



UNLOCKING REGIONAL CENTER SERVICES

WHAT EVERY
PARENT NEEDS
TO KNOW!





UNLOCKING
**REGIONAL
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SERVICES**

INTRODUCTION

Thanks to a grant from the California Department of Developmental Services and the Inland Regional Center, the Autism Society Inland Empire has created this toolkit to help families understand what services are available. Our goal is to ensure that children, parents, and caregivers have the information and resources they need so every child can reach their full potential.

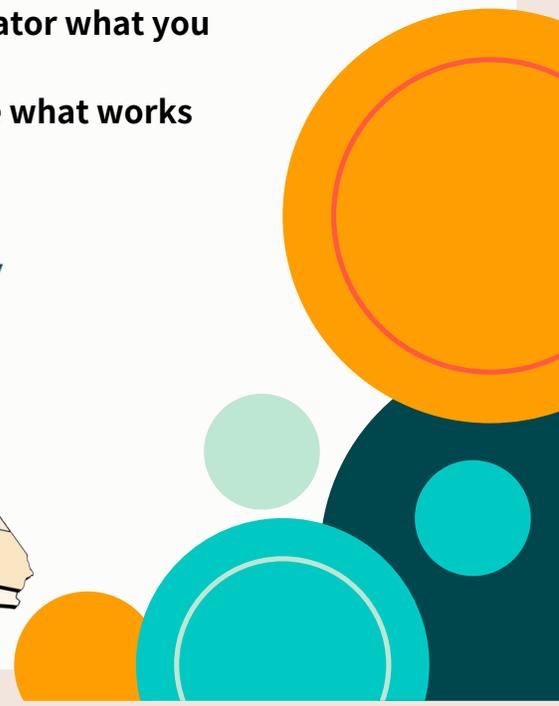
The pages that follow are designed to help you reflect on your child's life—what matters most to them, what helps them thrive, and what kinds of support they may need in everyday situations.

Inside, you'll find guiding questions and space to take notes about your child's strengths, interests, needs, routines, and goals. This is your opportunity to think about what is going well and what you would like to see improve.

You can bring these notes to your next planning meeting. They can help you and your Service Coordinator build a meaningful and personalized Individual Program Plan (IPP) that reflects your child's needs and your family's priorities.

Important Reminders

- The 12 Life Areas are a guide—but you can always add more. Your child is unique, and your IPP should reflect that.
- Don't worry about trying to come up with SMART goals on your own. You can discuss with your Consumer Services Coordinator what you want for your child and you can work on it together.
- You may not have needs in each of the areas so choose what works for your child.





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Medi-Cal

Life Areas for Goal Setting at Your Loved One's IPP Meeting



Life Areas for Goal Setting at Your Loved One's IPP Meeting

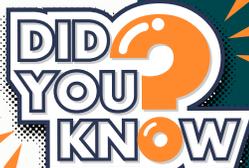
During your loved one's IPP meeting, you and your family member have the opportunity to help choose one or more goals together. These goals should reflect the parts of life that are most meaningful to your child and your family. The list below is meant to gently guide your thinking as you consider the areas that matter most for their growth, happiness, and well-being.

Take a moment to look back at your notes. Then, check the life areas that best match what you wrote down about your child's strengths and support needs.



LIFE AREAS:

1. Choice / Advocacy – Your child having a say in their life and learning how to speak up for what they need.
2. Community Participation – Being involved in activities, places, and events in the community.
3. Education / Learning – Learning new skills at school, at home, or in other settings.
4. Employment – Exploring jobs, job skills, or work-related experiences.
5. Healthcare / Wellness – Staying healthy, managing medical needs, and building healthy habits.
6. Home Life / Housing – Daily routines at home and future housing options.
7. Income / Finances – Understanding money, benefits, or financial support.
8. Personal / Emotional Growth – Building confidence, coping skills, and self-knowledge.
9. Relationships – Family, friends, and social connections.
10. Safety Considerations – Supports and skills that help your child stay safe.
11. Supports at Home – Services or tools that make daily life smoother.
12. Transportation – Ways your child gets where they want or need to go.



YOU CAN ALWAYS ADD MORE LIFE AREAS IF NEEDED!

