

## Young Child

Birth to age 5

**Early Intervention, or Early Start**, is a statewide program that aims to support young children with developmental disabilities and their families. This program is designed to assist infants and toddlers in meeting developmental milestones, provide education to families, and to aid the transition to school-based services. Some services to include:

- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Feeding Therapy
- Speech therapy
- Behavioral therapy
- Family training
- Social Work
- Care Coordination

### Service Providers and Regional Centers

The services listed above are provided through a network of community-based, nonprofit agencies known as Regional Centers, that each cover a different geographic area. **Evaluation and treatment are provided free of charge!**

Overview of Early Intervention and further information by state can be found here: [www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/parents/states.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/parents/states.html)

CDC's Recommendation for Developmental Milestones can be found here: [www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html)



### How to Contact your Regional Center

Per CDC guidelines, if your child is under the age of 3, you can call your states Early Intervention/Early Start program to inquire about these services. When contacting your states program, you can say:

**"I have concerns about my child's development and I would like to have my child evaluated to find out if they are eligible for early intervention services."**

Please note: a doctors referral is NOT necessary to access these services.

## School-Age

Ages 3-22

During school-aged years, individuals with disabilities may receive **services in an outpatient clinic setting and/or at school**. Services include:

- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Speech therapy
- Counseling/psychological services
- Educational therapy



### Insurance and Financial Factors

Outpatient services may or may not be covered by insurance, depending on the insurance provider and the insurance that the outpatient clinic accepts.



**At school, children with disabilities have rights that allow them to receive services which help them succeed in school. These rights are outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).**

### Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Rights

- Receive Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
- Be placed in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- Receive an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that outlines student/family goals and the services that will be provided by the school to meet the goals. Services include those as mentioned above, and others, such as transportation to and from school.
- Families of individuals with disabilities also have the right to an Educational Advocate or attorney who assists in understanding legal rights of students with disabilities and helps families navigate IEPs and the Special Education system.
- For more information about Special Education in California: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/>



## Transition

Ages 14-26

Transition begins a time that is highly focused on **independence, self-advocacy**, and supporting an individual's **abilities, interests, and needs** as they grow into adulthood. Transitioning from school to adult life may take months to years of advanced planning depending on each unique situation. Transition services may look similar to, and overlap with, adult services depending on the individuals' age and other factors. Available services include...

- Community-based life skills programs
- Vocational training
- Mock interviewing and job coaching
- Post-secondary education support
- Supported living
- Case management
- Rehabilitation services (OT, ST, Speech)
- Behavioral/mental health services

### Insurance and Financial Factors

Programming/services may be funded through federal laws including IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act. Students may be eligible for scholarships or financial aid in post-secondary education. Consider other funding sources, including those for healthcare, financial saving, and services/support such as:



Special Needs trust, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), In Home Supportive Services (IHSS), Cal Fresh, and Medicaid. Contact your Regional Center for more information.

### Legal Rights and Other Considerations

As stated in the IDEA, transition planning for students must begin by the age of 16. Individuals with disabilities can remain in school and continue to receive school-based services through their 22nd year of age.

It is also important to consider what are you and your family members plans regarding their caregiving. Is there a need for a conservatorship or a guardianship?



## Adult

Ages 18+

**What activities and careers interest your loved one?**  
Are they interested in attending a community-based program, specialized training program, a non-degree program to pursue a specific career, community college courses, or a university?  
**Is your loved one comfortable transitioning to living on their own or to a residential setting?**  
What services are they using in childhood that may also be helpful in adulthood?

### Continuing Education and Career-Based Services

**Community-based life skills programs:**  
Independent living skills including shopping, cooking, budgeting, and technology use.

**Vocational training:**  
Hands-on skills training for careers in healthcare, emergency services, arts, and more.

**Mock interviewing and job coaching:**  
Career-readiness and social skill building for entry into the workforce.

**Post-secondary education support:**  
Supportive services for students in university or community college settings.



### Home and Health Services

**Supported living:**  
Services provided to those living independently within a residential care community.

**Case management:**  
For ongoing management of health services and collaboration between service providers.

**Rehabilitation services:**  
Including Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Speech Therapy.

**Behavioral/mental health services:**  
Such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Psychiatry, and social skills groups.



## Basic Needs Support Services

If you are struggling to obtain basic needs such as food or housing, please refer to the following resources for more information about services offered for California residents.

