

Family Resource Centers Network of California

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California's Early Start Program and Prevention Resource and Referral Services

About the Family Resources Centers Network of California (FRCNCA)

The Family Resource Centers Network of California is a membership organization comprised of 47 Early Start Family Resource Centers (ESFRCs) funded by the Department of Developmental Services to provide support, information, and referrals to families with children birth to three years who have disabilities. ESFRCs are a respected source of information, resources, and parent-to-parent support for families throughout California. Family support is recognized as a vital component in early intervention. The FRCNCA believes that families should be included as partners in the development or revision of all policy related to services to families who have children birth to age three who are eligible for the California Early Start Program or Prevention Resource and Referral Services.

Linda Joy Landry, Chair
Sherry Torok, Vice Chair
Susan Graham,
Secretary/Membership
Patty Moore, Past Chair
Juno Duenas, Family
Voices Liaison

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Rowell Family
Empowerment of Northern
California

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Family SOUP

Region 3
Eileen Crumm
Family Resource Network

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Parents Helping Parents

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H.E.A.R.T.S. Connection

Region 7
Linda Landry
Westside Family Resource
and Empowerment Center

Region 8
Sherry Torok
Exceptional Family Resource
Center

Region 9
Janice Hinton
Early Start Family Resource
Network

At Large Members:

Julie Widman
Exceptional Family Resource
Center

Patty Moore
Alpha Resource Center

FRCNCA Position on Early Start and Prevention Resource and Referral Services

The FRCNCA supports the full restoration of Early Start services as defined in the CA Early Intervention Services Act 1994 with the continuation of funding for Prevention Resource and Referral Services (PRRS) to ensure families continue to receive enhanced and up to date information, resources, referrals and access to services. Restoration of Early Start, including the FRCNCA Prevention Resource and Referral Services provided by ESFRCs, is an excellent investment in California's children and families.

What was the scope of Early Start prior to 2009?

Prior to 2009, Early Start provided services to infants and toddlers under the age of 3 who were 'developmentally delayed', had an 'established risk', or who were 'at high risk' of a developmental delay.

What happened October 2009?

Infants and toddlers with high risk conditions were no longer eligible for the Early Start Program. The Prevention Program was created within the regional center system to provide intake services, assessment, case management, and referral to generic services for children with high risk.

What happened July 2011?

The Prevention Program was phased out. Prevention Resource and Referral Services, created by the passage of "665 Transfer Reduced Scope Prevention Program to the Family Resource Centers", was legislated to provide outreach, information, and referral services for families of "at-risk babies" birth to three years of age.

Services provided by ESFRC's through Prevention Resource and Referral Services

- Enhanced family support services including prescribed follow up contacts
- Enhanced referrals to community services
- Developmental resources including access to Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) screening tool
- Enhanced data collection including 140 data points
- MOUS with 21 regional centers to delineate how services are provided to ensure families are served (evaluation, establishment of developmental baselines, referral and re-referral guidelines)

Full restoration of Early Start services, including continued funding for FRCNCA Prevention Resource and Referral Services, is critical for California's children and families. The FRCNCA also supports coordinated efforts to address the revitalization and improvement of California's Early Start Program. These efforts must address the following critical components:

- 1. Family support is a vital component of an effective Early Start System and should be provided by family-run organizations.**
 - a. Families, including those who have children at risk of developmental delay, must have access to family support, including access to resources, referral, and screening for children birth to age three.
 - b. Families should have the opportunity to partner at all levels and have the information, education and support to be effective.
 - c. ESFRCs are skilled providers of system navigation.
 - d. Family referral to the ESFRC must be made at time of entry and time of transition from California's Early Start Program.
- 2. Regional Centers should be funded for and provide case management and funding for direct services to the broad range of children eligible for services in 2009.**
 - a. Children in California's Early Start Program must have timely access to services in their natural learning environments which must not be deterred by imposed mandates to generic services.
 - b. Service coordination must include a referral to the ESFRCs.
 - c. Access to respite and family counseling remain a necessary component of early intervention.
- 3. The Early Start system must be enhanced.**
 - a. Interagency coordination at state and local levels is a vital component to the delivery of services through California's Early Start Program.
 - b. Child find and system navigation remain critical components of all early intervention efforts by ensuring access to resources, outreach to underrepresented populations, and parent access to information about child development.
 - c. Back fill the 2013 sequestration cuts to California's Early start Program.
 - d. Immediate and long-term data is needed to determine the impact changes in eligibility criteria made in 2009 on children specifically those children deemed 'at risk' including those entering after the age of two when delays have become significant enough to meet eligibility.