



**Funded by the California Department of Education (CDE),
Special Education Division**

Early Intervention Essentials: Empowering Preschool Teachers to Identify Potential Needs and Make Effective Referrals

March 11, 2025



CalECSE



California Early Childhood Special Education Network

Funded by the CDE

Implementation Leadership

Co-Executive Director- Dr. Scott Turner, East San Gabriel Valley
SELPA

Co-Executive Director-Melanie Hertig, Irvine Special Education/SELPA



CalECSE

California Early Childhood Special Education Network
Funded by the CDE



<https://www.calesce.org>

CalECSE is a technical assistance project funded under the California Department of Education (CDE) that supports Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA)s, County Offices of Special Education (COEs), and other Agency Partners in the areas of IDEA Part C to B Transitions, Preschool Assessment Practices, and Preschool Child Find by providing technical assistance, professional learning, and demonstration of tangible practices *that have been proven successful*.

The CalECSE Network leverages collaboration amongst agencies, disseminates resources, highlights existing exemplar practices, and provides direct technical assistance to improve the capacity, knowledge, collaboration, and implementation of evidence-based practices across agencies throughout California.

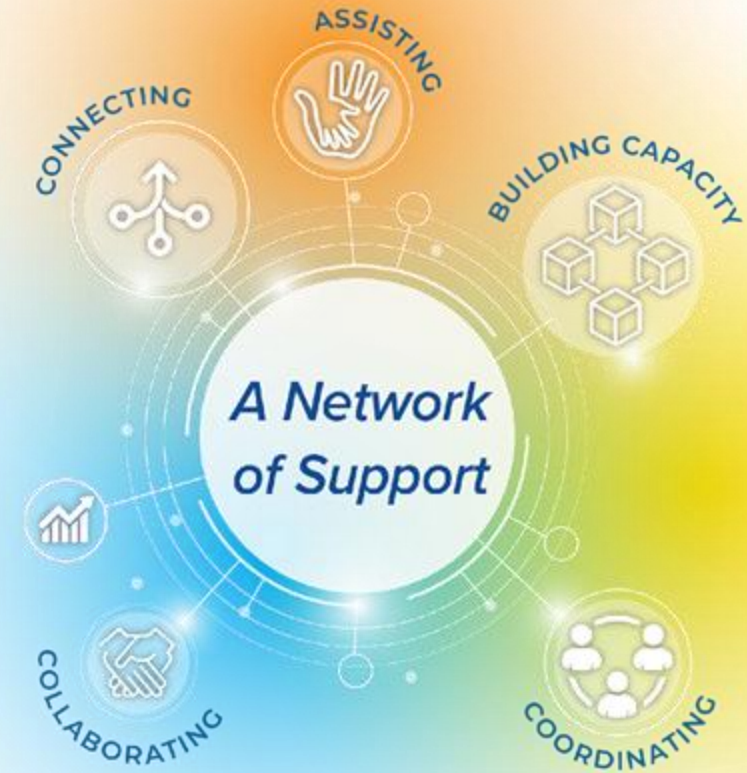
The CalECSE Network is committed to improving outcomes for children and their families by eliminating and addressing barriers to successful transition for California's youngest children with disabilities.

Today's Presenter

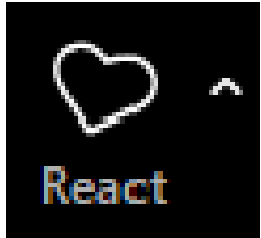
Cristina Blevins

CalECSE Exemplar Lead, Preschool Child Find

cristina.blevins@cfcoc.ocgov.com



Who's in the room?



Using the zoom reaction buttons, let us know what type of agency you are from:



Family Child Care



Center-Based Program



School District Early Learning General
Education Program

School District Special Education Program



Family, Friend, or Neighbor

Objectives



- Understand the referral process and its significance
- Learn effective communication strategies with parents and professionals
- Equip yourself with tools to support children and families

Why the Referral Process Matters

Importance of Early Identification and Intervention

- Early detection of developmental delays leads to better outcomes.
- Supports brain development during critical early years.
- Helps prevent future learning and behavioral challenges.



