

II. SERVICES FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS WITH DISABILITIES

The state's Early Start program is the service delivery system established by the [California Early Intervention Services Act](#). The program, which is also governed by the Early Support Services Act ([Part C of IDEA](#)), provides early intervention services to infants and toddlers up to 36 months of age who have a [developmental delay](#) or for whom there are [established risk conditions](#) or [high-risk biomedical factors](#) that could lead to a delay.

The individualized early intervention services for infants who are at high risk or who have a disabling condition, and for their families, provide educational, developmental, health, and social services. With active parent involvement, these supports can significantly reduce the potential impact of many disabling conditions and positively influence later development when the child reaches school age (California Early Intervention Services Act, *14 GC §95000*).

Infants and toddlers have unique needs and therefore require a unique service delivery model, which is different from the system for school age children. Specialized programs and personnel standards are specific to the needs of infants and toddlers who are at high risk or who have a disabling condition and to their families.

Partnership - Early Start services are services for eligible infants and toddlers. Golden Gate Regional Center provides the majority of these services in San Francisco County. SFUSD provides Early Start Services to solely low incidence eligible infants and toddlers.

- ❑ *Golden Gate Regional Center's mission and responsibilities are the result of two major legislative acts: the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act and the California Early Intervention Services Act. Additional information on services from Golden Gate Regional Center can be found at <http://www.ggrc.org/>.*
- ❑ SFUSD's Early Start program serves infants and toddlers eligible with "solely low incidence" disabilities (hearing impairments, vision impairments, or severe orthopedic impairments) who reside within the District's geographical boundaries.

Child Find - As SFUSD is responsible for serving solely low incidence eligible infants and toddlers, referrals are processed from the California Department of Education, SF County hospitals, doctors and the Golden Gate Regional Center.

Assessments - Golden Gate Regional Center and SFUSD conduct their own evaluations to determine eligibility for Early Start services.

Services - Specialized instruction and other services are provided to eligible infants/toddlers and their families in their homes, at center-based programs and community preschool programs, including Early Head Start. An *Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP)* is developed to document services agreed upon by the IFSP team. Services on the IFSP are provided to the maximum extent appropriate:

- ❑ In natural environments that are natural or typical for a same-aged infant or toddler without a disability, which may include the home or community settings; and
- ❑ In settings other than the natural environment that are most appropriate, as determined by the parent and the IFSP Team, only when early intervention services cannot be achieved satisfactorily in a natural environment. (*34 CFR §303.26, 34 CFR §303.126, 34 CFR §303.13(a) (8), 34 CFR §303.344 (d)*)

A. ASSESSMENT FOR SERVICE PLANNING

Assessment Teams:

- ❑ Transdisciplinary teams may include, but are not limited to, qualified persons from the following disciplines: (*30 EC §56426.6(c)(1)-(8)*)
 - Early childhood special education
 - Speech and language therapy
 - Nursing, with a skill level not less than that of a registered nurse
 - Social work, psychology or mental health
 - Occupational therapy
 - Physical therapy
 - Audiology
 - Parent-to-parent support
- ❑ Assessment for service planning for eligible infants or toddlers shall identify all of the following:
 - The infant or toddler's unique strengths and needs in all areas of development
 - Early intervention and other services appropriate to meet the needs identified
 - The resources, priorities and concerns of the family and the supports and services necessary to enhance their capacity to meet the developmental needs of an infant or toddler with a disability
- ❑ For purposes of service planning, the Golden Gate Regional Center and SFUSD may use existing evaluation materials if the multidisciplinary team agrees that the existing resources adequately describe the levels of development and service needs for the infant or toddler
- ❑ Assessment for service planning shall be based on age appropriate methods and procedures, which may include any of the following:
 - A review of information related to the infant or toddler's health status and medical history provided by qualified health professionals who have evaluated or assessed the infant or toddler
 - Developmental observations by qualified personnel and the parent
 - Other procedures used by qualified personnel to determine the presence of a developmental delay, established risk condition or high risk for a developmental disability; and
 - Standardized tests or instruments

- ❑ Assessments of family resources, priorities and concerns related to enhancing the development of the infant or toddler shall be voluntary on the part of the family. The family assessment shall:
 - Be conducted by qualified personnel trained to utilize appropriate methods and procedures
 - Be based on information provided by the family through a personal interview;
 - Incorporate the family's description of its resources, priorities and concerns related to enhancing the development of the infant or toddler; and
 - Be conducted in the language of the family's choice or other mode of communication unless it is not feasible to do so

- ❑ Assessments for service planning shall be conducted in natural environments whenever possible.

B. ELIGIBILITY

The SFUSD Early Start assessment team evaluates infants and toddlers with solely low incidence disabilities: Vision Impairment, Hearing Impairment and Orthopedic Impairment. The eligibility for infants and toddlers with a low incidence disability is the same as for school age students. Refer to [Chapter VI: PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY](#) in this manual for more information.

