

Behavioral Health Handbook



We're creating a more equitable world so people with developmental disabilities can choose their path. We do this by reimagining how care and support can be better connected to fill gaps in human services across an individual's lifespan.





WELCOME

Welcome to the Easterseals Northern California Behavioral Health Program. This handbook is provided to you as a resource, giving you information about your rights and responsibilities while receiving services from us and providing an overview of our program. We believe that the partnership between you and the Easterseals Northern California team is essential to meet the needs of your loved one.

OUR PURPOSE AND VALUES

At Easterseals Northern California (ESNorCal), we're creating a more equitable world so people with developmental disabilities can choose their path. We do this by reimagining how care and support can be better connected to fill gaps in human services across an individual's lifespan.

Values shape the culture and define the character of Easterseals Northern California. Values guide how we, as an organization, behave and are the standards by which we make decisions. As an organization, our values are:

BOLD

**EQUITY-
INFORMED**

**COMMUNITY-
CENTERED**

**WELLBEING-
DRIVEN**

WHO IS A "CAREGIVER"?

We use the word "caregiver" for anyone who provides regular parenting and care to someone. For example, a caregiver might be a parent, grandparent, aunt or legal guardian.

OUR PROMISE TO YOU

We will provide exceptional, individualized, family-centered services to empower children and adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities, and children who are at risk for developmental delays, to achieve their goals and live independent, fulfilling lives. Our services are voluntary and at any time you can refuse, decline or withdraw from them.

WE PROMISE TO:

- listen to and respect your perspectives and choices.
- provide clear and transparent communication.
- communicate and share complete and unbiased information with you in ways that are useful.
- integrate your knowledge, experiences, values, beliefs and cultural backgrounds into the planning and delivery of services.
- encourage and support your participation in your loved one's care.

Easterseals Northern California believes that everyone should be treated equally. We provide the same level of care to our clients regardless of their race, gender expression, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation or any other factor that makes them uniquely themselves.



Set aside quiet time to review the Handbook. Take time to read all of the information and sign the forms.





BEHAVIORAL HEALTH HANDBOOK CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

In this Handbook, you will find information about:

- ESNorCal Clinical Services
- Programs ESNorCal provides for treatment
- Your role in treatment planning

WHEN YOU HAVE QUESTIONS

If you have any questions, contact a member of your loved one's supervision team. We want to make sure all clients, parents and others in a client's life understand how ESNorCal can improve the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities – including autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

WHAT'S NEXT?

STEP 1: Review the contents of this Handbook.

STEP 2: Review, sign, date and return the following forms in order to receive services.

- Consent to Services
- Consent to Photography and/or Video Recording, Authorization to Use/Disclose Photograph(s)

IMPORTANT:

Throughout this Handbook, you will see “Tip” sections. Tips offered in the Handbook include helpful information and proven strategies.

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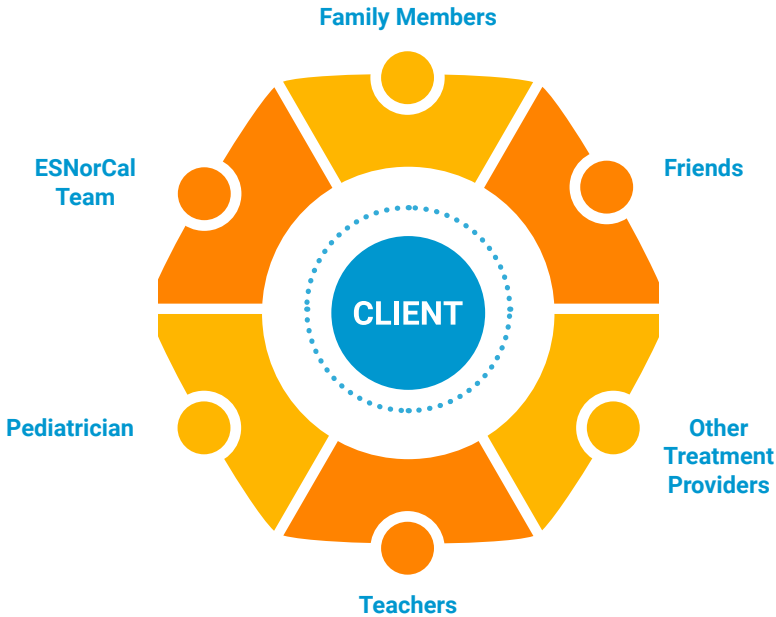


OUR CLIENT-CENTERED AND FAMILY-INVOLVED APPROACH

We believe in a client-centered philosophy.

Each client, family member and parent or caregiver is an important member of the treatment team.

You know your loved one best, so we try to recognize your knowledge and experience. This will help us reach better outcomes for someone with an intellectual or developmental disability. In order for treatment to work well, parents, caregivers and others who are close to the client need to participate in treatment.



tip

All caregivers should understand all treatments. It is helpful for everyone involved in your loved one's care to understand all the treatments being delivered. If your loved one gets medical or educational services from several providers, let us know what other services are being received.



AN INTRODUCTION TO OUR CLINICAL SERVICES



WHO IS EASTERSEALS NORTHERN CALIFORNIA?

Easterseals Northern California (ESNorCal) is an affiliate of Easterseals, Inc. We have proudly served thousands of individuals and families in many Northern California counties since 1927. Our services include behavioral health, early intervention, and adult day programming. All of ESNorCal's service lines have been accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) International for their quality.

WHAT FUNDING SOURCES DO WE ACCEPT?

ESNorCal partners with Kaiser Permanente, the California Regional Centers, and other funding sources. Together with these partners, we provide treatment services. For a complete list of services that we offer, you can visit esnoral.org.



key terms

Key Terms used in the Handbook help explain important topics throughout. You can also find the Key Terms at the end of the Handbook.

Client

Any individual who receives necessary treatment services from ESNorCal.

Evidence-Based Therapies

Treatments that:

- Are shown to be effective based on extensive and well-designed research
- Produce consistently positive outcomes

Funding Source

The organization that is responsible for paying for services which are provided through ESNorCal.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE SERVICES?

Everyone is unique. That's why clients at ESNorCal receive services that are personalized and designed specially to meet their particular needs. A treatment team is assigned to each client. This team is responsible for creating each client's treatment plan.

ESNorCal teams include professionals called practitioners. These practitioners are experts in working with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. At least one ESNorCal supervisor or manager (members of the supervising team) leads each treatment team. Our supervisors and managers oversee all treatment services.

Every supervisor and manager at ESNorCal have advanced training and/or is certified according to the laws and regulations for providing behavioral health services.