Impact of Timely Support on a Child's Development



- Enhances cognitive, social, and emotional growth.
- Increases school readiness and long-term academic success.
- Reduces need for intensive interventions later in life.

Benefits for Families, Educators, and the Community

- Families receive guidance and resources to support their child's needs.
- Educators can implement effective strategies for inclusive learning.
- Communities benefit from stronger, more capable future generations.

Overview of the Referral Process

Referral Process



Step 1

Identifying Concerns

Recognize signs that may indicate developmental, behavioral, or learning challenges. Observe the child's interactions, communication, motor skills, and overall development compared to typical milestones

Step 2

Document and Gather Data

Keep detailed notes on specific challenges, patterns, and progress over time. This may include checklists, anecdotal records, and samples of the child's work

Step 3

Communicate with Parents and Caregivers

Open and supportive communication with families is key. Schedule a private and respectful conversation to share observations, focusing on the child's strengths as well as areas of concern.

Step 4

Initiate Formal Referral Process

Guide families in connecting with their local school district or early intervention program to request an evaluation. This may involve assisting with paperwork, providing documented observations, and collaborating with specialists

Step 5

Evaluation and Eligibility Evaluation

After a formal evaluation, a team of specialists, educators, and the child's family will review the results to determine if the child qualifies for special education services.

Who to refer to...

children over 3 years
contact local school district



children under 3 years
contact local Regional Center



Child Find

The requirement for Child Find, which is also sometimes called Search and Serve, is in the California Education Code, Section 300.111.

“ All children with disabilities residing in the State, including children with disabilities who are homeless children or are wards of the State, and children with disabilities attending private schools, regardless of the severity of their disability, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated; and

(ii) A practical method is developed and implemented to determine which children are currently receiving needed special education and related services.” You can find more information about Child Find and the definition of children with delays or disabilities here:
sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/b/300.111

Learn more about Child Find and the California Ed Code here:

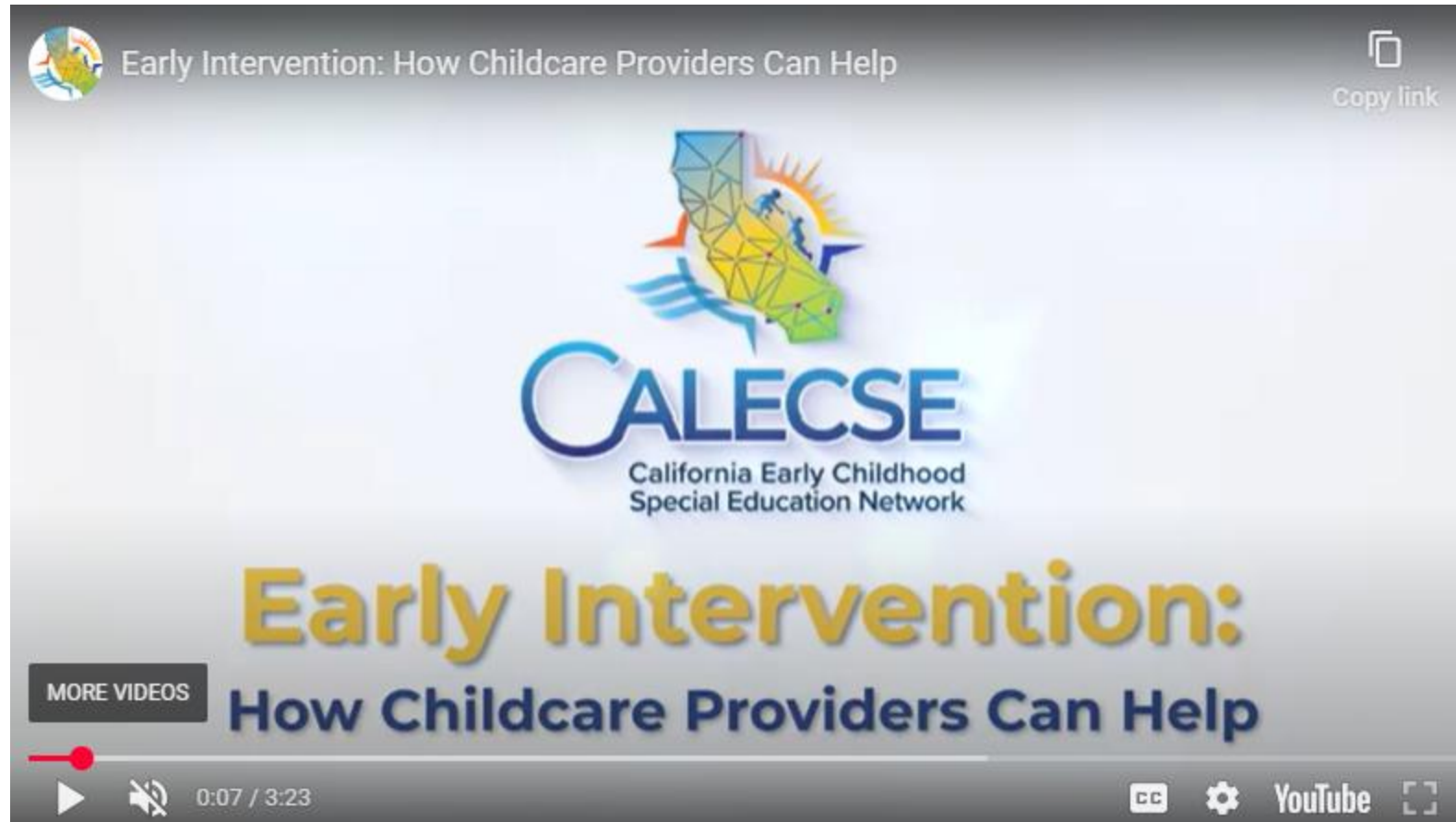
<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/b/300.111>





