limited personally identifiable information (identified above as child find notification/referral) is allowed without parental consent under IDEA Part C and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The regional center and the LEA must protect this information as educational records under IDEA and FERPA. With written parental consent, the Early Start service coordinator may provide additional identifying information about the child and family including the current IFSP, current evaluations and assessments, and other pertinent information regarding the child. Sample notification/referral forms are included in the Resources section.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- Create and maintain positive working relationships between Early Start and LEA personnel.
- Identify the LEA contacts for Part B notification/referral and create a list of names and contact information.
- Assign a single contact person at each agency to support transition activities.
- Establish a process of communication between the sending and receiving agencies regarding the written notification/referral. Ensure that the process is in writing and includes documentation of the notification/referral in the child's record.
- Maintain contact between the Early Start service coordinator and the LEA preschool representative throughout the notification/referral process.
- Ensure that the LEA establishes an internal process for notification/referral for LEA Part C transition to Part B.

WHEN Less than 90 days before the child's third birthday.

A child may be referred to Early Start at any time prior to the third birthday. Some children enter the program later than two years and six months of age. This is known as a late referral. In this case the initial IFSP may also serve as the transition conference. The IFSP must include steps to ensure transition to LEA or other services as appropriate at age three.

Early Start Responsibilities

For a child made eligible for Early Start between 45 and 90 days prior to the child's third birthday, the program **is required to:**

- conduct the initial evaluation and assessment;
- conduct the initial IFSP meeting if eligible;
- develop a transition plan with the appropriate transition steps and services;
- provide notification/referral to the LEA and the SEA.

For a child referred to Early Start between one and 44 days prior to the child's third birthday, the program **may, but is not required, to do the following:**

- conduct an initial evaluation and assessment;
- conduct an initial IFSP meeting;
- develop a transition plan;
- provide notification/referral to the LEA and the SEA.

[34 CFR § 303.209 (b)(ii)(iii)]

With parental consent, Early Start is required to make a referral to the SEA and the LEA or assist the family in initiating contact with the LEA. A transition conference may be conducted, but is not required.

LEA Responsibilities for Late Referrals from Early Start

For a child served in Early Start who was referred to an LEA less than 90 days before the child's third birthday, the LEA is responsible to:

- ensure that an initial evaluation under Part B is completed;
- develop an individualized education program (IEP) by the child's third birthday if the child is determined eligible under Part B, even if the 60-day timeline for conducting an initial evaluation expires after the child's third birthday.

Establish local procedures between Early Start and the LEA to respond to late referrals as part of the interagency agreement.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- Establish local procedures between Early Start and the LEA to respond to late referrals as part of the interagency agreement.
- Include processes to communicate between agencies quickly.
- Ensure that LEA assessment personnel plan their calendars to accommodate referrals that are received less than 60 days before the child's third birthday.
- Ensure that notification/referral occurs as soon as possible after Early Start eligibility is determined.
- Support the LEA in the assessment process by sharing relevant assessments and IFSPs, with parent consent.
- Plan and conduct joint evaluations between Early Start and LEAs when feasible to do so.

The Transition Conference

WHEN Not fewer than 90 days, and at the discretion of all parties, not more than nine months, before the toddler's third birthday.

The purpose of the transition conference with the LEA is to discuss Part B services and programs with the parent. The transition conference may also include the IFSP meeting to develop the transition plan, which includes individualized steps and services. The transition conference provides the opportunity for the LEA and the family to begin a positive relationship at the beginning of the child's and family's school experience. Each LEA affected by the transition must participate in transition conferences arranged by the lead agency. The LEA representative will be able to answer the family's questions and discuss the assessment process and timelines, eligibility determination, the individualized education program (IEP) process, and potential services and supports at age three. The transition conference must be held with the family no later than 90 days before the child's third birthday, or as early as nine months before the child's third birthday, with the agreement of all parties. The IFSP team members who are required to attend the meeting include the parent, service coordinator, a representative from each affected LEA, service providers, and family members or others invited by the parent.

The Written Transition Plan

The IFSP meeting for transition results in a written transition plan that includes the steps and services to be taken to support the smooth transition of the child:

- Discuss preschool and/or other appropriate program options and services.
- Discuss with and inform parents regarding future placement and other matters related to the child's transition.
- Document procedures to prepare the child for changes in service delivery, including steps to help the child adjust to and function in a new setting.
- Document notification/referral.
- Document written consent of the parent to transmit additional information, such as the most recent assessments and IFSP.
- Document transition services and other activities, as identified by the IFSP team, determined necessary to support the transition of the child [34 CFR § 303.344(h)].

