

## Preparing for Transition

It is exciting and scary to be planning for 0-3 services to end. This transition allows for new opportunities for both your child and family as your child is now older and you may be thinking about preschool programs or other ways to involve your child with other children his/her own age. It is also a time of change and adjustment. There may be changes in routines, environments, and schedules as well as different opportunities for you to be involved in child's learning.

Any transition, especially those involving people, require us to "let go" of those we know and to begin to know new people. This isn't always easy and becomes easier as we identify what adjustments need to happen. It is normal to feel uncertain and to have anxiety about what things will be like. Planning for and participating in transition planning helps to reduce the anxiety. Ideas that have helped families and their children prepare are listed below.

- Plan – Give yourself time to think about transition, to make decisions and to adjust to changes that will occur. Waiting until the last minute will only increase your anxiety.
- Realize that what you are feeling is normal. Your child is now older and has different needs.
- Actively participate – ask questions; share information about your child, family, what's important to you, your concerns.
- Talk – with your family, child care providers about the upcoming changes and what they might mean. Also, talk with other parents who have made the transition from 0-3 early intervention to other programs such as 3-5 early intervention (if you desire).
- Review your rights. Your service coordinator has given you information on your rights and procedural safeguards. If you need another copy, let your service coordinator know.
- Read the information that has been given to you about transition as well as any information about other programs you and your child may become involved with. Learning about transition and other programs can reduce some of the stress related to the upcoming change.
- Think about what will help your child successfully adjust to the coming changes and begin doing those things before it's time for the transition. This may include creating new experiences prior to the change that will give your child some practice. This will also help your child feel more confident and comfortable with the transition.
- Remember, you are your child's expert. You know your child better than anyone else and can advocate for him/her.

## Information Sharing Worksheet

As we plan for our meeting to talk about what happens when your child turns 3, please review and answer the following questions. These will help you provide information that is important to you to those in the 3-5 early intervention.

1. What types of things does your child enjoy learning?
2. What things are most difficult for your child to learn?
3. What are your child's favorite toys and activities?
4. How does your child get along with other children?
5. What types of things does your child not like or is afraid of?
6. How does your child seem to learn (for example, does your child need lots of help in learning new skills or does your child see it once and can do it)?
7. As you look to the future, what do you want for your child, what would you like them to do? How can the early intervention programs support you?



## Supporting Families Through the Transition Process From Infant/Toddler Early Intervention to Preschool Early Intervention

During times of transition, it is important for families to have information so you can make decisions and have a smooth and seamless process. This guide will help you plan and learn about procedures. It has timelines for when your child turns three and leaves the Infant/Toddler Early Intervention (EI) program and transitions to the Preschool EI program.

Although EI is a birth to school-age program, at age three, the state funding source changes, and as a result, your child's services and providers typically change based on their needs. Changes in services can be aligned to the transitions your child may have because of participating in PA Pre-K Counts, Head Start, child care, or other early childhood education programs. What will not change is that

your child's services will continue to meet their needs and their goals and outcomes.

As your child nears their third birthday, your Infant/Toddler EI program will help you connect with the Preschool EI program and/or other community programs so you can work together and understand similarities and differences between programs and the evaluation process.

### The Transition Process

Transition planning should begin at the first meeting with your service coordinator. Transition is a process rather than an event. It is individualized for each child and is based on your family and your child's unique circumstances and needs.

Planning for your child's transition will start the year before your child turns three. Planning is done whether you decide to continue Preschool EI services or not. At this point, your Infant/Toddler EI program and your Preschool EI program work together to identify children who are old enough to transition to a preschool program. They are also gathering information to share with you and preparing for transition meetings. At an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting, the Infant/Toddler EI team will talk with you about your child's transition to a preschool EI service and/or a community program.

Things to discuss with your service coordinator about your child's transition:

- Is your child in an early childhood education program, such as day care, child care, or Head Start? Will they continue at the same program or change at age three?
- If you have older children, did they attend an early childhood education program? If so, at what age?
- Does your child participate in activities with other children in your community? If not, would they like to participate in these activities?
- How does your child handle changes in their routine?
- What are your child's strengths, likes, and interests?
- What are your concerns as your child transitions?
- What would you want someone new to know about your child?

### The IFSP

As your child transitions, your EI team must include in the IFSP the steps to support the transition of your child. With your help, this may include steps, such as:

- Gathering information, support and guidance you need
- Preparing your child for changes in services

- Helping your child adjust to a new setting
- Sharing information on upcoming meetings and timelines

With your service coordinator, you can discuss activities that will help your child develop. These may include sports, music, dancing, story hours at the library, trips and vacations, as well as early childhood education programs.

