

# Early Intervention 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 Early Intervention 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 or delays 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 grandparent, aunt or legal guardian.

### OUR PROMISE TO YOU

We will provide exceptional, individualized, child-centered services to empower children 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.

### ANTI-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

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.** The information in this handbook is important. Please take time to read all of the information.

## DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions, please contact a member of the supervision team. We want to make sure all caregivers and the community in a child's life understand how Easterseals Northern California can improve the lives of people with delays. Contact information can be found at the end of this handbook.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

**STEP 1:** Review the contents of this handbook.

**STEP 2:** Review, sign, date and return the following forms.

- Consent to Services
- Receipt of this Early Intervention Handbook

### IMPORTANT:

Throughout this handbook, you will see "Tip" sections. Tips offered in the handbook include helpful information and proven parenting strategies.

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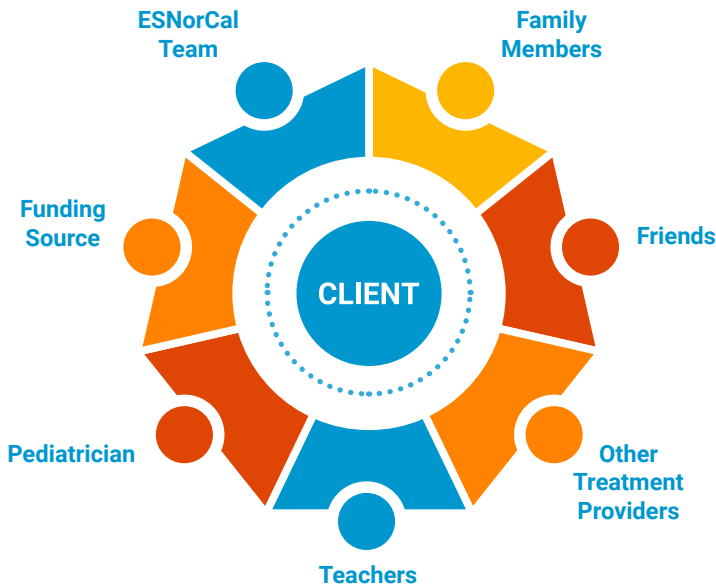
# OUR CHILD-CENTERED AND CAREGIVER-INVOLVED APPROACH

## *We believe in a child-centered philosophy*

Each child and caregiver are an important member of the treatment team.

You know your child best, so we recognize your knowledge and experience. This will help us reach better outcomes for your child.

For treatment to work well, it is important for caregivers and others who are close to your child to participate in treatment sessions.



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

## COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

How do we serve our clients better? We encourage practitioners from different professional disciplines to work together and share their skills. Through this collaboration, we are able to help caregivers reach the goals they desire for their child. Besides input from the ESNorCal team, we may ask other professionals in a child's life, like a daycare provider, or other therapists providing services, for their suggestions. Professionals all share valuable information, so we want to hear about your child from all the important people in their life.

## CHILD'S VOICE

Every child has a voice. Young children may not be able to say directly what they want and need. Others may communicate through their behavior, but not with words. No matter how a child expresses their wants and needs, we believe it is very important to listen to the child's voice. As a child goes through assessment and treatment, the ESNorCal treatment team will always listen to them.



**tip**

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

## 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 child in the caregiver's absence
- Approved by the caregiver to provide care for the child in the caregiver's absence

### Guardian

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

## **SIBLINGS, FRIENDS AND PEERS**

At ESNorCal we believe siblings, friends and peers also matter. We may include friends and other key people in a child's treatment. Our practitioners will ensure treatment sessions include appropriate people who will benefit the child. It is important for ESNorCal practitioners to be able to focus attention on the child's treatment. For that reason, if a child's siblings and peers are present at their session, a responsible adult must be there for supervision.

## **INDIVIDUALIZED TREATMENT AND CAREGIVERS**

We create an individualized treatment plan to serve the needs of both the client and caregiver. Sessions are focused on improving the child's developmental skills, but also on empowering their caregivers. We encourage caregivers to be active participants during the entire treatment process. Our evidence-based treatment is based on the Caregiver Guided Routines-Based Intervention model, which encourages caregivers to address goals within their daily routines.