Planning for Each Life Area

For each life area you choose to include in the plan, you'll be asked to think through the following questions:

1. What Is the Desired Outcome?

What do you and your child hope will happen? What positive change do you want to see?

2. What Is Currently Happening?

What is life like right now in this area? This helps everyone understand the starting point.

3. What Is Important TO the Person?

“Important To” means the things that make your child feel happy, comfortable, and fulfilled. These could be:

- Favorite routines
- Activities they enjoy
- People they love being with
- Things that make them feel calm or proud

(DDS IPP Guide)

4. What Is Important FOR the Person?

“Important For” means the things that help keep your child safe, healthy, and well-supported. These might include:

- Health or medical needs
- Safety supports
- Skills that help them stay well

(DDS IPP Guide)

5. What Needs to Be Done?

What steps, supports, or services are needed to help your child move toward the desired outcome?



Staying Centered on the Person

This whole process is built around understanding what truly matters to your child and what helps keep them safe and well. When we keep both “Important To” and “Important For” at the center of planning, we make sure the IPP supports your child as a whole person.

As parents, we bring deep knowledge of who our children are —their joys, their challenges, and their hopes. Your insight helps the team shape a plan that honors your child’s voice, respects their choices, and supports their growth.

TOGETHER, THE TEAM CAN CREATE AN IPP THAT LIFTS UP YOUR CHILD'S STRENGTHS, RESPECTS THEIR INDIVIDUALITY, AND HELPS THEM MOVE TOWARD THE LIFE THEY WANT.





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Life Area Worksheets



Life Area- 1

CHOICE/ADVOCACY

Here are some ideas to help you. Feel free to think about what your loved one needs if these questions don't fit.

Client's Stage of Life	Considerations or Questions to Ask
Child (3-12)	Choices and decisions that you hope your child will make in the future. For children it might be learning a chore, or choosing clothes, learning to express and set personal boundaries. Does your child currently need an advocate? Will they in the future?
Youth (14- 22)	Choices and decisions that you hope your youth will make in the future. For youth it might be learning a chore, or choosing clothes, learning to express and set personal boundaries. Does your young adult currently need an advocate? Will they in the future?
Adult (23+)	Choices and decisions that you want to make and those when you want support. Things you want to learn, where you want to live, what type of job you want, what to do in the community, things about your health, education, money and friends



Life Area- 1

CHOICE/ADVOCACY

GOAL:

**WHAT HAVE WE TRIED?
WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?**

Examples of Generic Resources:

- ABA services
- books, videos, natural supports
- parent modeling
- Self-advocacy training or conferences

Examples of Regional Center Resources:

- Adult - supported living or independent living services
- Regional Center co-pay assistance

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?



Life Area- 2

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION



Here are some ideas to help you. Feel free to think about what your loved one needs if these questions don't fit.

Client's Stage of Life	Considerations or Questions to Ask
Child (3-12)	Interests, hobbies, activities and places that your child enjoys. New ways that you and your child would like to spend time in the community.
Youth (14- 22)	Interests, hobbies, activities and places that your youth enjoys. New ways that your young adult would like to spend time in the community.
Adult (23+)	Interests, hobbies, activities and places that you enjoy. New ways that you would like to spend time in your community.



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

GOAL:

WHAT HAVE WE TRIED? WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Examples of Generic Resources:

- Museums, parks, zoos, or other community places
- Faith-based or cultural community events
- Practice ordering food, buying an item at a store
- Checking out books at the library

Examples of Regional Center Resources:

- Independent Living or Supported Living Services for adults
- Social recreation or Non-Medical Therapies

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?



EDUCATION/LEARNING

Here are some ideas to help you. Feel free to think about what your loved one needs if these questions don't fit.

Client's Stage of Life	Considerations or Questions to Ask
Child (3-12)	Goals in school for your child. Or, new things your child would like to learn.
Youth (14- 22)	Goals in school for your child. Or, new things your child would like to learn.
Adult (23+)	Goals in school or college for you. Or, new things you would like to learn including skills or hobbies.



EDUCATION/LEARNING

GOAL:

WHAT HAVE WE TRIED? WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Examples of Generic Resources:

- Conferences, workshops, webinars
- DOR
- DSPS
- Adult Ed
- ROP
- Anything funded through IEP

Examples of Regional Center Resources:

- Tutoring (Educational services)
- Conference registration fees for consumers, parents, guardians, conservators to attend conference(s) related to the consumer's developmental disability

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?



