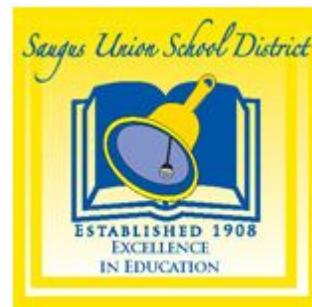


# Santa Clarita Valley Guide to Preschool Transition

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## **Introduction**

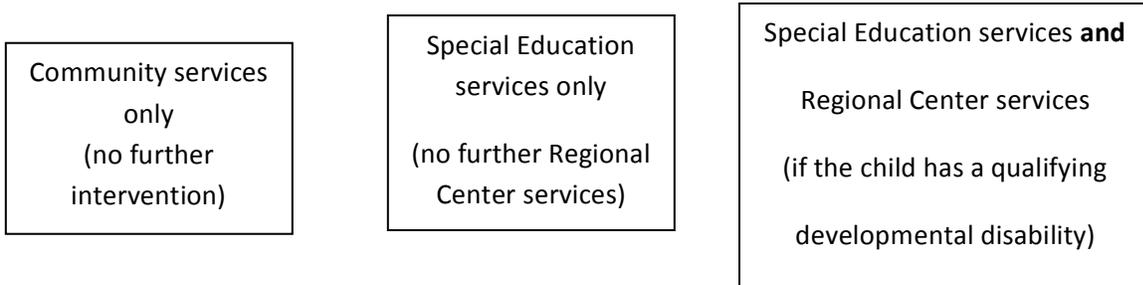
This Guide was created as part of a collaborative effort between the following agencies in order to facilitate the transition from Early Start services to Preschool. We hope you find it helpful as you assist your child in this exciting time.

- Santa Clarita Valley Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA)
- Family Focus Resource & Empowerment Center
- North Los Angeles County Regional Center

## When Your Child Turns Three

Your child has been receiving early intervention services funded through the North Los Angeles County Regional Center or SELPA Early Start program. These programs may include child development intervention, physical therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy and behavioral therapy.

On the child's third birthday, he/she will transition from Early Start to one of the following scenarios:



The scenario for your child will be determined based on your child's developmental assessments that will be done shortly before his or her third birthday. You will have the opportunity to participate in the transition and assessment process.

This manual will:

- Describe how the transition process works
- Tell you how school-based services are different from early intervention services
- Give suggestions on how to prepare for your child's transition to preschool
- Explain the school assessment and Individualized Education Program (IEP) process
- Explain how to find out if your child will qualify for continuing services through Regional Center
- Discuss how to resolve differences
- Give you some helpful tips from a parent's perspective
- Discuss other preschool options

### Why does my child need to transition?

Early intervention services are provided under a Federal law called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C (IDEA Part C). This law states that at age three, children are still eligible for services transition to another section of the law, IDEA Part B, which covers children between the ages of 3 and 22.

There are a number of differences between early intervention services (IDEA Part C) and school age services (IDEA Part B). Here is a chart that summarizes these differences.

	<b>Early Start (IDEA Part C)</b>	<b>School Services (IDEA Part B)</b>
Age of child	Birth to age 3	3 – 22 years
Eligibility Criteria	Children with delays in communication, motor, cognition, socio-emotional or adaptive skills	Thirteen specific eligibility categories for conditions that impact a child's education
Focus of Service	Family/Child	Child/Student
Plan Name	Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)	Individualized Education Program (IEP)
Location of Services	Natural Environment	Least Restrictive Environment in the school setting
Service Delivery	Multi-agency	Education agency (school district)
Goal of Program	Support families to support their children	Support a child's access to the general curriculum

Source: Brault, 2005

### **Transition Process Overview**

The transition to preschool special education in the Santa Clarita Valley is facilitated by the Santa Clarita Valley SELPA Preschool Transition Specialist. Throughout the transition time period, this Preschool Transition Specialist acts as a liaison/case coordinator on behalf of the child and his/her family. The Preschool Transition Specialist represents all four of the local school districts in the transition process.

