

# Talking with Parents....

*Adapted from: M.T. Bailey (2006) Keep Your Eye on the Prize! Disability Solutions 7(1), pp.1, 5-9, 12.*

1. **Choose an appropriate time to talk to a child's parents.** Set up a meeting. Don't try to talk to parents when they are dropping off or picking up their child.
2. **Prepare for the meeting.**
  - Do your "homework". Think about the issues you want to discuss with the parents. Gather information and resources that you want to share with the parents.
  - Be prepared to discuss a child's strengths and successes as well as your concerns.
  - Be prepared to provide specific information to illustrate your concerns. One way to bring up your concerns is to ask "Have you noticed that ...?" Do not make a diagnosis or give a label. For example, do NOT say, "I think your child is hyperactive" or "I think your child has autism".
  - Be prepared to provide resources to the parents and to suggest next steps that they may want to take. See the reverse side for a list of useful resources.
3. **At the meeting, create an atmosphere that puts parents at ease and helps them be comfortable speaking openly to you.**
4. **Imagine how you would feel in the parent's place.** How would you want someone to tell you of concerns about your child's development or behavior? Start on a positive note and discuss a child's strengths first.
5. **If you have a number of concerns about a child, don't try to address them all in one meeting.** Focus on the one or two issues that concern you most. It is difficult for parents to hear that their child is having difficulties. They may have trouble taking in much information beyond that fact.
6. **Listen to the parents, and ask them for their observations, insights, thoughts and feelings.** Parents may feel that their parenting abilities are being questioned. Let parents know (using words, eye contact, gestures) that you respect them and value their insights.
7. **Try to anticipate questions that the parents might ask,** and be prepared to try to answer them, but realize that you don't have to have all the answers. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know", and offer to try to help the parents find answers to their questions.
8. **Provide information on how parents can refer their child for evaluation and services.** See the reverse side and the resource sheets included in this packet for the phone numbers of Early Start agencies and school districts. Evaluation requires parental consent so parents should make the phone calls to refer their child and start the process.
9. **Understand that parents might not take immediate action.** You may be the first person to raise concerns about their child. What you may see as "denial" of your concerns is actually a very human way of coping with information that may be upsetting and scary. Understand that parents need time to process the information you give them.
10. **Suggest that the parents contact CARE Parent Network (Contra Costa County).**  
We can help parents determine the next steps to take. Our phone numbers are:

**(925) 313-0999**

**(925) 313-0999 x105 or 108 (Spanish)**

**(800) 281-3023**



Compiled by CARE Parent Network, [www.CAREParentNetwork.org](http://www.CAREParentNetwork.org)  
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## **Child Development Resources**

"Reasons for Concern that Your Child or a Child in Your Care May Need Special Help"

Available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Hmong and Chinese. To download a copy: <http://www.dde.ca.gov/earlystart>

"It's time to change how we view a child's growth."

Available in English and Spanish. To download a copy and to access other resources: <http://www.cdc.gov/actearly>

"Development Chart - Birth to Age Five"

Included in your resource packet from CARE Parent Network or <http://www.CareParentNetwork.org>

## **Early Intervention Referral – Contra Costa County**

### **EARLY START -- FROM BIRTH TO 3 YEARS:**

A child from birth to 3 years old may be eligible for services if the child (1) has a significant delay in one or more areas of development, (2) has an established risk condition, or (3) is at high risk for having significant delays (for example, if a child has a chromosomal disorder, was born prematurely or has vision or hearing impairment). Eligibility is determined by evaluating a child's development in the following areas:

- Cognitive development (*thinking*)
- Physical and motor development, including vision and hearing
- Communication development (*speech and language*)
- Social/emotional development
- Adaptive development (*self-help skills*)



### **TO REFER A CHILD FOR EARLY START EVALUATION, CALL:**

Regional Center of the East Bay	(510) 383-1355
West Contra Costa Unified School District	(510) 233-1955
Mt. Diablo Unified School District	(925) 825-0144
San Ramon Valley Unified School District and Orinda, Moraga, Lafayette & Walnut Creek School Districts	(925) 743-9710
Contra Costa County Office of Education (all other districts)	(925) 625-6330 x110

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION PRESCHOOL -- FROM 3 TO 5 YEARS OLD:**

A child from 3 to 5 years old may be eligible for special education preschool services if the child is determined to have one of the following 14 disabling conditions:

- Autism
- Deafness
- Hearing impairment
- Deaf-blindness
- Vision impairment
- Orthopedic impairment
- Emotional disturbance
- Speech or language impairment
- Specific learning disability
- Mental retardation
- Traumatic brain injury
- Established medical disability
- Other health impairment (including attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder)
- Multiple disabilities



### **TO REFER A CHILD FOR EVALUATION, CALL YOUR LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION OFFICE:**

Antioch	(925) 706-5313	Mt. Diablo	(925) 825-0144
Brentwood	(925) 513-6319	Oakley	(925) 625-7060
Byron	(925) 634-6644	Orinda	(925) 258-6216
Canyon	(925) 376-4671	Pittsburg	(925) 473-2340
John Swett	(510) 254-4300 x110	San Ramon	(925) 820-6815
Knightesen	(925) 625-0073	Walnut Creek	(925) 944-6850 x123
Lafayette	(925) 927-3516	West Contra Costa	(510) 233-1955
Martinez	(925) 335-5917		
Moraga	(925) 377-4105		