## **CAREGIVER COACHING**

Practitioners who are assigned to the client's case will work with the child and caregivers. Caregivers are expected to fully participate in weekly sessions. 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 facilitate development by integrating strategies into their daily routine and strengthening the relationships between the child and caregiver.





# 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 caregivers in many Northern California counties since 1927. Our services include Behavioral Health, a Community Adult Program, Early Intervention, and Respite. All ESNorCal's service lines have been accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) International for our quality of programming.

For a complete list of services that we offer, please visit [www.esnorcal.org](http://www.esnorcal.org).

## WHAT FUNDING SOURCES DO WE ACCEPT?

ESNorCal partners with the California Regional Centers for Early Intervention services. Together we provide treatment services that meet the needs of the child and caregiver.

## key terms

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### Early Intervention

Early Intervention (EI) is a play-based, inter-disciplinary, and caregiver-centered model for children aged 0-5 diagnosed with or showing signs or risk of a developmental delay.

### Evidence-Based Therapies

Treatments that are:

- Widely used in the field of Infant Development
- Proven to be effective
- Part of well-designed research

### Funding Source

The organization that is responsible for some or all payment for services which are provided through ESNorCal. For Early Intervention services, the Regional Center is the responsible funder.

## WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE SERVICES?

Everyone is unique, which is why clients at ESNorCal receive services that are personalized and designed specially to meet their needs. A treatment team is assigned to each client and is responsible for creating a treatment plan with the caregiver.

ESNorCal teams include professionals called practitioners. These practitioners are specialists in working with children 0-5. The Early Intervention Supervisor or Program Director is responsible for addressing your concerns or questions and may occasionally observe a session to ensure the highest quality of care is being provided.

Every practitioner at ESNorCal has advanced training and/or is certified according to the laws and regulations for providing Early Intervention services.

## TYPES OF SERVICES

There are multiple types of Early Intervention services offered to Regional Center clients that can be conducted in-person or virtually, if requested by the caregiver:

- Direct Infant Development Services 1:1
- Learning Focus Groups 1:3
- Eligibility Assessments 1:1
- Infant Massage 1:1

## key terms

### Early Interventionist

An individual who provides EI services to ESNorCal clients and caregivers.

### Early Intervention Supervisor

Oversees the practitioner/early interventionist.

### Program Director

Oversees early intervention supervisors and the program as a whole.

### Sessions

The time during which a client received services from ESNorCal.

### Services

Clinical services (direct or indirect) provided to clients and caregivers.



## **CAN I GET INTERPRETER SERVICES?**

Yes! We work with your funding source to provide interpreter services.

## **PRACTITIONER BACKGROUND CHECK REQUIREMENTS**

As a direct care services provider, we take measures to ensure client and caregiver safety. ESNorCal recognizes this fact and requires employees to be fingerprinted, which is part of the guidelines of the California Department of Social Services. The U.S. 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 or federal exclusion lists.





## EXCELLENCE AND HIGH STANDARDS

We are committed to excellence and high standards of clinical care for our clients and caregivers. Our practitioners are experienced in working with children with delays or 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:

- Current research and treatment approaches in the field
- Cultural awareness and understanding of the diverse populations that ESNorCal serves

Practitioners also receive direct training through supervision and observation during sessions. Furthermore, our tuition reimbursement program affords practitioners the opportunity to attend additional training programs outside of ESNorCal required training for personal and professional development.

## INNOVATION

ESNorCal utilizes innovation to continuously improve our quality of care. Throughout treatment we may ask you to use one of our apps. For example, we have smartphone and tablet apps. These apps can help you stay informed about your loved one's treatment while they are in our care.

ESNorCal believes that well-being is important for everyone involved. Positive well-being is associated with a heightened mood and the ability to learn new things. A well-being scale will be administered at the beginning of treatment and every six months until discharge. These scales will help the practitioners identify ways to support the client to be successful throughout treatment with ESNorCal.

## PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO RECORDING

When possible, ESNorCal uses technology to raise the level of care that we offer to our clients. This means using video or photography during treatment—or both, when necessary. They are important tools to improve the quality of care by capturing and reviewing the session. Video and photography enable practitioners to train and share information with caregivers or caregivers when they are unable to attend a session. We strive to use every available and appropriate way to improve services and achieve treatment goals. Your consent to photography and video recording 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.

# AN INTRODUCTION TO EARLY INTERVENTION

## OUR SPECIALITY

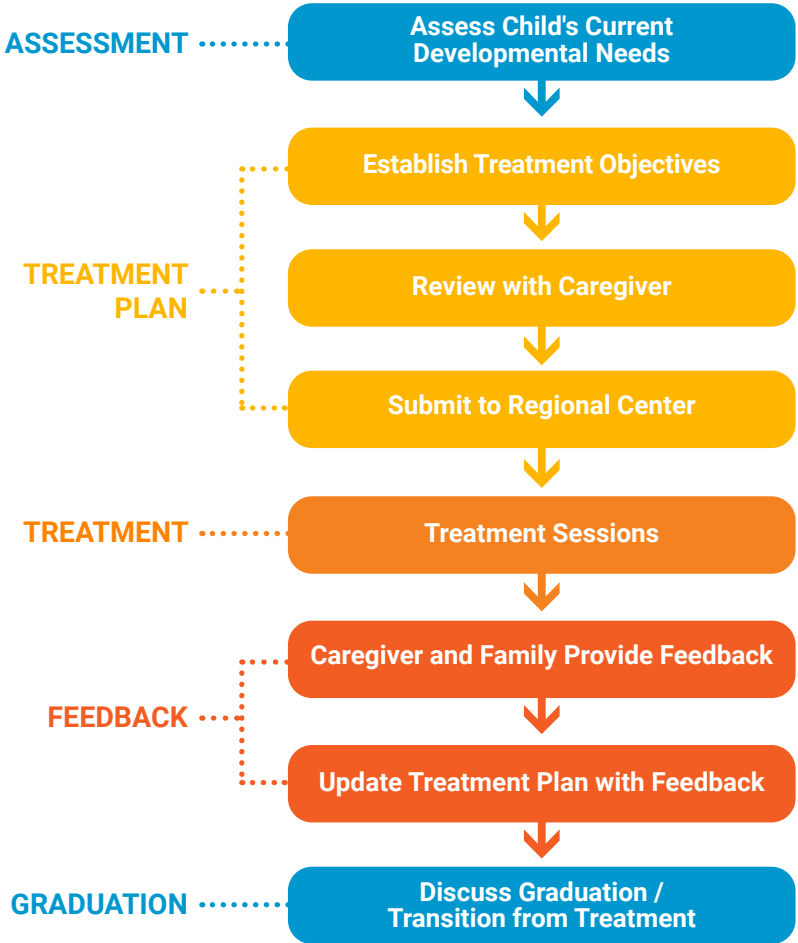
Our Early Intervention services offer a comprehensive, research-based treatment program for children from birth to five years of age diagnosed with, showing signs of developmental delay, or who may be considered high risk of a delay. We use a collaborative and child-centered model of early intervention. All services are provided in the child's natural environment, including the child's home, daycare, or other community-based site, including one of ESNorCal's clinical offices, when necessary and approved by the Regional Center Coordinator.





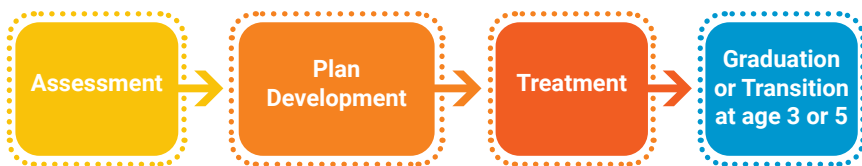
# EARLY INTERVENTION ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT

As part of your child's EI treatment plan, we will perform assessments over several appointments with you and your child to better understand their current developmental needs. You are a very important part of this process, and we will ask for your feedback about your child, their treatment plan and the transition from EI treatment.





