



FAQS ABOUT THE EARLY START REPORT (ESR)

The Early Start Report (ESR) is the primary means for collecting information related to the performance of the state and regional centers with respect to meeting the federal and state requirements of the Part C Early Start Program. This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is designed as a reference for regional center personnel completing ESR profiles. It provides answers to common questions about data entry into the ESR. Any questions or concerns, email ESR@dds.ca.gov.

HIGH RISK INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Q1. Is it necessary to designate infant/toddler eligibility for Early Start as At High Risk in the ESR? (Early Start Manual pp. 11-12)

A1. Yes. The section to record At High Risk eligibility is located under section C: Diagnostic.

Click the red box that says “Enter HR Eligibility Info” and the options for HR-1 At High Risk eligibility will appear. Complete this data field when setting up a new ESR for a child who was eligible for Early Start based on an At Risk combination of biomedical factors. The field represents the factors in the Early Start Regulations (California Code of Regulations, Title 17, Section 52022(c) High Risk for Developmental Disability). The field should be completed by checking two or more boxes for infants/toddlers qualifying due to biomedical factors. If a child qualifies for eligibility because they have a parent with a developmental disability, then only one box needs to be checked.

Q2. If a child enters Early Start with At High Risk eligibility, should it be changed in the ESR when the child later receives a diagnosis or shows delays before exiting Early Start? (Early Start Manual pp. 11-12)

A2. No. The eligibility information should remain the same. However, diagnosis should be added to the ESR any time there is additional delay or diagnostic information available.

Q3. Why does At High Risk information need to be added to the ESR? (Early Start Manual pp. 11-12)

A3. DDS is mandated to specifically report child outcomes data for children who enter Early Start as At High Risk in the Annual Performance Report (APR) to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). California's determination scores with OSEP will be partially based on child outcomes performance. Completed child outcomes data is crucial for all children receiving Early Start services, as the APR is a federal grant requirement and can impact Part C funding.

ASSESSMENTS AND FUNCTIONAL AGE INPUTS

Q1. What functional age scores should be used for a Premature Infant upon entry to Early Start? (Early Start Manual p. 19)

A1. Premature infants may have developmental assessments that account for their premature status. If the developmental assessment records the functional age at early start entry as less than 0 months, then the service coordinator or ESR user should enter the Child Outcomes entry age as 0 months. We do not utilize numbers less than zero.

Q2. Should adjusted age for a premature infant be entered into the ESR?
(Early Start Manual p. 19)

A2. The ESR does not utilize adjusted age scores, so simply enter the functional age at entry and exit for each child participating in Early Start. This will not affect the use of adjusted age for other regional center purposes.

Q3. When a child exits Early Start prior to their third birthday and there are no official exit assessments, what should the RC do about the exit functional age in Child Outcomes? (Early Start Manual p.3)

A3. Many children have periodic assessments completed by their Early Start providers. If there are no official exit scores, use the functional age scores from the most recent periodic assessment when it is completed within 6 months of exit from Early Start.

Q4. If the child enters ES after 30 months of age, should the same functional ages be used at entry and exit? (Early Start Manual p.3)

A4. Since the child's outcome data will not be used for the APR (because the child receives less than 6 months of ES services), leave the functional age blank at exit and complete the final disposition and exit date. Leaving the exit assessment data blank reflects the circumstance more accurately.

Complete the final disposition #21 and the exit date #22 in order for the record to be closed.

Q5. How should functional age be entered if the assessment tool gives a range of functional age? (Early Start Manual p. 19)

A5. The mid-point of the range should be entered into the ESR. In the case of an age with a fraction, such as 20.5 months, round the number up to the nearest month. In this example it would be 21 months.

Q6. If there are multiple functional ages for a particular developmental domain, which functional age should be entered in the ESR?

(Early Start Manual p. 19)

A6. In the case of multiple functional ages for one developmental domain, record the average functional age for the entry in the ESR.

For example, if the Adaptive/Self-help domain assessed functional age for play at 29 months; feeding at 27 months; and self-care at 25 months, then determine the average of these by adding $29+27+25$ (81) and then dividing by the number of sections (in this case, divide by 3) to create the average of 27 months. If the resulting average has a fraction, round up.

Q7. If all of the Initial/Entrance data for child outcomes are obtained on the same date, is it necessary to put in the date for all domains separately?

(Early Start Manual p. 19)

A7. No, it is not necessary. If all dates are the same, click on the down arrow below the "Date" heading after entering the date in the Cognitive Domain. By clicking on the down arrow, all of the domains will auto-fill with the same date as Cognitive. The same may be done at the Final/Exit column also.

Functional age for each domain will have to be entered separately at Entrance and Exit.

ELIGIBILITY

Q1. If one of the options is chosen on Item #13 Developmental Disability, does this mean that the child qualifies for Lanterman Act Services?

(Early Start Manual p. 11)

A1. Lanterman Act eligibility is not required in order for Item #13 to be checked. Also, children are not automatically eligible for Lanterman Act services when the Developmental Disability option is selected in the ESR. One of the boxes should be checked and/or ICD-10 code provided at any time a child has a diagnosis during their enrollment in Early Start.

