

VALLEY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL CENTER SERVICE STANDARD

SPEECH/LANGUAGE/AUDIOLOGICAL SERVICES

PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY: Valley Mountain Regional Center (VMRC) is committed to providing Speech and Language Services and Audiological Services to consumers who will benefit from these services as documented by the ID/Planning Team process. It is our commitment to insure the clinical appropriateness of each assessment before ongoing services are provided. To accomplish this, criteria have been established for Speech and Language services and for Audiological services.

In keeping with State mandates, we first utilize the consumer's Medi-cal, Medicare, private insurance or school services through the IEP process to provide or pay for these services. VMRC is the payer of last resort.

Early Start consumers whose families have private insurance are treated differently in terms of paying for these services. If the IFSP team has identified an Early Intervention service that is needed on the IFSP, and this services is paid for by the consumer's private insurance, the parent or guardian has to be given a choice to use the private insurance or request that it be funded by the Regional Center. This is in keeping with the law stating that Early Intervention services are free, as they are a part of the child's educational plan.

I. ELIGIBILITY: To be eligible for purchase of the above services by VMRC, the following criteria must be met:

1. Need for service is identified in the IPP or IFSP.
2. Services are not available through a generic resource (i.e. CCS).
3. Service is not the legal responsibility of another agency, i.e. Department of Rehabilitation, Public Schools.
4. A Clinical Assessment of the identified problem (i.e. delayed language, poor articulation, decreased hearing, etc.) by a health care practitioner of the appropriate discipline (Speech and Language Pathologist, Audiologist, ENT physician, etc.) has to be completed. The assessment may be done by a private vendor or a school speech and language pathologist. VMRC will review the assessment to determine the accuracy of the recommendations. The Service Coordinator or Intake Coordinator will utilize the Clinical department to make such determinations. If there is a disagreement by any member of the ID/Planning team, a second opinion can be obtained.
5. If Speech/Language therapy is recommended, the SC must explore all sources of generic funding first (i.e. schools, CCS, Department of Rehabilitation) before asking VMRC to fund. VMRC will fund on-going Speech/Language therapy only for a specific length of time, agreed to by the ID/Planning Team. A re-assessment will then occur and another clinical determination of the need to continue services will be done.
6. For diagnostic audiological testing, the SC will make every attempt to use generic resources, but will not let the unavailability of generic resources hinder a consumer having a diagnostic test.

7. For consumers that need specialized auditory equipment (i.e. hearing aids), VMRC will attempt to utilize all generic resources to assure the provision of such equipment to the consumer. VMRC will pay for such equipment as the payer of last resort.
8. For children whose parents desire Speech/Language services provided by the school to continue during off track times or summer breaks, the SC will assist the families in advocating for such services through the IEP process. The process needs to be started at least two months before the child's scheduled school break.
9. For children who are in Early Start and turn 3 during a time when their school district is closed for the summer or off track and if the child will be an ongoing VMRC consumer, then VMRC can choose to provide Speech/Language services, pursuant to the IPP until the child is enrolled in an appropriate pre-school program and an IEP to establish Speech services is held.

II. SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS: When speech/language or audiological services are being requested, some issues to consider are:

1. Has the consumer explored other free resources in the community such as Scottish Rite services?
2. Does the consumer have an unusual problem (such as a craniofacial malformation) that would best be served in a specialty clinic at a major medical center, at least for the diagnostic portion?
3. Does the consumer have feeding problems that would benefit from intervention by a speech and language pathologist?

III. EXCEPTIONS AND APPEALS PROCESS: As with all VMRC purchased services, if the Planning Team determines that sufficient support exists to request an exception to these standards, a Purchase of Service Exceptions request should be submitted.

VMRC recognizes that there may be occasions when a decision is made by VMRC that may not satisfy the consumer or his/her legally authorized representative. When the consumer or is/her legally authorized representative believes a VMRC decision is illegal, discriminatory or not in the consumer's best interest, an appeal can be made to challenge that decision. All processes shall be in compliance with Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 4700-4730.