C. IFSP AND SERVICES

Parents must be invited to participate in the IFSP and given the option to request the meeting be rescheduled if they are unable to attend at the offered time.

- ❑ The IFSP shall include a statement of the major outcomes expected to be achieved for the child and family, as well as the criteria, procedures, and timelines used to determine:
 - The degree to which progress toward achieving the outcomes is being made; and
 - Whether modifications or revisions of the outcomes or services are necessary (34 CFR §303.344(c))

- ❑ Early education and related services shall be based on the needs of the infant and the family as determined by the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) team and shall be specified in the IFSP. Any early education or related service may be provided only upon written parent/guardian consent. (30 EC §56426.8(a))
- ❑ The IFSP for any infant shall be developed in consultation with the infant's physician in order to ensure that the services specified in the plan do not conflict with the infant's medical needs. (30 EC §56426.8(b))

- ❑ The services offered by Early Start may include:

- Assistive technology (devices and services)
 - Audiology or hearing services
 - Family training, counseling and home visits
 - Health services necessary for a child to benefit from other early intervention services
 - Medical services necessary for diagnosis or evaluation
 - Nursing services
 - Nutrition services
 - Occupational therapy
 - Parent Counseling and Training
 - Physical therapy
 - Psychological services
 - Service coordination
 - Social work services
 - Special instruction
 - Speech and language services
 - Transportation and related costs necessary for a child to receive services
 - Vision services
- The IFSP shall include statements of the specific early intervention services necessary to meet the unique needs of the infant or toddler and the family to achieve the outcomes including: (17 CCR §52106(b)(6)(A)-(F))
- The frequency, intensity, and method of delivering the services
 - The location where the services will be delivered
 - The statements of location shall specify the natural environments such as home, child care, school program, or private program where early intervention services shall be provided
 - The statement shall include a justification of the extent, if any, to which the services will not be provided in a natural environment
 - The projected date for initiation of each service
 - The anticipated duration of the services
 - The scheduled days when services/programs will not be available when the service provider operates a program which has a fixed schedule, which includes breaks in service for periods such as holidays or vacations; and
 - The service provider providing each early intervention service
- These services are provided by either Golden Gate Regional Center or SFUSD
- Services provided by SFUSD are home-based programming until the child is 18 months old. A center-based model is available for deaf and hard-of-hearing toddlers based upon recommendation from the IFSP team. California Children's Services (CCS) provides all medically necessary OT and PT for CCS eligible children/infants.
- In the event the infant or toddler or infant or toddler's parent/guardian is not eligible to receive CCS services, or funding for the program is unavailable, the

required early intervention services shall be provided by the Golden Gate Regional Center or by SFUSD if the child is eligible for the solely low incidence program

- The parent shall be informed in writing of this provision during the initial 45-day evaluation and assessment period and/or during the IFSP meeting

D. STAFFING

- ❑ Early education services for infants/toddlers with solely low incidence disabilities shall be provided by SFUSD through a transdisciplinary team consisting of a group of professionals from various disciplines, agencies, as well as parents who shall share their expertise and services to provide appropriate services for infants and their families. Each team member shall be responsible for providing and coordinating early education services for one or more infants and their families and shall serve as a consultant to other team members and as a provider of appropriate related services to infants in the program. (30 EC §56426.6(a))
- ❑ A person who is authorized by SFUSD to provide early education or related services to infants shall have appropriate experience in normal and atypical infant development and an understanding of the unique needs of families of infants with exceptional needs, or, absent that experience and understanding, shall undergo a comprehensive training plan for that purpose. The plan shall be developed and implemented as part of the staff development component of the local plan for early education services. (30 EC §56426.6(d))
- ❑ Credentialed personnel with expertise in vision or hearing impairments shall be made available by SFUSD to early education programs serving infants identified as a student with a visual impairment, hearing impairment or deaf-blindness and shall be the primary providers of services under those programs whenever possible. (30 EC §56426.6(b)), (5 CCR §3030 (a),(b))

Transition from the Early Start Program

[CHAPTER III: SERVICES FOR PRESCHOOLERS WITH DISABILITIES](#) describes the process of transitioning from Early Start to Preschool. In addition:

- ❑ Any child who becomes three years of age while participating in Early Start services may continue until June 30 of the current program year if the IEP team determines that the preschooler is eligible, develops an IEP, and determines that the early childhood special education services remain appropriate
- ❑ No later than June 30 of that year, the IEP team shall meet to review the preschooler's progress and revise the IEP accordingly. The IEP team meeting shall be conducted by SFUSD. Representatives of the early childhood special education program shall be invited to this meeting. If a child's third birthday occurs during the summer, the child's IEP team

shall determine the date when services under the IEP will begin. (34 CFR §300.101(b)), (EC §56426.9(d))

APPENDIX II

- A. DRDP (2015) a Developmental Continuum from Early Infancy to Kindergarten
Entry: [Infant/Toddler View](#)
- B. [FAQ on DRDP](#)