TYPES OF SERVICES

- Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)
 - Paraprofessional ABA
 - Caregiver-Led ABA
 - Social Skills Groups
 - Group ABA
- Caregiver Training
- Chat
- Connect
- Compass-Behavioral (Compass-B)
- RUBI

METHODS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

- Telehealth
- In-person
- Hybrid
- Direct (face-to-face)
- Indirect (treatment development and oversight by clinical staff with client/caregiver not present)



CAN I GET INTERPRETER SERVICES?

Do you have Kaiser Permanente as your funding source? If so, our Clinical Services offer interpreter services to clients and parents with limited English skills. The Language Assistance Line is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. If you would like to use this service, please ask for assistance from your practitioner.

PRACTITIONER BACKGROUND CHECK REQUIREMENTS

As a direct care services provider, we must take measures to ensure client safety. ESNorCal recognizes this fact. To work at ESNorCal, employees are fingerprinted which is part of the guidelines of the California Department of Social Services. The Department of Justice will notify ESNorCal if any violations occur. This is in effect during the entire time that a practitioner has a job with ESNorCal. In addition, ESNorCal performs routine screening of all employees to ensure that new hires and existing employees are not on any state and federal exclusion lists.

key terms



Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

ABA is a process used to help us understand how learning takes place. A wide variety of ABA techniques are used to help clients with ASD learn new skills.

Hybrid

Hybrid services are a combination of in-person and virtual sessions via telehealth.

Practitioner

Any individual who provides services to ESNorCal clients.

Services

Any clinical service (direct or indirect) provided to clients.

Sessions

The time during which a client receives services from ESNorCal.

Supervising Team

The Supervising Team is the program supervisor (PS) and the clinical manager (CM). The CM is responsible for developing your loved one's treatment plan. Together, the PS and CM make sure of two things: that your loved one's treatment plan is followed, and that they are making progress.

Telehealth

Any clinical service provided virtually through a video meeting, such as Zoom.

HIGH STANDARDS AND EXCELLENCE

We are committed to excellence and high standards of clinical care for our clients. Our clinical practitioners are credentialed and/or experienced in working with clients with disabilities.

ESNorCal follows all laws and regulations required for each of our practitioners' positions. In addition, we require all practitioners to participate in ongoing training about:

- the latest research in the field,
- up-to-date treatment approaches, and
- cultural awareness and understanding of the diverse populations that ESNorCal serves.

Practitioners also receive direct training on delivering our services through supervision and observation during sessions.

INNOVATION

One of our guiding principles is innovation, where we often seek better ways to work and provide services. We do this to continuously enhance the quality of care we provide and to improve the satisfaction of our clients and their families. As part of our commitment to innovation, you may occasionally be invited to use one of our digital tools during treatment. For instance, we offer smartphone and tablet apps designed to keep you and your loved one informed and engaged throughout the care process.

One such tool is the free myBrightlink app, which you may be asked to download to your smartphone. This app allows you to communicate directly with your care and scheduling teams, as well as track treatment progress.





COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

How do we serve clients better? We encourage practitioners from different professional disciplines to work together and share their skills. Through this collaboration, we can help clients and families reach the goals that they desire. Besides input from the ESNorCal team, we may ask other professionals in a client's life, like a teacher or pediatrician, for their suggestions. Professionals, family members, friends, and the client all share valuable information. We want to hear from the client and all the important people in his or her life.

CLIENT'S VOICE

Every client has a voice. While some may not be able to express their wants and needs verbally, others may communicate through their actions or behaviors. Regardless of how a client communicates, we believe it is essential to listen and respond with empathy and understanding. Throughout the assessment and treatment process, the ESNorCal treatment team remains committed to honoring each client's voice — actively listening and adapting care to meet their individual needs.



Consistency is key. Progress is often more successful when you practice treatment strategies outside of session times. Ask your care team for ideas if you need help practicing what you learn in treatment.

key terms



Responsible Adult

A person who is a guardian or any individual who is:

- 18 years old or older
- capable of providing care for the client in the absence of a parent or caregiver
- approved by the parent or caregiver to provide care for the client in the absence of the parent or caregiver

Guardian

Someone who is authorized to make medical decisions for a client or on behalf of a client. This could be a parent. It may also be another person responsible for the client's medical decisions – like a grandparent or legal guardian.

SIBLINGS, FRIENDS AND PEERS

At ESNorCal we believe brothers and sisters, friends, and peers also matter. We may involve siblings, friends and others who are important in a client's life in treatment. Our practitioners will ensure treatment sessions include appropriate people who will benefit the client. It is important for ESNorCal practitioners to be able to focus attention on the treatment of the client. It is also important for the client's caregiver to be fully present when participating in session. For that reason, a Responsible Adult must supervise the client's siblings and peers at each session.

INDIVIDUALIZED TREATMENT AND FAMILIES

We try hard to create a unique treatment plan to serve the needs of the client. Sessions are focused on not only improving client skills, but also on empowering the family and caregivers. We encourage families and caregivers to be active participants during the entire treatment process. This includes each and every session.

CAREGIVER TRAINING

Practitioners who are assigned to the client's case will work with the client, family and caregivers to decide what level of participation is needed to reach treatment goals. Practitioners will offer training and coaching on how clients and caregivers can work on treatment during and outside of sessions. Participation may include coaching on how to respond, or when not to respond, to certain client behaviors.



Don't go through it alone! Join a parent or caregiver support group online or in person. Reach out to friends, family or your community for support.



YOUR LOVED ONE'S TREATMENT PATH WITH ESNORCAL



WHAT IS TREATMENT?

- a short-term opportunity for working on targeted goals
- intended for gaining skills and resources that are needed to manage the symptoms of autism or other developmental disability
- an important time for clients and families to build their skills
- different for every client who comes to ESNorCal for treatment

TREATMENT

The first treatment period usually lasts about six months. Total treatment length usually lasts two years or less.

During treatment, the team working with your loved one will follow the treatment plan developed during the assessment.

If you are concerned about the treatment plan at any time, or if your loved one is not making progress, please talk with your supervising team.

REASSESSMENT

Every six months we reassess your loved one. At this reassessment, we look at the same measures we used during the first assessment. This is how we can see how much progress your loved one has made. At each reassessment, we will talk about graduation from treatment or transition to another type of treatment.



tip

Don't forget to schedule time for your loved one's sessions. When beginning services, look at your family's daily schedule and determine if it needs to be changed to make time for your loved one's treatment sessions.

YOUR LOVED ONE'S TREATMENT TEAM

ESNorCal uses a tiered Practitioner Treatment Team approach, an industry best practice. We encourage you to interact with all members of your loved one's treatment team.