### Housing

[www.disabilityhubmn.org/your-options/housing/](http://www.disabilityhubmn.org/your-options/housing/)  
[www.hcd.ca.gov/housing-assistance](http://www.hcd.ca.gov/housing-assistance)

### Food Insecurity

[www.getcalfresh.org/](http://www.getcalfresh.org/)

### Transportation

[www.accessla.org/riding\\_access/riding\\_training.html](http://www.accessla.org/riding_access/riding_training.html)

### Financial Support

[www.disabilityhubmn.org/your-options/money/how-the-hub-can-help/](http://www.disabilityhubmn.org/your-options/money/how-the-hub-can-help/)  
[www.calable.ca.gov/](http://www.calable.ca.gov/)  
[www.thearca.org/info-resources/special-needs-trust-calable/](http://www.thearca.org/info-resources/special-needs-trust-calable/)

### Communication Access

[www.disabilityrightsca.org/publications/getting-communication-supports-through-the-california-department-of-rehabilitation-dor](http://www.disabilityrightsca.org/publications/getting-communication-supports-through-the-california-department-of-rehabilitation-dor)  
[www.ldatschool.ca/assistive-technology/](http://www.ldatschool.ca/assistive-technology/)

### Crisis Lines and Peer Support

Peer-to-peer telephone support  
Call 1-844-739-5369 from 5 pm to 9 am.  
Crisis Text Line  
The Crisis Text Line is available 24/7. Text MN to 741741.  
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
The Lifeline is available 24/7. Call 1-800-273-8255.

## Resources and References

### Young Child

[www.dds.ca.gov/services/early-start/](http://www.dds.ca.gov/services/early-start/)

### School-Age

Federation for Children with Special Needs (fcsn.org)

### Transition and Adult

[www.parentcenterhub.org/transition-starters/](http://www.parentcenterhub.org/transition-starters/)  
[www.disabilityrightsca.org/publications/transition-services-for-students](http://www.disabilityrightsca.org/publications/transition-services-for-students)  
[www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/](http://www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/)  
[www.hope4arts.org/about/](http://www.hope4arts.org/about/)

### Regional Centers

<http://www.dds.ca.gov/rc/lookup-rcs-by-county/>

**For information about the UC-LEND Clinic, please contact us at [uc-lend@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:uc-lend@mednet.ucla.edu).**



## The Care Team

### Psychologist

Psychologists play a pivotal role in meeting the mental health needs of people with disabilities. Psychologists may work in a 1:1 therapeutic manner with a client and/or their family or lead groups. Psychologists can provide therapy, assessments, advocacy, and consultation. Psychologists Within a disability framework it is also common for Psychologists to provide consultation to the system around a client (e.g., teachers, allied health professionals, careers, support workers). In this context, the contributions of psychologist are best given within a multi-disciplinary group. Psychologists integrate clinical care with research to improve the mental health and quality of life of children, adolescents, and adults with disabilities.

### Occupational Therapist (OT)

Occupational therapy helps people participate in meaningful, everyday activities ("occupations") that they want to and need to do. Occupational therapists work with individuals from birth to old age with a range of injuries, illnesses, and disabilities. Occupational therapists use a client-centered approach to understand the person, their abilities, strengths, challenges, and the factors that influence their participation in occupations. Occupational therapists are trained to break down activities and improve a person's ability to perform the activity and achieve their goals.

### Speech Language-Pathologist (SLP)

Speech-language Pathologists aim to prevent, assess, diagnose, and treat speech, language, social communication, cognitive-communication, and swallowing disorders in both children and adults. Speech therapy aims to improve a person's functional communication skills in order for the person to better understand and interact with their peers and the world around them. Speech-language Pathologists are trained to capitalize on each person's strengths and provide evidence-based treatment to assist individual's in overcoming communication challenges.

### Registered Nurse (RN)

RNs work in many capacities and settings and work with patients of all ages. An RN can have multiple responsibilities, including wound care, medication administration and education, head-to-toe assessments, and patient specific feedback to multidisciplinary teams. Some RNs are specialized and others see a variety of patients. Most RNs play the role of a clinical judge - deciding what medical orders to question and what new treatment-altering information to communicate to the provider. A core part of an RN's role is to be a non-biased advocate for their patient's unique and often complex wishes and needs. All RNs provide holistic care to patients and pay special attention to their psychosocial, cultural and spiritual needs.

**This resource guide has been developed through a collaboration of individuals from various career disciplines, fields of study, and expertise in neurodevelopmental disabilities.**

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