



Early Childhood
IMPROVING SCHOOL READINESS

FALL 2015 EARLY CHILDHOOD TRANSITION PROCESS

A guide for helping
families of children
with special needs
prepare for smooth
and effective
transitions



JOHN WHITE | STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION



Transition

A carefully planned process of passage of a child and family from one set of services and programs into other services and programs, or, in some cases, a transition out of service completely.

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Make sure you do everything you can to improve the quality of your child's education and his or her life!

Terms You Need to Know

ADL *Activities of Daily Life* (feeding, dressing, toileting, etc.)

APE *Adapted Physical Education* (individualized to meet child's needs)

Benchmark A general statement relating to a specific subject area

C.A. *Chronological Age* (example: 2 years old = C.A. 24 months)

CRT *Criterion-referenced testing*

DD *Developmentally Delayed*

ECE *Early Childhood Education*

ESYS *Extended School Year Services*: refers to education services provided over the summer months; designed to maintain school year services; eligibility requirements must be met

FSC *Family Service Coordinator* (case manager for families in the Part C system)

IDEA *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*

IEP *Individualized Education Program*: a document written annually to determine special education services and placement; developed jointly by family and school personnel

IFSP *Individualized Family Service Plan*: a document written annually and updated every six months by families and personnel serving infants and toddlers in the Early Intervention system

LA 4 One of Louisiana's 4-year-old PreK Programs; other programs include Title I and 8(g)

LDOE *Louisiana Department of Education*

LEA *Local Education Agency*

LRE *Least Restrictive Environment*

MDE *Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation*: used by Pupil Appraisal to determine eligibility for services

NRT *Norm-Referenced Testing*

ODR *Officially Designated Representative*: the school board employee with the authority to sign an IEP; generally includes the school principal and designee(s)

OT *Occupational Therapy*: a service for students whose fine motor, perceptual, and/or sensory integration impairments significantly interfere with learning

PAS *Pupil Appraisal Services*: school district assessment personnel

PT *Physical Therapy*: a service for students whose gross motor limitations interfere significantly with academic development

SBLC *School Building Level Committee*: a committee of faculty members and other school personnel who review referrals for school-based and special education services for school-aged children

Self-Contained Special education placement option

SP *Speech Therapy*: speech therapy is provided to students who have been evaluated and determined to have mis-articulated speech sounds; inappropriate voice and fluency disorders and/or impaired understanding or expression of their thoughts

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

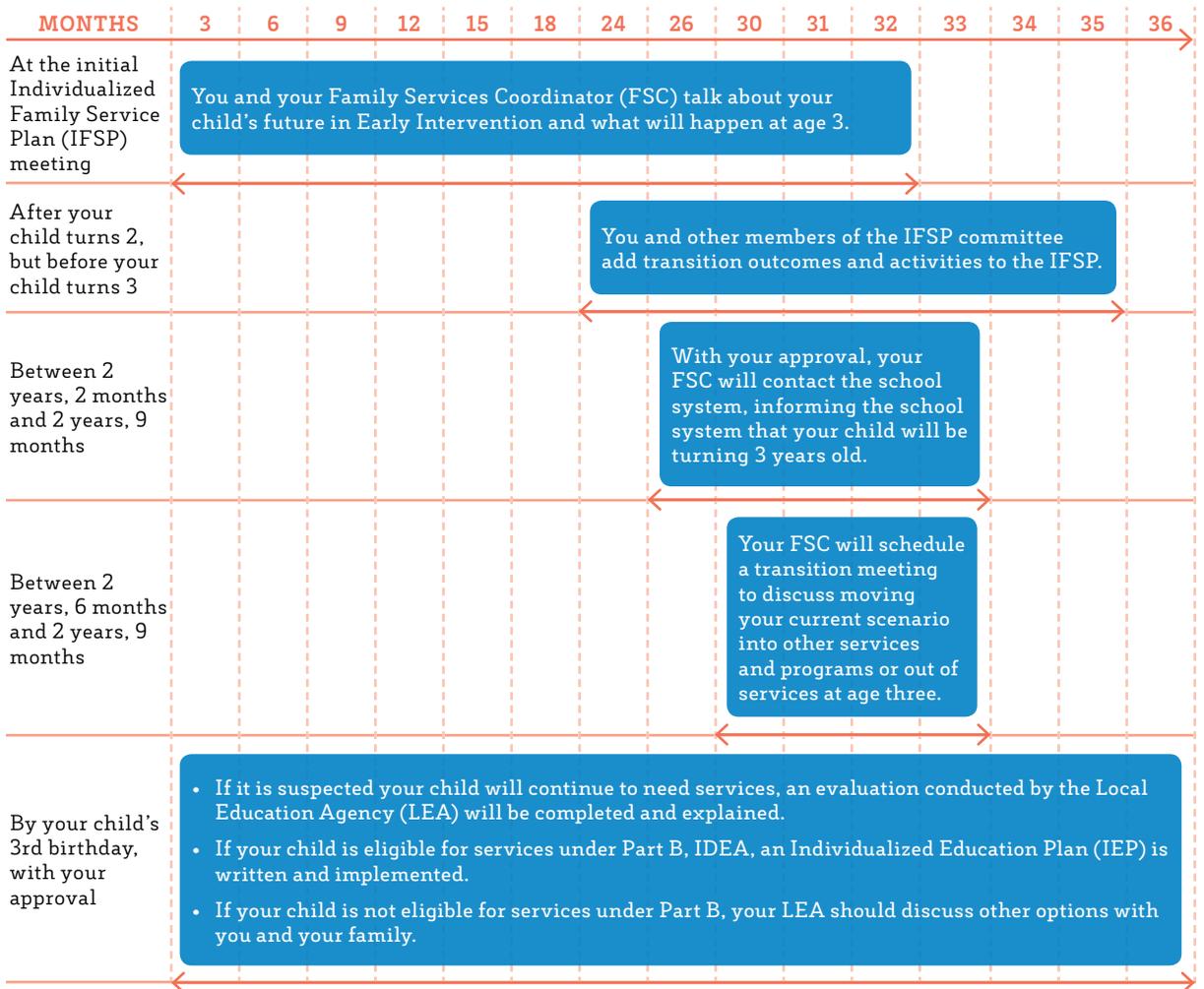
IDEA | Part C

Early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities from birth to age 3, and for their families.

IDEA | Part B

Special education and related services for children ages 3 through 21.

Timeline



Family Rights

To ensure what is best for your child, these rights are given to the family.

The right to confidentiality.

You can take comfort in knowing that information about your child and your family is private and will not be discussed with anyone unless you give permission.

The right to consent.

This means that before your child is evaluated, a placement decision is made, or before your child receives services, you must give your permission.

The right to receive services in a timely manner.

You will always receive written notice before any event happens (10 calendar days in advance). It is also your right to have the evaluation completed in a reasonable amount of time and to have an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) developed and implemented for your child by his or her 3rd birthday.

The right to discuss your child's strengths and needs.

You have the right to participate in your child's evaluation, to express your concerns and to discuss your child's progress and placement options. You are encouraged to help in developing the educational plan, as well.

The right to contact someone knowledgeable about your child and the law.

During the transition process, you may speak to any professional who has worked with your child.

You may also contact a child advocate or speak with support groups for families of children with disabilities. Ask your FSC to recommend resources.



Rights

Both federal and state laws protect the rights of children with disabilities and their families.

Even the smallest steps will move you forward.

Family Responsibilities

To ensure what is best for your child, these family responsibilities are important.

- › Give permission for your child to be tested and to receive services.
- › Give information about your child, such as the child's medical problems, likes, dislikes, etc.
- › Participate in meetings by talking about what you want for your child. Discuss any problems and always share information about how your child is doing. Remember, you know your child best; it is very important for you to attend meetings.
- › Keep scheduled appointments. If an emergency arises, call or send a message and reschedule as soon as possible. Make it your business to get the needed information to your team. Delays are not good.
- › Recognize that you are important to your child! Speak with your child about what you are doing and how you feel, and keep in touch with your child's feelings.

IFSP Individualized Family Service Plan | IDEA | Part C

- › For children and their families from birth through age 2.
- › Focus is on providing early intervention to meet the unique needs of the child and family.
- › Eligibility for children birth through age 2 is based on an evaluation (IDEA, Part C).
- › IFSP is developed by the IFSP team and is based on the evaluation and needs of the child and family. An IFSP is developed annually and reviewed every six months.
- › Statement of performance contains information about the child's present levels of motor, cognitive, communication, social/emotional and adaptive development (self-help skills).
- › Services are provided in the natural environment. This refers to providing services in a setting where the child would be if he or she did not have a disability.
- › Outcomes and activities are developed to address the needs of the child and family.
- › Outcomes are written to answer the following questions - What, Who, Where, How and When?