Life Area- 4

EMPLOYMENT



Here are some ideas to help you. Feel free to think about what your loved one needs if these questions don't fit.

Client's Stage of Life	Considerations or Questions to Ask
Child (3-12)	What does your child want to be when they grow up?
Youth (14- 22)	Getting a job or changing jobs. The kind of support your young adult needs to find and keep a job.
Adult (23+)	Getting a job or changing jobs. The kinds of support you need to find and keep a job.



EMPLOYMENT

GOAL:

[Empty text box for goal]

WHAT HAVE WE TRIED? WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

[Empty text box for what we tried and outcome]

Examples of Generic Resources:

- College/University
- Vocational Programs
- Department of Rehabilitation
- California Conservation Corp
- Apprenticeships
- Intern/Extern-ships
- Workforce Development Board Programs
- America’s Job Center of California (AJCC)
- Youth Leadership Forum

Examples of Regional Center Resources:

- Adult Day Programs
- Arts Program
- Behavior Programs
- Community Integrated Programs
- Paid Internship
- Tailor Day Services
- Training
- Customized Employment
- Supported Employment

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?

[Empty text box for additional resources]



Life Area- 5

HEALTHCARE/WELLNESS

Here are some ideas to help you. Feel free to think about what your loved one needs if these questions don't fit.

Client's Stage of Life	Considerations or Questions to Ask
Child (3-12)	Changes in your child's health needs or medicine. New doctors or new health issues in your child's life.
Youth (14- 22)	Changes in your youth's health needs or medicine. New doctors or new health issues in your life.
Adult (23+)	Changes in your health needs or medicine. New doctors or new health issues in your life. Plans for a major health event or information you want your doctor to know.



HEALTHCARE/WELLNESS

GOAL:

WHAT HAVE WE TRIED? WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Examples of Generic Resources:

- Medical treatment such as ABA, speech, occupational, and physical therapy, if aged 3-21 years, or if medical insurance covers
- Durable medical equipment that encourages independence, inclusion, and empowerment - CCS or medical insurance.
- Denti-Cal

Examples of Regional Center Resources:

- Medicaid waiver
- Diaper assistance
- Co-pay assistance
- Regional Center may pay for evidence-based medical treatment if the insurance companies refuse to pay (with denial letter)
- Durable medical equipment

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?



HOMELIFE/HOUSING



Here are some ideas to help you. Feel free to think about what your loved one needs if these questions don't fit.

Client's Stage of Life	Considerations or Questions to Ask
Child (3-12)	Choices and decisions that you hope your child will make in the future. For children it might be learning a chore, or choosing clothes, learning to express and set personal boundaries. Does your child currently need an advocate? Will they in the future?
Youth (14- 22)	Choices and decisions that you hope your youth will make in the future. For youth it might be learning a chore, or choosing clothes, learning to express and set personal boundaries. Does your young adult currently need an advocate? Will they in the future?
Adult (23+)	Choices and decisions that you want to make and those when you want support. Things you want to learn, where you want to live, what type of job you want, what to do in the community, things about your health, education, money and friends



HOMELIFE/HOUSING

GOAL:

WHAT HAVE WE TRIED? WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Examples of Generic Resources:

- CalWORKs
- Tenant-Based Voucher Rental Assistance Program (Section 8)
- Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8)
- County Housing Authority Programs
- In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)
- Home Care Aide
- Home Health Aide
- Medi-Cal
- Medicare
- Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) - Loma Linda University Health, AltaMed Senior Buena Care, High Desert PACE, InnovAge Greater CA PACE - Inland Empire, Neighborhood Healthcare PACE, Welbe Inland Empire & WelbeHealth PACE

Examples of Regional Center Resources:

- Independent Living Services (ILS)
- Supported Living Services (SLS)
- Personal Attendance Care
- In-Home Respite
- Out-of-Home Respite
- Community Integration/SocRec
- ABA
- Remote Technology
- Behavioral Support Services
- Family Home Agency
- Residential Placement
- Coordinated Family Supports (CFS)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?



Life Area- 7

INCOME/FINANCES



Below are some suggestions but feel to think of your loved one's needs if these questions don't quite fit.