### Transition Timelines

- Your service coordinator will talk with you about transition when your child begins to receive EI services so you know about the transition process and can plan together.
- As early as nine months but no later than 90 days, before your child's third birthday, the Infant/Toddler EI program will work with the Preschool EI program on your child's transition. With your permission, information about your child, including evaluation, assessment information and copies of your child's IFSP, will be shared with the local Preschool EI program.
- The programs will work with you to schedule a transition meeting at a place and time that works for you. The meeting will be held in your native language or other mode of communication used by your family. An interpreter can be provided if needed. At least a month before the meeting, you will receive a letter with the date and time of this transition meeting.
- If your child is first starting EI services within 45 days of their third birthday, these timelines will look different. Please talk with your EI program to find out more about what the process will look like for your child.

### The Transition Meeting

At this meeting, you, your Infant/Toddler service coordinator, and a representative from the Preschool EI program will meet to talk about the process for eligibility for the Preschool EI program. At this time, the Preschool EI representative will discuss next steps and provide information about their program. You can share information about your child's progress, your priorities, and any questions or concerns you have.

## Evaluation and Eligibility

If your child will transition to Preschool EI, it is important to understand the differences in evaluation and eligibility criteria from Infant/Toddler EI.

Because there are some differences between these two programs, your child may be eligible for Infant/Toddler EI, but not eligible for Preschool EI. When you talk with your service coordinator about transition, you can ask more about the evaluation process and what will happen next. If your child may be eligible for Preschool EI and you would like to receive services, an evaluation will occur. Some Preschool EI programs will complete a new evaluation for your child, and some may use an evaluation that has already been done by the Infant/Toddler EI program. If a new evaluation is done, this is a time to share

with the Preschool evaluation team progress your child has made, strategies you have used in teaching your child, and any concerns you have. This will help the evaluation team as they work with you in determining next steps.

If your child is eligible for Preschool EI and you choose to continue with services, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is completed prior to your child's third birthday. Preschool EI services should begin no later than 14 days after your child turns three. If your child is no longer eligible for EI services at the time of transition, the Infant/Toddler program will meet with you to discuss next steps. This meeting should include a discussion about your child's development and other community supports that your family may find helpful.

INFANT/TODDLER EI ELIGIBILITY	PRESCHOOL EI ELIGIBILITY
<p>To be eligible for the Infant/Toddler EI program, a child must have one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A diagnosis that may result in a delay</li> <li>• A developmental delay</li> <li>• Informed clinical opinion of one of the above two criteria</li> </ul>	<p>The Preschool EI program has two criteria for eligibility. A child must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have either a developmental delay or a disability as identified through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), <b>and</b></li> <li>• Be in need of special education and related services</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> A child cannot be eligible for preschool EI based only on informed clinical opinion.</p>

## In Conclusion

Communication between you and the EI team is essential. Since you know your child best, your involvement in the process at every step is important. Transition is a time to celebrate. You can find answers to questions you have and make a plan for your child's learning and growth. The EI staff who work with you and your child are a resource to guide you through transition and assist you as you make decisions about the future.

## For More Information

- Key resources that may be of interest to you as you support your child's learning and development  
[www.eita-pa.org/families/](http://www.eita-pa.org/families/)

- PA Department of Human Services Information for Children  
[www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Children/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Children/Pages/default.aspx)
- PA Department of Education information on services, programs, and information that support children and families  
[www.education.pa.gov/about/Resources/ResourcesFamilies/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.education.pa.gov/about/Resources/ResourcesFamilies/Pages/default.aspx)
- Options in PA to find child care and early learning programs  
[www.findchildcare.pa.gov/](http://www.findchildcare.pa.gov/)
- PA's federally funded parent training center  
[www.pealcenter.org/](http://www.pealcenter.org/)

## **Similarities of Early Intervention Infant Toddler and Preschool Programs**

### **Eligibility**

- Infant Toddler and Preschool EI use the same definition of developmental delay as one way to determine eligibility.
- Infant Toddler and Preschool EI use a multidisciplinary evaluation process to determine initial and ongoing eligibility.

### **Evaluation**

- All children need a determination of eligibility, the type and extent of the evaluation is an individualized decision.
- Information is gathered about both the child and family's needs.
- Families are members of the multidisciplinary team that conducts the evaluation.
- A written evaluation report must be provided to the family within timelines.
- There is a standardized, statewide format for the MDE report.
- Evaluations and assessments of the child must be conducted in the native language of the child and be conducted by qualified personnel, in a non-discriminatory manner.
- Cannot use any single measure or assessment as the sole criterion for determining whether a child is a child with a disability or determining appropriate programs or services for the child.

### **Individualized Plans**

- Infant Toddler and Preschool EI Programs require a written plan that describes for the provision of appropriate Early Intervention services to an infant/toddler or preschool child, including services to enable the family to enhance the young child's development. The plan shall be based on and responsive to the results of the evaluation.
- There is a statewide standardized Plan for infants, toddlers and preschool age children.
- Plans must be reviewed annually.
- Infant Toddler and Preschool EI require services to start as soon as possible after the completion of the plan and with parent consent and no later than 14 days from that date.
- Individualized plans Infant Toddler and Preschool EI must include the start date of services, duration, frequency, intensity, method, length, duration and location of service.

