

# Early Childhood Transitions in North Carolina:

A Parent's Guide to the  
Infant-Toddler  
and  
Preschool Programs



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## Dear Parent,

Congratulations on your child's progress through the North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program (ITP). We have provided this booklet to help you be a successful partner in the planning for your child's transition from your current enrollment in the Infant-Toddler Program to your child's possible enrollment in the Preschool Program, or within other community programs and services.

The transition process has a standard set of procedures, but it is designed to be flexible and responsive to individual families. We understand that parents have individual preferences for how, when, and with whom they plan. You can decide how you wish to participate in the transition process.

We understand that everyone's feelings, wishes, and reactions are unique and based on their own culture, language, experiences, and situations. Your family has its own practices and beliefs, which will be respected by the service providers on your child's transition planning team.

We also know that families communicate in many languages and styles, and parents need information that allows them to understand their choices. This process acknowledges the variety of languages used by children and their families. You have the right to ask for interpreters and translators and to involve advocates and cultural mediators.

The service providers you work with will explain and give you choices about how to prepare for, make, and review changes as part of the transition process. You should feel comfortable with providers and satisfied with services. You have rights protected by law and have choices about how to best proceed for you and your child.

If you have any questions or concerns about anything in this booklet, or about your child's transition, please address these with the members of your child's transition team.



# Early Childhood Transitions in North Carolina

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# Introduction

Transition means change. It happens in everyone's life in many different ways. Some of us look forward to change, while others don't like it. Either way, change is a part of life.

Transition in early intervention services means going from one program to another, such as:

- from the hospital to your home, or
- from infant-toddler services to preschool services, or
- from preschool services to kindergarten.

These mark what may be the first of many transitions, including educational transitions. They reflect the end of one service and the beginning of another.

Transition planning is an ongoing process and happens through discussions and planning meetings with you and your Early Intervention Service Coordinator (EISC) before your child turns three. The transition of your child on the third birthday involves new providers or teachers, different settings, and a change in the funding sources that support your child's services.

Transition planning activities include:

- discussions and information gathering about options for future placement, services, and supports in your community;
- help in preparing you and your child for changes in services; and
- providing information about your child (such as evaluation and assessment reports and IFSPs), with your written consent, to other service providers.

You are the expert on your child. Your active participation in the transition process will guide decisions about your child's services and programs. This handbook has been written to support and guide you at each step of the transition process. At some time in the future, you may share your copy of this handbook with another parent or family member of a young child. Hopefully, you will be able to share your successful transition experiences with this person, too!



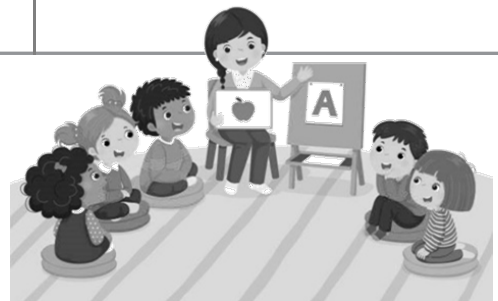
# Comparison of the NC Infant-Toddler Program and the Preschool Program

There are similarities and differences between the Infant-Toddler Program (Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA]) and the Preschool Program (Part B of IDEA). The following is a brief comparison of the two programs. If you have further questions, please discuss them with your Early Intervention Service Coordinator (EISC) and/or the Preschool Coordinator with your local school system.

|                          | North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program (Part C)  | North Carolina Preschool Program (Part B)  |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| <b>State Lead Agency</b> | Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child and Family Well-Being, Early Intervention Section  | North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Office of Exceptional Children  |
| <b>Local Lead Agency</b> | Children’s Developmental Services Agency (CDSA)   | Public School Unit (PSU) also known as the Local Education Agency (LEA), local school system   |
| <b>Ages Served</b>       | Children, ages birth to three years old, with special needs.  | Children, ages three to five years old, with disabilities. Five-year-olds who are eligible for kindergarten are not served through the Preschool Program.  |
| <b>Eligibility</b>       | <p>Eligibility is based on evaluation and assessment results. A child must meet one of the two following eligibility categories:</p> <p><b>Developmental Delay</b> – A child is considered to have a developmental delay if he or she is considerably behind other children of the same age in one or more of the five areas of development (cognitive, communication, physical, social-emotional, and adaptive).</p> <p><b>Established Conditions</b> – A child is considered to have an established condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay. Examples include genetic disorders, neurological disorders, severe prematurity, vision impairment, hearing loss, and autism.</p> | <p>Eligibility is based on observation, screening, and evaluation results. Results are presented to an IEP team. IEP stands for Individual Education Program. You are an important member of this team. Eligibility categories include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Developmental Delay</li> <li>♦ Autism Spectrum Disorder</li> <li>♦ Deaf-Blindness</li> <li>♦ Deafness</li> <li>♦ Hearing Impairment (Hard of Hearing)</li> <li>♦ Other Health Impairment</li> <li>♦ Orthopedic impairment</li> <li>♦ Speech or Language Impairment</li> <li>♦ Visual Impairment, including Blindness</li> <li>♦ Traumatic Brain-Injury</li> <li>♦ Serious Emotional Disability</li> <li>♦ Multiple Disabilities</li> <li>♦ Intellectual Disability</li> <li>♦ Specific Learning Disability</li> </ul> |



|                           | North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program (Part C)   | North Carolina Preschool Program (Part B)  |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Focus</b>              | The North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program focuses on meeting the needs of both your child and family. The Infant-Toddler Program offers a variety of early intervention services to help young children ages birth to three years old who have special needs. The Infant-Toddler Program strives to educate families on how to best meet each child's needs.   | The North Carolina Preschool Program focuses on your child's educational needs. The North Carolina Preschool Program offers a variety of services to help young children ages three to five years. The Preschool Program strives to educate the child to enable him or her to participate in age appropriate and/or developmentally appropriate daily activities.  |
| <b>Available Services</b> | <p>Infant-Toddler Program services are available to eligible children and their families. Services must be provided in a natural environment.</p> <p>Infant-Toddler Program services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Assistive technology services and devices</li> <li>◆ Audiological services</li> <li>◆ Service coordination</li> <li>◆ Family training, counseling, and home visits</li> <li>◆ Health services</li> <li>◆ Medical services</li> <li>◆ Nursing services</li> <li>◆ Nutrition services</li> <li>◆ Occupational therapy</li> <li>◆ Physical therapy</li> <li>◆ Psychological services</li> <li>◆ Respite services</li> <li>◆ Sign language and cued language services</li> <li>◆ Social work services</li> <li>◆ Special Instruction (also known as Community Based Rehabilitative Services)</li> <li>◆ Speech-language therapy</li> <li>◆ Transportation</li> <li>◆ Vision services</li> </ul> | <p>Special Education and Related Services Preschool Programs are available to children who are eligible for special education and related services as appropriate. Services should be provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE) based on the child's unique needs.</p> <p>Preschool Program services may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Specially-Designed instruction in areas of need.</li> <li>◆ Related services such as:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Audiology</li> <li>▪ Counseling</li> <li>▪ Interpreting</li> <li>▪ Medical services for evaluation purposes</li> <li>▪ Occupational therapy</li> <li>▪ Orientation and mobility</li> <li>▪ Physical therapy</li> <li>▪ School nurse</li> <li>▪ Social work</li> <li>▪ Speech-language therapy</li> <li>▪ Transportation</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |



|                               | <b>North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program<br/>(Part C)</b>   | <b>North Carolina Preschool Program<br/>(Part B)</b>  |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Type of Plan Used</b>      | <p>The North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program uses the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). The IFSP team, with you as a member, will decide what outcomes you want on the IFSP.</p> <p><b>The IFSP will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be responsive to your family’s concerns, resources, and priorities;</li> <li>• set outcomes for the functional needs of your child and family;</li> <li>• list the services your child and family need to assist with achieving the established outcomes;</li> <li>• be discussed and written in your family’s preferred language and way of communicating;</li> <li>• be approved by your family before implementation;</li> <li>• be supportive of your family’s values; and</li> <li>• be reviewed at least every six months.</li> </ul> | <p>The PSU will develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The Preschool IEP team, with you as a member, will decide what education goals will be on the IEP.</p> <p><b>The IEP will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reflect your child’s educational, developmental, and functional needs through annual goals;</li> <li>• specify the services your child will receive, for how long, and how often;</li> <li>• provide services in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), which for preschoolers is the natural environment; and</li> <li>• be written for one year, reviewed at least annually, and revised as appropriate.</li> </ul>        |
| <b>Service Delivery Model</b> | <p>Participation in the North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program is voluntary.</p> <p>Your main contact for services is your Early Intervention Service Coordinator (EISC) from your local Children’s Developmental Services Agency (CDSA).</p> <p>Planning is done before and during IFSP development. You, your EISC, and other service providers on your IFSP team decide what services are needed, who will provide the services, and where they will be provided.</p> <p>A variety of local programs and professionals can be used to provide needed services. These may be in the home, in community settings, or in other natural environments where children without special needs participate. Service options may vary from community to community.</p>  | <p>Participation in the North Carolina Preschool Program is voluntary.</p> <p>Your main contact for services is your child’s teacher or therapist employed by your local school district.</p> <p>Planning is done at the IEP meeting, where you are considered a team member.</p> <p>Special education and related services are coordinated through the PSU.</p> <p>During the IEP meeting, annual goals are developed based upon multiple sources of data including the child’s evaluation and present level of performance.</p> <p>After the goals are developed, the team determines services to be delivered, including where and how long services will be provided.</p> |



|  | North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program (Part C)  | North Carolina Preschool Program (Part B)  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Service Delivery Model</b> (continued)</p> | <p>All children must exit the North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program by age three. Your Early Intervention Service Coordinator (EISC) will work together with you to transition to the services and supports which meet your child’s needs. Your child may be eligible for Preschool Program services coordinated by the Public School Unit (PSU).</p> <p>Other services that your child may participate in, such as Head Start, regular preschool, etc., will be discussed with you during the transition planning process.</p> <p>Care Management for At-Risk Children (CMARC) through your local health department may be able to assist you in coordinating services for you and your child beyond the Infant- Toddler Program. You may discuss this with your EISC.</p> | <p>At age three, children who are eligible will move into the Preschool Program coordinated by the Public School Unit (PSU).</p> <p>The PSU will have a variety of service options available for your child. These options will include home-based, school-based, or itinerant (traveling teachers) services.</p> <p>The main contact for continued services or a change in services will be your child’s teacher.</p> <p>Continued special education services are available as your child grows older; however, eligibility requirements must be met.</p> <p>All decisions about services are made by the IEP team. You are a member of the team.</p> |
| <p><b>Cost of Service</b></p>                    | <p>Parents may be asked to pay for some services on a sliding fee scale. Your EISC can provide information about payment for services.</p> <p>The following Infant-Toddler Program services must be provided at no cost to your family:<br/>                     child identification and screening, service coordination, developmental evaluations and assessments, development and review of the IFSP, and activities related to making sure that your rights are protected.</p>   | <p>Services on the IEP are provided at no cost to the family. Under Federal law, this is called FAPE: Free Appropriate Public Education.</p>   |



**Child Find:** The Infant-Toddler Program is required to send limited information about enrolled children (your child’s name and date of birth, along with your family’s name, address, email address, and phone number) to public school personnel responsible for child find. Only the IEP team can determine eligibility for Preschool Program services.

## Rights and Responsibilities as a Parent or Guardian Under IDEA Part B Preschool Services

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) provides you, as a parent or guardian of a child with a disability, with certain rights in regard to obtaining and continuing services for your child. Many of these rights are similar to those you have with the Infant-Toddler Program (IDEA-Part C). If you have been receiving services through the Infant-Toddler Program, a transition meeting will be held as early as nine months before, but no later than 90 days before your child's third birthday to discuss possible service options and goals.

### **In brief, your rights under IDEA Part B are:**

#### **Evaluation**

If you believe that your child has a disability, your child can be evaluated at no cost to you to determine eligibility for services.

#### **Written Consent**

You must give your informed written consent before your child is evaluated and/or receives special education services.

#### **Written Notice**

You must be notified in writing before any action is taken that may change your child's education or IEP.

#### **Confidentiality of Information**

The information stored and used by the PSU about your child will be kept confidential and made available to you on request. This information is stored and released in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974.

#### **Due Process**

It is the intent of the PSU to provide appropriate services to your child and resolve any disagreements at the local level. However, if you disagree with your child's identification, evaluation, or provision of services, contact your PSU's Director of Exceptional Children which can be found at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/office-early-learning/preschool>. \*He or she will give you a copy of [Parents Rights and Responsibilities in Special Education](#), which will explain your child's educational rights and the procedural safeguards guaranteed to you as a parent or guardian.



# Steps for Transition from the Infant-Toddler Program to Special Education and Related Services in the Preschool Program

From age two to three, there are important times when meetings should happen so your child's early intervention services and supports are not disrupted.

## Step 1

### Transition Planning

Shortly after your child's second birthday, you and your Early Intervention Service Coordinator (EISC) will begin working on a transition plan. During this IFSP meeting you and your child's team will review your child's outcomes on the IFSP, including transition planning activities; share information about your family's concerns and priorities; and talk about the range of program options, including Part B Preschool Program, that may be available to your family and child at the age of three (see page 11, "*What Options Should You Consider?*").

### Notification and Referral to the PSU

The Infant-Toddler Program may notify the PSU for Special Education and Related Services in the Preschool Program as early as nine months before a child's third birthday to begin the process for determining eligibility for the Preschool Program. Other than for Child Find notification, written authorization from the parent is required to make any referrals. This includes the sending of the IFSP, evaluation results, ITP services, etc. to the PSU and other community programs the family chooses. Upon receipt of the notification, the PSU will contact you to discuss potential eligibility for Part B services and provide you with a copy of the most current *Parents Rights and Responsibilities in Special Education*. If your child is three years or older you may refer your child directly to the PSU if you suspect your child may have a disability.