Be sure to begin the transition process well in advance of your child's 3rd birthday.

Check with your child's IEP Teacher or Chairperson for the ESYS screening decision.

Eligibility for IDEA, Part B

When is your child eligible for IDEA, Part B services?

If your child is receiving early intervention services and it is suspected your child will continue to need services beyond age 3, he or she will be evaluated. If eligible for IDEA, Part B services, his/her services will begin at age 3.

If your child turns 3 during the spring or summer, he or she will be screened by the teacher for Extended School Year Services (ESYS).

If your child turns 3 before the school year ends, the IEP Team will review the last Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and determine if your child is eligible for services during the summer. If eligible, you may choose to have your child receive ESYS services during the summer. If the IEP Team determines that your child is not eligible for services during the summer, services will resume when the next school year begins.

If your child turns 3 during the summer months, the IEP Team will review the IFSP and determine when services will begin. If it is determined that your child needs ESYS services to begin immediately, your child can receive services during the remainder of the summer. If the IEP Team determines that your child does not need services immediately, then services will start when the next school year begins.

If your child turns 3 during the spring or summer months and the evaluation by the school system at age 3 determines that your child is not eligible for services under Part B, your FSC and school system will discuss options for your child and provide information on available programs.



Evaluation

The local school system is responsible for determining eligibility for the IDEA, Part B services. If it is suspected that your child will continue to need services beyond age 2, this process, called a multi-disciplinary education (MDE), will be completed to determine if your child will be eligible for services under IDEA, Part B at age 3. A team of qualified professionals, along with your family, will make this determination.

An evaluation will include the following:

- › Hearing and vision screening
- › Health and medical history
- › Developmental history
- › Cognitive development
- › Adaptive development
- › Social and emotional development
- › Communication development
- › Present levels of functioning
- › Physical development



Evaluation

Procedures used by appropriate, qualified personnel to determine a child's initial and continuing eligibility under IDEA, Part B.

IEP - Individualized Education Plan

Individualized Education Program IDEA, Part B, Section 619 for children age 3 through 5

Focus is on providing the services and supports to meet the child's needs in the educational setting.

Eligibility for children ages 3 through 5 is based on an evaluation (IDEA, Part B, Section 619).

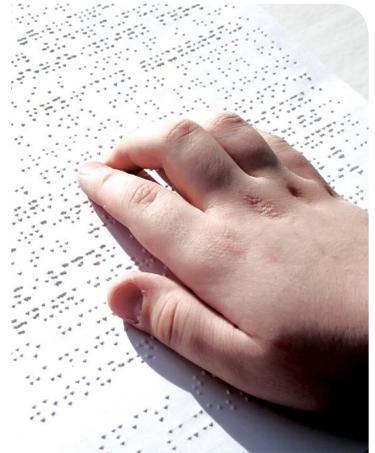
IEP is developed by the IEP team and addresses how the child's disability affects his or her progress in the educational setting. An IEP is developed annually and reviewed as needed.

Statement of performance contains information about the child's present levels, which includes how the disability affects the child's participation in appropriate activities in the educational setting.

Services are provided in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). This refers to the extent the child will participate with non-disabled children in regular activities or classes.

Measurable annual goals and objectives are developed to address the child's specific needs in reaching educational standards and benchmarks.

Description indicating special education, related services, supplemental aids and services, modifications and supports.



Commitment

To provide the best placement for children and their families so they can reach their full potential.

Our goal is that all children learn in the same setting with the necessary services and supports so that they can be successful.

Settings for Preschool Children with Disabilities



There are several programs available to preschool children ages 3 through 5 for continuing their process through the state education programs. The following outlines the programs available and gives a brief description of each.

Regular Early Childhood Program

A regular Early Childhood Program is a program that includes a majority (more than 50 percent) of nondisabled children (i.e., children not on IEPs). This category may include, but is not limited to:

- › Head Start
- › Kindergartens
- › Preschool Classes offered to an eligible prekindergarten population by the public school system
- › Private kindergartens or preschools
- › Group child development center or child care centers

Options

It is so important to make sure you provide accurate information about your child, so that he or she receives the appropriate services.