The transition process begins with a transition Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) when the child is approximately 2.6 years of age (2 years, 6 months). At this time, a plan is made which will outline the steps which are necessary for the child to be placed in a preschool program when he/she is three years old. The transition IFSP meeting and the transition workshop are opportunities for parents to obtain information and ask questions regarding the transition process. Parents or guardians, the Regional Center service coordinator, Early Intervention service providers, representatives of any community resources that are involved with the child, and the Preschool Transition Specialist attend the Transition IFSP meeting.

The Preschool Transition Specialist is the central contact person for the family throughout the transition process. When the child is approximately 2.9 years of age a referral file is completed. All current assessment reports and pertinent records are collected and included as part of this file, which is submitted to the child's school district of residence. The Specialist will provide contact information regarding visitations to educational programs.

Upon receipt of the referral file, the local school district preschool assessment team will review the information, develop an assessment plan, conduct additional assessments as necessary, and schedule an IEP meeting prior to the child's third birthday. The Preschool Transition Specialist may attend the assessment appointments and/or the IEP meeting, if requested to do so by the family.

## **Your Child's Individualized Education Program**

You will have the opportunity to be involved in creating your child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) by being on the IEP Team. The IEP Team is composed of:

- Parent(s) or guardian of the student
- The student, when appropriate (generally at age 14 or above)
- At least one special education teacher
- The regular education teacher if the child is or may be participating in the regular education environment
- A district representative
- Someone to interpret the assessment results; for example, a speech-language pathologist if the child was assessed for language and speech

Others may attend and participate in the assessment review and IEP planning process. Such persons may include a friend or advocate for the parent or student, other professionals working with the student, independent evaluators, doctors or other professionals. The parent(s) should inform the school district if others will be attending the IEP meeting.

### **Timeline**

The IEP meeting and process must, by law, be completed by the child's third birthday. If the IEP is not completed and consent given by the parent(s) or guardian(s) by the child's third birthday, he or she cannot start school until it is. You do not have to give your consent at the IEP meeting. You can take the IEP paperwork home for review and further discussion. However, the IEP must be signed before your child can start preschool or receive related services. After the initial IEP meeting, IEPs will take place annually in addition to goal progress reports.

### **Eligibility**

After assessment, the IEP team makes the decision as to whether or not the child meets the requirements necessary to receive special education services. In order for the child to receive special education services, the child must qualify according to guidelines in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

IDEA defines children with disabilities as those who have been assessed as having significant impairments in any one or combination of the following thirteen categories:

- Autism
- Deaf
- Deaf-blind
- Hearing impairment
- Intellectual disability
- Multiple disabilities
- Orthopedic impairment
- Other health impairment
- Serious emotional disturbance
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech/Language impairment
- Traumatic brain injury
- Visual impairment/Blind

### **The Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

When a child qualifies for special education services, an Individualized Education Program is written. This plan is a legally binding document between the local educational agency (LEA) and the parent(s)/student. The IEP summarizes the assessment information, sets goals and objectives appropriate to the student, describes who is responsible for the delivery of specific services and defines the least restrictive environment in which the child's educational and related services will be delivered. Parents, teacher and administrators work together to develop the IEP.

### **Elements of the IEP**

Here are the elements of an IEP:

- A statement of the child's present levels of educational performance, including:
  - How the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general curriculum
  - How the disability affects the child's participation in appropriate activities
- Measurable annual goals, including benchmarks or short term objectives, related to:
  - Meeting the needs of the child to be able to participate in the general curriculum;
  - Meeting each of the child's other educational needs that result from the child's disability
- A statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services to be provided for the child
  - To advance toward achieving annual goals
  - To be involved in the general curriculum and participate in extracurricular and nonacademic activities
- An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will *not* participate with nondisabled children in the regular education environment

- The projected date for the beginning of services and modifications as stated in the IEP
- The frequency, location and duration of services and modifications
- A statement of how the child’s progress will be measured and how the parents will be regularly informed of the child’s progress
- A statement of any individual modifications in the administration of State or district-wide assessment of student achievement that may be needed for the child to participate in those assessments. If the IEP team decides the student cannot participate in those assessments, an explanation of why the assessment is not appropriate, and how the child will be assessed. (This information is usually not applicable for preschoolers.)
- A written summary of the IEP discussion, including responsibilities for next steps (called the narrative)

### **Special Education Preschool Programs by School District**

Your child may qualify for placement in a special education preschool program. Each of the four school districts offers a variety of preschool program options for children who qualify, as determined by the IEP Team.

