

Transition in Early Childhood at Age Three for Children with Special Needs

- Developed by California Map to Inclusive Child Care, WestEd Center for Child & Family Studies
- in collaboration with the Supporting Early Education Delivery Systems (SEEDS) Project, Sacramento County Office of Education

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Early Childhood Special Education Handbooks

- The Supporting Early Education Delivery Systems (SEEDS) Project is operated for the California Department of Education, Special Education Division by the Sacramento County Office of Education
- SEEDS has developed a series of Early Childhood Special Education Handbooks that describe core concepts and recommended practices in early childhood special education
- The handbooks include strategies and practices that support and enhance very young children and their families
- The information for this PowerPoint is adapted from the Transition Handbook in this series

Intent of this Overview

To assist early educators in understanding transition out of the Early Start early intervention system when a child is three years of age

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

- Federal legislation mandates special education for all eligible children
 - IDEA Part C: services for children birth to age three years
 - Services in California are provided through Early Start
 - IDEA Part B: services for children with disabilities ages three through twenty-one years
 - Services provided by the public school district

IDEA Requires Transition Planning

Starting no later than age two years, nine months, children begin to transition from one system to the other

All Transitions End with a Beginning...

- Transition is a part of everyone's life.
- Young children experience multiple transitions in their early years
 - Hospital to home
 - Different child care and preschool settings
 - Entry into elementary school
- Most of these transitions are typical and expected or are made for family reasons

Transition at Age Three: Systems Driven

- The transitions with the most bumps are often
 - unexpected
 - not at natural or expected times, or
 - dictated by the system ~ not the family or child
- A family' s transition from Early Start does not occur at a natural time. It is dictated by law, not the needs of the family or child.

Overview of the Transition Process

- Slides 8 through 16 provide specific information about the legal requirements of transition at age three
- The remainder of the slides focus on the ways that early educators can be involved in supporting the family through the process
- Additional resources are also listed at the end of the presentation

Basic Differences Come From Different Underlying Goals

- Goal of Part C: To support families to support their children
- Goal of Part B: To support a child's access to the general curriculum

Basic Differences Between Part B & Part C of IDEA

Basic Differences Between Part B & Part C of IDEA (cont.)

The Transition Process

- Law dictates the transition process
- The intent of the law is to ensure a smooth transition to Part B with no interruption in services
- Even when transition goes smoothly, it is still a change for the child and family

Transition Steps in Early Start

Transition outcomes and steps are included on the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

Meeting About Transition

- A Transition Conference is required when the child is no older than two years, nine months old
- The conference is attended by
 - the family
 - the California Early Start service coordinator (which may be from the local regional center or infant program)
 - infant-toddler early intervention service providers and
 - the receiving local education agency (LEA) representative
- Other attendees may include friends or advocates invited by the family, a community preschool teacher/child care provider, and other agency personnel as appropriate

Transition Conference

- At the transition conference, participants discuss assessments and other information needed to determine eligibility
- An Assessment Plan is written by the LEA and signed by family 50 days before the IEP meeting
- By the child's third birthday, a meeting is scheduled to:
 - Close out the IFSP
 - Review assessment results
 - Determine eligibility for preschool special education and related services. If eligible,
 - discuss child's strengths and needs
 - develop goals on IEP
 - determine services and placement

Transition at Age Three: Issues for Families

- Timeline driven by the system and child's age, not family's needs
- There are new service providers with whom to develop relationships and trust
- New schedules may interfere with existing child care and other arrangements
- The change in personnel, services or frequency can be dramatic
- The terms (labels) used to describe the child's eligibility may be difficult for the family to hear

Early Educator Involvement

Parents and family members may not realize they can involve you in the transition process

Possible Early Educator Roles

- When a child receives care outside the home, early educators can take an active role in the transition process
- Early educators can provide critical information regarding the child's interests, strengths, learning style, and general development
- They may also provide support and continuity for the child and family

Support Through the Transition

You (and/or your program) may be the one constant in the family' s life during this transition

Moving On...Transition Tips

- Families experience many transitions
- Encourage them to use previous experiences to prepare for transitions
 - Identify the specific transition
 - Organize their thoughts
 - Gather information
 - Prepare themselves as well as their child
 - Keep the lines of communication open with new providers and early educators

What Happens If the Child Is Eligible for Part B Services?

