



The Early Edition

A Publication of Matrix Parent Network and Resource Center • Fall 2009

The Early Edition is a publication of the Matrix Family Resource Center (FRC) program as part of California's interagency system of early intervention services for children, birth to 36 months. Our FRC staff is here to provide information and support to help you care for your baby. Useful information and additional resources are also provided in a designated Early Start section on our website at www.matrixparents.org

FREE KIT FOR NEW PARENTS

First 5 California has a free kit for new parents that is available by calling 1-800-KIDS-025. It is also available in Spanish by calling 1-800-50-NIÑOS. This kit contains a DVD (or VHS tape) on a variety of topics from oral health to child care to safety and discipline. There is a new parents booklet that is divided by "ages and stages" that helps parents track their baby's development. The Kit includes information on what to do when your child gets sick, planning your child's first visit to the dentist, a number of other resources and a copy of *Puppy and Friends (Baby's First Book)*.

Because all babies are different,

they rarely do the same thing at exactly the same age. You may wonder: Why isn't my son sitting up? Why isn't my daughter crawling? Is my child's hearing (or vision) normal? If you are concerned about your baby or toddler's development, it is important to follow your instincts and talk to your child's doctor about this. You can also call the Matrix Help Line at 1-800-578-2592 or California's Early Start referral line at 1-800-515-BABY for information on early intervention services in your area.

The first step is to have your child referred for evaluation and assessment if your baby's development really does appear to be delayed. Even though some services for infants and toddlers are being changed in California, many children will continue to receive a variety of services and other children will be assessed and referred to generic services. YOU can make a difference in your child's life with accurate information about your child's development and the resources that are available.

Changes in Early Start Services

There have been significant changes in the laws regarding Early Start services. However, implementing regulations and policies, which are still being written, may mean those changes have an impact which is less dramatic. We are providing parents with the following information on the changes in the law that was put into effect in July 2009.

ELIGIBILITY: "High risk" infants and toddlers will no longer be eligible for Early Start. The State will develop a new Prevention program which will be available at Regional Centers with very limited services and a capped budget. According to the Department of Developmental Services, these changes are effective October 1, 2009.

To qualify for Early Start under "developmental delay" children are assessed in 5 areas of development: Cognitive, Physical, Communication, Social/Emotional and Adaptive/Self-help. Children assessed for eligibility who are over 24 months of age now must have a 50% delay in one area or 33% delay in two areas, compared to children with typical development. Children assessed for eligibility from birth to 24 months of age will continue to be eligible if they show a delay of 33% in one developmental area, compared to typically developing peers.

Eligibility will continue for children with conditions which are an "established risk," which means a child has a high probability of having a developmental delay or they have what is considered a "low incidence disability" (e.g. blindness or deafness).

FUNDED SERVICES: For children under age three, Regional Centers will no longer fund services which are not required by the federal government including day care, diapers, respite,

interpreters/translators, genetic counseling, and most medical services, except durable medical equipment. This is effective October 1, 2009.

NEIGHBORHOOD PRESCHOOLS: Priority will be given to funding neighborhood preschools with Regional Center funded supports rather than specialized infant development programs. The Governor cut an additional \$50 million from Early Start expecting that First Five will cover it. These neighborhood programs are to be used if available.

USE OF PRIVATE INSURANCE: Except for services related to evaluation and assessment of their child, parents will have to use private insurance to pay for Early Start services that are covered under their insurance plan. Parents will be responsible for any deductibles or co-payments when they use their private insurance. If parents are unable to get a decision from their insurance plan regarding approval or denial of a claim this will not result in a denial or delay of those services to their child by the Regional Center.

To learn about the latest developments in implementing these changes we recommend that you look at two pertinent websites: California's Infant Development Association or IDA www.idaofcal.org/ and the Early Start page of the California Department of Developmental Services or DDS www.dds.ca.gov/EarlyStart

We at MATRIX are here for you as you navigate through these challenging economic times. If you are interested in being part of a support group for families of children under age 3 or have any questions or need assistance, call us at 1-800-578-2592.

Early Start Resources

BOOKS

If you have time to read, the books listed below include short vignettes on how others have approached parenting a child with special needs and wisdom from 2 professionals on marriage.

After the Tears by Robin Simons

The Elephant in the Playroom by Denise Brodey

You Will Dream New Dreams by Stanley Klein Ph.D and Kim Schive

Married with Special Needs Children: A Couples' Guide to Keeping Connected by Laura Marshak, Ph.D and Fran Prezant, M.Ed.

All of these books are available in the Matrix Library – call 415.884.3535 and come visit us!

CALIFORNIA EARLY START MATERIALS

California Early Start is a valuable resource with many helpful materials. You can download these at www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart or call us at 800.578.2592 and we'll be happy to send you copies.

Early Start Services

- ✦ Assistive Technology
- ✦ Audiology
- ✦ Family Training, counseling
- ✦ Health services
- ✦ Medical services, diagnosis only
- ✦ Nursing services
- ✦ Nutrition services
- ✦ Occupational therapy
- ✦ Physical therapy
- ✦ Psychological services
- ✦ Respite services
- ✦ Service coordination
- ✦ Social work services
- ✦ Special instruction
- ✦ Speech and language services
- ✦ Transportation necessary to receive services
- ✦ Vision services



Reminder: Between 3 and 6 months before your child's THIRD birthday a discussion should take place about transitioning and the need for any preschool services. Matrix provides useful information to families on this subject in a designated Early Start section on our website and routinely holds parent trainings on Transition from Early Start Services to Preschool. Visit www.matrixparents.org to learn more.

Empowering families of children with special needs to understand and access the systems that serve them.