## YOUR CHILD'S TREATMENT PATH WITH ESNORCAL-REGIONAL CENTER AS THE FUNDING SOURCE



### WHAT IS TREATMENT?

- Short-term opportunity to address needs outlined by the initial assessment
- Intended for gaining skills and resources that are needed to manage developmental delays in all domains (cognitive, language, physical, social or adaptive skills)
- An important time for caregivers to build their skills
- Different for every client who comes to ESNorCal for treatment

### TREATMENT

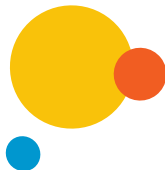
The first treatment period typically lasts until the child's 3rd or 5th birthday. From there they are either transitioned to the School District or another program. This differs for each Regional Center.

During treatment, the practitioner working with your child will follow the treatment plan developed during the assessment.

If you are concerned about the treatment plan at any time or if your child is not making progress, please talk directly with the Early Intervention Supervisor or Program Director.

### PROGRESS REPORTING

Every six months we monitor progress informally or through formal assessment measures, depending on the requirements of the specific Regional Center. We review progress, adapt goals, and create new goals with input from the caregiver and the Regional Center Coordinator.



# YOUR CHILD'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 child's treatment team.

## **Early Interventionist/Practitioner**

- Provides direct treatment based on your child's treatment plan

## **Early Intervention Supervisor**

- Supervises the quality of services in specific regions
- Manages, trains, and develops practitioners within the region

## **Program Director**

- Supervises, trains, and develops Early Intervention Supervisors
- Ensures the voice of the practitioners and supervisors are escalated to leadership
- Manages the sustainability and growth of the Early Intervention Program

## **ESNORCAL CLINICAL LEADERSHIP**

- Oversees service delivery quality and manages employees
- Oversees program operations and clinical quality
- Provides clinical consultation for high needs cases
- Acts as an escalation point for any concerns or questions





## DISCHARGE

Being discharged means leaving the program. A child graduates or is discharged when they reach the age of three or five, depending on the region.

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, transitioning to another provider if treatment is not progressing as recommended, relocating to a different region, etc. Discharge is not confirmed without funding source approval.

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

- Inconsistent attendance or numerous last-minute cancelations of sessions
- Late to treatment sessions or leaves sessions early
- Caregiver is unresponsive to contact attempts
- Necessary documentation not provided related to consent, custody or other issues that affect our ability to provide treatment
- Refuses or declines clinically recommended treatment
- Moves outside of the funding source's coverage area or ESNorCal territory

ESNorCal works with caregivers to rectify issues before a client is discharged. When possible and is recommended, ESNorCal may work with the Regional Center to connect a client to another provider for treatment, if appropriate.



**Understand the plan.** Understanding the treatment plan is important for your child's success. Ask your child's supervising team questions to fully understand the treatment plan.



# AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT TREATMENT SESSIONS

## TREATMENT SESSIONS

A responsible adult over the age of 18 must be present at all sessions.

A responsible adult must take care of:

- Feeding (oral or tube)
- Bathroom routines (diaper changing or potty training)
- Monitoring the health and safety of the child
- Monitoring the health and safety of any peer or sibling under their supervision
- The child's safety during an emergency or crisis
- Transporting the child to community locations during sessions

## IMPORTANT: RESPONSIBLE ADULT REQUIRED

Your child's session will be cancelled if no responsible adult is present at any time during your child's session.

## SCHEDULING A TREATMENT SESSION

We will make every effort to work around the client's and caregiver's scheduling needs in the home, community, daycare, preschool, other service lines, etc. However, because ESNorCal provides services to multiple clients each day, it is difficult to accommodate every scheduling preference. Please read our scheduling policy and let us know if you have any questions.



**tip**

**Keep phone numbers handy.** If not provided within the first session, please request and save the phone numbers for each of your child's supervising team members.



## IN-BETWEEN SESSIONS

Your Early Interventionist will provide activities, strategies, and techniques to practice between sessions and throughout the treatment period. Working on skills between sessions will make a difference in your child's response to treatment as well as generalizing skills outside of the home.

When practicing the skills, make them part of your child's everyday routine. For example, you can read picture books at home and have your child point to various pictures in the book if the treatment team is working on increasing your child's ability to identify objects. If there are siblings, caregiver members, or friends of a similar age, use them as an appropriate peer model.