Client's Stage of Life	Considerations or Questions to Ask
Child (3-12)	Changes in the services and supports your child needs at home, in changing homes or in making your home more accessible and safe.
Youth (14- 22)	You might want to talk about your young adult's benefits, or how they might earn money in the future, or learning about spending or saving money.
Adult (23+)	You might want to talk about your benefits, or money earned from a job, or learning about spending or saving money.



Life Area- 7

INCOME/FINANCES

GOAL:

[Empty text box for goal description]

WHAT HAVE WE TRIED? WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

[Empty text box for response]

Examples of Generic Resources:

- DB101
- CalABLE
- BenefitsCal.com
- Place to Achieve Self-Support (PASS)
- SSI/SSP
- CalFresh
- FDIC - Money Smart Programs
- Benefits Planner or Work Incentive Benefit Planner (Dept of Rehabilitation)

Examples of Regional Center Resources:

- Representative Payee
- Independent Living Skills or Supported Living for adults

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?

[Empty text box for additional resources]



Life Area- 8

PERSONAL/ EMOTIONAL GROWTH

Below are some suggestions but feel to think of your loved one's needs if these questions don't quite fit:

Client's Stage of Life	Considerations or Questions to Ask
Child (3-12)	Services and supports your child might need for their emotional well-being and/or mental health.
Youth (14- 22)	Services and supports your youth might need for their emotional well-being and/or mental health.
Adult (23+)	Services and supports your loved one might need for their emotional well-being and/or mental health.



PERSONAL/EMOTIONAL GROWTH

GOAL:

WHAT HAVE WE TRIED? WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Examples of Generic Resources:

- Counseling/Psychotherapy
- Advocacy Groups/Conferences
- Clubs with other people who enjoy the same inteterest

Examples of Regional Center Resources:

- Social Recreation
- Independent Living Skills (ILS) / Supported Living Services (SLS)
- Respite for the family

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?



RELATIONSHIPS

Below are some suggestions but feel to think of your loved one's needs if these questions don't quite fit.

Client's Stage of Life	Considerations or Questions to Ask
Child (3-12)	Services and supports your child might need to building healthy relationships with friends, family, and others.
Youth (14- 22)	Supporting your young adult might need to build healthy relationships with friends, family, and others.
Adult (23+)	Support you might need to build healthy relationships with friends, family, neighbors, and others.



Life Area- 9

RELATIONSHIPS

GOAL:

Blank space for writing the goal.

WHAT HAVE WE TRIED? WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Blank space for writing about what has been tried and the outcome.

Examples of Generic Resources:

- Self-advocate groups and advocacy conferences
- Social skills groups
- Counseling services
- Clubs
- ABA services

Examples of Regional Center Resources:

- Social recreation
- Independent Living or Supported Living Services

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?

Blank space for listing additional resources to help achieve the goal.



SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Below are some suggestions but feel to think of your loved one's needs if these questions don't quite fit.

Client's Stage of Life	Considerations or Questions to Ask
Child (3-12)	Any worries that you or your team have about the safety of your child at home or in the community. Helping your child begin to understand boundaries.
Youth (14- 22)	Any ideas you or your team have about the safety of your youth at home or in the community. Helping your young adult begin to understand boundaries.
Adult (23+)	Changes that you or your team feel is necessary for your safety at home or in the community.



SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

GOAL:

WHAT HAVE WE TRIED? WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Examples of Generic Resources:

- Blue Envelope, Safety Fairs, training
- Safe Return, Special Needs Registry, premise history for local law enforcement
- Severe Behavior Services ABA
- Anti-bullying workshops
- Healthy boundaries and consent classes
- Internet safety training

Examples of Regional Center Resources:

- Severe Behavior Services

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?



SUPPORTS AT HOME

Below are some suggestions but feel to think of your loved one's needs if these questions don't quite fit.

Client's Stage of Life	Considerations or Questions to Ask
Child (3-12)	Changes in your child's preferences, needs, and supports at home.
Youth (14- 22)	Changes in your youth's preferences, needs, and supports at home.
Adult (23+)	Changes in your preferences, needs and supports when you are at home



SUPPORTS AT HOME

GOAL:

[Empty text box for goal]

WHAT HAVE WE TRIED? WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

[Empty text box for response]

Examples of Generic Resources:

- IHSS
- ABA services
- visual supports
- speech/AAC services
- home modifications

Examples of Regional Center Resources:

- Independent living or supported living services

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?

