

Transition

Transition is one word that you will hear a lot of throughout your stay in early intervention. The dictionary defines transition as: “an act, process, or instance of changing from one state, form, activity, or place to another; a passage connecting to two themes; and passage from one position, state to another.”

In early intervention, we focus on two kinds of transitions. One is the day to day kind like going from home to the car, going into child care, changing activities and so on. This includes life events such as the birth of a baby, a move, a change in family structure, coming home from the hospital and so on. The other type relates to what happens at age 3 (remember 0-3 early intervention services end at the third birthday) or what happens when your child leaves the 0-3 early intervention system because of no longer needing early intervention services, moving or voluntary ending of early intervention services. Both types of transition are important and we address both types.

Probably the most important part of transition relates to planning and preparation. You already do a lot of planning and preparing for transitions. Think of those every day things; the routines or activities that your family does to get ready to go somewhere, to get ready for naptime or bedtime, supper, bath time and so on. These are evidences of where/how you plan and prepare for the next event. You know your child and will adjust your plans using that knowledge. We ask about these transitions and your preparations as there may be things that you are already doing in an area that will help in another area or we may be able to offer some suggestions that may make those transitions a little smoother.

Once a child has turned 2, we begin talking more specifically about planning for what will happen at age 3. We talk about your child’s present skills as well as needs, your concerns and encourage you to think about the future. We also talk together about options such as IU preschool (3 to 5 early intervention), Head Start, preschool programs or other child care programs and social opportunities for your child. It is your choice as to what happens at age 3 which may include no longer being involved with early intervention, your child no longer being eligible for early intervention and so on. We develop a plan and will hold a meeting sometime between 3-9 months prior to your child turning 3 to talk more specifically about things that need to happen for there to be a smooth transition to the next step. If you decide not to pursue anything, a plan still needs to be developed that reflects all of the discussions as well as your decision.

A similar type of planning occurs if your child is exiting early intervention services prior to turning 3 or if you are moving to a different county or state.