## 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 increase progress in the areas of concern for your child. The more you help your child practice new skills, the more independent your child will become.

## WORKING WITH YOUR CHILD BETWEEN SESSIONS

- Set aside time to work on skills.
- If you have other young children in the home, utilize them as an appropriate model while you are interacting with your child.
- Work in small amounts of time. Stop if you or your child gets tired.
- Take advantage of incidental opportunities. This is something that happens naturally throughout the daily routine. For example, if your child is working on asking for items or requesting and they want a cookie that is out of their reach, model the word "cookie" and require a vocalization or approximation before handing them a cookie.
- Ask the practitioner if you run into a problem and are unsure how to handle it. Your child's treatment team will help you find a solution that works for you and your child.



**tip**

**Focus on the desired behavior.** Explaining or trying to reason with an upset child is difficult. For many caregivers, this goes against how we would want to respond. For example, we tend to 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.



## **TREATMENT SESSION SETTINGS AND LOCATIONS**

One way that we can build a child's skills is to provide treatment services in a familiar environment. ESNorCal may offer sessions at the caregiver's home, in the community, daycare, or preschool. When it is clinically appropriate, safe, and possible, we will hold sessions in community settings such as a park or library. The session location must align with the treatment goals.

## **TELEHEALTH**

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

## **TREATMENT SESSION SETTINGS AND ENVIRONMENT**

We care about the safety of our clients, caregivers 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 they feel the environment is unsafe, poses a health hazard or could subject the client, caregiver or any staff member to any kind of harassment.

ESNorCal reserves the right to discontinue providing services in a home or in any other environment. In these cases, a supervisor or manager will directly address the problem with the caregiver and Regional Center Coordinator to help resolve the safety issue, if possible.

## **SPECIAL COSTS**

When a caregiver requests the participation of practitioners during a session in an activity or setting that is outside of the home or clinic, the caregiver is responsible for any cost required for the practitioner's participation (for example, a zoo or park entrance fee, etc.). This cost is to be paid at the time of the activity.

In addition, ESNorCal and practitioners are not financially responsible for any property damage incurred during treatment in the home or another setting.

## TRANSITION TO SCHOOL SETTINGS

ESNorCal practitioners may participate in IFSP meetings but not IEP meetings with the school district. The caregiver may request reports from practitioners to share with preschools or other programs when needed.

## IMPORTANT: LIMITS ON ESNORCAL'S PRESENCE

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

## SCHEDULING

We understand how busy life can get. You can work with your early interventionist directly to identify if there is flexibility in their schedule. If you have any questions about our policies, contact [earlyintervention@esnorcal.org](mailto:earlyintervention@esnorcal.org) and the director will reach out.

**Availability:** When your child can have services outside of any legally mandated activities, such as school.

**Preference:** Any preference for schedule times will be considered but depends on the schedule availability of the practitioner.

**Declined Hours:** Any scheduled hours offered to meet authorized treatment hours that are not accepted by the caregiver due to preference will count as declined hours. Just because hours are declined once does not mean they will be declined in the future. If you initially decline hours but later on can accept the declined hours, you may do so.

**Session Times:** Each session is 1 to 2 hours long, depending on the recommendation from the Regional Center.

**Schedule Changes:** Contact your practitioner to reschedule or cancel.






## **CANCELLATION POLICY**

Progress on treatment goals is a priority for ESNorCal practitioners. Depending on funder requirements, progress may be a requirement to continue receiving funding for treatment. Frequent cancellations can have a negative impact on our ability to help a client make progress. We understand that either the caregiver or ESNorCal may need to cancel sessions on occasion. However, when the number of cancellations, for any reason, interferes with the treatment progress, ESNorCal will make a reasonable effort to work with the caregiver to find the most appropriate solution. We may also consult with the funding source regarding decreasing or ending treatment if the cancellations are excessive or if they interfere with the progress of treatment.

