



With Early Start... We make a difference

California has a long history of providing early intervention services under prior State statutes and regulations. Infant services in public schools were started in the 1960s and 1970s using a variety of local, state, and federal funding sources. California state law, since 1980, has mandated early education programs for many infants and toddlers with disabilities. Additionally, the State administration has supported preventive and early intervention services for infants at risk for many years viewing it as a major investment in the future of California's children.

FEDERAL LAW

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C

California's Early Start system of early intervention services was enhanced in response to federal legislation authorizing states to maintain and implement statewide interagency systems of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. The Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities was enacted in 1986 and reauthorized in 2004 under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; 20 U.S.C., §1431 et seq.). Federal regulations are found in 34 CFR, Part 303.1-303.654.

STATE LAW

California Early Intervention Services Act

After six years of state and local interagency planning and coordination, the State Legislature passed the California Early Intervention Services Act in 1993 (CEISA; 14 G.C., §95000 et seq.). CEISA established state authority to expand California's early intervention service system to meet federal requirements. The California Department of Developmental Services (DDS), as the Part C lead agency, plans, develops, implements, and monitors the statewide early intervention service system in collaboration with the California Department of Education (CDE) and with advice and assistance from the State Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) on Early Intervention. The Departments of Health Care, Public Health, Social Services, Mental Health, and Alcohol and Drug Programs cooperate and coordinate with DDS and CDE in the delivery of services to children under the age of 3 and their families.

CEISA was amended in 1997 to acknowledge the provision of family support services by Early Start family resource centers such as parent-to-parent support, information dissemination and referral, public awareness, family-professional collaboration activities, and transition assistance for families.

In July 1997, the California Legislature requested that DDS convene a workgroup to examine relevant information and to develop recommendations related to the impact of implementing federal regulations under IDEA, Part C. Based on the Workgroup's recommendations, CEISA was amended in 1998 to address state coordination and collaboration with families and communities, service coordinator competencies and caseloads, evaluation and assessment, parents' rights, monitoring, and referral to local Early Start family resource centers.

A major milestone for Early Start occurred in 1999. California's original legislative agreement for implementation of the Part C program provided for a date when the program would cease to exist or "sunset." That date was eliminated in the 1999 legislative session when the Legislature conferred permanent status to Early Start.

State regulations pertaining to Early Start are found in Title 17, CCR, §§52000-52175.



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www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart