



*H*AND·IN·HAND
A GUIDE TO
EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES
AT HARBOR REGIONAL CENTER

Welcome



Welcome to Harbor Regional Center and our Early Childhood Services program. For the next few years – at least until your infant or toddler is three – we’ll be working hand in hand with you to provide the best possible early intervention services for your child with developmental delays.

We want you to know that you are not alone. You are part of a caring team of people who really do understand, and are here to help you make informed decisions.

We are here to listen and respond with information and coordination of services. We encourage families to be active participants in the process of planning and decision-making. The pages that follow answer the questions you may have in mind, and give you a sense of our Early Childhood Services as a whole. However, we understand that each child and each family is unique, so please feel free to contact your Service Coordinator for more information.

ABOUT US

Harbor Regional Center (HRC) is part of a statewide network of 21 community-based centers that provide information and support, and coordinate services.

- Through the California Early Start Program, we serve infants and toddlers from birth to age three who have a developmental delay, or are at risk of having a developmental disability, and their families. Beginning in 2021, a new law will allow us to serve some three and four year olds with developmental delays.
- If eligible under the Lanterman law, we provide lifelong services and supports for children and adults with developmental disabilities, and their families.

Regional centers are the hub of a comprehensive network linking people to services, a community focus for individuals with developmental delays or disabilities, their families and service providers. We are your partners in support.



What We Believe



At Harbor Regional Center, our focus is your family. You, after all, are your child's primary and most constant source of care and nurturing, and our goal is to help each of you maximize the development of your child with developmental delays.

We believe that a family-centered approach to Early Childhood Services is the most effective, and we see you as capable, competent decision-makers, working together as equals with professionals on the Early Childhood team.

We see your child as an important, valued member of your family and community. We also see your family and your community as a natural support system that will be there throughout your child's life. We will work with you to make sure that, whenever necessary, you also get help from formal sources such as teachers and doctors.

What are Early Intervention Services?

Early intervention services are ongoing supports for infants and toddlers with identifiable developmental delays that may interfere with normal development. These services are designed to identify a child's needs and support them as early as possible.



Research has proven that early intervention works and provides an important foundation for future growth and development. We now know that if we provide support and services to children with developmental delays and their families as early as the need is identified, the child's development will not be delayed as much as it would be if left unattended. This also lessens the stress on your family, so you are better able to meet the challenges you face.

Finally, early intervention services help you gain confidence in your own skills and those of your child.

How can we help you?

Harbor Regional Center is a place for you to turn, a place with people who will listen, provide information, and work as partners in coordinating services and supports for you and your child.

You can receive early intervention services and supports in a variety of places. Every child's needs are unique. Depending on your child's needs, we may help you access an infant development program in your home, a preschool program, training and support for your family, or perhaps therapy services. We will also support you during your child's transition to school-based services at the age of three.

We also offer additional supports, such as groups composed of other parents who understand the challenges and stresses of having a child with developmental delays, educational workshops, a resource center, and opportunities for community involvement.

Whom does your team consist of?

When your infant or toddler is referred to Harbor Regional Center, you are assigned a Service Coordinator from our Early Childhood Services Department.

Your Service Coordinator is a key member of your family's team and the person you call when you need support. Your Service Coordinator is familiar with early childhood development, as well as early intervention services and how to access them. He or she will work with you and your family as long as your child is receiving services from Harbor Regional Center. Your Service Coordinator also helps you review information from the assessments of the various professionals who have worked with your child, and discusses how these complement your own observations.

Members of your natural support system, such as extended family, friends, neighborhood programs, religious groups, other parents and service providers from our community can also be important parts of your team. Other members of your team may include clinical specialists on our staff.

When you and your Service Coordinator meet to create or review your Individual/ Family Service Plan, we encourage you to include or consult with any of these individuals if you would like.



What is the Individual/Family Service Plan?



The Individual/Family Service Plan (IFSP) is a document that you create together with your family, your Service Coordinator and service providers.

It identifies:

- Your child's strengths and needs
- Your family's concerns, priorities and resources
- Both formal and informal sources of support outside your family that can help address the needs of all family members, including those related to your child's development.

The Individual Family Service Planning (IFSP) process recognizes that children live in families, families live in communities, and all of these influences affect a child's development.

The guiding principles of the IFSP are that the family is a child's greatest resource, that a child's needs are closely tied to the needs of the

family, and that the best way to support children is to support and act upon the strengths of the family.

The plan sets forth long-term goals and objectives, what services your child will be receiving, and how we will work together to promote and monitor your child's development.

The IFSP is not an end in itself, and it is never truly finished. It is an ongoing process designed to periodically reassess your child's and your family's needs and priorities, and it continues as long as your child is receiving early intervention or ongoing Harbor Regional Center services.



What kinds of services may be identified in the IFSP?

Based on your child's and family's needs, services and programs that may be identified and coordinated as a result of your IFSP are:

- Physical therapy, to help with sensory-motor coordination
- Occupational therapy, to help with developmental or physical skills that will aid in activities of daily living
- Speech/language therapy, to support the development of communication skills
- Parent consultation in behavior management
- Comprehensive Center-Based Program
- Nutritional consultation and feeding therapy
- Medical, dental, vision and hearing evaluations

These services and supports may be coordinated through a variety of community resources, and whenever possible, will be provided in a natural setting where children of the same age without disabilities spend time – such as a neighborhood preschool or local head start program. Service providers will also guide you, your family, pre-school teacher, etc., in ways to promote your child's development.

Your child's progress, and the need for continued services, are evaluated periodically every six months to determine appropriate services and supports, based on your child's development.



What happens as your child gets older?

As your child continues to grow, your child's needs will continue to be assessed to determine if services are recommended. Service can be provided in your home, or in a "mommy/daddy and me" or typical preschool program, depending upon your child and family's specific needs. Services and supports may be provided in these community settings that will continue to teach many of the same things that your child has been learning at home. A community program or preschool provides the added benefit of enriched opportunities for your child to develop early childhood learning, language, and socialization skills in the company of other children.

How do we provide family support?

The HRC Resource and Assistive Technology Center offers a place for families within the regional center where they can receive information, get to know other parents, find out about parent educational workshops, participate in child development programs that we call "Together From the Start," and be connected to parent support groups.

The Resource and Assistive Technology Center is a total resource center, containing a multi-media library of books, videotapes, DVDs, developmental toys, and other materials especially selected for families like yours, as well as an assistive technology lab and computer lab. The Resource and Assistive Technology Center is open Monday through Friday at our main Harbor Regional Center location in

Torrance. We are also open for selected hours at our Long Beach office. We encourage you to visit us and browse through our shelves, or just talk with the staff.

If you are not able to visit, you can call our helpline and talk to our trained staff and volunteers. Just call (310) 543-0691. If the line is busy, our voice mail system will take your message. A staff member will call you back, usually on the same day or the next business day.



Families tell us that there is nothing that quite equals the support one parent offers another. In our parent support groups, members share information and resources as well as the emotional experiences, which families have in common when they realize that their child has special needs. The HRC Resource and Assistive Technology Center works together with parent groups serving families of different disabilities, cultures, age groups and communities. We also coordinate with trained volunteers, called “Parent Support Specialists” who would be happy to talk one-on-one with you.

We also offer training workshops on topics of special interest to families. These include understanding disabilities, early childhood and child development, coping with feelings, overviews of various therapies, health, nutrition, community resources and advocacy.

Finally, the Resource and Assistive Technology Center offers a variety of opportunities for volunteer involvement, such as helping in the library, becoming a trained peer support volunteer, and much more.



A parent's role and responsibility

As a parent, you are the heart of your child's team, and the essential partner in the process. We encourage you to be active, informed participants in every aspect of your child's development. Children do best when parents learn and reinforce the information and techniques taught by specialists.

You should also keep records and regularly communicate with other team members – especially your Service Coordinator– about your sense of what is happening with your child, so that together you and your team can make appropriate choices for your child.

We also suggest that you take advantage of the many educational programs and workshops available to you. If you can, we invite you to participate as a parent support volunteer, helping other families who have children with special needs.

When your child turns three

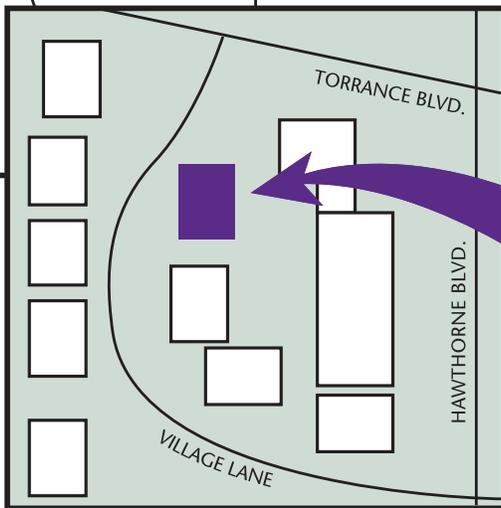
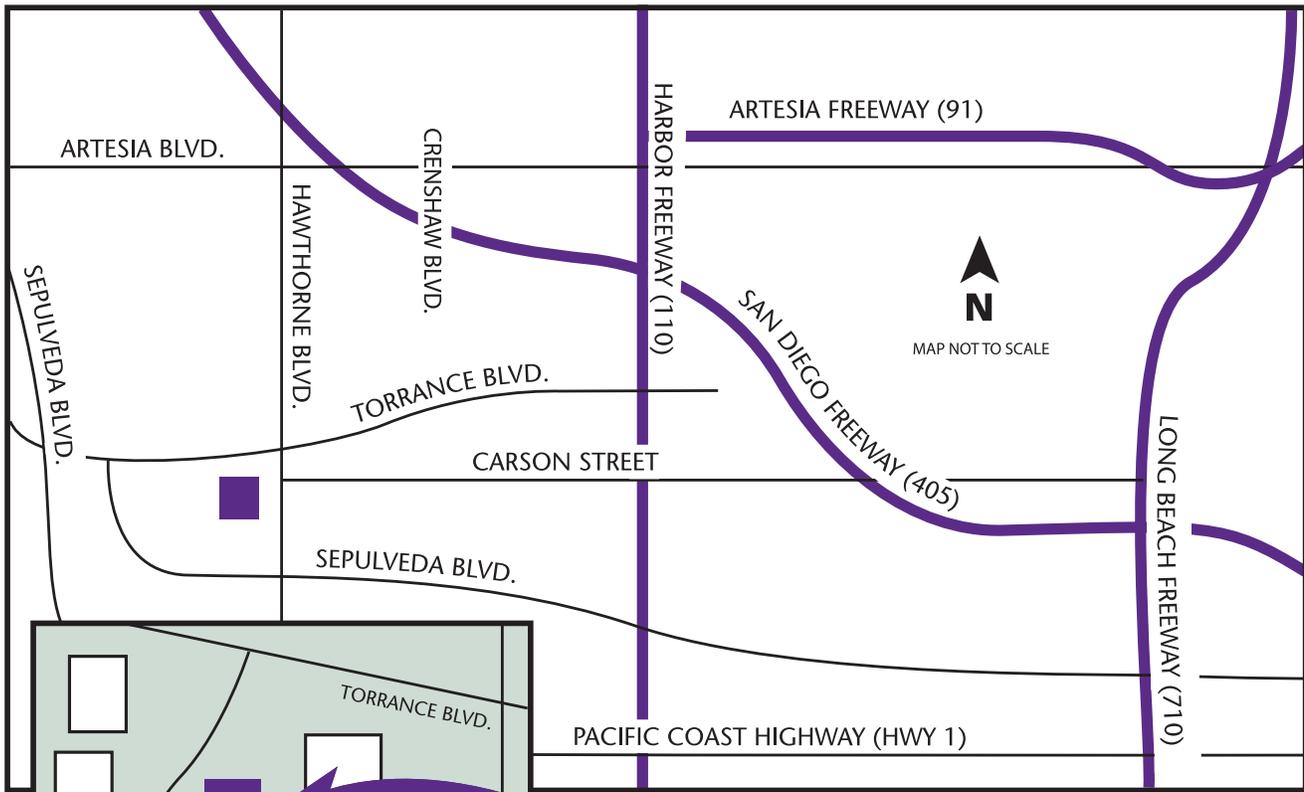


The period of change from one stage of service to the next is called “Transition”. Once again, we are here to help you transition your child from early start services to school-based services, or from one developmental stage to the next.

Most families reading this booklet will find that, as a result of our teamwork and early intervention, your child will be doing well and will no longer need continuing regional center services, but will be eligible for continued services in the community. In this situation, your Service Coordinator will provide information to assist you in using all appropriate community resources for continuing your child’s development.

Depending on the school district in which you live, many children with special needs/developmental delays are eligible for early intervention programs in the public schools, at no cost to families, beginning at age three. At this point, your Service Coordinator will help you learn what programs are available to your child.

At the age of three, your child’s eligibility for continuing regional center services will be determined based upon California’s Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Act. Beginning in 2021, under a new law, your child with developmental delays may qualify for “provisional” eligibility through ages three and four. If your child does not meet the eligibility criteria for either ongoing or provisional regional center services, their case will close. Your Service Coordinator will provide information regarding resources suitable to your child’s needs after the age of three.



Please Note:



Although our address is Hawthorne Blvd., our building is not visible from Hawthorne Blvd.

ARTESIA FREEWAY (91 West) – Go to the “end of the freeway” west to Hawthorne Blvd. Turn left (south) to Torrance Blvd. Turn right (west) onto Torrance Blvd. and enter first LEFT-HAND TURN LANE (Village Lane). This is the entrance to the Village Del Amo, our building is on your left.

SAN DIEGO FREEWAY (405) – Traveling North – Exit on Crenshaw Blvd. Proceed south on Crenshaw Blvd. (about two miles) to Torrance Blvd. Proceed west on Torrance Blvd.(about one mile). Cross Hawthorne Blvd., to first LEFT-HAND TURN LANE (Village Lane). This is the entrance to the Village Del Amo, our building is on your left.

SAN DIEGO FREEWAY (405) – Traveling South – Exit on Hawthorne Blvd. Proceed south on Hawthorne Blvd. (about four miles) to Torrance Blvd. Turn right (west) onto Torrance Blvd. to first LEFT-HAND TURN LANE (Village Lane). This is the entrance to the Village Del Amo, our building is on your left.



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