



CALECSE

California Early Childhood
Special Education Network



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

Parent Outreach and Support

A Journey through Early Intervention: A Parent's Story

December 4, 2024



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Implementation Leadership

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<https://www.calesce.org>

CaIECSE 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 CaIECSE 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 CaIECSE 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

Presented in Spanish by Parent Silvia Torrico

English Interpretation by Elena Sanchez
CalECSE Exemplar Lead, Parent Outreach and Support
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Personal Story: The Beginning

- My story starts when my daughter Evelyn was two years old
- After observing Evelyn's behaviors, a teacher from a local school district suggested that I take my daughter to get an evaluation from the Regional Center
- Evelyn qualified to receive Early Intervention through the Pomona Regional Center



Evelyn at 18 months

Personal Story: The Beginning

- I did not drive at the time, so I had to take the bus to the Pomona Regional Center for all the evaluations
- Evelyn was diagnosed with Autism and had challenging behaviors
- Through the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), the service coordinator approved services at home for my daughter and family

The Journey Continues



- Evelyn started receiving occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), and behavior therapy at two years old at home
- Her most significant challenge was not being able to communicate her needs verbally
- Another need she had was her difficult behaviors
- She needed OT to help her with her fine and gross motor skills
- The therapists came to my house three to four times a week
- The Regional Center coordinator always listened to me about Evelyn's needs and challenges so that I could help her accordingly

Transition to the School District



- Regional Center started the process of the transition to the school district before the age of three
- The Regional Center coordinated a meeting with the school district to based on the evaluations I received from the Regional Center
- My service coordinator from the Regional Center was at my Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting to support Evelyn and me
- Evelyn needed OT and behavioral therapy at school
- At three years old, Evelyn started school in a special education preschool class
- The teacher recommended that Evelyn needed to be evaluated again for speech because she could not communicate her needs to others
- After a comprehensive assessment with the school district, Evelyn started receiving speech therapy and the PT started to focus on her motor skills since Evelyn was falling very often
- The OT discovered that one of Evelyn's feet were not properly developing

Transition to the School District



- During this time, the teacher and the service coordinator reintroduced me to the local Family Resource & Empowerment Center, Parents' Place
- At Parents' Place, we received parent training on IEPs, assessments, and transition to public school, which prepared me for my IEP meetings and helped me to better understand special education, including my rights and responsibilities when I have a child with a disability
- I was also able to participate in parent support groups where we find support from other parents raising children with disabilities
- At the Family Resource Center, they loaned me educational toys, special education books, and many times, interpretation since I only speak Spanish
- I want to thank the Regional Center, Parents' Place, and all the teachers for all of the support they offered me; I believe that the help of other parents is important to success because the better prepared parents are, the better off our kids will be

Tips for Parents



- I would love our kids and parents to know that the teachers are there to help
- Do not wait for an annual IEP to talk to the school and let them know if something is not working or if there are new delays arising. Early communication is vital to get better help
- I also want the parents to know that having a relationship with the school district is essential since we will be with them for many years
- It is essential for parents to know that many centers, like the local Family Resource & Empowerment Center, can help even if they don't understand the language or the special education maze
- It is also very important to take care of ourselves since our children will need us for the rest of their lives

The Mother's Here and Now

- At present, I work part-time at Parents' Place, where I provide help and support to families with children with disabilities and speak Spanish
- I feel blessed and thankful because God sent me a daughter like Evelyn, with whom I learned to be a better mother and person. God gave me a community with the purpose to help Evelyn accomplish her goals and dreams. God gave me a family that together learned and enjoy having a daughter like Evelyn. But none of those would be possible without the Regional Center, Parents' Place and the school district that, since she was two years old, were the ones responsible for helping Evelyn succeed

The Families' Here and Now

Torrigo Family



Resources

- Families of infants and toddlers can receive parent-to-parent support from Early Start Family Resource Centers. Family Resource Centers (FRC) actively partner with local and regional centers and education agencies and help many parents, families and children get information about early intervention, zero to three services and how to navigate the Early Start system.
- California's FRC are staffed by parents who have children with special needs and provide information and parent-to-parent support. Each FRC is unique, reflecting the needs of their community. They may operate as independent sites or be based in regional centers, local education agencies, public health facilities, hospitals or homes. Family support services are available in many languages and are culturally responsive to the individual family's needs.

Resources

- Family Empowerment Centers (FECs) provide training and information to families of children and young adults with disabilities, between the ages of three and 22 in California. These nonprofit organizations offer specialized training, peer-to-peer support, information and referral services. They aim to assist parents to better understand their child's educational and developmental needs, effectively communicate with service providers, serve as a resource for the IEP process, participate in school reform and improvement activities, promote alternative dispute resolution, and support positive relationships between parents and professionals. Services available through each FEC vary based on the needs of the community. Several FECs are involved with additional federal, state, or local initiatives which expand or specialize their services and support for families with children with disabilities from as early as birth up to age 26. California's 58 counties are organized into 41 FEC regions. There are currently 33 FECs which support one or more regions.
- Seeds of Partnership project, under the direction of and funded by the California Department of Education, Special Education Division, assists with Family Empowerment Center technical assistance, evaluation support, and coordination of the Family Empowerment and Disability Council.

