

# The Next Step



## Navigating the Special Needs System





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# Does My Child Need Help?



- You or someone else suspects your child may have a problem or delay
- What do you do now?



# Steps to Take

1. **Make a Referral**-a referral for an evaluation may be made by a pediatrician or other physician, a teacher, or even by you. Knowing where to make the referral is key!

# Steps to Take

**2. Get an Evaluation**-discipline specific evaluations are completed in order to determine if your child is eligible to receive services funded through Regional Center, California Children Services, or the public school system. The evaluation also guides the *type and frequency* of intervention needed.



# Steps to Take

**3. Intervention-**if recommended, may be direct therapy or indirect therapy (consultation, monitoring). Individual or group intervention may be recommended.



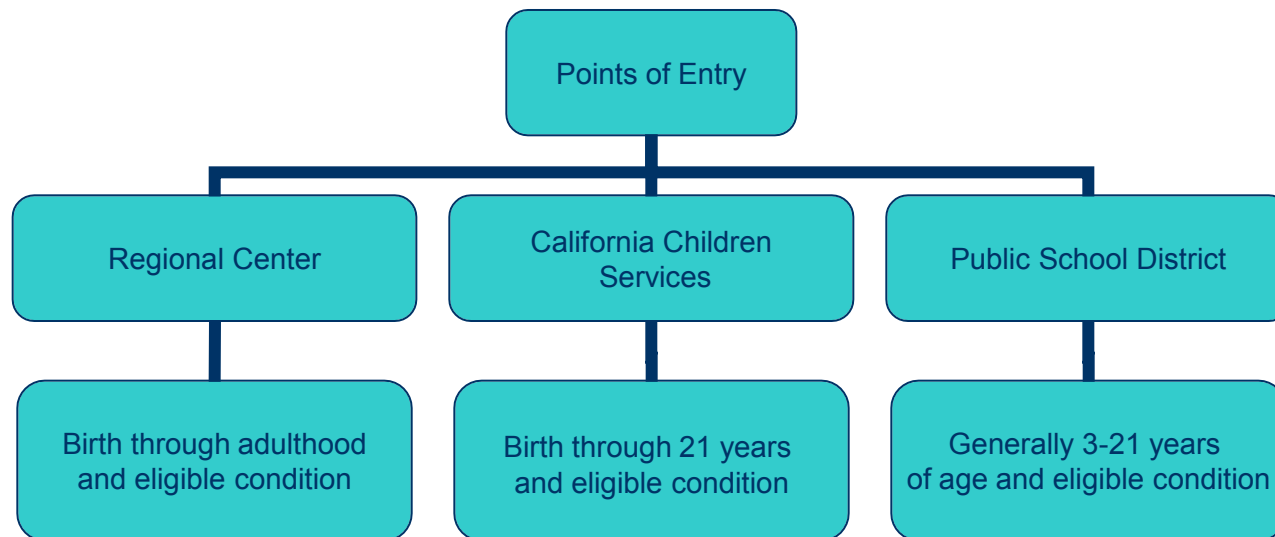


# Referral

The Special Needs System has several points of entry for referral depending upon your child's age and/or diagnosis:

- Regional Center
- California Children Services (CCS)
- Public School System

# Referral Points of Entry







# Referral

## Regional Center Eligibility

- **Age:** Birth-Adulthood
- **Diagnosis/Condition:** Serves persons who have a developmental disability\*, are experiencing or at risk for a delay/disability, or are at high-risk of parenting an infant with a disability
- **Income:** N/A; services available to all income levels

\* a disability that originates before an individual attains the age of 18 years, can be expected to continue indefinitely, and constitutes a substantial handicap for that individual. This includes mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, and closely related disabling conditions

# Referral CCS Eligibility



There are two Branches:

## Medical Services Branch

- California resident under 21 years
- Covers certain medical conditions that are physical or require medical, surgical, or rehabilitative services
- Family income of \$40,000 or less (AGI) **or** the child has Healthy Families coverage

# Referral CCS Eligibility



## Medical Therapy Branch

- Under 21 years
- Has a neuromuscular or orthopedic condition that is covered by CCS
- Income is not a factor

# Referral CCS Eligibility



- If you do not meet all the eligibility criteria for the Medical Services Branch of CCS, your child may still be eligible to receive therapy services through the Medical Therapy Program (MTP)
- The MTP provides PT and OT for eligible children regardless of the family's income



# Referral

## Public School System Eligibility

- **Age:** 3-21 years
- **Diagnosis/Condition:** Must be eligible for special education in order to receive support services
- **Income:** N/A; services available regardless of income level



# Evaluation

- Assuming your child has an eligible condition, intervention may be recommended according to the results of the evaluation.
- If your child is found to have an eligible condition, the appropriate funding agency is determined according to your child's age and diagnosis. The funding agency may change as your child gets older or their condition or diagnosis changes.
- It is this funding agency that provides the recommended intervention either through their own staff, a "vendored" agency, or a combination of the two.