The transition plan is a part of an IFSP and not a separate document. An IFSP meeting to develop transition steps and services must follow all requirements of an IFSP including a review of information about the child and family, current assessments, a review of services, progress toward meeting outcomes, and determination of any revisions to outcomes or services that may be needed. The purpose of the transition plan is to ensure a comprehensive and thoughtful transition process that is individually designed to meet the needs of the child and the family. The transition plan must be established not fewer than 90 days before the child's third birthday, or as early as nine months before the child's third birthday, with the agreement of all parties. The transition plan must include individualized steps to prepare the toddler for changes in service delivery at age three. It must also include transition services for the child or family that are identified by the IFSP team. As with all IFSPs, the family's concerns, priorities, and resources are discussed and documented in order to individualize the steps and outcomes for the child and family.

The transition plan must:

- review program options for the toddler for the period from the toddler's third birthday through the remainder of the school year;
- include the family in the development of the transition plan;
- include as part of the IFSP:
  - steps for the toddler and his or her family to exit from the Early Start program;
  - any transition services that the IFSP team identifies as needed by that toddler and his or her family [34 CFR § 303.209(d)(1)(2)(3)].

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- Enable family members to participate as equal partners in planning their child's transition by:
  - individualizing the process based on the unique needs of each family to support the child's success and comfort in the new environment, including routines, skills, expectations, accommodations, equipment needs, and schedules;
  - bringing all necessary documents including notification/referral and parent consent forms to the meeting;
  - providing written material on LEA services, assessment procedures, and Part B eligibility criteria;
  - providing written material about eligibility for Lanterman regional center services;
  - discussing public and private community-based programs and services;
  - providing families with useful Web sites, program brochures, and newsletters;
  - reminding families that FRCs, PITCs, and FECs provide support during transition and may have transition-related information boards and Internet resources.
- Create an agenda that includes all meeting topics to be covered.
- Determine participant roles and responsibilities for sharing transition information and creating transition steps.
- Ensure that the transition plan also documents the identified individual steps for the child and family. Items may include, but are not limited to the following:
  - accommodations and modifications
  - health care needs
  - equipment needs
  - transportation needs
  - individual needs that are identified through the family's concerns, priorities, and resources
  - individual needs that are identified through information gathered from child and family service providers
  - additional factors to ensure the child's success
- In the event that the family declines the transition conference with the LEA, document the family's preference in the IFSP transition plan.

Summer Birthdays and Extended Breaks

WHEN By the child's third birthday.

The summer poses challenges for LEA programs in meeting timelines and having staff available for referrals, evaluations, and IEPs. The LEA must hold the IEP meeting on or before the child's third birthday, even if the LEA program is not in session when the birthday occurs. Examples include summer breaks, mid-winter breaks, and other non-instructional days. It is important that professionals plan for summer birthdays and extended breaks to ensure that supports are available for children and families at age three. Families need to be aware of when these breaks occur and what procedures are in place to ensure that timely transitions occur [34 CFR § 300.124(d)].

It is recommended that the transition conference be scheduled early enough to ensure that all evaluations and assessments are completed and the exit IFSP and initial IEP meetings are held by the child's third birthday. Appropriate LEA personnel need to be available to conduct the initial evaluations to determine eligibility and hold IEP meetings during the summer as necessary to meet state and federal timelines.

For children who turn three during the summer months and are determined eligible for Part B services, extended school year (ESY) services must be considered. Considerations may include any of the following:

- The child has unique needs that require him or her to need special education and related services in excess of the regular academic year.
- The child has disabilities that are likely to continue indefinitely or for a prolonged period.
- The child may experience regression caused by interruption in the educational programming.
- The child has limited recoupment capacity, rendering it impossible or unlikely that without ESY services, the child would attain the level of self-sufficiency and independence that would otherwise be expected in view of his or her disabling condition.

If the IEP team determines that ESY services are not needed or are not appropriate, or if the parent declines the service, the date of initiation of services may be the beginning of the school year and the IEP is considered "implemented" by the child's third birthday. If the IEP team determines that the child needs ESY services, the service is designated on the initial IEP document and provided by the LEA.

As part of the transition IFSP, the exit IFSP, and the initial IEP meetings, plans should be made for extended and summer breaks. Being proactive with parents in providing information, calendars, and resources provides a smooth transition for the child and the family.

A note regarding initial referrals and assessments for children during summer and extended breaks:

Although this guide focuses on the requirements and recommended practices around transition from Part C to Part B, it is important that LEAs understand the requirements for accepting and responding to initial referrals for all children that may occur during summer months or extended breaks. Federal regulations require that LEAs must respond to all initial referrals within 15 calendar days with an assessment plan or a prior written notice that an assessment will not be completed with reasons. The parent has 15 calendar days to respond to the assessment plan or letter. LEAs may not defer the initial assessment. OSEP has clarified that timelines for initial assessments and IEP meetings are not to be suspended because of a school break [34 CFR § 300.301(d)].

