

Transition to Preschool

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Planning for the transition from early intervention (Part C) to preschool services (Part B) is a very important step in the life of your child and family. Eligible children can receive special services and assistance (special education and related services) under this law. At the age of three there will be a transition process which may include:

- A change of people who have been serving your child
- A change of location of services
- A change in which part of the law oversees services in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- A change from an IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan) to an IEP (Individual Education Plan)
- A change from goals that are family directed to educational need based goals

You will be assisted by your Early Intervention Service Coordinator. Transition planning will begin months before your child enters preschool so that you have adequate time to explore your options and feel comfortable with your child's placement.

The first step in the transition process involves a transition meeting with your Early Intervention team. At this time the procedures in your district will be shared with you. As part of this process you will be referred to your local school district's Child Find. This referral can be made by your Service Coordinator.

Child Find is responsible for assessment and identification of young children who might be eligible for services under IDEA. The team's evaluation may include any or all of the following: health, vision, hearing, motor, social/emotional, general, and communication skills. These tests must be conducted in your child's preferred mode of communication (spoken language, sign language or a combination). These evaluations are offered by the district at no cost to you as the parent. You should also share any current assessment data that you have with the team. They may decide to include some of the data into the overall assessment.

There are guidelines in the law covering the different steps required to complete a child's transition between services. This period is filled with assessments needed by the school, visiting school programs, learning even more about how one's child learns and communicates best... so most families would benefit from even more transition time to mull over decisions and meet the key people who will be involved in their child's life in school. This additional time can greatly ease pressure on parents as well as allow for more time for the family and the school personnel to develop a positive relationship.

Here is a timeline to consider:

9-12 months prior to the child's third birthday:

- Request information on transition, the law, options, and timelines in a format useful to you as parents.
- Family and Early Intervention service Coordinator set general timelines for transition planning.
- Consider articles or other resources on preschool selection and parent experiences from Hands & Voices.
- Begin to identify area preschools to visit.
- Discuss the child's learning style and modes of communication across a variety of settings.
- Consider the option of meeting other families of preschoolers.
- Bring your questions to the continuing home visits.

6 months prior to child's third birthday:

- Visit preschools. Consider use of rating scales as one method to prioritize needs. You can access a preschool rating scale at www.handsandvoices.org. Begin to become familiar with district IEP form and learn if there is a Communication Plan.
- Check over current IFSP to be read by school district personnel. Does it fit your child's strengths and needs?
- Learn your state laws that are applicable to special education.
- Attend local trainings preparing parents for special education services.

3 months prior to third birthday:

- Write down questions for team.
- Begin work on transition portfolio about your child and family. Make sure this portfolio includes what you believe are your child strengths and educational needs.

30 days prior to third birthday:

- Share your child's portfolio with the IEP team
- Discuss equipment needs with the team
- Get letters of recommendation from professionals currently working with your child
- Invite professionals/ individuals who can contribute to the development of your child's IEP

- Review a [Communication Plan](#) and [IEP checklist](#) (both can be found at www.handsandvoices.org)
- Request a preview of any "DRAFT" IEP and look it over thoroughly

Once the evaluations are completed, a team will be convened. You are an important member of this team. At this meeting the assessment results will be shared and discussed as they relate to your child's educational needs and subsequent placement. Once your child has been determined eligible for services, the IEP team will develop an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) for your child. This plan will state the goals for your child and the services that will be provided by the school.

The team needs to include parents and/or guardians, first of all. A representative must be present who can make decisions on behalf of the lead educational agency, (LEA) otherwise known as the school district. A deaf education teacher is generally present on behalf of the future service providers and the district. One regular education teacher must also attend. School audiologists and speech therapists should also attend. If a child has additional health care needs, other professionals may also be invited. Childcare providers or extended family or others invited by the parents with a special interest or knowledge of the child may attend, including an advocate or another adult to support the parents and take notes at the parents' discretion.

There are many options for educating your child. The law mandates that a continuum of services be discussed. One basic tenet of IDEA is that public agencies must ensure that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in. As your child moves into Part B services, you will work with a team of professionals to develop a plan (IEP) that addresses the unique needs of your child. A part of this process could be developing a Communication Plan for your child which ensures among other things that all educational options have been explored.

Items to consider on a Communication Plan are:

1. Student's primary communication mode(s)?
2. The IEP team has considered the availability of deaf/hard of hearing adult role models and peer group of the student's communication mode or language.
3. A statement documenting that an explanation was given of all educational options provided by the school district and available to the child.
4. Teachers, interpreters, and other specialists delivering the communication plan to the student must have demonstrated proficiency in, and be able to accommodate for, the child's/student's primary communication mode or language.
5. The communication-accessible academic instruction, school services, and extracurricular activities the student will receive have been identified.

*A sample communication plan can be found at www.cohandsandvoices.org

As part of developing the IEP, the team needs to consider the unique needs of the student including the need for accommodations and modifications. Here is a list that

should be considered for students who are deaf or hard of hearing:

THE IEP CHECKLIST:

Amplification Options

- Personal hearing device (hearing aid, cochlear implant, tactile device)
- Personal FM system (hearing aid + FM)
- FM system/auditory trainer (without personal hearing aid)
- Walkman-style FM system
- Sound-field FM system

Assistive Devices

- TDD
- TV captioned
- Video Phone

Communication Accommodations

- Specialized seating arrangements
- Obtain student's attention prior to speaking
- Reduce auditory distractions (background noise)
- Reduce visual distractions
- Enhance speechreading conditions (avoid hands in front of face, mustaches well-trimmed, no gum chewing)
- Present information in simple structured, sequential manner
- Clearly enunciate speech. Allow extra time for processing information
- Repeat or rephrase information when necessary
- Frequently check for understanding
- Educational interpreter (ASL, signed English, cued speech, oral)
- Communication Facilitator

Physical Environment Accommodations

- Noise reduction (carpet & other sound absorption materials)
- Specialized lighting
- Room design modifications
- Flashing fire alarm

Instructional Accommodations

- Use of visual supplements (overheads, chalkboard, charts, vocabulary lists, lecture outlines)
- Captioning or scripts for television, videos, movies, filmstrips
- Buddy system for notes, extra explanations / directions
- Check for understanding of information
- Down time / break from listening
- Extra time to complete assignments
- Step-by-step directions
- Tutor
- Note taker

Curricular Modifications

- Modify reading assignments (shorten length, adapt or eliminate phonics assignments)
- Modify written assignments (shorten length, adjust evaluation criteria)
- Pre-tutor vocabulary
- Provide supplemental materials to reinforce concepts
- Provide extra practice
- Alternative curriculum

Evaluation Modifications

- Reduce quantity of tests
- Use alternative tests
- Provide reading assistance with tests
- Allow extra time

Other Needs? Considerations.

- Supplemental instruction (speech, language, pragmatic skills, auditory, speechreading skills)
- Counseling
- Sign language instruction
- Vocational services
- Family supports
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing role models
- Recreational/Social opportunities
- Financial assistance
- Transition services

Source: Johnson, Benson, & Seaton. (1997). Educational Audiology Handbook. Appendix 11-A, p.448. Singular publishing Group, Inc.

The transition time between early intervention Part C and preschool services Part B can feel overwhelming but the key to ensuring that this transition goes as smooth as possible is having time to learn and prepare. There are many articles on the Hands & Voices website that are very informative. Go to www.handsandvoices.org and go to resources and then there will be a drop down of articles. This is a new stage for families to learn and grow and Guide By Your Side Parents can be a nice resource to help families through this stage in their journey. ~

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