YOUR LOVED ONE'S PRACTITIONERS

Behavior Interventionist

- Provides direct treatment based on your loved one's treatment plan

Program Supervisor

- Provides training to caregivers or other practitioners on implementing the loved one's treatment plan

Clinical Manager

- Meets with clients or parents and caregivers each month to discuss progress and review treatment plans
- Oversees all practitioners who are on the team
- Responsible for the development, implementation and overall success of your loved one's treatment plan

ESNORCAL CLINICAL LEADERSHIP

- Manages services and employees, and ensures service quality and customer service
- Oversees program operations and clinical quality throughout a region's offices
- Provides clinical consultation for high needs cases
- Supervises practitioners and ensures service quality
- Acts as an escalation point for any concerns or questions



DISCHARGE

Being discharged means ending the episode of care with ESNorCal. Planning for the discharge process starts as soon as the client begins receiving services. A client graduates or is discharged when the client and family have the skills and resources needed to maintain or continue improvement even after the client is no longer receiving services from us.

In some cases, however, we may need to discharge a client for other reasons, such as not following ESNorCal or funding source policies and requirements. We also may discharge clients if treatment is not progressing as recommended.

Here are some examples of why a client may be discharged:

- Attends/participates in sessions inconsistently and/or cancels too many sessions
- Often arrives late to treatment sessions or leaves sessions early
- Is unresponsive to contact attempts (by phone, email, etc.)
- Does not provide needed documentation related to consent, custody or other issues that affect our ability to provide treatment
- Refuses clinically recommended treatment
- Caregiver behavior towards staff, such as yelling, profanity, or personal insults, interferes with the client's progress and creates barriers to effective treatment delivery
- Tells ESNorCal that they do not want services anymore
- Moves to a home that is not in ESNorCal's or the funding source's coverage area, and can no longer access services provided within the coverage area

ESNorCal works with clients or parents and caregivers as much as possible to take care of any issues before any client is discharged. When it is possible and it is recommended, Catalight Care Services may connect a client to another Provider for treatment.



Understand the plan. Understanding the treatment plan is important to your loved one's success. Just ask us if you don't understand part of the plan. Your loved one's supervising team is here to help you understand your loved one's treatment plan.



AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT TREATMENT SESSIONS

TREATMENT SESSIONS

A Responsible Adult must be present at all sessions.

IMPORTANT: RESPONSIBLE ADULT REQUIRED

Your session will be canceled if no Responsible Adult is present at any time during a session outside of ESNorCal clinic sessions.

A Responsible Adult must take care of:

- Feeding
- Bathroom routines (includes potty training)
- Monitoring the health and safety of the client
- Monitoring the health and safety of any peer or sibling under their supervision
- The client's safety during an emergency or crisis situation

The Responsible Adult is also responsible for communicating feedback and information about treatment to the client's parent or caregiver.



Keep phone numbers handy. Add the phone numbers for each of your loved one's supervising team members to your phone along with the Easterseals Northern California Customer Service number, 855-843-2476, and email address, CustomerService@esnorcal.org.





SCHEDULING A TREATMENT SESSION

We are required to offer every family a complete schedule offer. A schedule offer is considered complete when the schedule offered is outside of your loved one's legally mandated school hours, based on your loved one's age and/or IEP, and medical appointments, and when it fulfills the authorized hours. We schedule all sessions outside of legally mandated hours. This does not include daycare, after school programs, or extra-curricular activities (sports, tutoring, etc.). ESNorCal can provide visit verifications as documentation to your employer if needed. Please read our scheduling policy and let us know if you have questions.

IN-BETWEEN SESSIONS

Your treatment team will give you things to work on between sessions and throughout the treatment periods. Working on skills between sessions will make a big difference in your loved one's response to treatment.

Practice the skills your loved one is learning in treatment. If you can, make them part of your loved one's everyday routine. For example, you can read picture books at home and have your loved one point to various pictures in the book if the treatment team is working on increasing your loved one's ability to identify objects.

IMPORTANT: PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!

Treatment is not a long-term solution but rather a short-term opportunity to obtain the skills and resources needed to manage the symptoms of autism or other developmental disability. The more you help your loved one practice new skills, the more independent your loved one will become.



WORKING WITH YOUR LOVED ONE BETWEEN SESSIONS

- Set aside time to work on skills.
- If you have other young children in the home, find someone who can watch them while you are interacting with your loved one receiving services.
- Work in small amounts of time. Stop if you or your loved one gets tired.
- Take advantage of incidental opportunities. This is something that happens while you and your loved one are doing daily tasks. For example, your loved one may be working on learning how to ask for items or make requests. If you know they want something, like a cookie, keep it just out of reach so they have the opportunity to ask for it when they want it.
- If you encounter a problem and aren't sure how to handle it, please don't hesitate to reach out. Your loved one's treatment team will help you find a solution that works for you and your loved one.



tip

Focus on the desired behavior. Explaining or trying to reason with an upset individual is difficult. For many parents and caregivers, this goes against how we would want to respond. For example, we want to reason, explain and force. Instead, focus on the behavior you want to see. Simple prompts such as, "When you are calm, we will go to the park," can help.

SERVICE METHOD DELIVERY

ESNorCal provides services in primarily a telehealth service modality. This has been supported in multiple research studies noting its effectiveness in treatment outcomes. When clinically recommended, we also offer a hybrid service delivery model, which includes a mixture of both in person and telehealth sessions. In the hybrid model, one practitioner may be in-person, while the other is providing supervision via telehealth. The method of service delivery will be determined by recommendation from your clinical team.

Prior to engaging families in telehealth, a team member will provide instructions to the family on the equipment used in service delivery, including features, set-up, use, maintenance, safety considerations, infection control and troubleshooting. Further, if a family has questions about telehealth at ESNorCal, they can contact a member of the supervision team. If after normal operating hours, families and/or caregivers can expect a response within two business days.

TREATMENT SESSION SETTINGS AND ENVIRONMENT

We care about the safety of our clients and staff. We reserve the right to evaluate any setting before approving it. We also reserve the right to re-evaluate to determine if the location is suitable at any time. The setting can be rejected at the sole discretion of the staff member if an ESNorCal employee feels an environment is unsafe, possesses a health hazard or could subject the client or staff to any kind of harassment.

ESNorCal reserves the right to discontinue providing services in a home or in any other environment where the above criteria is met. In these cases, a supervisor or manager will directly address the concern with the client, caregivers, or other responsible adult who can help resolve the safety issue. If the safety issue cannot be resolved it may result in ending the episode of care.

MAINTAINING A SAFE AND RESPECTFUL ENVIRONMENT

Maintaining a safe and respectful environment is essential for both clients and ESNorCal employees. We do not tolerate inappropriate behavior toward our employees, including yelling, threats, or any conduct that creates an unsafe or hostile atmosphere.

ESNorCal employees have the right to pause or end sessions, leave a setting, or refer clients back to the funder if these behaviors occur.