Since developmental disability is not always known at entrance to Early Start, this item can be added at any time or when exit data is entered in the ESR for the children with available diagnostic information.

CHILD OUTCOMES DATA

Q1. What Child Outcomes data is required for infants and toddlers in Early Start per the State's submission of the Annual Performance Report (APR)?

(Early Start Manual p. 19)

A1. The Annual Performance Report is required to be submitted to the federal government and must include Child Outcomes data on all children served by Early Start for 6 months or more.

Child Outcomes data should reflect all of the following:

- a) The child has received a minimum of 6 months of ES services
- b) Entrance and Exit functional ages in all domains completed (all boxes within Item #19)
- c) The child's exit assessments were completed within 6 months of the exit date
- d) The final disposition is completed (Item #21)
- e) The exit date is completed (Item #22)

FINAL DISPOSITIONS AND EXITS

Q1. What definitions are used to determine the appropriate final disposition code on item #21? (Early Start Manual p. 21)

A1. Please refer to the following code and definitions to ensure the appropriate final disposition code is used at exit:

01. *Part B eligible*: Include all children determined to be eligible for Part B and who exited Early Start.
02. *Exit prior to the age of 3*: Include all children who have exited Early Start before the age of 3 because they are no longer eligible.
03. *Not part B eligible, refer*: Include all children who reached age 3, were evaluated and determined not eligible for Part B, and were referred to other programs such as preschool, head Start, or childcare centers.
04. *Not Part B Eligible, not referred*: Include all children who reached age 3, were evaluated and determined not eligible for Part B, and were not referred to other programs.
05. *Part B eligibility not determined*: Include all children who reached their 3rd birthday and their part B eligibility has not been determined. Once Part B eligibility is determined or denied after the case is closed, please update the record accordingly to reflect the most accurate final disposition code.
06. *Deceased*: Include all children who died before their 3rd birthday.
07. *Moved out of State*: Include all children who moved out of state before their 3rd birthday.
08. *Withdrawal*: Include all children under the age of 3 whose parents declined all services after an IFSP was in place or declined to consent to Part C services on the IFSP and provided written or verbal indication of withdrawal from Part C services.
09. *Unable to contact*: Include all children, under the age of 3, who had an active IFSP, and for whom Early Start personnel have been unable to provide early intervention services either due to lack of response from the parent or family, or inability to contact or locate the family or child who was no longer receiving services under Early Start before reaching age 3, and

who has not been reported in categories above.

10. *Other*: Select this code when the child ceases receiving Early Start services for a reason not otherwise specified above. Selection of “Other” should be rare.
11. *Transfer*: Include all children who have been transferred from one regional center to another regional center in the state prior to age of 3 years.
12. *Administrative Closure*: Select this code in unique situations such as Educational Rights have not been determined, etc.

Q2. Should a closed ESR be edited after an exit date is applied to it?

(Early Start Manual p. 22)

- A2. Yes, cases can be edited and updated as information changes. For example, if the final disposition code for a child upon exit was “Part B eligibility not determined” and then the child became Part B eligible the case should be updated in the ESR to reflect the most accurate final disposition code.

DATA ENTRY AND TECHICAL ASSISTANCE

Q1. How far back should you go to answer section G: “Natural Disaster”?

(Early Start Manual pp. 23)

- A1 We are not asking RCs to go back and re-open ESR cases for the purpose of this item. Please indicate this item moving forward.

Q2. In section G: “Natural Disaster,” what does the word “affected” include?

(Early Start Manual pp. 23)

- A2. The word “affected” refers to any disruption in services due to the causes listed in this section. For example, if the family declines virtual services or puts services on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic stay at home orders, you would check the box for COVID-19 in this section. If the services were transitioned to a virtual platform during COVID-19, but that did not disrupt service delivery, then you do not need to check this box.

Q3. How can an RC update the ESR user list? (Early Start Manual p. 30)

A3. Instructions for Regional Centers SuperUser role(s). If SuperUser is unavailable, RCs can email ESR@dds.ca.gov for assistance.

- a) Navigate to the Early Start Web application
- b) Log in as an AdminReadWrite, Admin or SuperUser role
- c) Select the View / Edit Users link in the footer of a page
- d) The operator can then reset passwords, update permission levels, add new users, change regional centers, etc.

Q4. When should an ESR entry be created and updated?

(Early Start Manual p. 17)

A4. An ESR record should be created as soon as an IFSP is completed. Current regulations (303.342 & 303.310) state that the IFSP should be done 45 days from referral date. The ESR should also be updated within 30 days of a child exiting, either based on family circumstances, because of a child aging out of the program, or because the final disposition changed (i.e. Part B eligibility not determined changed to Part B eligible or another applicable disposition code).

Q5. What should the RC do about duplications in the ESR?

(Early Start Manual p. 30)

A5. Please contact ESR@dds.ca.gov to have the duplication removed from the ESR.

Q6. Can SANDIS and the ESR be linked? (Not included in Early Start Manual)

A6. Demographic data are taken from SANDIS and used to create the Client Master File (CMF). The ESR cross checks this data with the CMF to verify each child identity. There is no plan for DDS to link SANDIS and the ESR.