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- Establish time slots for IEP meetings for children prior to extended breaks in the LEA program.
- Work together to hold transition conferences and make referrals for children with summer birthdays prior to the date when the LEA begins an extended program break.
- Coordinate transition conferences and referral dates for children with summer birthdays.
- Work with the families of children who have summer birthdays to ensure that they can accommodate attendance at the meeting, working around potential summer or holiday travel.

WHEN By the child's third birthday.

Evaluation and Assessment for Part B Services

The LEA is required to act on referrals for children who are transitioning from Early Start throughout the year, in order to hold the IEP by the child's third birthday. After receiving the referral and signed parent consent, the responsible LEA conducts an evaluation in all areas of suspected disability to determine the child's eligibility for special education. The LEA also conducts an assessment of the child's strengths and needs. This information is used to assist the IEP team to develop goals and objectives and to determine appropriate services that are designed to ensure a free appropriate public education. Federal and state regulations require that evaluations and assessments must:

- be conducted by individuals who have expertise in the suspected area of disability;
- include multiple measures that are considered valid and reliable for the child's age;
- take into account the child's and family's primary language.

The LEA designates individuals to conduct and complete the evaluation and assessment in time to hold the IEP meeting on or before the child's third birthday [34 CFR § 300.124(b)].

The LEA must review and consider any recent information as a part of the evaluation process. This includes the current IFSP, existing assessment data completed by the Early Start program, medical records, outside assessments, and progress reports completed by Early Start service providers [34 CFR § 300.101(b)].

Initial IEP Meeting

The LEA must arrange the initial IEP meeting to be held on or before the child's third birthday. The purpose of the IEP meeting is to review the results of evaluation and assessment information and to determine eligibility for special education. IEP team participants must include the child's parents, the Early Start service coordinator at the parents' request, a regular education teacher, persons with knowledge of the child's abilities and needs, persons who can interpret evaluation results, and an administrator or designee from each affected LEA. If the child is determined eligible for special education, the team develops an IEP that documents the following:

- present developmental levels and functional performance;
- child's strengths and needs;
- parents' concerns regarding their child's education;
- annual goals and benchmarks to meet needs;
- special education and related services;
- necessary program accommodations, modifications, and supports;
- an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not be able to participate with typical peers in age-appropriate activities;
- projected date for the beginning of services and the frequency, location, and duration of the services;
- offer of FAPE.

The IEP must be developed and implemented by the child's third birthday. Federal regulations under IDEA Part B require that services be provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE) that will allow the child to benefit from his or her educational program. LRE means that to the maximum extent that is appropriate, the child will be educated in the regular education setting with children who do not have disabilities. The IEP team will identify goals and design services to increase the likelihood that the child will make progress in the identified areas of need and successfully participate in regular preschool activities.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- Sending and receiving agencies develop and use a locally agreed-upon parent consent form for exchange of information.
- The LEA representative develops an informational packet to present to parents at the transition conference that explains all components of referral and evaluation.
- The Early Start service coordinator and LEA representative encourage parents to sign the assessment plan and return it to the LEA as soon as possible so that the assessment can begin.
- The Early Start service coordinator and LEA representative work with appropriate agencies to organize an information night during which families can review LEA programs and services.
- The Early Start service coordinator and LEA representative encourage families to take part in transition events such as open house night, workshops, support groups, training, and other resources.
- Based on individual program requirements, the LEA representative informs families of required information for program enrollment at age three, which may include the child's birth certificate, social security number, immunization records, and/or proof of family income.
- The LEA representative provides information regarding LEA programs and services (brochures, preschool program visits, videos, etc.).
- The LEA service providers meet the family and discuss steps to prepare the child.
- The LEA sets a tentative date for the IEP meeting with the family at the beginning of the assessment process so that all parties are aware of and can complete assessments in time to hold the IEP before the child's third birthday.
- The Early Start service coordinator stays in contact with LEA representative throughout the assessment process and offers assistance if needed.
- The Early Start service coordinator and LEA representative follow up on indicated referrals to other agencies and service providers.
- The LEA representative communicates with the family throughout the assessment process to prepare them for the initial IEP meeting.

Regional Center Eligibility/ Individualized Program Plan at Age Three

WHEN At three years of age.