## **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 preferred.
  - Provide details regarding the cancellation(s) – the number of sessions, dates, time and reason.
  - When asking for a make-up session, remember the ability to reschedule in-person is based on practitioner availability.
- 

## **IMPORTANT: SCHEDULE CHANGES**

Sometimes ESNorCal needs to make a schedule change. When this happens, the practitioner and/or manager will contact the caregiver.

## **WHEN A PRACTITIONER CANCELS A TREATMENT SESSION**

We want to ensure cancellations on the part of the practitioner do not affect any client's treatment in an adverse way. We encourage caregivers to notify the assigned supervisor or director of any unplanned gaps in treatment sessions, including a practitioner's tardiness.

## **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 caregiver-initiated cancellations, ESNorCal will offer an in-person make-up session if the practitioner has availability. Keep in mind that 24 hours or more advance notice is preferred.

For ESNorCal practitioner-initiated cancellations, ESNorCal will make every effort to provide a make-up session when possible.





# **SAFETY COMES FIRST**

## **ENSURING THE SAFETY OF CLIENTS, CAREGIVERS AND PRACTITIONERS**

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

## **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 our premises, you acknowledge and give your implied consent to this safety measure.

## **SICK POLICY**

Caregivers must notify the program if their child shows signs of illness, unless there is documentation provided by a medical provider stating that their child is well enough to attend sessions. Your child should be free of symptoms for 24 hours before resuming scheduled in-person sessions. In-person sessions should be cancelled if your child is sent home or stays home from school or childcare and has symptoms of illness. In-person sessions can be rescheduled for telehealth or take place on another day when your child is symptom-free and no longer contagious.

If anyone else in the 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 child or anyone in the 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 the home has head lice, please let us know and cancel sessions until they can be treated and nit-free.



## IMPORTANT: SICK POLICY

ESNorCal requires all caregivers and practitioners to strictly abide by the terms of the sick policy. Sessions can transition to virtual sessions, be cancelled or be rescheduled if there is a risk of spreading illness and/or infection.

## RESPONSE TO UNSAFE CLIENT BEHAVIOR

With input from caregivers, practitioners develop treatment plans with goals. They may also provide coaching on how to respond to unsafe and unhealthy behavior in the most effective way. If more support is needed, we'll refer alternative or additional services.

If a child's 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 caregivers, nor can they accept transportation from caregivers.



# YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**WE ARE COMMITTED TO PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF OUR CLIENTS AND CAREGIVERS 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, gender, sexual orientation, race, cultural or religious preference, health status and physical ability.
- To receive information that allows caregivers or any guardian to make informed consent before starting services.
- To refuse services offered after being notified of the benefits, alternatives and consequences.
- To be an informed caregiver 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](http://www.esnorcal.org).
- To have your 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 be provided with access to or referral to self-help support services, advocacy services, and legal entities for appropriate representation, when applicable.
- To file a complaint without fear of retaliation or the imposition of any barrier to service.

## **PARTICIPATION IN LEGAL MATTERS**

Sometimes caregivers who come to ESNorCal for services for their child are involved in legal matters such as divorce or custody proceedings. While we understand that these situations can be stressful for caregivers, 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 or court order.

If you need information sent to any party involved in a legal matter, please inform your practitioner. They will provide you with a Request for Information form, which you can present to a court official to receive the necessary details.

## **MANDATED REPORTING LAWS IN CALIFORNIA**

The 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.

The 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 autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

## **CONSENT TO SERVICES**

Obtaining valid informed consent for services is a necessary step in providing services to our clients. The client's caregivers must provide written consent for the services prior to their child receiving them. This written consent is valid until the child ages out of services, moves from our geographical service location or the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) team determines services are no longer needed.

Because obtaining accurate and complete documentation is essential to starting and/or continuing services, it is the responsibility of the caregiver 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.
- Young children cannot make their own treatment decisions. Under California law, client and/or other caregiver participation becomes part of all treatment plans. In addition, depending on the funding source of treatment, client or caregiver participation may be required for continued funding.



## **JOINT CUSTODY/DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY**

In cases involving joint custody and decision-making authority of a child, ESNorCal will assume either party with joint custody has independent authority to make medical decisions for the child and will primarily rely on the consent of the caregiver referring the child 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 for the party until the disagreements are resolved. ESNorCal may, in its sole discretion, require the caregiver or any other party who asserts 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.