Child Find applies to all children, including those who are homeschooled or in private schools, plus kids who are migrants or without homes

Child Find Video



<https://youtu.be/Zoi9bGN6Wy8>



Have you referred a child for assessment? What steps did you take? Tell us your success stories.

Effective Communication Strategies With Families

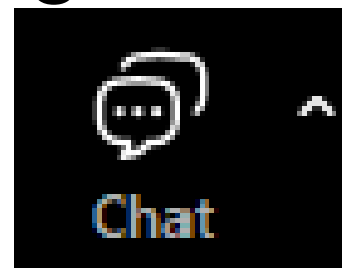
How to Approach Sensitive Conversations

- Choose a private, comfortable setting for discussion.
- Use a strengths-based approach—highlight the child’s abilities first.
- Be clear, objective, and compassionate when sharing concerns.
- Listen actively and validate parents’ feelings and perspectives.
- Provide resources and next steps to support decision-making.

Share Examples



In the chat share some examples of how you can share a concern with a strength based approach



Building and Fostering Collaboration

- Establish open, ongoing communication early on.
- Show empathy and respect for family values and concerns.
- Involve parents as equal partners in the decision-making process.
- Offer consistent updates and encourage questions.
- Reinforce that the goal is the child's success and well-being.



Engaging Relevant Professionals and Stakeholders

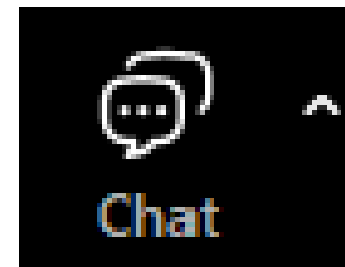


- Connect families with early intervention specialists and school district teams.
- Collaborate with speech therapists, occupational therapists, and other experts as needed.
- Encourage families to seek additional support, such as advocacy groups.
- Share documentation and observations to support the referral process.
- Maintain professional confidentiality while ensuring teamwork among key stakeholders.

Share examples



In the chat share some examples of resources you can share with families.

