
R E G I O N A L C E N T E R S



Partners in Lifelong Support



Just a few decades ago, individuals with developmental disabilities and their families lived in a shadow world of discomfort and denial, often isolated from their community, separated from family and virtually invisible to the larger society – with no service network and little hope of a future.

In those days, care was primarily institutional and custodial, with long waiting lists and minimal programming. Decision-making was based on impersonal institutional practices, and conditions were unacceptable by today's standards.

But that changed in the early 1960s when a small group of parents, professionals and legislators came together to challenge the state over its treatment of people with mental retardation, and to improve their quality of life. Their actions resulted in the development of a remarkable system that gave each community a place of hope – offering choices, support and empowerment.

That place is the regional center.

As a single parent, the regional center has been my partner, helping me get connected, and finding the resources and finding the schools. I know they wouldn't be the miracle that they are now if it hadn't been for the regional center.

A NETWORK OF SUPPORT



What you need to know is that it will be OK. Whatever the outcome, whatever the diagnosis, you're not alone. Regardless of the severity of the disability, there is a life out there for our children. There are very fulfilling lives, and they are very fulfilling for ourselves, too.



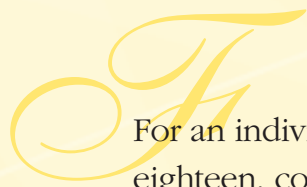
Established in 1966, the 21 regional centers together serve more than 210,000 individuals throughout California.

The regional center concept is unique in the field of human services. We combine the most compassionate and professional elements of the social services with the best features of business practice. The result is a remarkable partnership between people with developmental disabilities, their families, local communities and government.

Each center is a private, non-profit, community-based corporation that operates under contract with state government, and also must comply with federal guidelines. We serve a specific geographic area, and are governed by a community-based board of directors which includes individuals with developmental disabilities, family members and local leaders.

Regional centers serve individuals with mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, and other conditions closely related to mental retardation, or requiring similar services or treatment. If someone had complications at birth, has seizures or difficulty in talking or walking, is slow to learn to sit, crawl or walk, does not interact with other people, or has a physical or mental handicap, he or she may be eligible for our services.

Since research has established that many developmental disabilities are preventable, regional centers also offer early intervention services for infants considered at risk, and prenatal diagnosis and counseling for parents at high risk of having a child with a developmental disability.



For an individual to qualify, the disability must originate before the age of eighteen, continue or be expected to continue indefinitely, and constitute a substantial hardship. After initial evaluation and diagnosis, people with developmental disabilities and their families become active partners with professionals in designing individualized plans for services and support.

For example an infant plan may include in-home therapy or a specialized preschool program. As a child develops, we work with parents and the school to find appropriate school programming.

As they mature to adulthood, individuals learn about their rights and are able to make decisions concerning their own lives, and with support from their families and the regional center can live and work independently.

We are available lifelong – whether for vocational planning, special kinds of therapy and training, conservatorship assistance, or help with various living options.

We also help identify sources of community support – such as friends, neighbors, community organizations and churches – as well as other resources that provide individuals with developmental disabilities opportunities to learn life skills and be fully included as active and valued members of their community.

It's really easy to think you're the only parent going through what you're going through. It's easy to let that happen. And it's so important to know that you're not. And it's so important to make the effort to meet other families. Talking to another family makes such a difference.

A C T I V E P A R T N E R S



Having a child with a disability can be so profoundly isolating. Many people didn't quite know what to do with us after our son was born. And suddenly through the regional center we had this network of support and a network of peers that we didn't have before.



PARTNERS IN LIFELONG SUPPORT



*It's such a wonderful community-based planning situation
for your own children. And they help you identify programs.
They go through it step by step.*

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Regional centers stand on a foundation of empowerment and shared responsibility. We encourage partnerships between individuals, families and professionals, in which people with developmental disabilities and their families are supported and respected as capable decision-makers. Our emphasis is on personal choice, self-determination, and inclusion in the mainstream life of the community.

Through our innovative approaches, regional centers are redefining the field of human services. We are active in legislative advocacy and civil, legal and service rights efforts. We also offer a variety of education, information and support programs for individuals with developmental disabilities, their families and professionals. In addition, we monitor and evaluate services.

Regional centers are the hub of a community network, linking people to services – a community focus for individuals with developmental disabilities, their families and service providers.

We are your partners in lifelong support.



CALIFORNIA REGIONAL CENTERS

Alta California Regional Center
Sacramento

Central Valley Regional Center
Fresno

Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center
Alhambra

Far Northern Regional Center
Redding

Golden Gate Regional Center
San Francisco

Harbor Regional Center
Torrance

Inland Regional Center
San Bernardino

Kern Regional Center
Bakersfield

Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center
Los Angeles

North Bay Regional Center
Napa

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Van Nuys

Redwood Coast Regional Center
Eureka

Regional Center of Orange County
Santa Ana

Regional Center of the East Bay
Oakland

San Andreas Regional Center
Campbell

San Diego Regional Center
San Diego

San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center
Pomona

South Central Los Angeles Regional Center
Los Angeles

Tri-Counties Regional Center
Santa Barbara

Valley Mountain Regional Center
Stockton

Westside Regional Center
Culver City

*The advice I'd give to new parents coming
to the regional center would be don't be afraid.
Don't be afraid because they're there to help you.
They really, truly are interested in the children,
they want the children to be the very best
they can possibly be.*

