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**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DOCUMENT  
TRANSITION AT AGE THREE: TRANSITIONING ELIGIBLE CHILDREN FROM EARLY  
INTERVENTION TO PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION  
REVISED APRIL 2010**

This joint technical assistance document, developed by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and the Colorado Department of Human Services/Division for Developmental Disabilities (DDD), reviews the roles and responsibilities of Administrative Unit/Lead Education Agency (AU/LEA) and Community Centered Board (CCB) personnel with regard to requirements and recommended practices during transition from early intervention (EI) services to preschool (Part B) services. AU/LEAs and CCBs must work together effectively and efficiently in the transition process to ensure that requirements, including timelines, are met. Below are some questions and answers to consider that will assist teams when transitioning children out of EI services into preschool (Part B) services.

**What are the responsibilities of the CCB to ensure a smooth transition of children turning three years of age who are exiting EI services and may be eligible for preschool (Part B) services?**

Based on the requirements of Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, DDD requires that:

- Each child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) includes the steps and services necessary to support a smooth transition of the child to preschool (Part B) services, to the extent that those services are appropriate, or other services that may be available, if appropriate;
- By the time the child is two years, three months of age (or as soon as possible if a child enters EI at a later age), the CCB must **notify** the AU/LEA in which the child resides that the child will shortly reach the age of three;
- By the time the child is two years, six months of age (or as soon as possible if a child enters EI at a later age), the CCB **refers** a child who is potentially eligible for preschool (Part B) services; and

- With the approval of the family of the child, the service coordinator, parent(s) or legal guardian, representative(s) from the present program and representative(s) from a future program will participate in a transition conference meeting no later than 90 days, and at the discretion of all participants, up to nine months, prior to the child's third birthday.

The necessary steps and services to support a smooth transition are documented on the IFSP transition plan page, discussed at the transition conference, and must include:

- Evidence reflecting a discussion with the parent(s) regarding the variety of services and other matters related to a child's transition, including a description of how the family is included in the transition process;
- Procedures to prepare a child for changes in service delivery, including steps, services and timelines to help a child adjust to, and function in, a new setting;
- Old and new evaluation/assessment information;
- Steps to exit from EI; and
- A review of a child's program options for the period from the child's third birthday.

**What are the responsibilities of the AU/LEA to ensure a smooth transition of children turning three years of age who are exiting EI services and who are potentially eligible for preschool (Part B) services?**

Part B of IDEA requires that children participating in EI and who will receive preschool (Part B) services will:

- Experience a smooth and effective transition to those preschool programs;
- Have a representative of the AU/LEA participate in the transition conference; and
- By the third birthday, have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) developed and implemented.

**Which children are included in the notification to the AU/LEA?**

The CCB must provide notification to the AU/LEA of children who have an active IFSP and will be turning three years old in the upcoming nine to twelve months. This notification should include the name of the CCB, the child's date of birth, the family's zip code, and the name of the local AU/LEA.

**Which children are referred to the AU/LEA?**

With written parental consent the CCB must refer to the AU/LEA all children who are **potentially eligible** for preschool (Part B) services and who will be turning three years old in the upcoming six to nine months. Potentially eligible is defined as a child enrolled in EI who has not met all of the outcomes on the IFSP and/or a child enrolled in EI who is demonstrating a delay in any area based on the expertise of a member of the IFSP team. The CCB should forward pertinent information for children referred for potential preschool (Part B) services to the AU/LEA:

- Current IFSP
- Developmental evaluation and assessments (within the last three months)
- Provider progress reports (within the last three months) including child outcome/Results Matter data
- Other information pertinent to transition.

## **Under what circumstances should a child not be referred to the AU/LEA during transition from EI services?**

All families should participate in transition planning and have a transition plan developed, even if their child is not referred for potential preschool (Part B) services. Examples of children who should not be referred to the AU/LEA include:

- Children who have met their IFSP outcomes and have been, or will be, exited from EI services;
- Children whose skills are developmentally on target in all areas as determined through the review of progress notes, the ongoing child outcomes/Results Matter data, and observations by the child's family and current EI provider(s); and
- Children whose parents do not consent to be referred to the AU/LEA. Parents should be given information on how to reconnect with the AU/LEA if they have concerns about their child's development in the future. This information should be included on the transition plan.

In any of these instances, with the approval of the family of the child, the CCB will make reasonable efforts to convene a conference with the service coordinator, parent(s) or legal guardian, and provider(s) to discuss other services and other community options for the child.

