

A Guide for
Parents
of Children
With Special
Needs



**NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY
REGIONAL CENTER**

15400 SHERMAN WAY, STE. 170, VAN NUYS, CA 91406
(818) 778-1900 Main Office www.nlacrc.org

WHO NEEDS EARLY START SERVICES?

If you have a baby who . . .

* was very small or sick at birth

* seems to be developing slowly

* has a disability

. . . then this guide is for you.

| | |
|---------------|---|
| IEP | Individual Education Plan |
| IFSP | Individual Family Service Plan |
| IPP | Individual Program Plan |
| LAS | Language / Speech Impaired |
| LAUSD | Los Angeles Unified School District |
| LEA | Local Education Agency |
| LVUSD | Las Virgenes Unified School District |
| MCH | Maternal and Child Health |
| MTU | Medical Therapy Unit |
| NLACRC | North Los Angeles County Regional Center |
| OHI | Other Health Impaired |
| ORT | Orthopedically Impaired |
| OT | Occupational Therapy |
| PL | Public Law |
| PS | Partially Sighted |
| PT | Physical Therapy |
| SB | Senate Bill |
| SELPA | Special Education Local Plan Area |
| SLD | Specific Learning Disability |
| SSI | Supplemental Security Income |
| TDD | Telecommunication Device for the Deaf |
| TTY | Teletype |
| UCP | United Cerebral Palsy |
| VNA | Visiting Nurses Association |
| WIC | Women/Infant/Children Supplemental Food Program |

THERE ARE SO MANY DOCTORS...WHO SHOULD MY CHILD SEE?

Your primary pediatrician is responsible for well child care and treating childhood illnesses. She/he will oversee your child's health care and development, answer your questions and can refer you to a specialist when appropriate.

Some medical specialists you may encounter include:

- Pulmonologist** - Specializes in breathing problems.
- Neurologist** - Specializes in the nervous system and development.
- Ophthalmologist** - Specializes in eye and vision problems.
- Cardiologist** - Specializes in heart problems.
- Gastroenterologist** - Specializes in digestive problems.

SOCIAL SERVICE/ASSISTANCE

Department of Public Special Services (DPSS) for AFDC & Medi-Cal

Canoga Park: (818) 718-3500
Lancaster: (661) 723-4021
Panorama City: (818) 901-4124
San Fernando: (818) 837-2111
Santa Clarita: (661) 298-3406

SSI (800) 772-1213

Women/Infant/Children (WIC) Food Assistance

San Fernando & (818) 361-7541
Santa Clarita
Antelope Valley: (661) 949-5805

California Child Health and Disability Program (CHDP)

(818) 834-3380

Counseling

El Centro de Amistad

7024 Deering Ave.
Canoga Park, CA 91303
(818) 347-8565

El Nido Adolescent/Family Services

12502 Van Nuys Blvd., Ste. 201
Pacoima, CA 91331
(818) 896-7776

El Proyecto del Barrio

8902 Woodman Ave.
Arleta, CA 91331
(818) 830-7181

Family/ Children's Bureau

1529 E. Palmdale Blvd. # 210
Palmdale, CA 93550
(661) 272-9996

Friends of the Family

15350 Sherman Way, # 140
Van Nuys, CA 91406
(818) 988-4430

Hathaway Children Services

11500 Eldridge Ave. #204
Lakeview Terrace, CA 91342
(818) 896-2255

S.F. Valley Child Guidance Clinic

9650 Zelzah Ave.
Northridge, CA 91325
(818) 993-9311

Santa Clarita Child Center

21704 Golden Triangle Rd.
Saugus, CA 91350
(661) 259-9439

Valley Child Guidance

310 E. Palmdale Blvd. #G
Palmdale, CA 93550
(661) 265-8627

S.F. Valley Community Mental Health

14545 Sherman Circle
Van Nuys, CA 91405
(818) 901-4854

CHILD CARE

Assistance League - Antelope Valley

808 W. Newgrove Ave.
Lancaster, CA 93534
(661) 948-1513

Child Care Resource Center San Fernando Valley:

16650 Sherman Way, Ste. 200
Van Nuys, CA 91406
(818) 756-3360

Antelope Valley:

540 W. Lancaster Blvd., Ste. 101
Lancaster, CA 93534
(661) 949-0615

Dubnoff Center

10526 Dubnoff Way
North Hollywood, CA 91606
(818) 755-4950

L.A. Childcare/Development Council

2701 N. Main St.
Los Angeles, CA 90031
(323) 223-3313

Maud Booth Family Center

11243 Kittridge St.
North Hollywood, CA 91606
(818) 980-2287

Helping Hands/Single Parents

P.O.Box 572471
Tarzana, CA 91357
(818) 345-6452

Head Start / Latin American Civic Assoc.

San Fernando, Santa Clarita &
Antelope Valleys:
340 Parkside Dr.
San Fernando, CA 91340
(818) 361-8641

At times, finding resources for your child can be difficult and confusing. Your local Family Resource Center can answer many questions and provide you with basic information; phone numbers are listed under the **"Family Resource Center"** section.

In addition, many community organizations such as hospitals, churches and others have social services available that can help you find the appropriate agency. You may not get the answer you are looking for on your first phone call. If you think the individual or agency you are calling should be able to help, be persistent.

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WHAT IS A REGIONAL CENTER?

The **North Los Angeles County Regional Center** is one of 21 private, non-profit, state-funded community based centers in California whose purpose is to provide diagnostic evaluations, case management and support services to individuals who have or may be at risk of having a developmental disability and to parents at risk of having a child with developmental disabilities.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

If your child has a diagnosis of Mental Retardation, Cerebral Palsy, Autism, Epilepsy or is at risk of having a developmental disability due to problems at birth or during the first three years of life, then she/he may be eligible for the **Regional Center's Early Start Program**.

CEREBRAL PALSY

United Cerebral Palsy
6430 Independence Ave.
Woodland Hills, CA 91367
(818) 782-2211

DOWN SYNDROME

Down Syndrome Association
8949 Reseda Blvd., Ste. 109
Northridge, CA 91324
(818) 718-6363

EPILEPSY

Epilepsy Society of Los Angeles
3600 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 920
Los Angeles, CA 90010
(800) 564-0445

LEARNING DISABILITIES

Learning Disabilities Association
37 N. Auburn Ave. #3
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
(626) 355-0240

MENTAL RETARDATION

Association of Retarded Citizens
Exceptional Children's Foundation
3750 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90008
(323) 290-2000

SPEECH AND HEARING

American Speech Language
Hearing Association Information
Resource Center
(800) 638-8255

GREATER L.A. COUNCIL OF DEAFNESS

2222 Laverna Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90041
(323) 478-8000 (TDD/Voice)

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

American Council of the Blind
(800) 424-8666

FOUNDATION FOR THE JR. BLIND

5300 Angeles Vista Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90043
(323) 295-4555

RESOURCE LIST

This is a partial list of resources available within Los Angeles County, especially the North Los Angeles area. For additional resource information, contact **Info Line at (818) 501-4447** or your local Family Resource Center.

North Los Angeles County Regional Center

Main office: 15400 Sherman Way, Ste. 170
Van Nuys, CA 91406
(818) 778-1900

Lancaster office: 43210 Gingham Ave. #6
Lancaster, CA 93535
(661) 945-6761

Santa Clarita office: 25031 W. Ave. Stanford
Unit #30
Santa Clarita, CA 91355
(661) 775-8450

Los Angeles Unified School District Preschool Special Education

East Valley: 15530 Hesby St., Rm. 20
Encino, CA 91436
(818) 904-2043

West Valley: 6505 Zelzah Ave.
Reseda, CA 91335
(818) 997-2466

Antelope Valley SELPA Preschool Special Education

1607 E. Palmdale Blvd., Ste. G
Palmdale, CA 93550
(661) 274-0147

California Children Services

Reseda Therapy MTU Santa Clarita MTU
19451 Wyandotte Dr. 19420 W Sierra Estates Dr.
Reseda, CA 91335 Santa Clarita, CA 91321
(818) 885-6244 (661) 251-0464

North Hollywood MTU Palmdale MTU
12827 Saticoy St. 37005 Hillcrest Dr.
North Hollywood, CA 91605 Palmdale, CA 93552
(818) 765-2076 (661) 456-1255

Los Angeles Unified School District

Vision

5210 West Clinton St.
Los Angeles, CA 90004
(323) 962-9560

Hearing

15530 Hesby St.
Encino, CA 91436
(818) 997-2330

Santa Clarita SELPA

Preschool Special Education

17866 Sierra Hwy., #101
Canyon County, CA 91351
(661) 254-4695

Las Virgenes School District Preschool Special Education

4111 N. Las Virgenes Rd.
Calabasas, CA 91302
(818) 880-4000

Orthopedist

- Specializes in bone growth and development.