Resources

- Department of Developmental Services (DDS) oversees the coordination and delivery of services for Californians with developmental disabilities through a statewide network of 21 community-based, non-profit agencies known as regional centers. Regional centers provide assessments, determine eligibility for services and offer case management services. Regional centers also develop, purchase, and coordinate the services in each person's Individual Program Plan.

Helpful Links



Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

A list of Family Resource Centers can be accessed at:

<https://www.dds.ca.gov/rc/disparities/community-navigator-program/family-resource-center-listings/>

Seeds of Partnership

Find access here to locate a Family Resource Center by county

<https://www.seedsofpartnership.org/fec/index.cfm>

San Gabriel/Pomona Parents' Place Family Resource and Empowerment Center

Supporting and enhancing family focused services. Events and newsletter at:

<https://www.parentsplacefrc.com/>

LET'S PARTNER

Ways we can work together to support families raising children and young adults with disabilities

Eblasts

Add your name to the more than 6000 families receiving our e-newsletter



Social Media

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram



Website

<https://www.parentsplacefrc.com/>
To register to our workshops and have access to our most updated resources



Referrals

We have a 48 hour turn around for every referral that we received.



Meetings and virtual tours

Make an appointment with one of our team members to present at an upcoming meeting or to have a virtual tour

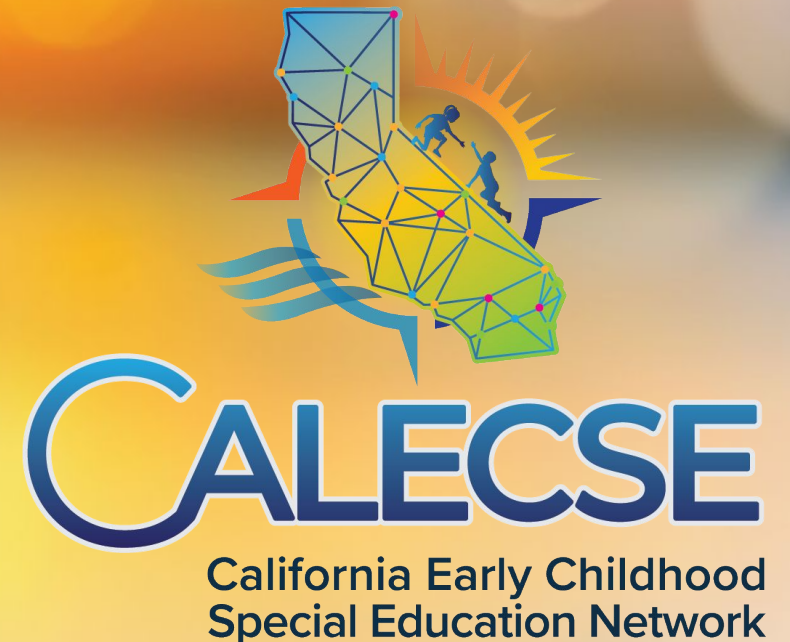


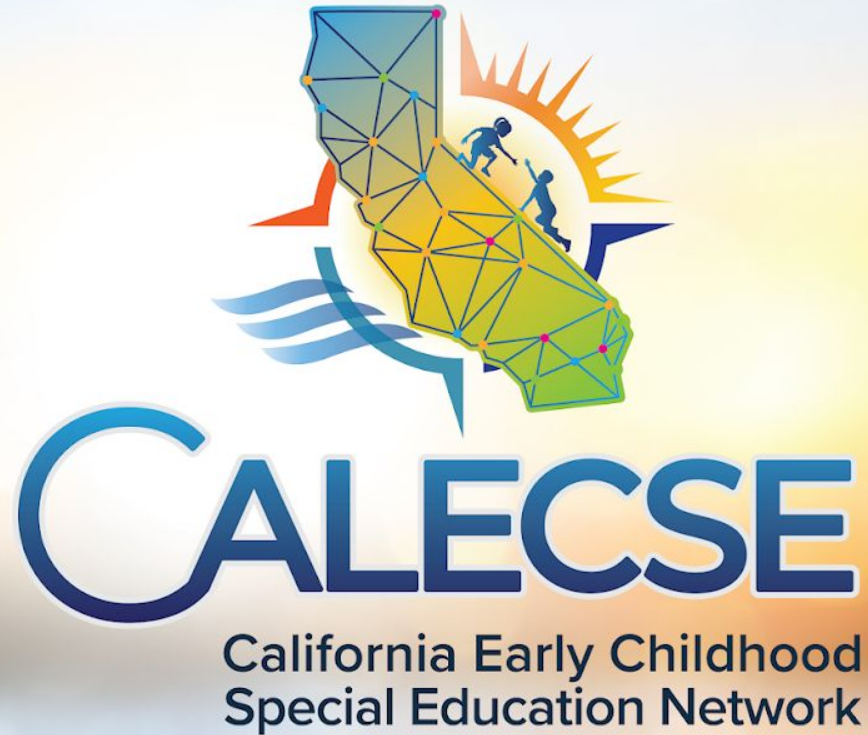
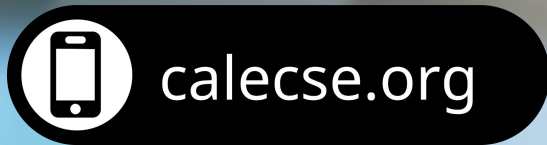
Workshops-Seminars or Support Groups

Join a future workshop, seminar or support group.



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





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