## **What if the EI provider and/or family member is unsure if there is an ongoing concern that warrants a referral for preschool (Part B) services?**

When there is a question as to whether a referral to the AU/LEA should be made and there are concerns about the child's development, it is best to make the referral. Upon referral, pertinent information that includes current IFSP, developmental evaluation and assessments (within the last three months) and provider progress reports (within the last three months) including child outcome/Results Matter data should be provided to the AU/LEA. Once the information is reviewed, and as a part of the transition planning process, the AU/LEA personnel, with the family, will determine what additional information is needed and what next steps need to be taken.

## **When a child who is transitioning out of EI is referred to the AU/LEA for an evaluation to determine eligibility for preschool (Part B) services, what information should be sent to the AU/LEA to help ensure a timely and individualized evaluation?**

The service coordinator should ensure that up-to-date information on the child's development is contained in the child's EI record, including progress notes and provider reports, ongoing child outcome/Results Matter data, information from the family about the child, the most recent IFSP, and progress towards IFSP outcomes. This information should be shared with the AU/LEA sufficiently in advance of the evaluation to give the Child Find team time to review and consider the information as they plan for an appropriate and individualized evaluation process. Child Find team members can then decide what areas of development need further evaluation and who needs to be included on the evaluation team.

### **Are there any special provisions for the initial IEP of a child transitioning from EI?**

Yes. In the case of a child who was previously served through EI, an invitation to the initial IEP team meeting must, at the request of the parent, be sent to the service coordinator and/or other representatives of EI to assist with the sharing of information and the smooth transition of services. The initial IEP team must also consider the information contained in the current IFSP of the child when developing the initial IEP.

### **What about children who enter EI after two years nine months of age?**

A transition plan must be developed for a child at least 90 days before the child's third birthday or as soon as the initial IFSP is completed for a child who is referred with less than 90 days to the third birthday. For a child who is potentially eligible for preschool (Part B) services, the AU/LEA should participate in the development of the transition plan and the identification of appropriate steps to support the transition. The evaluation to determine eligibility for preschool (Part B) services may be done at the same time as EI eligibility or may be one of the steps listed in the transition plan.

In cases where a child is referred to EI within 45 days of their third birthday the referral should be sent directly to the AU/LEA.

### **What about children whose third birthday occurs in late spring or over the summer?**

If a child's third birthday occurs towards the end of the school year or during the summer, the child's IEP team, which includes the parent(s), shall determine the date when services under the IEP will begin. This could be by the child's third birthday, if the birthday is before the school year is over, or when the new school year begins in the fall.

All children, but specifically those with significant needs, should have thorough records kept on progress and developmental status while receiving EI services. This would include documentation of any regression that is noted after breaks in service. Having this information available may inform the IEP team as to whether or not a child qualifies for extended school year (ESY) services from the AU/LEA over the summer.

Review of current assessment information about the child's strengths and needs is critical in making these determinations. When an EI provider believes a child should be considered for ESY services, it is incumbent upon the EI provider to keep thorough records of the child's progress (or lack thereof) including documentation of **predictive factors**. This may aid in qualifying a child for ESY services. The definition and examples of predictive factors can be found on page six of the CDE document *Determining ESY Services* at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/download/pdf/law-ESYGuidelines.pdf>

## **Where can I find research-based practices related to the transition process?**

The National Early Childhood Transition Center (NECTC) funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) investigated and validated practices and strategies that enhance the early childhood transition process and support positive school outcomes for children with disabilities. The website is found at <http://www.hdi.uky.edu/NECTC/Home.aspx>

A helpful document has been developed by the Center: *Meeting the Transition Requirements: The State of Evidence and Recommended Practices*. This document lists specific research-based practices and strategies for early childhood transitions and can be found at: [http://www.hdi.uky.edu/Libraries/NECTC\\_Completed\\_Presentations/Meeting the Transition Requirements The State of the Evidence and Recommended Practices Handout.sflb.ashx](http://www.hdi.uky.edu/Libraries/NECTC_Completed_Presentations/Meeting_the_Transition_Requirements_The_State_of_the_Evidence_and_Recommended_Practices_Handout.sflb.ashx).

Specific practices and strategies that relate to this technical assistance brief are:

- Practice #5 (Program eligibility processes and timelines are clearly delineated);
- Practice #19 (Families actively participate in gathering information about their child's growth and development); and
- Practice #20 (Transition team members share appropriate information about each child making a transition).