

Navigating the System of California's Early Start Program for Children with a Visual Impairment

Concern about child's vision, what do you do?

If you are the parent/guardian

First speak w/Pediatrician and ask for referral to a **Pediatric Ophthalmologist /Pediatric Optometrist**

If a diagnosis of visual impairment is made, or vision is of concern, you should ask for an assessment with the **Early Start Program** through your **Local Education Agency (LEA)/School District**.

If you are concerned about your child's overall development you can also ask for an assessment with your local **Regional Center**.

Call **1-800-515-BABY** or
www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart

What is the next step?

Child's Evaluation for eligibility and assesment for service planning, Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

Depending on your child's needs, he/she will be assessed by a team of specialists, and eligibility for services will be determined based on diagnosis, risk factors and % of delay.

A Service Coordinator from either the school district and/or the Regional Center will meet with you to review developmental levels, service needs, determine outcomes and develop a written plan, which is called the IFSP.

During this process, your family concerns, priorities and resources will be identified and a referral to other community resources may be necessary, like health services, social services, **Family Resource Centers (FRC), CCS and SSI**

Important Additional Resources -

There are many resources to consider, but these 3 may be the ones you should look into first and consider a priority...

Family Resource Centers (FRC) are most valuable & are available in regional areas. They offer you opportunities to connect w/other parents, provide trainings and education sessions, support groups, and resources to help parent a child with special needs.

California Children's Services (CCS) is a state program that helps children with certain physical limitations, diseases or chronic conditions. CCS covers most problems that are physically disabling or require surgery, medicines, or rehabilitation along with Occupational Therapy & Physical Therapy services for specific eligible conditions.

Supplementary Security Income (SSI) is a federal income program designed to assist blind and disabled people who have little income and limited resources for basic daily living needs. Children under 18 with a disability may qualify.