Early Childhood Special Education Setting

This may include, but is not limited to:

- › Special education classrooms in regular school buildings
- › Special education classrooms in portable buildings outside regular school buildings
- › Special education classrooms in child care facilities, hospital facilities on an outpatient basis, or other community-based settings

Home

Children receive all of their special education and related services in the principal residence of the child's family or caregiver.

Settings for Preschool Children with Disabilities [CONTINUED]

Residential Facility

This may include, but is not limited to:

- › Hospitals
- › Nursing homes
- › Public or private residential facilities

Itinerant Service Outside the Home

This option describes services for children who receive all of their special education and related services at a school, hospital facility on an outpatient basis, or other location for no more than 3 hours per week.

This option does not include services delivered at home for 3 hours or less per week. These itinerant services may be provided individually or to a small group of children in a school, hospital, or other community based setting.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- › Special Instruction
- › Speech Therapy
- › Adaptive Physical Education (APE)
- › Physical Therapy (PT)
- › Occupational Therapy (OT)
- › Assistive Technology

Any combination of service may not exceed 3 hours per week.

Separate School

This refers to children who receive all of their special education and related services outside the home, such as:

- › Public or private day schools designed for children with disabilities



Get Involved

Learn about the options available for your child within the public school system and in your community.

School Registration Requirements

What will I need for my child to enter school?

Louisiana Public Schools Registration Information:

Proof of Residency

You must provide proof of your address. The proof can be a copy of a recent utility bill with your name on it or a copy of a lease or rental agreement in your name. Checks and driver's license are generally not acceptable as proof of residency.

Birth Certificate

The birth certificate must be the official record of birth issued by the state, not a hospital record of birth. If you do not have a copy, your local school board office can provide you with information on ordering a copy from the state.

Social Security Card

Your child's card is required for registration. If the card has been lost, contact your local Social Security Office for a verification form to prove that your child has a number and apply for a replacement card.

Immunization Record (White Health Card or "Shot Card")

This card is available from your pediatrician or your local Health Unit. If your child has been unable to receive all appropriate immunizations because of medical reasons, have your doctor write a letter of explanation.

Custody Papers

If you have court papers documenting custody arrangements for your child, present these papers to your child's school during registration, so that school personnel can be aware of any mandated restrictions.



Registration

- > Proof of Residency
- > Birth Certificate
- > Social Security Card
- > Immunization Record
- > Custody Papers

Program Options for 4-Year-Olds

Head Start Programs

Head Start programs are federally-funded, child-focused programs which have the overall goal of increasing the social competence of young children in low-income families. In simple terms, this means that the focus of the program is to increase your child's everyday effectiveness in dealing with both his or her present environment and later responsibilities in school and life. Head Start addresses development in the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development areas.

Head Start services are also family-centered, because children develop within their families, and parents are respected as their primary educators and caregivers. Some Head Start programs serve 3-year-olds, as well. Your Family Service Coordinator or local public school system can provide contact information for your local Head Start centers.

Other PreK Programs

The year before your child enters kindergarten, he or she may be eligible to attend a local public school PreK program, such as LA 4, Title I, or 8(g). Contact your local school system at the beginning of the calendar year (January/February) prior to the school year for additional information and eligibility requirements.



PreK programs are important in helping your child develop skills needed for school.

Areas of Development

Play Plays with toys, shares, takes turns, plays by self, plays with others

Language Expresses wants and needs, follows directions, uses phrases, understands things said

Meals Uses spoon to eat, drinks from a cup, eats finger foods (Please tell about any food allergies or concerns)

Self-Care Dressing, toileting and other self-help needs

Thinking Understands cause and effect, matches colors, solves problems, understands “few” and “many”

Moving Walks, runs, climbs, catches rolled ball, builds block tower, makes scribble marks

Favorite Activity What does your child enjoy doing?

Medical Concerns Health issues, allergies, feeding issues

Know Your Child

Every child is individual and special.

Phone Numbers & Dates

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Family Service Coordinator

Family Doctor

School System Contact

Medicaid Office

WIC

Social Security

Insurance Contact

Families Helping Families

Teacher

School

Child Care

Head Start

Library

Hospital

Baby Sitter

Other

IMPORTANT DATES

Keep this booklet handy with all vital information and contacts you will need throughout the transition process. It is designed to be a tool to help you stay organized and informed.



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