Applicant Information

Alta California Regional Center

Making it Happen

Thank you for contacting Alta California Regional Center. You have most likely applied for services from our organization because you, your son, daughter, or other relative has shown some developmental delays. Or perhaps you or your child's doctor or school has suggested that we might be helpful. No matter how you found us, we are pleased to get to know you and your family.

We've prepared this booklet to let you know what to expect during the application process – and to give you an idea of how long it might take.

INTAKE

In order for you or your child to receive ongoing services and supports from our Center, there must be a diagnosis of a ***developmental disability*** – and this disability must be considered a substantial disability.

This means that we will need to go through a process to determine if you or your child meets these eligibility conditions. We call this process "***intake***." And we call the Alta California Regional Center person who coordinates this process with you your "***Intake Specialist***."

Your Intake Specialist is a caring professional, and is your key contact at the Regional Center during the intake process.

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

As we said earlier, in order for you or your child to be eligible for our services, there must be a diagnosis of a ***developmental disability***. Since this term may not be familiar to everyone, we will describe it briefly.

Developmental disability includes ***intellectual disability, autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, or some other conditions similar to intellectual disability***.

The condition must have ***originated prior to the age of 18*** (this means that it started sometime during the "developmental" period of the person's life – even though the person may be over 18 now), and the condition must create a "***substantial disability***" for the person in at least three areas of major life activity.

Some people, after the age of 18, have serious accidents from which they may sustain traumatic head injuries. Though their condition might be like a developmental disability, it is necessary that they meet ***all*** aspects of the eligibility criteria.

Some people do have a diagnosis of autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, or intellectual disability – but their effects are so mild that these individuals are able to get along in almost all areas of life. Although they may have a diagnosis, it is necessary that it's determined to be a "***substantial disability***."

Some people have learning disabilities, a mental health condition and/or physical impairments that may be confused with developmental disabilities.

As you can see, it's not always simple to conclude that a person has a developmental disability.

ASSESSMENT STEPS TIMELINE

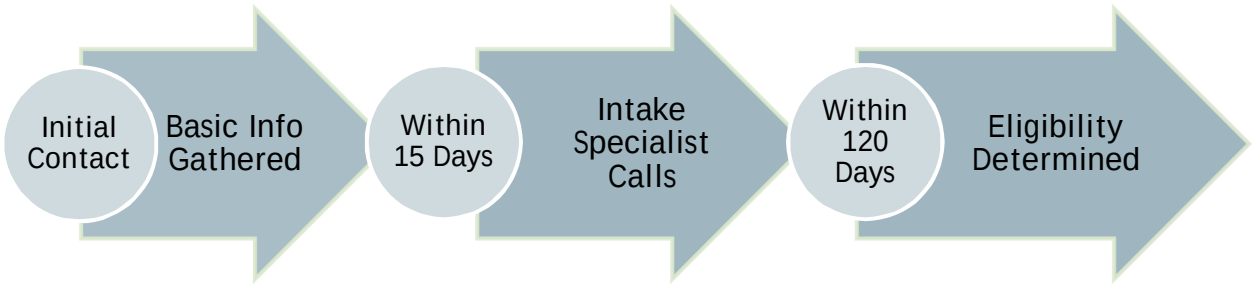
STEP 1
You make your first contact with Alta California Regional Center and speak with an office assistant who will gather some basic information from you.

STEP 2
Within 15 working days, an Intake Coordinator calls you to gather additional information related to the disability.

STEP 3
An Intake Specialist will be assigned and call you to schedule a meeting in order to learn about your family, developmental history, and special needs.

STEP 4
Any assessment needed to determine eligibility will be completed. You will receive a phone call and letter from the Intake Specialist informing you whether or not you or your child has been found eligible to receive ongoing services from ACRC. This should be done no later than 120 days.

STEP 5
If you or your child is eligible, an ACRC Service Coordinator assigned to work with you will contact you within 60 days. If you or your child is not eligible, we will refer you to other resources in your community for assistance.



ASSESSMENT AND DIAGNOSIS

Cerebral palsy and epilepsy are diagnosed by a medical doctor. Intellectual disability and autism are often initially identified by a medical doctor, but formal diagnostic evaluation conducted by a qualified psychologist is required to confirm the diagnosis.

Perhaps you or your child has recently been seen by a medical doctor or a psychologist and a diagnosis has already been made. If so, and if the report is sufficiently detailed for us to determine if there is a substantial disability, it may not be necessary for us to conduct further formal assessment. Sometimes, though, previous testing may have been done long ago and needs to be updated, or may not be adequate for our purposes. In these cases additional information will be needed, and you may be asked to participate in a new evaluation.

FEES

There is no cost to you or your family for any of the tests or other services we provide during the intake process. However, if you are a parent of a child under age 18 who is found eligible for regional center services, there may be a fee or share of cost to receive some services. Your Service Coordinator will explain more about the programs if they apply to you.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Be sure to keep your appointments with us – or notify us ahead of time if you find you will be unable to keep a scheduled appointment. Also, try to have the information that we request (such as you or your child's social security number, insurance or Medi-Cal information, copies of medical, psychological and/or school records, etc.) ready when we meet with you – this will save a lot of time.

In addition, it will be helpful to us if you have the names and addresses of all the professionals who have already seen you or your child. With your consent, we will request for copies of you or your child's records and, if we receive them in time, we may be able to avoid having to repeat evaluations that have already been conducted. If you move or change your phone number, be sure to let us know.

ELIGIBILITY DECISION

After your Intake Specialist has interviewed you, and after we have received or conducted the necessary assessments, we will be ready to make an eligibility determination. ***This should be done no later than 120 days.***

If we find that you or your child is ***eligible*** for ongoing services, your Intake Specialist will notify you by phone and by mail. If we find that you or your child is ***not eligible***, you will also be notified by phone and by mail – and your notifications will include our recommendations for any follow-up or other services which you may wish to explore.

Whether or not you or your child is eligible for Regional Center services, you may see and get a copy of any assessment that we have conducted. If you choose to have copies, let your Intake Specialist know. Otherwise, we will keep all copies of reports in the files that we maintain.

APPEALS

The fair hearing process is a process for resolving disagreements between the regional center or state developmental center and clients or applicants who are age three or older. Under the fair hearing process, disagreements may be about services, eligibility or any decision or action of the regional center or state developmental center with which you disagree. For example, sometimes people disagree with our decision that they or their

child are not eligible for regional center services. If you receive written notification of ineligibility, you will also receive information about how you can appeal this decision. We encourage you to file an appeal if you believe ACRC has made a decision in error. You should know that the fair hearing process includes a voluntary informal meeting, mediation, and a fair hearing. If you have questions about the fair hearing process, you may contact your Intake Specialist, or the Department of Developmental Services at www.dds.ca.gov.

SERVICE PLANNING AND COORDINATION

If you are notified that you or your child is eligible for Regional Center services, it will be explained that a Service Coordinator will be calling you to schedule a meeting to discuss service planning (this is a different person from your Intake Specialist). Your Service Coordinator will meet with you within 60 days of the eligibility notification to develop an Individual Program Plan for you or your child. Service planning is different for everyone because everyone we serve has unique needs and preferences. Together you will modify plans and services as you or your child's needs and priorities change.

THANK YOU

We hope this information will be helpful as you or your child goes through our intake process. Remember, if you have any questions at all – don't hesitate to call your Intake Specialist, as each situation can be case specific.