#### **Castaic Elementary School District**

Following are the special education preschool program options offered by the Castaic School District.

<b>Type of Class</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Campus/Location</b>	<b>Frequency/Duration</b>
Mild	Children with mild delays requiring focused intervention	Castaic Middle School	2 days per week, 3 hours each day
Moderate	Children with mild to moderate delays in two or more areas of development, requiring more intensive services	Castaic Middle School	4 days per week, 3 hours each day
Intensive	For children with significant delays in several areas of development, requiring intensive services	Castaic Middle School	5 days per week, 3 hours each day
Inclusive	As recommended by IEP Team	Castaic Community Preschool (at Castaic Middle School)	TBD

This information is believed to be correct, but please note that this information is subject to change without notice. Check with your district representative(s) for program details, including days, times and locations.

## Newhall School District

Following are the special education preschool program options offered by the Newhall School District.

<b>Type of Class</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Campus/Location</b>	<b>Frequency/Duration</b>
Mild	For children with mild delays requiring focused intervention in the area of speech and language	Peachland Elementary	2 days per week, 2.5 hours each day
Mild/Moderate	For children with moderate delays in two or more areas of development, requiring more intensive services	Peachland Elementary	4 days per week, 2.5 hours each day
Moderate/Severe	For children with significant delays in several areas of development, requiring intensive intervention	Peachland Elementary	5 days per week, 3 hours, 20 min each day
Inclusive	As recommended by IEP Team	Peachland Elementary	TBD

This information is believed to be correct, but please note that this information is subject to change without notice. Check with your district representative(s) for program details, including days, times and locations.

**Saugus Union School District**

Following are the special education preschool program options offered by the Saugus Union School District.

<b>Type of Class</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Campus/Location</b>	<b>Frequency/Duration</b>
LIFT program (mild)	For children with mild delays requiring focused intervention in the area of speech and language	Santa Clarita Elementary	2 days per week, 2 hours each day
RISE program (moderate)	For children with mild to moderate delays in two or more areas of development, requiring more intensive services	Santa Clarita Elementary	3 days per week, 2 hours each day
Special Day Class (intensive)	For children with moderate to severe delays in several areas of development, requiring intensive intervention	Santa Clarita Elementary	4 days per week, 3 hours each day
Inclusive	As recommended by IEP Team	Fun for Threes programs Santa Clarita Elementary Emblem Academy	2 days per week 3.5 hours each day

This information is believed to be correct, but please note that this information is subject to change without notice. Check with your district representative(s) for program details, including days, times and locations.

## Sulphur Springs School District

Following are the special education preschool program options offered by the Sulphur Springs School District.

Type of Class	Description	Campus/Location	Frequency/Duration
Early Learners program (mild)	For children with a mild delay in expressive speech and language	Leona Cox Elementary	1 or 2 days per week, 30 minutes each day
Early Learners Bridge program (mild to moderate)	For children with mild to moderate delays requiring focused intervention in speech and language	Leona Cox Elementary	2 days per week, 1.5 hours each day
Preschool Class (moderate)	For children with mild to moderate delays in two or more areas of development, requiring more intensive services	Leona Cox Elementary	4 days per week, 3 hours each day
Preschool Class (intensive)	For children with moderate to severe delays in several areas of development, requiring intensive intervention	Leona Cox Elementary	5 days per week, 3 hours each day
Preschool Class – Autism (intensive)	For children on the autism spectrum with moderate to severe delays, requiring intensive, specific interventions in several areas of development.	Leona Cox Elementary	5 days per week, 5 hours each day
Inclusive	As recommended by IEP Team	Stepping Stones Preschool at Leona Cox Elementary	TBD

This information is believed to be correct, but please note that this information is subject to change without notice. Check with your district representative(s) for program details, including days, times and locations.

## **Specialized Programs**

The Santa Clarita Valley SELPA has several regional programs for students whose specific needs are better met by a specialized program instead of a program operated by the child's local school district. Regional programs are open to students from all four elementary districts upon approval by the IEP team and the student's home district. The Santa Clarita Valley SELPA's specialized regional programs include the following:

### ***Autism Program***

The Regional Autism Program is for children on the autism spectrum with moderate to severe delays, requiring intensive, specific interventions in several areas of development. The preschool regional program is located at Emblem Academy and operates 5 days per week for 5 hours each day.

### ***Orthopedic Impairment/Other Health Impairment Program***

This program is for children with orthopedic impairment or other health impairments with average cognition that require specific interventions, such as children who are tube fed or who require oxygen. This program is located at Valley View Elementary and operates 5 days per week for 3.5 hours per day.

### ***Multiply Handicapped Program – Mild/Moderate***

This program is for children who have multiple disabilities, including orthopedic impairments or other health impairments with mild cognitive deficits. This program is located at Valley View Elementary and operates 5 days per week for 3.5 hours per day.

### ***Multiply Handicapped Program – Severe***

This program is for children who have multiple disabilities, including significant cognitive deficits, physical limitations, or medical fragility, and who require intensive interventions. This program is located at Valley View Elementary and operates 5 days per week for 3.5 hours per day.

### ***Low Incidence DIS Services***

Services for children who have low incidence disabilities (visually impairment, Deaf or hard of hearing, orthopedic impairment) can receive services such as instruction from a Teacher for the Visually Impaired, Mobility & Orientation training, instruction from a Teacher for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and instruction from a Teacher for Orthopedically Impaired.

## **Designated Instructional Services**

Each of the four elementary school districts provides Designated Instructional Services (DIS) services by district personnel. These are services provided by specialists which are determined necessary for your child to benefit from his or her educational program.

These services may include, but are not limited to: language/speech services, audiology, psychological services, mobility instruction, instruction for the visually impaired, instruction in the home or hospital, adapted physical education, coordination and/or provision of physical therapy and occupational therapy, behavior management, parent education and school health services.

The IEP will state when these services will begin and how long they will last, the location, and how frequently they will be provided. The specific services are determined according to the individual needs of the child.

DIS services are provided to students in the mild, moderate and intensive preschool programs *if those services are an assessed need and deemed appropriate by the child's IEP Team*. DIS services can be provided in the class setting or on a pull-out basis.

### ***What are Language and Speech Services?***

Language and Speech services can be provided for students who are eligible for Special Education services. It is taught by a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP).

### **What is the referral process for LSS?**

- If a child was receiving speech and language services for a speech delay while in Early Start, then a referral for an LSS assessment will be made with the initial referral packet to the child's school district. The LSS assessment will be reviewed at the IEP meeting with the IEP team.

### **Who requires LSS services?**

- Students who demonstrate delays in language and speech
- Students who demonstrate developmentally inappropriate phonological errors

### **Who does not require LSS services?**

- Students who are functioning at their (age) ability level for speech and language
- Students who require only maintenance of skills

### ***What is Adaptive Physical Education?***

Adaptive Physical Education (APE) can be provided for students who are eligible for Special Education services. It taught by an Adaptive Physical Education (APE) Specialist.

#### **APE typically addresses:**

- Gross motor skills
- Large muscle movements
- Game skills
- Object control (for example, throwing a ball at a target or a hoop)
- Locomotor Skills
  - Playground games
  - Sports
  - Physical Fitness

#### **Who requires APE services?**

- Students who cannot successfully participate in general education PE
- Students who need modifications in games and equipment
- Students who receive services generally perform below the 10th percentile or are functioning 1-1/2 years below age level
- Students who demonstrate global delays in motor skills

#### **Who does not require APE services?**

- Students who are functioning at their (age) ability level for PE
- Students who require only maintenance of skills

#### **What is the referral process for APE?**

If a child was receiving PT/OT services for a delay in gross motor skills while in Early Start, then a referral for an APE assessment will be made with the initial referral packet to the child's school district. The APE assessment will be reviewed at the IEP meeting with the IEP team.

### ***What is Occupational Therapy?***

Occupational Therapy (OT) is a support service to the Special Education Teacher and staff. Services may be provided directly to the student individually, in a group, or may be on a consultation basis.

OT typically addresses:

- Fine motor skills
- Visual motor skills
- Activities of daily living
- Deficits of sensory integration:
  - organization of behavior
  - self-regulation
  - tactile sensitivities (hypersensitivity or hypersensitivity)
  - body awareness/proprioceptive processing

### **Who requires OT services?**

- Students who are missing foundational or underlying skills such as strength or coordination
- Students whose sensory processing difficulties significantly impact their ability to function at school

### **Who does not require OT services?**

- Students who are functioning adequately within the educational environment
- Students who have other educational personnel that are able/trained to assist the student in areas of concern previously addressed by OT, such as the Adaptive Physical Education instructor
- Students who continue to maintain or make progress in the areas being addressed by OT consistent with developmental progress in other educational areas, despite a decrease in OT services

### **What is the referral process for OT?**

If a child was receiving OT services for sensory issues while in Early Start, then a referral for an OT assessment may be made with the initial referral packet to the child's school district. The OT assessment will be reviewed at the IEP meeting with the IEP team.

### ***What is Physical Therapy?***

Physical Therapy (PT) is a support service to the Special Education Teacher and staff. Services may be provided directly to the student individually, in a group, or may be on a consultation basis.

PT typically addresses:

- Gross motor skills

### **What is the referral process for PT?**

If a child was receiving PT services for gross motor issues while in Early Start, then a referral for a motor assessment may be made with the initial referral packet to the child's school district. The motor assessment will be reviewed at the IEP meeting with the IEP team.

## **Transportation**

Your local school district may provide bus transportation to special education preschool programs, based on IEP Team recommendation. Transportation via school bus can be from home to school or from designated pick up locations, depending on your school district, program and age of the child.

Sometimes children go to childcare locations after school. If your child goes to a location other than your home after school, such as a childcare location, please note that the bus will only transport within the school district boundaries.

You may continue to transport your child as you did in their early intervention program, or you might want to utilize the bus. Your child does not have to ride a bus until you decide that it is right for your family.

## **Preparing for Your Child's First IEP Meeting**

As a parent or guardian, you are naturally the best advocate for your child. Your active participation is extremely important to best meet the needs of your child. The following list of questions will help you prepare for the IEP meeting:

### **Before the meeting**

- Do you know your child's strengths and challenges?
- Have you reviewed your child's legal rights?
- Have you found out about preschool education and related services provided by your district?
- Have you observed or visited possible preschool options?
- Which preschool and related services do you think are required for your child to meet his/her educational needs?
- Why are these services important?
- What would you like your child to be learning over the next school year? These are called your child's goals.
- Have you invited others to attend, if you wish?
- Have you signed and returned the written notification of IEP meeting? Did you include the names of people you plan to invite?
- Have you requested and received a written copy of your child's assessment reports prior to the IEP meeting?
- Have you reviewed the reports and formulated questions or comments?
- Have you written down questions you want to remember to ask the IEP team?

### **Information About Your Child**

- Do you have any current medical information to bring to the IEP (medications, allergies, etc.)?
- Is there specific information that you want to remember to share at the IEP meeting?

### **Logistics**

- Have you arranged for transportation to and childcare for the IEP?
- If appropriate, have arrangements been made to have an interpreter present at this meeting?
- Do you have notepaper and a pen or pencil?
- Do you have some water?

## Community Preschool Options

***My child is not eligible for a special education preschool program. What options are available?***

There are many preschool options in the Santa Clarita Valley. Here are some to consider.

### **Head Start**

Head Start is a school readiness program for low income families. Volunteers of America of Greater Los Angeles operates three Head Start programs in the Santa Clarita Valley. Priority registration is given to four year olds who will be entering kindergarten the following fall. Twenty percent of spaces are saved for students who have special needs. For more information about Head Start, you can call Volunteers of America at 818-897-4124 or see [www.voala.org](http://www.voala.org).

Head Start of Santa Clarita – Walnut  
24823 N. Walnut St  
Newhall, CA 91321  
661-253-2035

Wiley Canyon Head Start  
24240 La Glorita Circle  
Newhall, CA 91321  
818-897-4124

Head Start – Child and Family Center  
21545 Centre Point Parkway  
Santa Clarita, CA 91350  
818-980-2287

### **State Preschool Programs**

State Preschools are free of cost to families that meet income limitations, and offer three-day per week programs to prepare children for kindergarten. Children typically have to be eligible for kindergarten the following year.

#### **Castaic School District**

Northlake Hills State Preschool  
32545 Ridge Route Road  
Castaic, CA 91384

Val Verde State Preschool  
30249 San Martinez  
Val Verde, CA 91384

Contact Jackeline Vasquez, Director of Preschool Programs, at 661-257-4500 ext 1520 for information about either site.

**Newhall School District**

McGrath State Preschool  
21501 Deputy Jake Dr  
Newhall, CA 91321  
661-291-4092

Newhall State Preschool  
24607 N. Walnut Ave  
Newhall, CA 91321  
661-291-6723

Oak Hills State Preschool  
26730 Old Rock Rd.  
Valencia, CA 91381  
661-291-6723

Peachland State Preschool  
24800 Peachland Ave  
Newhall, CA 91321  
661-291-4022

**Saugus Union School District**

Cedarcreek State Preschool  
19409 Cedarcreek St  
Canyon Country, CA 91351  
661-298-3248

Rio Vista State Preschool  
20417 Cedarcreek St  
Canyon Country, CA 91351  
661-298-3242

Santa Clarita State Preschool  
27177 Seco Canyon Rd.  
Santa Clarita, CA 91350  
661-294-5341

**Sulphur Springs Union School District**

Canyon Springs State Preschool  
19059 Vicci St  
Canyon Country, CA 91351  
661-252-8045

Mint Canyon State Preschool  
16400 Sierra Highway  
Canyon Country, CA 91351  
661-252-8026

**Community Preschool Programs**

Community preschool programs offer reduced-cost two-day or three-day per week programs to prepare children for kindergarten.

Each of the four elementary school districts in Santa Clarita operates community preschool programs for three or four year olds. Registration for these programs usually takes place in the Spring for school starting the following Fall.

**Castaic School District**

Castaic Community Preschool  
28900 Hillcrest Parkway  
Castaic, CA 91384

Northlake Hills Community Preschool  
32545 Ridge Route Road  
Castaic, CA 91384

Contact Jackeline Vasquez, Director of Preschool Programs, at 661-257-4500 ext 1520 for information about either site.

**Newhall School District**

Wiley Canyon Elementary  
24240 La Glorita Circle  
Newhall, CA 91321  
661-291-4030

**Saugus Union School District**

The Saugus Union School District operates “Fun for Threes” and “Fun for Fours” programs at a number of school sites. Children must turn three by September 1st for “Fun for Threes” and “Fun for Fours”, respectively. Contact your neighborhood school site to see if one is operated there, or to find the closest one. There are full-day preschool options available at Rosedell Elementary (661-294-5536) and Emblem Academy (661-294-5516).

**Co-op or Parent Participation Programs**

The City of Santa Clarita offers three affordable parent participation preschool programs. My Buddy and Me is for two and three year olds, and parents participate at each session. Terrific Tots is for three year olds, and Primetime Preschool is for four year olds. Parents are required to help the teacher five times per session. Sessions run between 12 and 14 weeks and take place at Santa Clarita Park, Canyon Country Park and Valencia Glen Park. See the Seasons brochure or look online at [www.santa-clarita.com/seasons](http://www.santa-clarita.com/seasons) and look under “Child Development Classes”, or call 661-250-3710 for registration information. Financial assistance may be available from the SCORE program. Call 661-250-3700 for details on financial assistance.

The Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation also offers preschool programs at the Castaic Sports Complex. For more information please call 661-775-8865.

**Private Programs**

Private preschool programs are offered by private schools as well as places of worship. Many programs operate two days per week for three year olds, and three days per week for four year olds, for about three hours per day. Morning or afternoon programs are available. Fees will vary by preschool. Often these programs have waiting lists in the Spring for Fall programs.

Contact Family Focus Resource Center for further information on private programs at 661-294-9715.

## **Evaluating Preschool Program Options**

### ***How should parents evaluate preschool program options?***

Discuss the range of options with school personnel and arrange to visit programs with a District Representative, if possible, before your IEP meeting. Visitation policies differ by district and program. It is a good idea to visit the options of services in your District in order to get a feel for how the programs are similar or different, and to see which program would be most appropriate for your child.

### ***What should parents look for?***

Prepare a list of items you want to observe on your visit. Make notes after the visit of what you liked or didn't like about the programs and what will be beneficial to your child. Here are some things to consider:

- How many children will be in the class?
- How many adults (teachers and aides) will be in the class?
- What is the daily schedule?
- What materials are used in teaching?
- Will my child have a "recess"? Where will he/she play?
- Do the children have a snack? Who provides it?
- Will there be opportunities for interaction with children in other classrooms or programs?
- What are the requirements regarding toilet training? Are there toileting or changing facilities nearby?
- Is the classroom area safe?
- Is the classroom area accessible?
- Are there appropriate toys, books and playground equipment?
- Do the children seem happy and well cared for?
- Are the children's needs and abilities similar to those of my child?

## **Regional Center Eligibility Process**

### **Will my child be eligible for services from Regional Center after he/she child turns three (3)?**

Early Start services end on your child's third birthday. Determining whether your child is eligible for ongoing services is important and this process begins at 2 years 6 months. At that time, you will be meeting with your child's service coordinator for the transition IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan). Your child's service coordinator and the Transition Specialist representing your school district will discuss not only the transition from Early Start services to preschool services under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), but also ongoing Regional Center services under the Lanterman Act. You will be asked for your consent for North Los Angeles County Regional Center's (NLACRC's) clinical department to conduct a psychological and medical review of your child.

As defined by the Lanterman Act, Welfare and Institutions Code Section 4512(a), the law that governs the Regional Center, an individual may receive services if she/he is found to have a substantially handicapping developmental disability. These are defined as:

- Autism
- Cerebral Palsy
- Epilepsy/Seizure disorder
- Intellectual Disabilities
- Other conditions closely related to mental retardation or requiring similar treatment

### **How is eligibility determined?**

With your consent, your service coordinator will refer your child to NLACRC's Clinical department at approximately 2 years 9 months. A psychological and medical evaluation/review will be completed in person at the main office in Chatsworth. This evaluation will assist in determining whether your child is eligible for ongoing Regional Center services. A determination of eligibility may also be made by reviewing comprehensive medical records. If you have obtained a psychological evaluation from another facility, NLACRC may require an additional evaluation at our main office. When the eligibility determination is completed, you will receive a call and a letter from your service coordinator informing you of the eligibility determination. You will also receive a copy of both the medical and psychological evaluation.

If your child is determined not to be eligible for ongoing Regional Center services, a Notice of Action will be sent. You have the right appeal this decision. You may also receive referrals to other agencies and community resources.

If your child is eligible for Regional Center services, you will receive a letter informing you of the name and telephone number of your new service coordinator in the School Age Unit. A new

Individualized Program Plan (IPP) will be developed to replace the IFSP to determine what services your child will need over the next year.

When transition is complete, the educational services are provided by the school district. Based on need, and developed through the IPP process, NLACRC may provide family supports, such as respite or behavioral services. All Early Start services will terminate on your child's third birthday.

If you did not obtain an eligibility evaluation before the age of three, you can still contact the Regional Center intake department after age three if you have concerns about your child's development. However, you will go through the intake process as a new applicant.

### **Resources**

North Los Angeles County Regional Center  
[www.nlacrc.org](http://www.nlacrc.org)

Main office:  
Chatsworth, CA  
818-778-1900  
818-778-1900

Santa Clarita office:  
28470 Avenue Stanford, #100  
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California Department of Developmental Services  
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Lanterman Act, Section 4512. As used in this division:

(a) "Developmental disability" means a disability that originates before an individual attains age 18 years, continues, or can be expected to continue, indefinitely, and constitutes a substantial disability for that individual. As defined by the Director of Developmental Services, in consultation with the Superintendent of Public Instruction, this term shall include mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and autism. This term shall also include disabling conditions found to be closely related to mental retardation or to require treatment similar to that required for individuals with mental retardation, but shall not include other handicapping conditions that are solely physical in nature.

## Resolving Disputes

### For Public Schools (ages 3 and up)

Read through the SELPA's "Parent's Rights and Procedural Safeguards" document provided by your school district.

### Is Due Process Needed?

As a parent, you are a part of the IEP team. If you disagree with any of the recommendations of the Individual Education Planning Team regarding identification, evaluation, placement, or the provision of a free and appropriate public education for your child, you may wish to file for Due Process. The intent of Due Process is to provide an objective forum. It allows for appropriate educational decision making when a disagreement occurs.

A due process hearing is a formal proceeding presided over by an administrative law judge, which is similar to a court action. The hearing can be initiated by you or the District when there is a disagreement over a proposal or a refusal to initiate or change the identification, evaluation or educational placement of your child, the provision of a FAPE to your child, or a dispute over the availability of an appropriate program for your child.

When considering filing for a Due Process hearing, all attempts should be made by the Individual Education Planning Team to reach an acceptable resolution of the differences. This includes methods such as mediation or alternative dispute resolution. If such attempts have failed to solve the disagreements, then Due Process may be pursued by submitting a written request to the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The request for a due process hearing must be filed within **two** years from the date you knew or had reason to know of the facts that were the basis for the hearing request.

A copy should be sent to your school district (public education agency). The request for a Due Process hearing should state the issue(s) upon which you are basing your appeal. Upon receipt of your request, the following two events must take place:

1. The Superintendent of Public Instruction will advise you and the public education agency of all your rights relating to procedural safeguards (the Fair Hearing process) including the right to waive the mediation conference.
2. Within three days after your school district receives your request for a Fair Hearing, they must advise you of free or low cost legal services available in your area.

The basic Due Process hearing process consists of the informal conference at the local level, the mediation conference, and the hearing at the state level. This procedure can be modified because you have the option to waive either the informal conference, the mediation

conference, or both. There are strict timelines that must be followed by all parties involved, including the parent.

If you want a mediation conference, the Superintendent has 15 days from the receipt of your request to hold the conference. Many issues can be resolved at this stage. However, if the problem is not resolved, the mediator will list those issues upon which the state level hearing will be based.

The Fair Hearing process should not last longer than 45 days unless either party requests a delay.

If satisfactory results are not brought about through the Fair Hearing process, you or the school district may choose to carry action into the courts.

The public school Due Process hearing process is complicated. You may wish to ask for help from your Regional Center service coordinator/ peer consultant, consumer rights advocate, Family Resource Center or other advocacy resources.

### **When Should I File a Complaint?**

You may file a written complaint with the Department of Education which serves your area if you believe that your public educational agency has failed to comply with the procedural safeguards and mandates of the law, or when the educational program of your child is not being carried out as designated in the Individual Education Plan (IEP).

### **Know Your Rights and Responsibilities**

Become familiar with all of the rights and responsibilities of the special education process. Your local district has the obligation to inform you of your legal rights. Parent advocacy groups and family resource centers can help you understand the fair hearing process and prepare you for the meeting that will be held. Family Focus Resource & Empowerment Center has free monthly workshops that you can attend.

Communicate with your school district. Although the issue or concern is usually between the school district and you, it is still important to communicate with district personnel. Information that you must communicate to the district includes:

- convenient dates
- locations for the hearing
- provisions for interpreters
- exchange of documents

## **Parents Want to Know....**

Here are some commonly asked questions.

### ***My child is not yet toilet trained. Can he/she go to preschool?***

If your child will go to a special education preschool program, they are not required to be toilet trained. You should supply diapers or Pull-Ups and wipes if your child is not yet toilet trained. Other preschool programs, such as community or private programs, may have policies related to toilet training.

### ***Will I be able to stay with my child at school?***

Parents drop off their children at preschool. There are usually parent participation opportunities at preschools, such as school parties, special programs or volunteering.

### ***My child can't tell me what she did at school. How will I know what happens at preschool?***

Communication with your child's preschool teacher is very important, especially when your child is not able to tell you about his or her day. Each teacher typically has a preferred communication method for parents. Find a method that works well for the teacher and you, whether it's daily reports, emails, phone calls or a communication log that goes between home and school.

### ***How long will my child receive special education services? Will he or she attend "regular" classes?***

Every year the IEP Team will assess your child's progress toward his or her goals. Together, the IEP Team will determine when your child no longer needs special education services. Your child may receive special education services for a short time, or for his or her entire education. It varies from child to child. It's best to focus on your child's growth one year at a time.

### ***Can my child attend a special education preschool program and another preschool program?***

Yes. Sometimes parents want their child to have a "blended" program and attend a typical preschool program a couple of days a week and a special education program a couple of days a week, for example. You are responsible for finding the typical preschool program, enrolling your child and paying the tuition.