Anesthesiologist

- Specializes in sedating and monitoring vital signs during surgery.

Geneticist

- Specializes in genetic disorders.

Neonatologist

- Specializes in treatment and care of newborns.

ENT

- Specializes in problems related to ears, nose and throat.

Depending on your child's needs, there are many specialists or therapists who could be involved with your child's care. They may include an Audiologist for hearing, a Nutritionist for advice on nutrition, a Speech Therapist for language and speech, an Occupational Therapist for fine motor and daily living activities, or a Physical Therapist for assistance with motor skills, such as crawling and walking. These specialists work on referral from your doctor.

WHAT IS EARLY INTERVENTION?

Early Intervention is a combination of specialized services provided for infants and toddlers who are at-risk or are showing signs of developmental delay. Services are designed to address the health, physical, educational, and social needs of young children, necessary for early growth and development. Early intervention services encourage active parent involvement and seek to reduce the impact of potentially handicapping conditions on the care givers and family.

Early Intervention Services may be provided in a variety of environments: your home, a clinic, a center, or preschool in your neighborhood. These services may vary in frequency and intensity depending on your child's and family's needs. The services identified in your IFSP may include educational, visual, auditory, nutritional, orthopedic, behavioral, and other services, including speech, physical and occupational therapy.

Early Intervention Services may also include support services for your family, such as respite care, parent training and support. Intervening early, when your child's problems are first identified, can help you gain confidence in your ability to manage your child and lessen the stress on you and your family.

Funding for **Early Intervention Services** may be available through a variety of funding sources such as health insurance, California Children Services, regional center, schools, and others. Your Early Start Service Coordinator will help you find the resources needed for your child through the IFSP process.

WHAT IS THE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER?

The Family Resource Center is a place where families can receive information, get to know other parents, learn about special education workshops and be connected with parent support groups. It is staffed by parents of children with special needs and contains a multimedia library of books, video tapes and other materials with information specially selected for families like yours. It provides a telephone support service, parent mentors, multicultural resources and a referral service.

There is no service that quite equals the support that one parent offers another. In parent support groups, members share information, resources and the emotional experiences which families face when a child has special needs. The Family Resource Center works with families of different ages, cultures and communities. Training workshops on specific topics of interest are offered on a periodic basis.

The Family Resource Center encourages volunteer involvement. Interested persons can help in the library, provide support to other parents or help plan training or informational events for families.

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD?

As a parent, you are at the heart of your child's team and an essential partner in the process. You are encouraged to be an active, informed participant in every aspect of your child's development. You should keep records and regularly communicate with the team members, especially your Early Start Service Coordinator, so that your team can make appropriate decisions for your child.

ALPHABET SOUP

The following are some abbreviations that you may see or hear as you talk to parents and professionals.

| | |
|----------------|---|
| AB | Assembly Bill |
| ADL | Activities of Daily Living |
| AFDC | Aid for Dependent Children |
| AMESLAN | American Sign Language |
| ARC | Association for Retarded Citizens |
| CCS | California Children Services |
| CHDP | California Child Health and Disability Program |
| CHIME | Children's Center Handicapped Integration Model Educational Project |
| CP | Cerebral Palsy |
| CSUN | California State University Northridge |
| DCFS | Department of Children and Family Services |
| DD | Developmental Disability |
| DDS | Department of Developmental Services |
| HIP | Hearing Impaired Program |
| HOH | Hard of Hearing |
| IDEA | Individuals with Disabilities Education Act |

ARE THERE OTHER PARENTS LIKE ME?

Many people have concerns about their newborn or very young child. There are hundreds of babies being discharged from newborn intensive care units in the North Los Angeles area every year. Infants and toddlers may be diagnosed as having a developmental delay or a disability, or their families may suspect that something is not right. These families are looking for information and resources just as you are. Many want to meet other parents to share ideas and experiences.

Early Start Services are for interested families who wish to support and maximize the development of their child with special needs. Early Start Services are intended to provide family support, encourage family involvement and promote positive parent-child interactions.

If you are concerned about your child's development and would like more information on community resources, parent groups and parent-to-parent support, then North Los Angeles County Early Start Program and Family Resource Center are good places to start.

