

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


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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



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Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

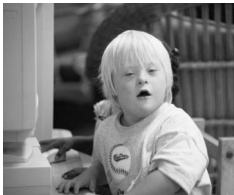
Federal legislation mandates special education for all eligible children

- 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

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IDEA Requires Transition Planning

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



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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

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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.

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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

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Basic Differences Come From Different Underlying Goals

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

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Basic Differences Between Part B & Part C of IDEA

	Part C	Part B
Ages	Birth-3 years	3-22 years
Eligibility Criteria	Also children at risk	Eligible conditions
Focus of services	Family	Child
Services available	Types and frequency of services may vary both in Parts B and C	

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


	Part C	Part B
Plans	IFSP	IEP
Location of services	Natural environment	Least restrictive environment
Service systems	Multi-agency	Education
Cost to families	Possible costs <i>Rare in California</i>	Free

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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

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Transition Steps in Early Start



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

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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


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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

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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

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Early Educator Involvement



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

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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

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Support Through the Transition

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



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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

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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

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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

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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

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**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

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**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

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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

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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

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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)

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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

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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/

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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.rnetwork.org

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For More Information

- Websites
 - Map to Inclusive Child Care: www.CAInclusiveChildCare.org/Map
 - 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

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