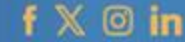


Tools & Resources



CALECSE
California Early Childhood
Special Education Network

Technical Assistance and Resources funded by the California Department of
Education



HOME ABOUT ▾ SUPPORT/RESOURCES ▾ TRAINING/EVENTS ▾ CONTACT

Home / Parent Resources

Parent Resources

EVENTS



Parent Outreach: Milestones & Abilities Ages Zero to Five

February 20, 2025
3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Join us as we review developmental milestones

Parent Outreach: Milestones and Abilities Ages Zero to Five Feb 20 Event (PDF)

Join us as we review
developmental
milestones and expected
abilities for children ages
zero to five.



EN ^

RECORDED TRAININGS



Journey through Early Intervention: A Parent's Story (PDF)

In this enlightening
presentation, we delve
into the intricate
pathways of early
intervention and special

TOOLS

Parent Outreach and Support Compilation of Resources for Family Support

Family Resource Center Network of California

The mission of the Family Resource Center Network of California is to support families of children with disabilities, special healthcare needs, and those at risk by ensuring the continuous, appropriate provision and quality of family-centered, parent-directed, Family Resource Centers.

Services for Families

If you have a child between birth to three with a disability, Early Start Family Resource Centers are a great source of information and support. Located near you, these centers accompany you and your family as you navigate the disability system and services. Many also serve families of older children, youth and adults with disabilities, too.

What you can expect:

- Family-driven support from staff who understand what you are going through
- Meet staff and parents of children with disabilities
- Practical and emotional peer support
- Helpful knowledge, workshops and conferences
- High quality resources and information
- Referrals to services for you or your child
- Assistance with transition as your child turns three
- Friendly, helpful and great listening

Parent Outreach and Support Compilation of Resources for Family Support (PDF)



<https://calecse.org/parent-resources>

Actionable Next Steps

Next Steps

- Identify your local school district contact information
- Document, document, document
- Discuss challenges with the family
- Reach out to your school district for additional support and referrals



Questions?

Reference Page

California Early Childhood Special Education Network

<https://calecse.org/>

video: <https://youtu.be/Zoi9bGN6Wy8>

Center for Parent Information & Resources (CPIR)

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/>

Harvard Graduate School of Education

<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/>

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

<https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/individuals-disabilities/idea>

First 5 California

<https://www.first5california.com/en-us/>

First 5 Orange County

<https://first5oc.org/>

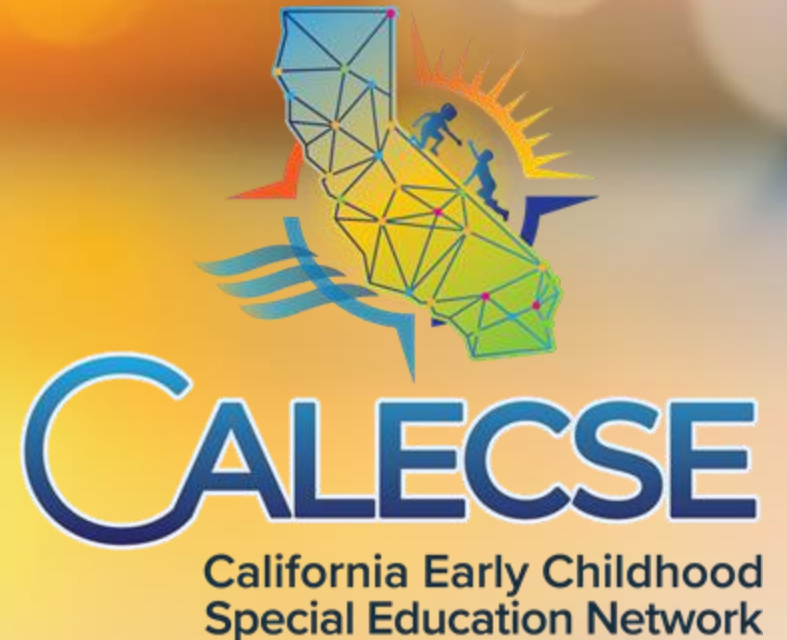
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

<https://www.naeyc.org/>

**Interested in joining a local
Community of Practice for practitioners
who support children ages zero to five ?**



SCAN ME





Please tag us on social media: #CalECSE

Follow us for updates on training opportunities:

