

Transition Across the Lifespan: Using Communities of Practice to Support Parent- Professional Partnerships

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On the Schedule for Today.....

- Present the results of a partnership approach to developing a Community of Practice around transition;
- Provide examples of strategies and products, and
- Provide opportunities for dialogue across participants – what can you beg, borrow and steal!!

The History - How this Came to Be



Knowledge Banks

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Emotional Well-Being
Care Coordination
Parent Rights

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Wisdom-Based Action
You can have access to experience-based knowledge, research, and policy that can enable you to make wise decisions for your child and family.

Emotional Well-Being
You can learn about programs and resources that are especially helpful when you feel worried about your child's special needs and the impact on your family.

Care Coordination
You can advocate for care coordination which involves linking children and their families with appropriate services and resources to achieve good health.

Parent Rights
You can be a partner in creating smooth transitions when your child leaves early intervention and enters preschool.

Parent Rights

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Parent Rights

KNOWLEDGE MAP
 Knowing and Acting on Your Rights

IDEA and Its Organization
 IDEA identifies the individuals with disabilities Education Act. IDEA is the federal law that governs the provision of early intervention, preschool, and school-aged services. If your child is an infant/toddler (birth to three), Part C of IDEA entitles you and your child to early intervention services. If your child is a preschooler (three to six) or school-aged (six through 21), Part B gives your child a right to a free appropriate public education.

Purposes of Part C

- enhance children's development
- maximize their potential for developmental delay
- maximize their ability to live independently
- enhance families' capacities to meet their children's needs
- enhance state and local capacities to meet these goals (20 U.S.C. Sec. 1437)

Parent's role in partnership with educators

- be involved with professionals in carrying out these purposes (U.S.C. Sec. 1438)
- be active in the entire process related to their child's education, the "cooperative process" being the "core" of IDEA.

You can organize your and your child's rights and your questions about them according to IDEA's six principles, as we describe them below:

- Zero Reject** – Under Part B, ages 6-21, no child may be excluded from school if the child qualifies to receive IDEA benefits; under Part C, birth to three, a child has no such right but instead must meet certain eligibility requirements that are set by states.
 - How do I learn whether my daughter has a right to early intervention?
 - What do I do if my son's pediatrician tells me that there is an agency that does "child find" but the agency has not contacted me?
 - If the early intervention program in my community does not accept my son, what steps I should I take to enroll him?
 - If a center-based program accepts my child and later terminates my daughter's enrollment, what steps should I take to learn why it terminated her enrollment and how I can challenge the decision?
 - What do I do if a program says it does not have the capacity to serve her because of the extent of her disability?
- Needless Reentry Evaluations** – Once an early intervention program accepts my child for services, the program has to be fair in evaluating my child for services; the program must determine what my child needs by using techniques that do not discriminate in any way.
 - How do I know if I have a choice in the evaluations and follow-up decisions being made about my child's education?
 - How do I justify a re-evaluation if I think my son has changed significantly and it is not yet time for the annual re-evaluation?
 - How do I persuade the agency to use a process yields the best returns for my family and my son?
 - What recourse do I have if I believe the agency's evaluation is not sufficiently multi-disciplinary or contains inaccurate information about my son and my family?
- Appropriate Education** – Once a program accepts my child, the program has to benefit my child that means it must provide services that carry out the purposes Congress declared.
 - What should I do if the services offered do not reflect the services my daughter needs, as identified by her evaluations?
 - What's the role of the service coordinator and how do I find out if that person is qualified and doing the job properly?
 - What should I do if my child needs some services and the Part C program has not yet completed all of the evaluations but has enough information to start offering some benefits to my child?
 - How should I approach the agency if I believe my daughter is not making progress toward the outcomes identified in her IF SP?
 - My daughter is turning 3. What steps do I need to take to learn my rights and make the best decisions in her transition planning meeting?
- Least Restrictive Environment** – IDEA favors educating my child in the same places and programs where children without disabilities receive their education to the maximum extent

Transition Knowledge Bank

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Transition Knowledge Bank

Knowing and Acting on Your Rights:
 Planning Transition from Early Intervention to Preschool

"My daughter is turning 3. What steps do I need to take to learn my rights and make the best decisions in her transition planning meeting?"

Share your experiences!

- Submit your story
- Join our Community of Practice
- Comment on our blog

Topic

When your child's transition at age 3 from early intervention to preschool, big changes occur both for your child and for your family. This Knowledge Bank will guide you through the process in terms of steps you can take to be an active decision-maker before the transition planning conference, during the conference, and in follow-up after the conference.

"Videos provided by SpecialQuest and The Family Infant Toddler Program/The Special Education Office Public Education Department of New Mexico."

Bottom Line

- Recognize that transition from early intervention to preschool is a process rather than an event. Attend and participate actively at every step along the way. Don't be afraid to ask lots of questions.
 - PC Professional talks about transition process (35)
 - Mac Version of Professional talks about transition process (35)
- Consider the short and long-term outcomes that you envision for your child and your family. This will help define more clearly what services and supports your child and your family may need in the school setting in order to reach future goals.

Experienced Based Knowledge



Experience-based knowledge

Below you can see a video about transition planning and hear directly from families and professionals, in English or Spanish. *Next Steps Video provided by The Family Infant Toddler Program The Special Education Office Public Education Department of New Mexico.*

Next Steps Video (3:40)



[View Next Steps Spanish PC Version \(3:40\)](#)
[View Next Steps Spanish Mac Version \(3:40\)](#)

You can read families' perspectives from families contained in the Beach Center's Community of Practice. You can also learn about families' experiences with transition planning by reading 4 family stories (1 story available in both Spanish and English) in which personal experiences are shared. Many state departments of education have developed guides that merge families' and professionals' perspectives and offer advice on successful transitions. These booklets describe the steps you can take to plan the transition planning conference, participate within the conference, and follow-up after the conference.



Family Stories

Parents Speak Out: Family stories dealing with transition planning.

- Ethan and Adam**
 Two mothers describe some of their transition experiences – dealing with an unexpected diagnosis, preparing for the new preschool routine, and switching from a program in which relationships were rocky. Although the challenges were different, they both found successful resolutions.
- Sienna**
 Sienna's mother offers the encouragement to always ask questions to get the information you need. She shares what she did that lead to transition success.
- Jose's transition**
 José's mother shares her surprise when José quickly adjusted to preschool on the first day. She had great support from Early Head Start and is delighted that José's is now ready for kindergarten.
- Transición de José (Spanish)**
 La mamá de José habla de su sorpresa cuando José se acomodó pronto a su clase preescolar el primer día. Ella tendría apoyo mayor desde Early Head Start y está muy contenta porque José está listo para su primer año de escuela.
- Emma and Zoe**
 Nancy Peeler shares experiences related to the transition planning and implementation for her two daughters, Emma and Zoe. She provides in-depth tips of how to make this process both successful and satisfying.

Sample Parent Story – by Nancy 😊

PARENTS SPEAK OUT

A Tale of Two Transitions: Emma and Zoe

By Nancy Peeler

I have two children, Emma and Zoe, both participated in early interventions, at different rates and at different times. The two rates and somewhat early intervention means were VERY different, and we had some very good experiences, and some experiences that could definitely be improved. In the end, we learned a lot as parents and have several aspects of that learning shared in one guide name through school. I would like to share one transition success with you, in the hopes that it may be of use to you, too, as your children grow and learn.

Emma was enrolled in early intervention at 18 months in 1975. We had a great service coordinator, who worked closely with us to help us navigate what we were already doing to support Emma's development. She also suggested us to explore and add other strategies and services. I am so grateful for the successful early intervention experience we had, as they went far in preparing us for the future! They helped us learn to focus on the positive and possible, and what we could do to make that happen.

Emma did well in early intervention and made some great gains, but we were still concerned about her development as she approached her 3rd birthday. We knew early intervention was ending. Because we had some friends who were special education teachers, we had some idea of what was next. But we clearly needed some information. It was next – was we going to lose the support that we relied so much? What if Emma didn't qualify? What if we didn't like the school? What do you mean, put a three-year-old on a bus? What if...??

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Other Resources.....

Because policies vary from state to state, determine if your state or local program has specific guidelines that are different from the ones in these booklets.

- "Step Ahead at Age 3. A Guide for Families in Alaska"
- "The Early Childhood Transition Process" (Louisiana)
- "Best Practices in Early Childhood Transition from Massachusetts"
- Más Allá De eci (Texas)



Research



Research

A hot off-the-press Early Childhood Transition Literature Review summarizes research findings related to planning for transition from early intervention to preschool.

A study conducted in 2000 followed 22 families through the transition planning process and identified important themes. Get action steps from our Planning for Transition Research Highlight. Based on the study, the researchers prepared six booklets for parents.

Another study conducted in 2007 collected perspectives on transition strategies from professionals, administrators, faculty, researchers, and families. Learn about their findings and related action steps in Perspectives on Planning Transition Research Highlight.

You can hear the senior researcher, Beth Roux, and a parent advisor, Nancy Praeger, summarize the bottom line of the research and how it can help you make wise decisions. If you prefer a written format, you can read the Research Transcript of this interview.

- Hear researcher and parent PC Version
- Hear researcher and parent Mac Version



RESEARCH TRANSCRIPT

Transition from Early Intervention to Preschool Research and Application

Beth
I think one of the things that families probably don't recognize that becomes clear after that we've gone through the transition process is that you have to start thinking about things early enough to prepare both you and your child. So having time to look at, "What are the options for my child? What's going to happen with my child at age three?" The answer, going through it, was to parents that administrators, to think on that information over time, and to be able to choose back over time to ask questions.

Nancy
I agree with Beth that it's really important to take some time to think about what it is that you want for your child and not of thinking ahead to, "What are you desiring for your child? Are you thinking beyond preschool? Are you thinking that you want your child in the kindergarten or even school that your other children or their cousins or their neighbors go to, and what does that mean?" And even looking further down the road, you know, "What is it that you are hoping that is going to be happening for your child in their life," and go back and think about how you lay that foundation for that to happen as a way that you want to. I think that that's really crucial to take that time to think ahead when you're going so young so that confidence you are not just thinking about it on the spot, you have had some time to sort of think through it.



Sample Paper

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

Perspectives on Planning Transition

Roux, B., Jones, C.T., & Swadlow, S.B. (2007). Strategies for supporting transitions of young children with special needs and their families. *Journal of Early Intervention, 30*(1), 1-18.

BOTTOM LINE

Professionals, administrators, faculty, researchers, and families reported the strategies they recommended for successful transition. The two most important strategies are interagency collaboration and effective transition practices.



ACTION STEPS

When your child turns 2 years old, ask his early intervention staff to tell you how they prepare parents to be partners in planning the transition. Here are some questions to ask:

- How do you typically prepare families to plan before the transition conference, to participate during the conference, and to follow-up after the conference?
- What state and local policies do we need to follow? Please let me have a copy of them so tell me where I can find a copy?
- Is there a transition planning specialist? Please give me the person's name and tell me what he or she will do.
- What other agencies are involved in transitions? Please identify them and the key contact person in each agency?
- Will you have interagency meetings about transition within the next year? Are the meetings open to families? Please tell me when and where they are, and what I may expect if I attend.
- In what ways do your services match up with the services provided by my child's state agency or school? Please give me some examples of how you and I can plan to continue my child's services.
- How can I be an effective partner before and during my child's transition planning meeting? Please tell me what things other families have done to be effective.
- How can I learn about preschool programs my child might attend? Please tell me how other parents have learned about preschool programs.
- How can all of us work together to make transition successful? Please tell me what other parents did to be good partners.
- Is there information about my child's disability that I should and so that I can be an effective transition partner? Please share the information with me.
- In what other ways might I learn about transition and being a good partner? Please tell me about summertime or neighborhood activities, as well as parent support groups.

KEY FINDINGS

Professionals, administrators, faculty, researchers, and families identified two major strategies for effective transitions: interagency collaboration and effective practices.

The researchers involved in this study are associated with the National Centre for Early Childhood Transition www.nccet.org. This website is rich with relevant resources.

Research

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

Planning for Transition

Hansen, M.J., Berkman, P.J., Hove, E., Marquet, J., Seidell, S.R., Grog, D., & Bassman, E. (2000). Entering preschool: Family and professional experiences in the transition process. *Journal of Early Intervention, 21*(2), 179-203.

BOTTOM LINE

Through interviews with families and professionals, observations of their transition planning meetings, and analyses of their transition planning documents, researchers identified six themes:

1. Transition is an event, not a process
2. The effect on families and children of transitioning from one system to another
3. The importance of communicating and exchanging information
4. The limitations on family choices
5. The impact of the child's characteristics and abilities for preschool on making decisions
6. The factors that facilitate successful transition experiences

Twenty-two families and the professionals who worked with them throughout the transition process were the subjects of this research.

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A study conducted in 2000 followed 22 families through the transition planning process and identified important themes. Get action steps from our [Planning for Transition Research Highlight](#). Based on the study, the researchers prepared six booklets for parents.

