TRANSITION: The next step:

What happens when my child turns three?

A Guide to Transition from Early Intervention Services under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C.

Funded by the Washington State Department of Early Learning, Early Support for Infants and Toddlers Program.

Washington State Department of Early Learning

Early Support for Infants and Toddlers

What is transition?

When your child turns three, early intervention services end and new services and supports may be available. This process of change is one of the many transitions that will occur for your child and family throughout your lives.

Six to nine months before your child's third birthday, you will begin working with your family resources coordinator (FRC) and your team to plan for transition to preschool special education services or other needed services and supports. Families and service providers walk through this process together in a journey that leads to a transition meeting.

What is the purpose of a transition meeting?

During an IFSF meeting, a written transition plan will be developed by you and your early intervention team to help guide you through the transition process.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C requires a written plan for transition prior to your child's third birthday.

When do we start planning for transition?

Six to nine months before your child's third birthday:

Transition planning begins. Your FRC will facilitate contact between you and your school district or other community-based programs to begin planning for your child's transition at age three.

At least three months before your child's third birthday, a transition planning meeting will be held:

You will meet with a school district representative as part of the meeting. They will explain what will happen to determine if your child qualifies for preschool special education services.

If your child qualifies for preschool special education services, as determined by the school district, services will be provided through an Individualized Education Program (IEP)

A meeting with a school district representative will not be scheduled if you do not wish to receive preschool special education services.

What is a transition plan?

A transition plan identifies how you, your FRC, and your early intervention team will help as your child and family move beyond early intervention services at age three. The plan describes what supports, steps and services will be needed as your child enters your local school district preschool special education program or other community-based services, or leaves supports and services because your child is no longer eligible.

What's next for my child?

Developing my child's transition plan:

You and your early intervention team will work together to develop the plan. The team includes you, your FRC, people who now work with your child, other individuals you may wish to be involved and people who may be involved with your child in the future. The team will look at your child's progress and needs. The FRC coordinates the development of the transition plan.

What services may be available for my child after transition at age three?

That depends on whether your child needs preschool special education services. Your school district will determine if your child qualifies for preschool special education services. If your child is eligible, a variety of service setting options may be available, such as a community program, Head Start, Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), or a school-based, preschool special education program. Special education and related services will be provided through an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The FRC coordinates the transition plan meeting. The school district will set up a meeting to develop your child's IEP.

You may request that your FRC be invited to the IEP meeting. You can bring a friend, family members or other community member of your choice with you for support to the IEP meeting. If you have a Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) case manager or a Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) coordinator, you may wish to invite them as well. An IEP meeting must occur before your child's third birthday and an IEP must be in place by your child's third birthday. IEP meetings are scheduled annually. However, you can request an IEP meeting at any time you or school staff feels there is a need to discuss your child's program.

What happens if my child does not qualify for preschool special education services?

If your child is not eligible for preschool special education services, your FRC will work with you to identify other possible options that are available for your child, such as Head Start, ECEAP or other community programs.

What is our role in the transition process?

Tips on how you can help your child and your family make a smooth transition:

- Participate in meetings by talking about what you want for your child.
- Take notes at meetings.
- Explore resources and services.
- Keep a notebook about your child's activities and interests. Include your child's birth certificate, immunization record, medical reports, photographs, evaluations, assessments, and past IFSPs. Pictures of your child help personalize facts and information.
- What may be helpful to advocate for your child? You know her/his needs best. Know what to expect of your child and work with the school district and IEP team to obtain those services for your child.

What are my next steps after transition?

Ask if there is a family support group, local Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) or Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) in your district. Ask if the district has a family services worker, social worker, or school psychologist who could help you if you have concerns. Remember that you, as a parent, may benefit from support for yourself, as well as for your child, as your family moves through the transition process.

What other information do we need to know?

If your child is currently eligible for services from DDD, eligibility for services must be re-determined before your child turns four

years old. It is important for you to share early intervention assessments, transition information and the school district's evaluation report during this transition process with DDD. **Your consent to release this information to DDD can be obtained from the school district at the transition planning meeting**. If information to determine your child's continuing eligibility is not received, your child will be dropped from DDD services at age four.

Where can I go for more help or information?

- The Department of Early Learning Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) program directs the statewide system of IDEA Part C early intervention services.
  PHONE: 360-725-3500
  WEBSITE: www.del.wa.gov/esit
- For further information and referral to a family resources coordinator (FRC) contact:
  WithinReach (Family Health Hotline) for the name of an FRC in your local area.
  PHONE: 800-322-2588
  WEBSITE: www.withinreachwa.org
- Washington State Fathers Network at Kindering Center. Advocates for and provides support and resources for all men and their families who have children with special needs.
  PHONE: 425-653-4286
  WEBSITE: www.fathersnetwork.org
- PAVE is a statewide parent training and information center providing assistance to families who have children with disabilities, ages birth through adulthood.
  PHONE: 800-572-7368 (800-5 PARENT)
  WEBSITE: www.wapave.org
- Washington State Parent to Parent is a statewide parent network providing emotional support and information to parents who have children with disabilities or developmental delays.
  PHONE: 800-821-5927
  WEBSITE: www.arcwa.org
- The Arc of Washington State promotes the education, health, self-sufficiency, self-advocacy, inclusion, and choices of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.
  PHONE: 888-754-8798
  WEBSITE: www.arcwa.org
- The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction has a helpful website for families of children who receive special education and related services at:
  www.K12.wa.us/SpecialEd/Families/default.aspx

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Discrimination is prohibited in all programs and activities. No one shall be excluded on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, gender, age or handicap.

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