[Empty text box for additional resources]



TRANSPORTATION



Below are some suggestions but feel to think of your loved one's needs if these questions don't quite fit.

Client's Stage of Life	Considerations or Questions to Ask
Child (3-12)	Ways your child gets around in the community now and changes in transportation that will help them to be involved in your community.
Youth (14- 22)	Ways your young adult gets around in the community now and changes in transportation that will help them be involved in your community.
Adult (23+)	Ways you get around in the community now and changes in transportation that will help you keep involved in your community.



Life Area- 12

TRANSPORTATION

GOAL:

WHAT HAVE WE TRIED? WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Examples of Generic Resources:

- Public transportation
- Dial-a-Ride
- Medical transportation
- Rideshare

Examples of Regional Center Resources:

- Vendorized Transportation Services
- Pay for driver's education

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?





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Additional Resources



Additional Resources

Inland Regional Center Purchase of Services Policies

www.inlandrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/1.2.4a-PURCHASE-OF-SERVICE-POLICIES-Draft-Revisions-01142026.pdf

Inland Regional Center Common Services, Program Manager Lookup

www.inlandrc.org/clientsfamilies/

Autism Society Inland Empire Community Resources

<https://ieautism.org/resources-by-topic/>





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We get you because we are you!

The Autism Society Inland Empire supports parents and children from the start. We offer many programs and services for children — most are free or low-cost!

- Fun, Safe Events for the entire family!
- Parent Support Groups to connect with other parents for advice and friendship.
- Educational Workshops with subject matter experts to learn about Autism and treatment options.
- Help with System Navigation. Our Resource Specialists to guide you, support you and help you find local services and specialists.
- Free resource and webinar library available 24/7.

We're here to help you and your child thrive. Visit our website or contact us for more information.

 info@IEAutism.org
 951.220.6922



Our Mission

We create connections, empowering everyone in the Autism community with the resources needed to live fully.

Our Vision

Creating a world where everyone in the Autism community is connected to the support they need, when they need it.



Getting Connected

PLAYGROUPS AND FUN SOCIAL EVENTS

Finding playgroups and safe social events for your young child with Autism can be incredibly beneficial. These activities provide a structured environment where your child can practice social skills, make friends, and learn through play. They also offer a chance for you to connect with other parents who understand your experiences, providing valuable support and advice. Specialized playgroups are designed to be inclusive and accommodating, ensuring your child feels comfortable and confident. These events are a fun way for your child to explore, communicate, and enjoy new experiences in a safe setting.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Attending a support group can be incredibly helpful for families who have just received an Autism diagnosis for their child. These groups provide a safe space to connect with other parents who understand what you're going through. You can share experiences, get practical advice, and find emotional support. It's a great way to feel less alone and more empowered as you navigate this new journey. Plus, you'll learn about resources and strategies that can make a big difference for your child and your family.

WORKSHOPS, CONFERENCES AND WEBINARS

Attending workshops, conferences, and webinars about Autism can be incredibly valuable for parents. These events provide up-to-date information and practical strategies to help you support your child. You'll learn from experts and connect with other parents who share similar experiences. This can help you feel more confident and empowered in your parenting journey. Plus, you'll discover new resources and tools that can make a big difference in your child's development and well-being.

Many webinars are offered free of charge. Conferences tend to cost more. If you are a Regional Center client, Regional Center can pay for or reimburse these costs up to \$1200 per year. You must contact your caseworker for approval before the conference.

[Autism Society Inland Empire Community Resource Listing of Social Groups](#)



[Autism Society Inland Empire Community Resource Listing of Support Groups](#)



[Sign Up for Our Free Newsletter to Get the Latest on Workshops, Conferences and Webinars](#)





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Notes

COULD MY CHILD HAVE AUTISM OR A
DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY?

SYSTEMS

- What Are the Different Systems & Agencies
- Diagnosis Vs Assessment
- Medical Diagnosis & Therapies
- Regional Centers Services
- School District
- Financial Assistance
- Getting Connected



IEAutism.org

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Your local Autism connection