We ask all families to help us uphold these standards so that everyone can work together in a safe, respectful, and supportive space.

SPECIAL COSTS

When a client, parent, caregiver or guardian requests the participation of practitioners during a session with an activity or setting that is outside of the home or clinic, the client, parent, caregiver or guardian is responsible for any cost required for the practitioner's participation (example: zoo or park entrance fee, etc.). In addition, ESNorCal and practitioners are not financially responsible for any property damage incurred during the course of, or as a result of, treatment in the home or other setting. There are times that your clinical team may ask you to purchase certain materials to support your loved one's treatment plan. If there are financial constraints in purchasing these items, please inform your clinical team.



IMPORTANT: LIMITS ON ESNORCAL'S PRESENCE

Allowing a client to attend or participate in any particular setting such as preschool, daycare, school, lesson, or class cannot be dependent on ESNorCal's presence at that location.

SCHEDULING POLICY

We understand how busy life can get at times. Please review our Scheduling Policy to learn about how we schedule sessions for our clients and if there is flexibility to fit your family's schedule. If you have any questions about our policies, contact compliance@esnorcal.org.

Availability: When your loved one is able to have services outside of any legally mandated activities, such as school.

Preference: Any preference for schedule times will be considered based on clinical needs and treatment plan recommendations.

Session Times: Schedules will be offered in specific blocks of time in order to meet the demand for services in the most efficient manner.

Full Schedule: A full schedule is the number of hours that are authorized by the funding source.

Declined Hours: Any scheduled hours offered to meet authorized treatment hours that are not accepted by the client, parent, caregiver or guardian due to preference will count as declined hours, and the authorization will be adjusted as a result to reflect only the hours accepted. If hours accepted are not adequate for meaningful progress the clinical team may discuss alternative service options with you or recommend to end this episode of care. If you initially decline hours but later on can accept the declined hours, you may do so. If the additional hours are still clinically indicated, the clinical team will submit an addendum requesting the hours to increase.

Schedule Changes: ESNorCal will periodically give you the opportunity to update your schedule preferences and availability.

Approval of Changes: Changes will be made based on scheduling guidelines and when the practitioner is available. Requests for schedule changes are never guaranteed. The scheduler or supervisor or manager will contact the client, parent, caregiver or guardian regarding any schedule changes requested.

Treating Practitioners: The practitioners assigned to your case will be changed on a regular basis. These changes support ongoing generalization of your loved one's skill development.

AN INTRODUCTION TO APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS (ABA)

ABA

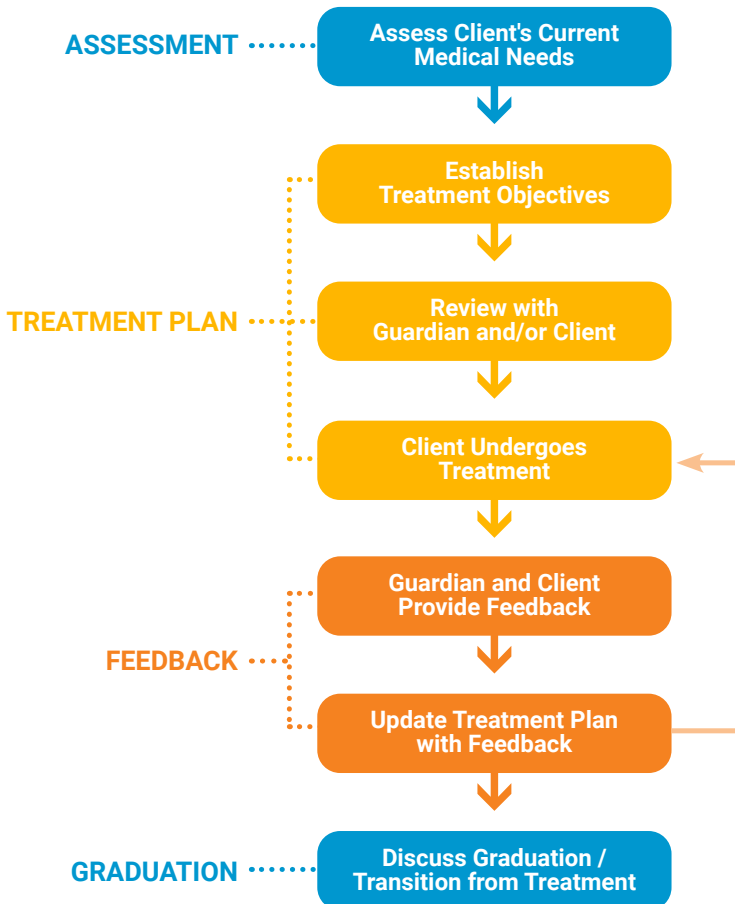
For many clients who have ASD, a common treatment option is ABA. ABA is a scientific discipline that focuses on the principles of how learning takes place. There are many factors that can contribute to determining our behavior. One set of factors includes both our past and our current environments. Others are biological factors such as our genetics. For example, if a child is rewarded (positively reinforced) for sitting at the table with the family at dinnertime, that child is more likely to want to sit at the table in the future. In a similar way, if a child behaves poorly, the adults that are present can ignore this behavior. The result is that the child will be less likely to repeat the behavior over time.

SKILLS

Learners with ASD can build useful skills using many ABA techniques. ABA programs focus on improving day-to-day behaviors. The goal is to help someone with ASD become more independent. When a client with ASD learns new skills, the treatment team will reinforce desired behaviors and ignore or interrupt undesired behaviors. These techniques are used in various situations that are structured and common, such as a family meal or playing at the neighborhood playground.



As part of your loved one's ABA and Treatment Plan, we will perform assessments over several appointments with you and your loved one in order to better understand his or her current medical needs. You are a very important part of this process, and we will ask for your feedback about your loved one and their treatment plan and also talk to you about when your loved one will graduate or transition from ABA treatment.





AN INTRODUCTION TO CHAT

CHAT

CHAT is a language-focused, naturalistic developmental treatment model designed for children aged 6 and under. It emphasizes building communication and social-emotional skills through everyday routines and familiar environments, such as a playroom or the dining table at home.

In this model, clinicians coach parents and caregivers to support their child's development in language, play, and social interaction, while also addressing challenging behaviors during daily activities. The goal is to foster expressive communication and emotional growth, while empowering caregivers with practical tools they can use throughout the day. For example, if a child has difficulty expressing discomfort—such as irritation from a shirt's fabric—trained caregivers can recognize the signs and help the child learn to communicate their needs, like pointing to the shirt to indicate the problem.