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

It is our policy to only send records to caregivers unless we are authorized to send them to other parties. Written authorization must be completed by the caregiver prior to releasing or sharing Personal Health Information (PHI).

### **TO GET AUTHORIZATION FORMS:**

- Ask your treatment team via email, phone call or postal mail.
- Caregivers may authorize ESNorCal to share PHI with an individual or entity by completing the Authorization to Disclose PHI Form.
- Caregivers may complete a request to obtain a copy of the child's records by completing the Authorization to Release Form.

Caregivers may revoke an authorization to disclose PHI except:

- To the extent that we have already acted in reliance on the authorization, or
  - 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.
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## FILING A COMPLAINT OR GRIEVANCE

Caregivers may file a complaint at any time without fear of retaliation. When we receive a complaint, our 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 child'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 [earlyinterventionreferrals@esnorcal.org](mailto:earlyinterventionreferrals@esnorcal.org).

#### STEP 3

If the issue is not resolved by the clinical leadership team, contact our **Quality Department at [Quality@catalight.org](mailto: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.



## GENERAL INFORMATION

### HOLIDAYS

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

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

## COMMON TERMS USED DURING TREATMENT SESSIONS

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

**ASSESSMENTS:** Every six months, a development assessment will be administered by the early interventionist to monitor your child's progress and current developmental levels.

**AVAILABILITY:** When the client can have services.

**CAREGIVER:** A child's parent, guardian or legal representative.

**CHILD:** An individual who receives Early Intervention treatment services from ESNorCal.

**EARLY INTERVENTION:** The ESNorCal Early Intervention Program provides services to infants and toddlers (birth to age 5) with developmental delays or who are at risk for delay.

Early interventionists monitor a child's developmental milestones and support the caregiver in providing developmentally appropriate activities, materials and environments to best support the child's overall development and well-being.

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

**PRACTITIONER/EARLY INTERVENTIONIST:** Any professional who provides services to ESNorCal clients and caregivers.

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

**REGIONAL CENTER:** Early Intervention services are funded through the local Regional Center. ESNorCal contracts with the Regional Centers to provide in-person services for all eligible clients.

**RESPONSIBLE ADULT:** A person, other than the caregiver(s), who is: (1) 18 years of age or older; (2) capable of providing care for the child in the caregiver's absence; and (3) approved by the caregiver(s) to provide care for the child in the caregiver's absence.

**SCHEDULE CHANGES:** ESNorCal will give you the opportunity to update your schedule preferences and availability when your child ages out or is discharged from the program.

**SERVICES:** Any clinical service (direct or indirect) provided to clients and caregivers.

**SESSIONS:** The scheduled time during which a client and caregiver receives direct services from ESNorCal.

**SESSION NOTE:** After each session, practitioners will complete a session note documenting what was targeted during the session as well as activities to work on until the next session.



If you have questions about Early Intervention services,  
please email [earlyinterventionreferrals@esnorcal.org](mailto:earlyinterventionreferrals@esnorcal.org).



[esnorcal.org](http://esnorcal.org)



## **CORPORATE OFFICE**

2730 Shadelands Drive  
Building 10  
Walnut Creek, CA 94598  
(925) 266-8400

## **HOURS**

M-F 8:30am – 5:30pm

(Clinical hours may vary  
by office and service)

*Easterseals Northern  
California has been  
awarded the highest level  
of accreditation by CARF  
International for its Early  
Intervention Program.*



## **BURLINGAME**

1633 Bayshore Highway, Suite 155  
Burlingame, CA 94010

## **CLEARLAKE**

14085 Lakeshore Dr.  
Clearlake, CA 95422

## **DUBLIN**

5601 Arnold Road, Suite 104  
Dublin, CA 94598

## **FAIRFIELD**

744 Empire Street, Suite 160  
Fairfield, CA 94533

## **LAKEPORT**

1173 Eleventh Street  
Lakeport, CA 95453

## **WALNUT CREEK**

2730 Shadelands Drive, Building 10  
Walnut Creek, CA 94598