Lanterman Eligibility

As part of the transition IFSP, the service coordinator must discuss eligibility for ongoing regional center services. The regional center will evaluate the child to determine eligibility under the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act. To be eligible for services, a child must have a developmental disability, defined as including "intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and autism,"* or a condition that is "found to be closely related to intellectual disability or to require treatment similar to that required for individuals with intellectual disability..." that "originates before an individual attains age 18, continues, or can be expected to continue, indefinitely, and constitutes a substantial disability for that individual." In addition, the child must have a significant impairment in three or more of the seven areas of major life activity. These areas include self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living, and economic self-sufficiency.

If a child is determined eligible for regional center services beyond three years of age, the regional center service coordinator and the family must develop an individual program plan (IPP). A best practice recommendation is to begin the process for assessments early enough so that eligibility is determined before the child's third birthday. This will help to ensure that needed regional center services can be obtained without delay when the child turns three.

The regional center is required to provide parents with a copy of their parent rights and procedural safeguards under the Lanterman Act. A new service coordinator may be assigned for the child and family at age three. If so, a recommended practice is to invite the new service coordinator to attend the IEP meeting and final IFSP review. With parent consent, a copy of the IPP may be provided to the LEA [17 CCR §§ 52112 (d)(2) and (d)(5)(C)].

* Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act Welfare and Institutions Code, Division 4.5, Chapter 1, Section 4512 (a). Assembly Bill (AB) 2370, legislation enacted and chaptered on September 22, 2012, replaced the term "mental retardation" with "intellectual disability." The legislation aligns California code with the federal definition, known as Rosa's Law, that was signed in 2010 and that removed the term "mental retardation" from all federal statutes and replaced it with "intellectual disability." AB 2370 revises various California statutes to make the same changes. The bill does not change the coverage, eligibility, rights, responsibilities, or substantive definitions referred to in existing law.

Regional Center Eligibility/ Individualized Program Plan at Age Three

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- Discuss Lanterman eligibility throughout Early Start services.
- Initiate Lanterman eligibility determination early, with parent consent, to determine eligibility for ongoing regional center services to meet timelines.
- Invite the new service coordinator to attend the final IFSP and initial IEP meetings.
- With parent permission, provide the LEA with a copy of the IPP, as appropriate.

Resources

Family Support Agencies in California

AGENCY	DESCRIPTION	PURPOSE	SERVICES INCLUDE
Family Resource Centers (FRCs)	These centers serve children birth to age three with developmental delays or disabilities and their families who are eligible for Early Start. Parents often staff these centers. The FRCs are available in every county in California.	1. Provide accurate information to parents of children with disabilities. 2. Help parents, families, and children locate and use needed services. 3. Support parents in their ability to enhance their child's development.	1. Parent-to-parent support. 2. Information and referral. 3. Public awareness. 4. Parent education. 5. Resource materials and transition assistance.
Family Empowerment Centers (FECs)	These centers serve children and young adults, age three to twenty-two, who have disabilities and their families.	1. Support children and young adults with disabilities to receive a free and appropriate education and other services. 2. Provide parents access to information, training, and parent-to-parent support. 3. Support parents to partner with professionals in obtaining appropriate education for children with disabilities, to fully participate in their child's education, and to navigate the educational system.	1. Parent-to-parent support. 2. Support for families concerned with their child's education. 3. Support for transition to adult services.

AGENCY	DESCRIPTION	PURPOSE	SERVICES INCLUDE
Parent Training and Information Centers (PTICs)	These centers serve individuals with disabilities, age birth to twenty-six, and their families.	1. Help families understand special education laws, rights, and responsibilities. 2. Work to improve educational results. 3. Train and inform parents and professionals about disability issues. 4. Resolve problems between families and schools or other agencies. 5. Connect children who have disabilities to community resources that address their needs.	1. Education for families and professionals. 2. Parent-to-parent support. 3 Advocacy for children and families, support for individualized education programs (IEPs). 4. Support for transition to adult services.
Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs)	These centers serve underserved parents of individuals with disabilities, age birth to twenty-six, including parents of children with limited English proficiency, parents with low incomes, and parents with disabilities. The goal is to enable parents to participate more fully and effectively with professionals in meeting the educational needs of their children with disabilities.	1. Provide training and information to parents of children with disabilities and to people who work with parents. 2. Provide outreach and support for families that may not know about these services.	1. Parent-to-parent support. 2. Support for families concerned with their child's education. 3. Support for transition to adult services.