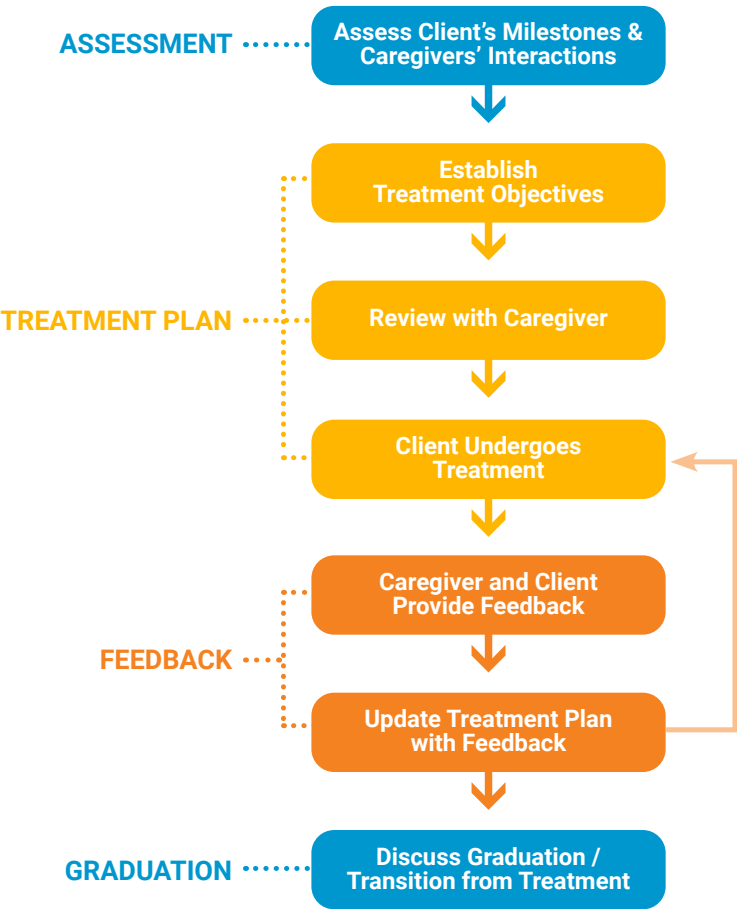
SKILLS

Parents and caregivers will learn essential skills for child development, including how to track their loved one's milestones and identify learning opportunities within their loved one's daily routines. This can include jotting down every time their loved one points to something they want, or noting when they can introduce saying, "All done," after meals. Individual goals for each child are determined by what behavior concerns each family has, and what their family routines look like.



CHAT ASSESSMENT & TREATMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT

As part of your loved one's Chat Treatment Plan, caregivers will fill out a Milestones Checklist and a behavior assessment. The clinician leading the assessment – the assessor – will observe the caregivers and their loved one interacting naturally together over the course of one or two meetings. The assessor will also ask about the child's current routines, how they play, any behaviors of concerns, as well as the caregivers' goals and priorities for treatment.





AN INTRODUCTION TO CONNECT

CONNECT

This caregiver-mediated program focuses on people with profound intellectual multiple disabilities (PIMD) and increasing wellbeing for the family and the person with PIMD. This means that parents or caregivers learn how to teach their loved one new skills under the guidance of a clinical team. They will also learn to better connect to their loved one's needs and wants, such as the need to use the restroom or the desire to go outside or see a movie.

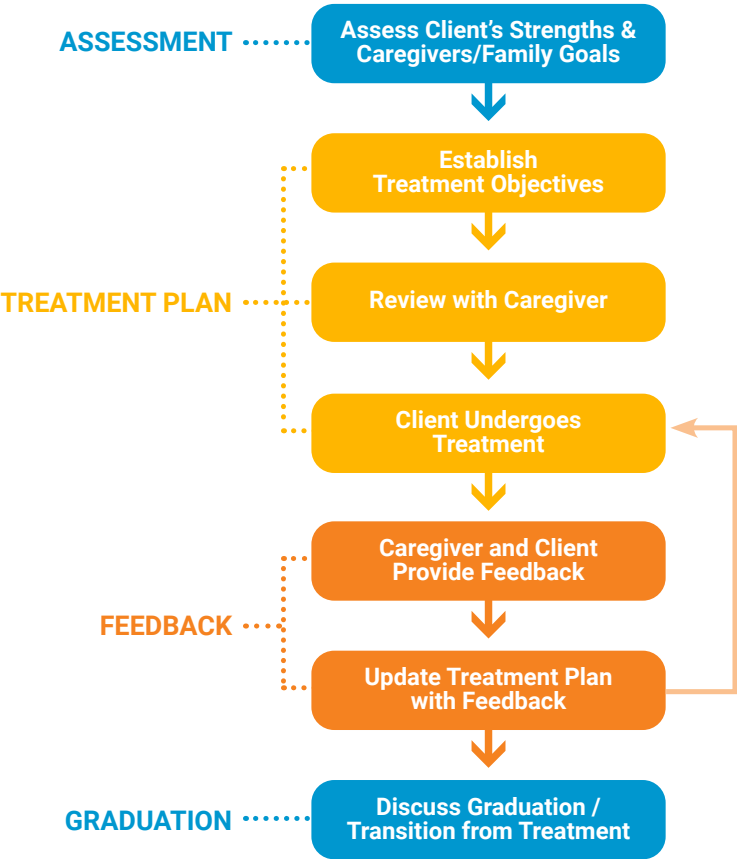
Individuals with PIMD may include those with a cognitive disability, physical limitations, or sensory impairment. The clinical team collaborates with the family to identify which skills are meaningful to them, and they focus on helping families gain confidence and independence to teach new skills to their loved one.

SKILLS

The goals of Connect are to improve communication skills so that the family has a better understanding of the client's wants and needs and can support the client's self-determination. The program can also help lower stress of parents and caregivers, increase their confidence in their own ability to interact with their loved one in meaningful ways, and increase their wellbeing as a family.

CONNECT ASSESSMENT & TREATMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The assessment for Connect includes a functional skills checklist to determine which areas to focus on during treatment. Functional skills include activities like getting dressed, brushing hair or teeth, and managing money. In Connect, your clinician will focus on your loved one's strengths in order to develop more skills. A sensory and behavioral assessment are also included to help identify other areas of focus. Treatment is focused on the needs and priorities of parents, caregivers and the family unit as a whole, which can help guide the treatment plan.





AN INTRODUCTION TO COMPASS-BEHAVIORAL (COMPASS-B)

COMPASS-B

Compass-B is a client-mediated program that focuses on improving the quality of life for youths who have challenges with organization and planning, social skills, and regulating emotions. For example, if a client needs help learning to get ready for school by themselves and improve how they share with their siblings, these could be areas to focus on during treatment. This program can be paired with family coaching.