# Evaluation Regional Center



- Intake Assessment is completed to help determine eligibility.
- If found eligible, referrals may be made for additional evaluations which may be done by regional center personnel or vendored agencies.
- Discipline specific evaluations are conducted. These may be done individually by each discipline or in a team format which may include all or a combination of physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, psychology, nutrition, developmental specialist.



# Evaluation California Children Services

- A CCS nurse will require medical information and together with a physician will determine if a child is eligible for the medical therapy program.
- If so the referral information is sent to the child's local medical therapy unit which are usually housed in schools.
- An occupational and physical therapy evaluation will be conducted to determine further services





# Evaluation School District

- A request for an evaluation is submitted in writing to the local school district special education department.
- The family signs an Assessment Plan indicating the areas to be assessed which may include:
  - Academic/pre-academic/functional assessment
  - Social/adaptive behavior
  - Psycho-motor development
  - Language/speech/communication development
  - Intellectual development
  - Audiological assessment

# Intervention and Support

- Regional Center-services may be provided in home or at a vendored agency.
- California Children Services-services are typically provided in a medical therapy unit located at a public school.
- School District-services are provided in school, a vendored clinic, or a combination.

# Intervention and Support Regional Center



- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Nutrition Therapy
- Early Intervention Services
- Infant Stimulation
- Respite and Nursing Care
- Transportation
- Assistive Technology
- Some Evaluative Medical Services
- Behavioral Support Training
- Psychological Services
- Vision Services
- Social Work Services

# Intervention and Support CCS Medical Therapy Program



- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Social Work
- Nutrition Services
- Pediatric and Orthopedic clinics
- Orthotic and durable medical equipment (DME) clinics

# Intervention and Support School District



- Psychologist
- Behavioral Specialist
- Audiologist
- Speech/language Pathologist
- Adapted Physical Education Specialist
- General Education Teacher
- Special Education Teacher Nurse
- Occupational Therapist
- Physical Therapist
- Assistive Technologist
- Vision Specialist
- Hearing Specialist



# Contact Information

## Los Angeles Area Regional Centers

- Lanterman Regional Center (213) 383-1300
- Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center (626) 299-4700
- San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center (909) 620-7722
- North Los Angeles Regional Center (818) 778-1900
- Harbor Regional Center (310) 540-1711
- Westside Regional Center (310) 258-4000
- South Central Regional Center (213) 744-7000



# Contact Information

- Los Angeles County California Children Services  
(800) 288-4584
- Orange County California Children Services  
(714) 347-0300
- Contact your local school district's special education department for information regarding school based assessments or support services

# Terminology

- **IEP**-Individualized Education Program
- **IFSP**-Individualized Family Service Plan. A written plan which serves as a “road map” for providing early intervention services to a child between birth and three years of age who is eligible for services under IDEA. This plan determines how a child’s goals/outcomes will be achieved and which services will be provided in order to achieve those outcomes.
- **EI**-Early Intervention. Services provided to infants and toddlers age birth-three years. Eligibility is determined by assessment and indicate the child is developmentally delayed or at risk for delay in one or more of the following areas: cognitive, motor, communication, social/emotional, or adaptive.
- **IDEA**-Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- **FAPE**-Free and Appropriate Education
- **LRE**-Least Restrictive Environment



# Terminology

- **Physical Therapy (PT)**-directed at improving a child's gross motor skills which affect development and movement. Intervention emphasizes neuromuscular performance during play and mobility, with focus on muscular strength, balance, coordination, and posture.
- **Occupational Therapy (OT)**-directed at improving a child's development and ability to function independently within the family, community, and school. Intervention emphasizes sensory integrative and neuromuscular techniques through goal directed motor, self care, and play activities.
- **Speech-Language Therapy (ST)**-directed at improving a child's communication and oral motor skills, both verbally and non-verbally. Intervention emphasizes interactive communication within the child's environment.

# Terminology

- **Dietary Services**-directed at improving a child's relationship with food and the experience of eating so that they can maintain good health and reach their growth potential. Intervention emphasizes behavioral strategies and feeding recommendations to address specific problems interfering with feeding/nutrition.
- **Social Work**-Provides counseling, emotional support, and community resource information to assist children and families with psychological and social adjustment to the child's disability



# Questions?

If you have any questions, would like more information on navigating the special needs system, or have suggestions on further information to include in this informational piece, please contact:

**Center for Developing Kids**  
**200 E. Del Mar Blvd. #112**  
**Pasadena, CA 91105**  
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**[www.centerfordevelopingkids.com](http://www.centerfordevelopingkids.com)**