California Education Code Related to Local Education Agency Requirements

REQUIRED PROCESS	ACTION AND TIMELINE
Referral for Assessment—A parent, teacher, or other person may request a referral in writing [*EC* 56029].	The local education agency (LEA) receives a written referral.
Assessment Plan—Within 15 calendar days of the referral, the LEA develops an assessment plan and gives a copy to the parents along with notification of parents' rights and procedural safeguards [*EC* 56321(a)].	Within 15 calendar days, excluding holidays and school breaks, the LEA develops an assessment plan to evaluate the child in all areas related to the suspected disability.
Parental Consent to Assess—The LEA must obtain written parent permission to begin the assessment. Parents have at least 15 calendar days to sign and return the assessment plan [*EC* 56321(c)].	Parents have 15 calendar days to decide to consent to the assessment and return the signed assessment plan.
Assessment—The LEA assessment team assesses the child in all areas related to the suspected disability. Persons with knowledge of the suspected disability conduct the assessments [*EC* 56320 (f)(g)].	The LEA assessment team conducts the assessment.
Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting—Within 60 calendar days of receipt of a signed assessment plan, the LEA must conduct an IEP team meeting. At the meeting, the LEA must make an offer of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) and develop an IEP for a student eligible for special education [*EC* 56344]. LEAs are required to invite parents to any meeting regarding the child's eligibility for special education and related services and to give parents reasonable notice in advance to ensure their attendance [*EC* 56341.5].	The LEA coordinates and holds an IEP meeting within 60 calendar days of receipt of the signed assessment plan. The LEA sends advance written notice of the IEP meeting that will be held to determine the child's eligibility for special education.
Parental Consent for Services—*Education Code* requires that written permission be obtained from the parents to place the child in special education and to implement the IEP. The LEA may implement those parts of the IEP to which the parent has consented [*EC* 56346(a)].	The LEA implements recommendations of the IEP as approved by the parents.
Placement—The LEA must begin the recommended placement and services as soon as possible after the date of the parents' written approval of the IEP [5 CCR § 3040(a)].	Parents make their child available for services as identified on the IEP.
Annual Review—The IEP team must review a student's IEP at least every 12 months: *EC* 56380.	The IEP is reviewed annually.

Early Start Service Coordinator's Transition Checklist

This checklist may be used to monitor the Early Start service coordinator's required transition responsibilities and related activities. Transition planning may begin as early as 27 months of age with the agreement of all involved parties, and the transition conference must be held no later than 90 days before the child's third birthday. For detailed information please refer to the topical chapters of this guide.

Family-friendly practices no later than the IFSP meeting prior to the transition conference (may take place at the same time):

- ❑ Refer family to the family resource center (FRC) for family support services, with parent permission.
- ❑ Emphasize that Early Start services terminate at three years of age.

No later than 30 months:

- ❑ Notify the family (and others requested by the family) that a transition conference will occur no later than 90 days prior to the child's third birthday.
- ❑ Inform the family that the LEA will be invited to attend the transition conference.
- ❑ Inform families that they have the right to invite persons of their choice to the transition conference.
- ❑ Notify the LEA that a transition conference will occur no later than 90 days before the child's third birthday.
- ❑ Coordinate the transition conference location, date, and time with parents and the LEA.
- ❑ Inform the family that a notification/referral will be made to the LEA no later than 90 days before the child's third birthday.

Ninety days before the third birthday, or earler at the discretion of all parties:

- ❑ Send written meeting invitation to parent and LEA at least two days before the transition conference.
- ❑ Convene the transition conference.
- ❑ Document discussions and identify individual transition steps and services including:
  - ❑ family questions, concerns, priorities, and resources;
  - ❑ training to prepare families for future placements;
  - ❑ providing information about community services and resources;
  - ❑ steps and services to prepare a toddler for successful transition at age three;
  - ❑ steps to determine eligibility for LEA and continued regional center services at age three;
  - ❑ required assessments, timelines, and responsible parties;
  - ❑ possible program options at age three;
  - ❑ opportunities for the family to learn about preschool programs and services;

- ❑ identification of persons responsible for convening the final IFSP review, initial IEP, and initial IPP meetings as appropriate;
- ❑ projected meeting dates for final review of the IFSP, development of IEP if the child is eligible for LEA services, and IPP if the child is eligible for ongoing regional center services.

❑ Involve others requested by the family, such as the FRC, in the transition process.

❑ Send the LEA the written notification/referral for the child (parent consent is not required).

❑ Include copies of evaluation and assessment reports and the most recent IFSP in the referral packet, with parent consent.

By the third birthday:

❑ Participate in the final IFSP review and initial IEP and IPP meetings, as appropriate.

❑ Provide referrals for community-based services, as appropriate.

At three years:

❑ Complete the required data reports.

❑ Close Early Start file.

Family Transition Activity Checklist

This checklist is a tool to help you prepare for the activities that will take place as your child transitions from Early Start services at age three.