THERE ARE SO MANY AGENCIES AND SERVICES WHO DO I CALL?

It is very important to have your baby checked regularly by your pediatrician or clinic. Depending on your child's needs, agencies to call may include:

***North Los Angeles County Regional Center**

***Neonatal Intensive Care Follow-Up Clinic**

***Local Education Agencies**

Los Angeles Unified School District
Las Virgenes School District
Santa Clarita Valley SELPA
Antelope Valley SELPA

***California Children's Services**

WHERE DO I GO FOR LEGAL OR ADVOCACY ASSISTANCE?

Area Board X

411 N. Central Ave., Ste. 620
Glendale, CA 91203
(818) 543-4631

Alliance for Children's Rights

3333 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 550
Los Angeles, CA 90010
(213) 368-6010

Children's Rights Project

Public Counsel
601 S. Ardmore Ave.
Los Angeles,, CA 90005
(213) 385-2977

North Los Angeles County Regional Center

15400 Sherman Way, Ste. 170
Van Nuys, CA 91406
(818) 778-1900

Protection and Advocacy, Inc. (PAI)

3580 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 902
Los Angeles, CA 90010
(800) 776-5746

Team of Advocates for Special Kids (TASK)

100 W. Cerritos Ave.
Anaheim, CA 92805
(714) 533-TASK (8275)

Disability Rights Education Fund

2212 Sixth St.
Berkeley, CA 94710
(800) 466-4232

Legal Aid Foundation of L.A.

1102 Crenshaw Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90019
(800) 399-4529

L.A. County Department of Children/Family Services

Child Abuse Hotline
(800) 540-4000

WHAT IS AN INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SERVICE PLAN (IFSP)?

The **Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)** is a process of gathering information concerning your family's needs and priorities. A written plan of service will then be developed in consultation with your family, your service coordinator and other service providers as appropriate.

The **IFSP** process is based upon the assumption that the family is the child's greatest resource and that a child's needs are closely tied to the needs of the family. The best way to support children is to support and act upon the strengths of the family.

Your written family service plan will include a statement of your child's strengths and needs, your family's concerns, priorities and preferred resources. It will identify expected outcomes for your child, which services she/he will be receiving and when and how progress will be evaluated. The IFSP is not an end in itself. It is an ongoing process which will reassess needs and priorities at six month intervals until age three.

The **Family Resource Centers** in the North Los Angeles area are:

Family Focus Resource Centers

San Fernando Valley

Cal State University, Northridge
School of Education, Bldg. 27
Room E 109-I
18111 Nordhoff St.
Northridge, CA 91330
(818) 677-5575

Santa Clarita Valley

19059 Vicci St. # 27
Canyon Country, CA 91351
(661) 299-4572

Families Caring for Families

113 W. Pillsbury St.
Lancaster, CA 93535
(661) 949-1746

HOW CAN I FIND INFORMATION ON SPECIFIC DISABILITIES?

The following is a partial list of California Agencies for specific disabilities groups:

AIDS

L.A. Family AIDS Network
6430 Sunset Blvd. # 1202
Los Angeles, CA 90028
(323) 669-5616

MARCH OF DIMES

3699 Wilshire Blvd., # 520
Los Angeles, CA 90010
(213) 637-5050

AREA BOARD X

411 N. Central Ave., Ste. 620
Glendale, CA 91203
(818) 543-4631

MENTAL HEALTH

SFV Child Guidance
9650 Zelzah Ave.
Northridge, CA 91325
(818) 993-9311

AUTISM

Autism Society of Los Angeles
1612 W. Olive Ave. # 201
Burbank, CA 91506
(818) 953-3855

VALLEY CHILD GUIDANCE

310 E. Palmdale Blvd., Ste. G
Palmdale, CA 93550
(661) 265-8627

The Early Start Program is a combination of services which provides assessment, early intervention, information, and support to children with special needs from birth to three years and their families.

When your infant or toddler is referred to a regional center, she/he is assigned an **Early Start Service Coordinator**. Your service coordinator is a key member of your family's team and the one you can call when you need help. She/he will help you review the information from various professionals who know your child, discuss how these complement your own observations and offer recommendations. Family members, friends, etc., can also be part of your team.

Every child in Early Start will have an **Individualized Family Service Plan** within 45 days of referral to the program. The sooner you apply for services for your child, the sooner your child can be helped.