- The child may:
 - Attend special day class in a school district preschool
 - Be included in a school district preschool, while receiving special education services
 - Receive services at home or in a child care setting
- This means:
 - The child may stay with you
 - The child may leave your program
 - The child may spend part of the day with you and part with another program

Transitioning to Part B

No matter which way the Part B services are delivered, the family and child must adjust to new people, different routines, new schedules, and possibly a new environment

How You Can Help the Adjustment

- Help the family to get all the information they need
- Make sure the family is connected to resources
- Participate on the planning team, if requested by the family
- If the child is staying with your program, provide scheduling flexibility when possible
- If the child is leaving your program, help the child and family prepare for the change by talking about and planning for the transition

Not All Children Are Eligible for Part B Services

- This may happen because:
 - Eligibility definitions change from Part C to Part B
 - Children who were delayed as infants are no longer significantly delayed
- If the family still has concerns, they can pursue therapy and/or other support outside of Part B
 - Some therapy may be covered by insurance or the family may choose to pay for services
 - This therapy or service can occur at home or at your program

Ongoing Monitoring of Development

- When a child is not eligible, this is a good time to ask the early intervention and local education agency (members of the transition team) for suggestions to continue supporting the child's development
- It may also be important to ask how to request another evaluation or assessment for eligibility from the local education agency/school district if the child does not seem to be progressing over the next year or so

How You Can Help

- Familiarize yourself with resources
- Make connections with the local Early Start Family Resource Center for information and support
- Offer information to help the family seek other services, if requested
- Encourage the family to pursue other avenues of support and services, if needed
- Continue keeping the lines of communication open with the family
- Continue to provide high-quality, individualized care

Long Term Outcome of Early Intervention

The long term outcome of early intervention is the enhanced wellbeing of families, not mourning the loss of a system they have become dependent on, but supported from many directions by people who know and care about them in their home community

- New Jersey Natural Environment Service Guideline

Specialist Resources for Families

- Health and medical service systems
 - Primary health care provider, specialists who know the child
 - California Childcare Health Program www.ucsfchildcarehealth.org
- Local special education or early intervention services
 - Regional Centers in California can be found at www.dds.ca.gov/RC/RCLookup.cfm
 - You can also call 1-800-515-BABY for local Early Start information
 - Start with your local school district for special education services or try the Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPA). Contact information by county may be found at [http://kcsos.kern.org/SpecialEd/stories/storyReader\\$112](http://kcsos.kern.org/SpecialEd/stories/storyReader$112)

Support Resources for Families

- Local Early Start Family Resource Center (FRC)
 - Staffed by families of children with special needs, FRCs offer parent-to-parent support and help families locate needed services
 - www.frcnca.org/
- Family Resource Centers are also an excellent resource for early educators

Website Resources

- The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center supports implementation of early childhood provisions of IDEA
 - www.nectac.org/topics/transition/transition.asp
- The National Early Childhood Transition Center examines factors that promote successful transitions between infant/toddler programs, preschool programs, and public school programs for children with disabilities and their families
 - www.ihdi.uky.edu/nectc/

Website Resources (cont.)

- Project STEPS is a Training and Outreach Project that enhances services provided by local agencies to young children with disabilities and their families
 - www.ihdi.uky.edu/stepsweb/
- Local Resource and Referral Agency (R&R)
 - R&Rs provide free/low-cost training in topics such as health, child development, and special needs
 - www.rrnetwork.org

For More Information

- Websites
 - Map to Inclusive Child Care: www.cainclusion.org
 - Early Start: www.dds.ca.gov/EarlyStart/
 - Eligibility for Early Start: www.dds.ca.gov/Title17/T17SectionView.cfm?Section=52022.htm
 - U.S. Department of Education IDEA website: <http://idea.ed.gov/>
- Early Childhood Special Education Handbooks are available through CDE Press, the California Department of Education's publisher: www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/rc/ap/pubcat.aspx and through Supporting Early Education Delivery Systems (SEEDS) Project www.scoe.net/SEEDS/
- Early Start products are available at no cost: www.wested.org/cd/cpei