MY CHILD'S AGE	STEPS
24 to 30 months	❑ Discuss and receive information about the transition process including timelines. ❑ Discuss and receive written information about future services, including: ❑ special education programs and services provided by the LEA; ❑ regional center services; ❑ community resources such as Head Start, child development centers, private preschools, etc. ❑ Receive information about and be referred to the local family resource center (with my permission).
27 to 33 months	❑ Receive a written transition conference notice with date and time that is convenient for me. ❑ Understand that I can bring others (family member, friend, FRC representative) to the transition conference. ❑ Participate in the transition conference with the LEA. ❑ Understand that I have the opportunity to ask questions and share my child's strengths, my areas of concern, and my priorities at the transition conference. ❑ Participate in the development of the transition plan that is part of the IFSP. Assist the team to identify individual steps and needed services to prepare my child and our family for successful transition at age three. ❑ Discuss possible Lanterman services at age three as part of the transition IFSP. ❑ Sign the agreed-upon transition plan that is part of the IFSP to begin transition steps and services. ❑ Understand that a notification/referral will be sent to my child's school district.

MY CHILD'S AGE	STEPS
33 months to three years	❑ Receive contact from my child's school district to develop an assessment plan to determine eligibility for special education at age three. ❑ Sign and return the permission for assessment within 15 days. ❑ Understand that no evaluations will be conducted until I give my written permission. ❑ Receive a copy and explanation of my parental rights and procedural safeguards related to Part B from the school district. ❑ Participate in implementation of transition steps and services. ❑ Receive information and referrals for community-based preschool services as appropriate. ❑ Receive information regarding regional center due process rights and eligibility for ongoing services at age three.
By my child's third birthday	❑ Participate in the final IFSP meeting. ❑ Attend the initial IEP meeting that includes: ❑ a copy and explanation of my due process rights related to special education; ❑ a review of evaluations that have been completed in suspected areas of disability; ❑ determination of eligibility for special education; ❑ if eligible, development of goals and objectives; ❑ if eligible, discussion of appropriate special education services and supports; ❑ if eligible, offer of free appropriate public education (FAPE); ❑ if eligible, date the preschool services will begin; ❑ if in agreement, my signature on the IEP.
On my child's third birthday	❑ Early Start services end.

Sample Notification/Referral Letter to Local Education Agency

Date of Referral:

To: Contact Name
LEA
Address
Contact Phone
Email

From: Contact Name
Part C Service Agency
Address
Contact phone
Email

This is a notification/referral for a child who resides in your school district and will soon be turning three years of age. As a child who currently receives Early Start services, he/she is potentially eligible for Part B services through the LEA at age three.

Child's Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Parent Name: _____

Parent Contact Information:

Address: _____

_____

Phone: _____

_____

Email: _____

Languages Spoken by Child and Family:

_____

Sample Notification/Referral Information Packet to Local Education Agency

This packet accompanies the referral for the child listed below, with parent consent:*

Date: _____

Regarding: _____

Child's Name Date of Birth

To (Receiving Agency): _____

Agency Contact: _____

From (Sending Agency): _____

Service Coordinator/Agency Contact: _____

___ Most recent Individualized Family Service Plans, including Transition Plan

___ State of California School Immunization Record (*if available)*

___ Parent's signed Consent to Exchange Additional Identifying Information Between Agencies

The following assessments, evaluations, and progress reports were completed recently (within the past six months) and are included in this packet. Additional assessments that are in process are noted below. Please contact the service coordinator to obtain additional information.

- ❑ Psychological/Developmental _____
- ❑ Speech and Language _____
- ❑ Occupational Therapy _____
- ❑ Physical Therapy _____
- ❑ Behavioral _____
- ❑ Medical _____
- ❑ Audiological _____
- ❑ Vision/Optical _____
- ❑ Nursing/Nutrition _____
- ❑ Other _____

NOTE: This packet contains additional identifying information beyond the limited personally identifiable information that is allowed to be transmitted to the local education agency (LEA) without parental consent under IDEA and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Sample Notice of Transition Conference

Date: _____

Parent Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Re: _____

DOB: _____

Dear Parent: _____

This is to confirm that our meeting is scheduled for:

_____	_____	_____
Date	Time	Location

The following people are invited to this meeting:

_____	_____	_____
Name	Agency	Title
_____	_____	_____
Name	Agency	Title
_____	_____	_____
Name	Agency	Title

You may invite anyone else (family member, friend, advocate, other) that you would like to be involved in the Transition Conference. **If this time is no longer convenient for you, please contact me at _____ as soon as possible so that the meeting can be rescheduled.**

Sincerely,

Service Coordinator
Cc: LEA Representative

List of Acronyms

CCR	Code of California Regulations
CDE	California Department of Education
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CPRC	community parent resource center
DDS	Department of Developmental Services
EC	California *Education Code*
ESY	extended school year
FAPE	free and appropriate public education
FEC	family empowerment center
FERPA	Family Education Rights and Privacy Act
FRC	family resource center
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	individualized education program
IFSP	individualized family service plan
IPP	individual program plan
LEA	local education agency
LRE	least restrictive environment
PITC	parent information and training center
SEA	state education agency
SELPA	special education local plan area

Glossary

assessment: the ongoing procedure used by qualified personnel to identify the child's unique strengths and needs and the services appropriate to meet those needs.