Policy

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Policy

Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) authorizes state and local programs for children from birth to age 3. Part B of the law authorizes programs for children and youth ages 3 to 21. It can be helpful for you to distinguish the requirements for Part C from those of Part B. The Comparison of IDEA Part C and Part B Policy Advisory provides a comparison and contrast on 9 criteria.

Our Parents' Rights and Roles Policy Advisory describes IDEA's requirements related to transition planning for children leaving early intervention and entering preschool, as well as IDEA's requirements on the content of the IEP and the related services provided through Part B programs. More detailed information is available in a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Turning Three" which is largely based on IDEA with some references to Massachusetts state law.

Only a few court decisions address transition from early intervention to preschool. They involve the continuation of services and the preschool's liability if it does not act timely to provide services. Check out Court Decisions in Planning for Transition to learn about these court decisions and actions you can take if you are not satisfied with the IEP for your child's preschool program.

Four R's: Remark, Recall, Reason, Response

The Four R's synthesizes the information in the Knowledge Bank and provides guidance in how to reply to comments that parents might hear from educators during transition planning. This tool was developed from discussion contents of the Early Childhood Family Support Community of Practice (ECFSCoP) and a related wiki created by CoP



The **Remark** is an example of what parents might hear from educators during school meetings.



The **Recall** the Law section is a quote from or explanation of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) that addresses the Remark.



The **Reason** explains the rationale used to create the Response.



The **Response** is a possible reply to the Remark that the parent or education advocate can make. Please consider it one example. It may be just the opening statement on which to build.

The 4 R's in Action



The Remark:

"We don't have an aide (or service or equipment item, etc.) for your child, although we agree that it's a good idea. Our budget is really tight and we just can't afford it."



Recall the Law:

The school district must provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for children regardless of cost or funding issues. The school is required to identify building resources to meet the students' needs. "Special education means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability." 300.39(a)



The Reason:

Thinking of supports as only paraprofessionals or aides limits the possibility of other school staff or peers providing help. A willing custodian, librarian, or older student could provide effective support. You can make suggestions for creative solutions, but remember that this is the school's responsibility. You do not have to raise funds for a needed service.



The Response:

- "I can appreciate the dilemma that you face in these times when money is tight, but my child needs support. Is there someone who could serve as an aide for at least a part of the day?"
- "Could we consider someone else in the building, a custodian, librarian, another student, or a volunteer to work with my child? We can meet in X number of weeks to evaluate the benefits of this option and make further decisions then."
- "It's really a matter of prioritizing the money that the district does have, and for our conversation today, the issue isn't about money. It's about my child's need for an aide. Since we agree that my child needs an aide, funds need to be found to pay for one. Could that be considered when the school plans its budget for next year?"

Sample Policy Advisory

POLICY ADVISORY

Comparison of IDEA Part C and Part B

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POLICY ADVISORY-1

Comparison of IDEA Part C and Part B

	Early Intervention Program—Part C	Prevalent Special Education Program—Part B
Age:	Child ages designated by state—Children, ages birth to three years of age	State Dept. of Education—Children, ages three through twenty-one years
Eligibility Criteria—does IDEA have an MIECHV waiver?	Early intervention services must be provided to: • Children experiencing developmental delay, or • Children with a condition that is highly likely to result in developmental delay, and by reason thereof, need early intervention.	Special education must be provided to children who fit 1 or more of the following categories of disability: • mental retardation, • a hearing impairment (including deafness), • a speech or language impairment, • a visual impairment (including blindness), • a serious emotional disturbance (defined in no less part as emotional disturbance), • an orthopedic impairment, • autism, • traumatic brain injury, • an other health impairment, • a specific learning disability, • deaf-blindness, or • multiple disabilities and by reason thereof, need special education.
Eligibility Criteria—does IDEA have an MIECHV waiver or other waiver?	Early intervention services may (at the option of the state) be extended to: • Children who are at risk of developmental delay	Special education may (at the option of the state) be extended to: • Children age 3-9 (or some part of that age group) who experience developmental delay
Individualized Plan Available Services	Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)	Individualized education program (IEP)
	Early intervention services for child and family to meet the developmental needs of the child and increase the family's ability to meet the needs of that child (except as limited in regulations)	Special education and related services—determined appropriate to meet the educational needs of the child (in examples of services listed in comment, and that enable the child—to the maximum extent possible—to participate in the

Time to Chat

- How might you use this example in developing your own CoP?
- What strategies can we use to better connect families, researchers and other professionals in understanding and using evidence based practice?
- Other questions, thoughts, comments?