SKILLS

The clinician will work one-to-one with the client on the skills the client wants help with – a process called Behavior Mapping. This lets the client decide which improvements will help them in their daily life, such as self-management, self-advocacy, communication, navigating social situations, managing time, and observing their own emotions and behaviors. Treatment utilizes Behavior Mapping to look at the chain of events for a certain behavior. For example, if a client is struggling with social skills, the Behavior Mapping would look like this:

INSTEAD OF...

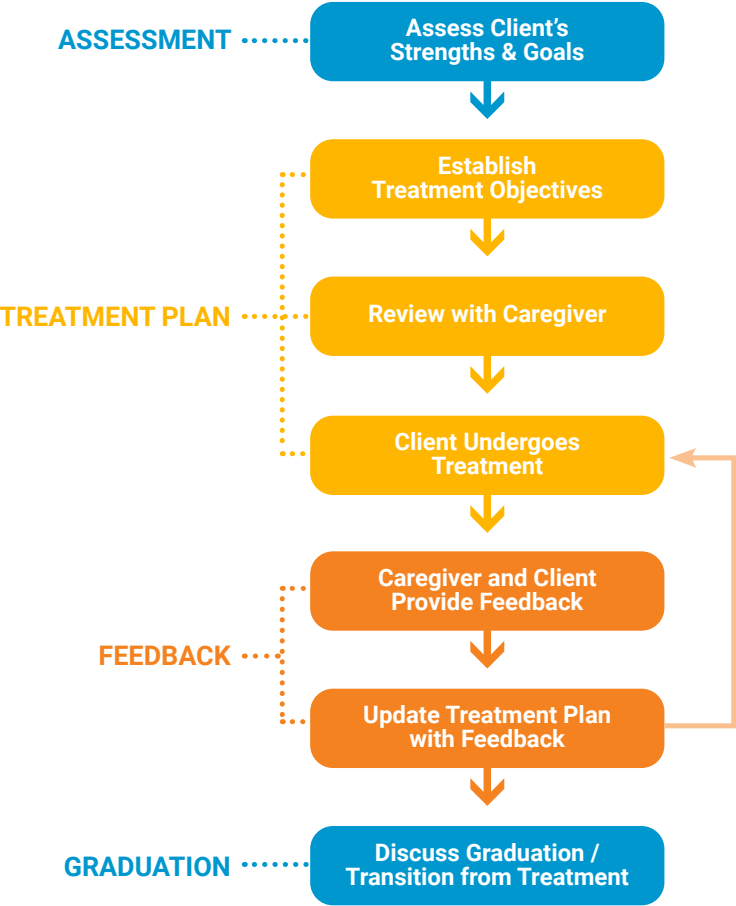
- A** My friend was being too sensitive.
- B** I told my friend, "Don't be a baby, I'm just teasing."
- C** My friend ran away crying.

LET'S TRY...

- A** My friend said I was saying mean things to them.
- B** I said sorry and used kinder words when I spoke to them.
- C** My friend accepted my apology and asked me to play with them.

COMPASS-B ASSESSMENT & TREATMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT

What makes Compass-B's treatment different is the self-observation piece of the program. Using a worksheet called the Compass Assessment Element, the client and clinician discover the client's strengths and determine what they want to work on in the program. Clients are actively involved in creating their own goals.





CANCELLING A TREATMENT SESSION

CANCELLATION POLICY

Continued progress to achieve treatment goals is important to ESNorCal. Depending on your funding source, progress may also be a requirement to continue receiving funding for treatment. Frequent cancellations or “no-shows” (where a client misses a session without prior notice) can have a negative effect on our ability to help a client make progress. We understand that the client or ESNorCal may need to cancel sessions on occasion. For example, a session may need to be cancelled due to illness. However, when the number of cancellations or no-shows, for any reason, interferes with the treatment progress, ESNorCal will make a reasonable effort to work with the client, parents, caregivers or guardians to find the most appropriate solution. We will consult with the funding source regarding ending treatment if the cancellations are excessive and they interfere with the progress of treatment.



tip

Schedule changes can happen. Sometimes ESNorCal needs to make a scheduled change. When this happens, the scheduler and/or supervisor/manager will contact the client, parents, caregivers or guardians.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE TO CANCEL A TREATMENT SESSION

Follow these guidelines when cancelling a session:

- Provide as much notice as possible. Keep in mind that 24 hours or more is required.
- Communicate to the scheduler – do not communicate cancellations directly to practitioners.
- Provide details regarding the cancellation(s) – the number of sessions, dates, time, and reason.
- When asking for a make-up session, refer to the guidelines for make-up sessions below.

You may cancel sessions using the myBrightlink app, ESNorCal’s client family companion app available in the Apple and Google Play stores.

REQUESTING A TREATMENT HOLD

We understand that life can be unpredictable. Sometimes your family may need to temporarily pause services. You may request a treatment hold with your practitioner or funding source. Treatment holds are typically up to 30 days. Upon a return from a hold, you may be assigned new practitioners and be provided with a new schedule offer. We do not hold practitioners or schedules beyond a 2-week period.

IMPORTANT: CANCELLATIONS

Too many cancellations and no-shows from a client family can lead to discharge from ESNorCal services. Since these are medical services, they require consistency in order to be effective. Families can work with the Scheduling department to secure make-up or substitute sessions.

WHEN A PRACTITIONER CANCELS A TREATMENT SESSION

Providing coverage for your regularly scheduled appointments when your care team members are not available is an important aspect of our service delivery to you. ESNorCal will make every effort to offer an alternate or proxy practitioner when your care team members are not available. We want to ensure cancellations on the part your care team do not affect client treatment in an adverse way, as such we encourage you to accept session offers from our proxy practitioners.

MAKE-UP SESSION GUIDELINES

All make-up sessions are subject to the expectations of your specific funding source as well as the availability of the practitioners.

For client-initiated cancellations, ESNorCal will offer a make-up session only if the required advance notice is provided and practitioners are available. Keep in mind that 24 hours or more advance notice is required.

For ESNorCal practitioner-initiated cancellations, ESNorCal will make every effort to provide a make-up session when possible if another practitioner cannot fill the regular session time. If a client or caregiver or guardian declines an offered make-up session for any reason, we will consider these hours as declined.

HOLIDAYS

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Presidents' Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day

In addition to the above holidays, the Behavioral Health Program may be closed for up to two business days per year for staff training. Holidays are subject to change and will be communicated in advance.



SAFETY COMES FIRST

ENSURING THE SAFETY OF CLIENTS AND PRACTITIONERS

We want to ensure the health and safety of all clients and practitioners. To reduce health and safety risks during treatment, it's important to follow all policies, laws and regulations related to health and safety, including our sick policy.

SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS

To help maintain a safe and secure environment for all individuals on our property—children, families, visitors, employees, and caregivers—video surveillance is in use throughout all public areas. No audio is recorded. These cameras help us monitor activity, prevent incidents, and protect both people and property. By entering the premises, you acknowledge and give your implied consent to this safety measure.

SICK POLICY

If your loved one shows any signs of illness, please notify the program right away. In-person sessions should be canceled unless you have a note from a medical provider stating your loved one is well enough to attend. To help keep everyone safe, your loved one must be symptom-free for at least 24 hours before returning to in-person sessions. If your loved one is sent home from school or child care, or stays home due to illness without a doctor's note, their in-person session should also be canceled. You can either reschedule the session for a later date when or switch to a telehealth session if appropriate.

If anyone else in the family or home is experiencing any signs of illness, we ask that a safe distance be maintained between the individual and ESNorCal staff to prevent transmission of any illness.

If your loved one or anyone in the loved one's home has a highly contagious disease, such as, but not limited to, COVID-19, Pink Eye, Strep, Impetigo (skin infection), or Hand-Foot-Mouth Disease, sessions must be cancelled. A note from a medical provider may be requested by ESNorCal prior to resuming services.

If anyone in your household has head lice, please let us know right away and cancel any scheduled sessions. Sessions can resume once the lice have been fully treated and your child is completely nit-free.

IMPORTANT:

ESNorCal requires all clients and practitioners to strictly abide by the terms of the sick policy. Sessions will be cancelled and rescheduled if there is a risk of spreading illness and/or infection.

RESPONSE TO UNSAFE CLIENT BEHAVIOR

With input from clients, parents, caregivers or guardians, practitioners develop treatment goals. They may also provide coaching on how to respond to unsafe and unhealthy client behavior in the most effective way. While practitioners may use some gentle physical prompting based on specific treatment guidelines, they are prohibited from using any physical restraint on clients unless the use of restraint is specifically recommended in the client's treatment plan. The use of restraint during treatment is rare, and a multidisciplinary team including ESNorCal Clinical Services Leadership and Catalight Care Services Clinical Leadership must approve all use of restraint.

If client behavior escalates to a point that makes practitioners feel unsafe, ESNorCal encourages practitioners to remove themselves from any perceived danger. In the event a client is in immediate danger to themselves or others, ESNorCal staff will call 911.

TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES

ESNorCal practitioners are responsible for their own transportation. Our practitioners can neither provide transportation to clients and families, nor can they accept transportation from clients and families.

WHO IS EASTERSEALS NORTHERN CALIFORNIA?

Easterseals Northern California (ESNorCal) is part of Catalight Care Services, a network of behavioral health and therapy providers. ESNorCal is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a purpose of creating a more equitable world so people with intellectual or developmental disabilities can choose their path. We do this by reimagining how care and support can be better connected to fill gaps in human services across an individual's lifespan. ESNorCal provides comprehensive, evidence-based therapies to individuals living with disabilities from birth through adulthood and their families.






YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

WE ARE COMMITTED TO PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF OUR CLIENTS AND STAFF AT ALL TIMES.

YOU HAVE THE FOLLOWING RIGHTS

- To receive services in a manner free from abuse, retaliation, humiliation, neglect and financial or other exploitation.
- To receive services voluntarily and of your own free will.
- To receive services that are sensitive to age, sexual orientation and gender identity, race, cultural or religious preference, health status, and physical ability.
- To receive information that allows clients and caregivers to make informed consent before starting services.
- To refuse services offered after being notified of the benefits, alternatives, and consequences.
- To be provided with access to or referral to self-help support services, advocacy services and legal entities for appropriate representation, when applicable.
- To be an informed participant by receiving information regarding services in a reasonably prompt and confidential manner.
- To access information and records in sufficient time to facilitate decision making, as outlined in the Notice of Privacy Practices. Our Notice of Privacy Practices is maintained at all times on our website, www.esnorcal.org.
- To have the client's records protected as required by applicable privacy law, as described in our Notice of Privacy Practices.
- To receive relevant information regarding the individuals providing services, to the extent permitted by organizational policies and applicable privacy laws.
- To be provided on request, an accurate and current set of professional credentials of practitioners working with the client.
- To be provided with information on how to lodge complaints about professional practices of practitioners through the applicable professional licensing/credential board.
- To file a complaint without fear of retaliation or the imposition of any barrier to service.



To help your loved one get the most out of services, we ask that all caregivers and Responsible Adults follow these important responsibilities:

- Be an active participant in your child's treatment.
- Join scheduled sessions and meetings.
- Use the strategies outlined in your child's treatment plan at home.
- Share your thoughts on your child's goals, progress, and any concerns.
- Help set and review goals with your child's care team.
- Keep us updated on any changes in your child's behavior or routine.
- Communicate with respect.
- Treat all staff with kindness and professionalism.
- Use respectful language and behavior during all interactions.
- If you have concerns, please follow the steps in our complaint and grievance section so we can support you appropriately.
- Maintain a safe and clean environment for in-home sessions.
- Provide a clean, quiet, and safe space for services.
- Secure any fragile or valuable items away from the session space.
- Keep pets, hazardous materials, and distractions out of the area being used for services.
- Make sure the space is comfortable and ready for your child and the practitioner.

PARTICIPATION IN LEGAL MATTERS

Sometimes families who come to ESNorCal for services are involved in legal matters such as divorce. While we understand that these situations can be stressful for clients and families, it is important to know that we will remain neutral and not participate in any legal matters or disputes, including those involving clients, unless required by law.

MANDATED REPORTING LAWS IN CALIFORNIA

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA) requires any ESNorCal practitioner to report any suspected abuse or neglect of any child. This could include a client's siblings.

Elder Abuse and Dependent Adult Civil Protection Act requires any ESNorCal practitioner to report any suspected abuse or neglect of a dependent adult.

A dependent adult is anyone who, because of their physical or mental limitations, cannot care for themselves. This includes some adults with ASD.



CONSENT TO SERVICES

Obtaining valid informed consent for services is a necessary step in providing services to our clients. This is especially true when services may be based on a medical model and medical necessity. Clients, parents, caregivers and guardians must provide written consent for the services prior to receiving them. This consent must be renewed each year.

Because obtaining accurate and complete documentation is essential to starting and/or continuing services, it is the responsibility of the caregiver/guardian to:

- Provide current, accurate information and/or documentation
- Notify ESNorCal about any custody or decision-making authority issues
- Update ESNorCal with relevant information if it changes

MINOR CONSENT TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

Starting July 1, 2024, under AB 665 and DHCS APL 24-019, minors in California who are 12 years or older may consent to or decline behavioral health services without parent or guardian permission, in certain situations.