California Department of Developmental Services (DDS): lead agency for Part C early intervention services for California infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities and their families. Also responsible for administering the developmental disabilities service delivery system under the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act in California.

California Department of Education (CDE): state agency responsible for administering early intervention services and programs for infants with solely low-incidence disabilities (visual, hearing, and severe orthopedic impairments and any combination thereof).

child find: a federal requirement for both Part C and Part B to actively locate children age birth to twenty-two who may be eligible for special education services.

community-based preschool: educational or enrichment programs for children ages three to five that are operated by private businesses or non-profit community agencies.

consent: the written permission that is granted by the parent for certain required activities, after the parent is fully informed about the action or activity in the language or mode of communication he/she understands. Parent consent is required prior to conducting assessments and evaluations, sending confidential information to another agency about a child or family, and implementing an individualized family service plan or individualized education program.

designated instruction and services: specially designed instruction and related services to assist a pupil with a disability to benefit educationally. Such services include, but are not limited to, speech and language therapy; occupational therapy; orientation and mobility; adapted physical education; counseling and guidance; and health and nursing services.

Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP): the California Department of Education's statewide assessment system for all infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who are enrolled in state-funded child development programs.

Desired Results Developmental Profile *access* (DRDP*access*): the California Department of Education's statewide assessment system for all preschool aged children with individualized education programs.

developmental areas: cognitive, communication, adaptive, physical, and social/emotional areas of development.

developmental delay: eligibility criteria for infants and young children whose development is significantly delayed as compared to expected levels of development.

developmental disability: a disability that originates before an individual attains 18 years of age, is expected to continue indefinitely, and constitutes a substantial disability for that individual. The term includes intellectual disability,[9] cerebral palsy, epilepsy, or autism and disabling conditions found to be closely related to intellectual disability[10] or to require treatment similar to that required for individuals with intellectual disability,[11] but shall not include other disabling conditions that are solely physical in nature.

district of residence (DOR): the school district in which the child resides that is responsible for providing educational services.

evaluation: procedures used by qualified personnel to determine an infant's or toddler's present level of development and eligibility for Early Start, or for a child between ages three and twenty-two to determine present levels of performance and eligibility for special education services.

9 Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act Welfare and Institutions code, Division 4.5, Chapter 1, section 4512 (a). Assembly Bill (AB) 2370, legislation enacted and chaptered on September 22, 2012, replaced the term "mental retardation" with "intellectual disability." The legislation aligns California code with the federal definition, known as Rosa's Law, that was signed in 2010, and that removed the term "mental retardation" from all federal statutes and replaced it with "intellectual disability." AB 2370 revises various California statutes to make the same changs. The bill does not change the coverage, eligibility, rights, responsibilities, or substantive definitions referred to in existing law.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

extended school year (ESY): refers to public school services provided in summer months pursuant to an individualized education program.

free appropriate public education (FAPE): the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires a school district to provide a "free appropriate public education" to each eligible child ages three to twenty-two with a disability who is in the school district's jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the person's disability.

Head Start: a federally funded program started in 1965 that provides a comprehensive preschool program for children from income-eligible families. At least 10 percent of enrollment opportunities are for children with disabilities, and 10 percent of families may be enrolled whose incomes are above the eligibility requirements. Early Head Start is a program that serves infants and toddlers from birth to age three.

individual program plan (IPP): a service plan developed for persons with developmental disabilities who are served by the regional center system under the Lanterman Act. The plan describes the provision of services and supports needed to meet the written goals and objectives.

individualized education program (IEP): a written statement of educational goals and services for children age three and older that is developed, reviewed annually, revised, and implemented by local education agencies.

individualized family service plan (IFSP): a written plan for providing early intervention services for an infant or toddler, age birth to three years, and his or her family, who is eligible for early intervention services under Early Start.

individualized family service plan (IFSP) service coordinator: an individual who works with families and other professionals to identify, arrange, and coordinate needed services and supports for Early Start children and families.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): federal law passed in 1991 that reauthorizes and amends the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142). Most recently reauthorized in 2004, Part C of the law focuses on early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities.

informed clinical opinion: the judgment of a qualified professional who is a member of the multidisciplinary team. Informed clinical opinion is based on, but not limited to, opinions derived from a review of records, parent and professional observation of the child, and knowledge of evidence-based practice.

interagency agreement: an agreement between two or more agencies designating specific activities, behaviors, and responsibilities of each party in relation to a shared activity, interest, or requirement.

Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act: statute that governs how services are delivered within the California developmental services system.

Lanterman eligibility: regional center services determined through a diagnosis of developmental disability (see **developmental disability**).

least restrictive environment (LRE): one of several vital components in the development of a child's individualized education program that plays a critical role, influencing where a child spends his or her time at school, how services are provided, and the relationships the child develops within the school and community.

local education agency (LEA): a school district, county office of education, or special education local plan area that is responsible for providing educational services.

memorandum of understanding (MOU): written agreement between agencies stating each agency's specific responsibilities in coordinating early intervention services.

multidisciplinary team—Early Start: the parent and two or more individuals of various disciplines or professions (one of whom is the service coordinator) who participate in the provision of integrated and coordinated services, including evaluation and assessment and development of individualized family service plans.

multidisciplinary team—Part B: a group of specialists who independently assess and evaluate the child in their individual area of expertise and then collaborate with one another and families to develop and implement individualized education programs.

parent: a natural or adoptive parent; a guardian; a person acting in place of a parent such as a grandparent or step-parent with whom the child lives, a person who is legally responsible for the child's welfare, or a surrogate parent who has been assigned. "Parent" may mean a foster parent if the natural parent's authority to make the decision required of the parent has been limited or relinquished under state law and the foster parent has no interest that would conflict with the interests of the child.

parent concerns: areas of concern that family members have identified as needs, issues, or problems they want to address as part of the individualized family service plan (IFSP) process that are related to meeting the developmental needs of the infant or toddler.

parent priorities: a family's ranking of choices for the focus of early intervention services as well as for the ways in which early intervention services will be incorporated into the family's day-to-day organization, routine, and planning.

parent resources: the formal and informal supports and resources made available to the family to meet the developmental needs of the infant or toddler.

parent rights: an entitlement granted under law such as the right to appeal or the right to full access.

Part B: the section of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act for children and young adults ages three to twenty-two.

Part C: the section of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act that addresses early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities, birth to age three, and their families.

potentially eligible: a status describing any child who receives Early Start services with an active individualized family service plan and is referred to the local education agency to determine eligibility for special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part B at age three.

preschool: public or private general educational programs available to children from age three to the age of kindergarten entry.

preschool special education services: special education services available for children at age three through five.

primary contact: the designated individual within an agency who should be notified regarding a child or family referred to or served by that agency, such as a service coordinator or school district program administrator.

procedural safeguards: the legal rights and protections of children age birth to twenty-two and their families who are eligible for services under Part C Early Start or Part B special education.

qualified personnel: professionals who meet state certification, licensing, credentialing, registration, or other comparable requirements for the area in which they are providing early intervention or special education services or, in the absence of such approved or recognized requirements, meet the California Department of Developmental Services or California Department of Education requirements.

receiving agency: agency or program that "receives" a child after he or she exits early intervention services, such as a local education agency program, Lanterman regional center services, and/or community-based services.

referral: oral or written information that causes a written record to be developed and opened for an infant or toddler who may be eligible for early intervention services, or a child age three to twenty-two who may be eligible for special education services.

regional center: a private non-profit community agency or corporation acting as a contractor for the California Department of Developmental Services that coordinates services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Rosa's Law: enacted in October 2010, changes references in federal law from "mental retardation" to "intellectual disability."

sending agency: agency or program that "sends" a child from early intervention services to a local education agency program, Lanterman regional center services, and/or community-based services.

special day class: special education service setting comprised entirely of special education students.

special education: specialized instruction and related services provided to eligible children to address specific learning abilities and needs in accordance with provisions of state and federal education law.

special education local plan area (SELPA): an individual district, group of districts, or districts and county office of education that forms a consortium to ensure that full continuum of special education services is available to all eligible students within its boundaries.

state education agency (SEA): as defined in the *California Code of Regulations (CCR)*, at 2 *CCR* § 1859.202, the state education agency means the California Department of Education.

state preschools: state-subsidized preschool services for income-eligible families operated by local education agencies or non-profit agencies under contract with the Child Development Division of the California Department of Education.

transdisciplinary team: a group of specialists and family members who share information, professional expertise, techniques, and roles across disciplines to collaboratively assess and evaluate a child in order to develop and implement the individualized family service plan or individualized education plan.

vendored service provider: an individual or agency approved by the regional center to provide evaluation, assessment, and/or services to an infant or toddler and/or parent related to implementation of the individualized family service plan.

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