## **Services**

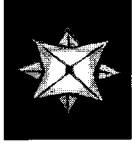
- Infant Toddler and Preschool EI programs provide similar Early Intervention services for the child and family.
- While Programs provide a list of Early Intervention services, the types of services that may be provided to the child and their family is not limited by this list.
- Services in Infant Toddler and Preschool EI Programs are designed to meet the developmental needs of the child and the family's needs related to enhancing the child's development.

## **Location of Services**

- Infant Toddler and Preschool EI Programs support providing services to children with disabilities in settings with typically developing peers to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of the child.
- Infant Toddler and Preschool EI Programs require an explanation of why services, if any; will not be provided in a natural environment (Infant/Toddler)/least restrictive environment (Preschool).
- Infant Toddler and Preschool EI Programs rely on the team, including the parents, to make the decision about where services should occur as appropriate to meet the needs of the child.

## **Program Exit**

- Infant Toddler and Preschool Programs have obligations at age three to meet in order to assist in making sure the transition is smooth and effective.
- Infant Toddler and Preschool Programs must develop interagency agreements to ensure smooth transitions. [Act 212, Section 104; Chapter 4226.77(d)]
- Infant Toddler and Preschool Programs are required to have procedures for a child to exit from Early Intervention services. [Act 212, Section 301(a)(14)]
- Infant Toddler and Preschool Programs have policies and procedures related to the transition of young children from Early Intervention services to other special education or community services.



## Helpful Information About Preschool

Can be used to develop family friendly handouts and to develop consistent messages for Providers:

### Eligibility:

Eligibility is a two-pronged decision.

- Developmental delay: (same as Infant Toddler)
  - Delay of 25% in one or more areas of development
  - 1.5 standard deviations below the mean on standardized test in one or more areas of development

[Chapter 14.101]

### OR

Diagnosed with:

- Autism
- Visual impairments, including blindness
- Hearing Impairments, including deafness
- Intellectual Disability
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Serious Emotional Disturbance
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech or Language Impairments

[\$300.8 and 300.111]

### One of the above AND

In need of special education and related service



## **Evaluation**

### Purpose of Evaluation:

Determines whether the child has a disability and needs special education and related services and to determine the extent to which the child can be involved in appropriate preschool activities. [Chapter 14.153(3) and §300.301 (b)]

## **Individualized Education Program**

### Participants: The IEP team is composed of:

- The parents of the child
- Not less than 1 regular education teacher if the child is or may be participating in the regular education environment
- Not less than 1 special education teacher or where appropriate, not less than 1 special education provider
- An agency representative who is qualified to provide or supervise specially designed instruction, is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum, and is knowledgeable about the availability of resource.
- An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of the evaluation results (may be a member of the team described above)
- Other individuals, at the parent or agency discretion who have special expertise or knowledge about the child, including related service personnel as appropriate [Chapter 14.154(b) and §300.321(a)]
- Initial IEP Team meeting for child under Part C. In the case of a child who was previously served under Part C of the Act, an invitation to the initial IEP Team meeting must, at the request of the parent, be sent to the Part C service coordinator or other representatives of the Part C system to assist with the smooth transition of services §300.321(f)

### Plan Components and Content of IEP (similar to IFSP)

- Special Considerations (vision, hearing, behavior, limited English proficiency, communication, assistive technology, transition)
- Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance
  - Developmental, academic achievement, and functional performance information on the child's strengths and needs, describing what the child can and cannot do in appropriate activities
  - How the disability affects the child's participation in appropriate activities
- Family Services
  - Family needs related to supporting their child's development
  - Services/assistance provided to assist the family in supporting their child's development
- Goals and Progress Indicators

- Measurable annual goals designed to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum and to meet other educational needs that result from the child's disability
- Description of how the child's progress toward meeting annual goals will be measured and when periodic reports on the child's progress will be provided
- Specially Designed Instruction and Program Modifications
  - modifications and accommodations to enable the child to attain goals and to be involved in and progress in appropriate activities with children without disabilities and progress in the general curriculum ie .the same curriculum as non-disabled children.
  - [§300.320]
  - Supports to program personnel, including training or materials
- Least Restrictive Environment
  - Recommended Level of Intervention and Educational Environment
  - Explanation to what extent, if any, the eligible child will not participate with non-disabled children in appropriate activities
  - [§300.320(a) (5)]
- Early Intervention Services
  - Statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services, based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable, to be provided to the child.
  - The IEP team shall recommend services and programs be provided in a regular class or regular preschool program unless the IEP team determines that the IEP cannot be implemented in a regular class or regular preschool program even with supplemental aids and services.
  - [Chapter 14.155(c)]
  - Services provided in the home may be the least restrictive Early Intervention program for eligible preschoolers
  - [Chapter 14.155(b)]

Projected start date, frequency, duration and location of services.

### **Location of Services and Supports:**

#### **Least Restrictive Environment**

- To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are nondisabled.  
[Chapter 14.102(2)(xxiv) and §300.114 ]
- Services provided in the home may be the least restrictive Early Intervention program for eligible preschoolers  
[Chapter 14.155(b)]