Before any services begin, your practitioner must first evaluate whether the minor is mature enough to make informed decisions about their care. This includes looking at:

- Their understanding of the service
- Their ability to make thoughtful, informed choices
- Their emotional stability

WHAT FAMILIES SHOULD KNOW

- Minors can say yes or no to services if they meet the maturity and understanding requirements.
- Parents may not be notified, unless the minor agrees or there is a serious safety concern.
- We encourage family involvement when it is safe, helpful, and supported by the minor.

OUR PROCESS

1. **ASSESSMENT:** We assess the minor's maturity and readiness for services.
2. **CONSENT:** If appropriate, we explain services, answer questions, and obtain written consent.
3. **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT:** We talk with the minor about whether they want a parent or guardian involved.
4. **CARE AND SUPPORT:** If consent is given, we begin services and check in regularly.

We are committed to providing respectful, confidential care that supports minors while following California law, and we actively encourage caregiver involvement whenever it is safe, appropriate, and in the best interest of the minor.

JOINT CUSTODY/DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY

In cases involving joint custody and decision-making authority of a client, ESNorCal will assume either party with joint custody has independent authority to make medical decisions for the client and will primarily rely on the consent of the guardian referring the client for treatment.

We will not suspend services due to the inability to contact a party holding joint custody. However, if ESNorCal is informed or otherwise reasonably believes that there is a disagreement related to medical decision-making between parties with joint medical decision-making authority ESNorCal may suspend services the party until the disagreements are resolved. ESNorCal may, in its sole discretion, require guardian or any other party who assert joint decision-making authority, to provide a certified copy of the document that establishes that party's decision-making authority, such as a court order regarding joint legal custody.

CAPACITY TO MAKE MEDICAL DECISIONS

Sometimes a client is not able to make his or her own medical or treatment decisions. This depends on the severity of the disability or on the age. If a client, who is 18 years of age or older, cannot make his or her own medical decisions, under California law, family and/or other caregiver participation becomes part of all treatment plans. In addition, depending on the funding source of treatment, family or caregiver participation may be required for continued funding.

HOW TO AUTHORIZE ESNORCAL TO SHARE PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION (PHI) AND REQUEST MEDICAL RECORDS

It is our policy to only send medical records to clients or caregivers or guardians unless we are authorized to send to other parties.

TO GET AUTHORIZATION FORMS:

- Contact Catalight Care Services Customer Service Department, or
- Ask a member of your loved one's supervising team via email, phone call or postal mail

Clients, parents, caregivers or guardians may authorize ESNorCal to share PHI with an individual or entity by completing the Authorization to Disclose PHI Form.

Clients, parents, caregivers or guardians may fill out a request to obtain a copy of the client's medical records by completing the Authorization to Release Form.

Clients, parents, caregivers or guardians may revoke an authorization to disclose PHI except (1) to the extent that we have already acted in reliance on the authorization, or (2) if (a) the authorization was obtained as a condition of obtaining insurance coverage and (b) other law provides the insurer with the right to contest a claim under the policy or the policy itself.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO RECORDING

When it is possible, ESNorCal uses technology to raise the level of care that we offer to clients and families. This means using video or photography during treatment — or both. They are important tools to improve the quality of care. Video and photography enable practitioners to train and share information with clients, parents, or caregivers. We strive to use every available and appropriate way to improve services and achieve treatment goals. Your consent to photograph and video record treatment is an important step to help us accomplish this goal. However, this is voluntary. You may decline to sign this consent or have the right to revoke consent at any time without impact on treatment, payment or eligibility for benefits. It is also a client right to attend virtual sessions where all attendees agree to not record audio or video, or take photos of attendees during any part of the session. *(Please see the form called **Consent to Photography/Video Recording Authorization to Use/Disclose Photograph(s)**.)*



FILING A COMPLAINT OR GRIEVANCE

Clients and caregivers may file a complaint at any time without fear of retaliation. When we receive a complaint, ESNorCal staff works to remedy the concern and prevent the issue from happening again.

STEPS TO FOLLOW IF YOU HAVE A COMPLAINT OR GRIEVANCE

STEP 1

Ask to meet with a member of your loved one's supervising team to discuss your concerns. Usually this is the only step you need to take. We are committed to resolving issues quickly. If you are not satisfied after meeting with a supervisor or manager, please move on to the second step below.

STEP 2

If the discussion with a supervisor or manager does not resolve the issue, **talk to your Program Manager or a member of ESNorCal's clinical leadership team** by emailing them at Behavioralhealth@esnorcal.org.

STEP 3

If the issue is not resolved by the clinical leadership team, contact our **Quality Department at Quality@catalight.org to file a complaint or grievance.** You may also bypass steps 1 and 2 above and file a grievance at any time. Our Quality Department will work with you, your treatment team, and our leadership to resolve the issue in an unbiased and ethical manner.



COMMON TERMS USED DURING TREATMENT SESSIONS

The following are definitions of commonly used terms found in this Handbook.

APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS (ABA): ABA is a scientific discipline. It focuses on the principles of how learning takes place. A wide variety of ABA techniques help clients with ASD learn new skills.

AVAILABILITY: When your loved one is able to have services outside of any activities they have to participate in by law, such as school.

BEHAVIOR MAPPING: A visual representation of engaging in appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and the consequences the behaviors result in.

CAREGIVER-MEDIATED: When a caregiver or guardian utilizes clinical strategies to implement goals with the client.

CLIENT: Any individual receiving treatment services from Easterseals Northern California (ESNorCal).

CLIENT-MEDIATED: When a client utilizes clinical techniques or strategies to implement and monitor their own goals.

EVIDENCE-BASED THERAPIES: Treatments that are a) based on well-designed research and b) that have shown to be effective.

FAMILY COACHING: When a practitioner facilitates the practice of clinical strategies and techniques to address goals with the caregiver.

FULL SCHEDULE: A full schedule is the number of hours authorized by the funding source.

FUNDING SOURCE: The organization responsible for some or all of the payment for services provided by ESNorCal.

GUARDIAN: The person(s) authorized to make medical decisions for or on behalf of a client. This could be a parent but could also be another person (a grandparent or caregiver) who is responsible for the client's medical decisions.

PRACTITIONER: Any professional providing services to ESNorCal clients.

RESPONSIBLE ADULT: Either a guardian or other individual 18 years of age or older who is capable and approved by the client's parent or caregiver to provide care to the client in their absence.

SELF-DETERMINATION: The practice of a client choosing their own treatment goals and strategies.

SERVICES: Any clinical service provided to clients by ESNorCal.

SESSIONS: Time when a client receives services from ESNorCal.

SUPERVISING TEAM: The program supervisor (PS) and the clinical manager (CM). The CM is responsible for developing a client's treatment plan. Together the PS and CM ensure the client's treatment plan is followed and the client is making progress.







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*Easterseals Northern
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