To find your state and local preschool exceptional children's program contact, you may go to: <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/exceptional-children/early-childhood-preschool>. Select IDEA Part B 619 Program Resources and Updates; then [Local Preschool Coordinator Contact List](#); and then LEA Preschool EC Coordinators.

My PSU is \_\_\_\_\_.

## Step 2

### Transition Planning Conference

As early as nine months before your child's third birthday, but no later than three months (90 days) before your child's third birthday, a transition planning conference will be held with you, your EISC, your current service providers, and others as requested by the parents who may be working with your child and family after your child turns three. If your child is potentially eligible for Special Education and related services in the Part B Preschool Program, a representative from the PSU will be invited to the conference, with your permission.

During this conference to discuss any services the child may need upon exiting the Infant-Toddler Program, you may be asked to give consent for your child to receive certain evaluations or assessments by the PSU. This will aid in determining your child's eligibility for Part B Preschool Services and other related services.

## Step 3

### **Evaluation for a Suspected Disability**

Before eligibility can be determined by the PSU, an individualized multi-disciplinary evaluation must be conducted in your child's native language or way of communicating. The purpose of this multi-disciplinary evaluation is to decide whether your child has a disability that affects his or her learning. Evaluation information that is already available must be current and relevant to be used by the IEP team for decision making. Any information you can provide regarding your child's medical, educational, or social history may be helpful. The PSU may request you to sign a consent to release information if you do not have copies available. Please provide any relevant information prior to the scheduled meeting.

Any needed evaluations for your child will be completed by a multi-disciplinary team.

A variety of assessment tools, strategies, and techniques are required to gather information to establish your child's eligibility and services.

After the evaluations have been completed, a written report will be given to you. This report will include the evaluation results and recommendations, which should be explained to you in a way that you will understand.

## Step 4

### **Part B Eligibility Determination**

After the evaluations have been completed, an IEP Team meeting will be scheduled to determine your child's eligibility for Special Education and Related Services in the Preschool Program. You will be contacted to meet with the IEP team of which you are a member.

If your child is eligible for Special Education and Related Services in the Preschool Program, an IEP and placement decision will be made. However, services will begin on your child's third birthday, unless your child turns three when school is not in session.

If your child is not found eligible to receive Special Education and Related Services in the Preschool Program, the IEP team may suggest other possible service options for your child.

### **Who Will Attend the IEP Meeting?**

You are an important member of the IEP team and should attend the IEP meeting. There are required members that must attend, but other providers can also be invited.

Required IEP Team Members:

1. a PSU representative who may be the supervisor of special education, preschool coordinator, the principal, or another designee, who is able to provide or supervise the provision of special education and to commit financial resources;
2. a teacher qualified to provide regular early childhood education;
3. a teacher or service provider qualified to provide special education; and
4. a person knowledgeable about evaluation results (may be the special education supervisor or teacher).

### Other possible members:

- Members of an outside agency such as your EISC or referring agency personnel or teacher or representative from the current service provider may be invited (for children with vision or hearing problems, a representative from the Office of Education Services may be invited).
- Other expected participants the school believes are necessary may also be invited. This might include a teacher or therapist who is currently working with your child. The school must inform you about the other people who are invited to the meeting.
- You as the parent can invite others, such as a physician, a supportive friend, or other family members.

### Tasks of the Meeting

1. Determining eligibility, if this has not yet been completed (once your child becomes eligible for Special Education and Related Services in the Preschool Program, an IEP must be written within 30 days).
2. Developing the IEP, which includes placement decisions, to become effective on your child's third birthday.

### Writing the IEP

The IEP team will discuss and develop goals for your child. This team will decide what special education and related services are needed, based upon the unique needs of the child.

An IEP must contain the following:

1. your child's present level of performance – what your child is able to do and not able to do;
2. annual goals to address delays;
3. the amount of special education and related services (number of times per week, month, or reporting period, amount of time in hours or minutes, and location of services);
4. the extent to which your child will participate with non-disabled children in regular early childhood educational programs;
5. any supplementary aids, services, modifications and/or accommodations your child needs;
6. starting date and length of time the services will be offered;
7. the method or procedures that will be used to measure (determine) if the annual goals have been met and how you will be regularly informed of your child's progress; and
8. documentation of the IEP team members who attended.

### Before the Meeting

It is helpful for parents to request a copy of all evaluation documents and the initial IEP. Many parents find it helpful to keep a notebook of important records. Whatever you decide to keep in this notebook will help your child, you, and the preschool personnel at the IEP meeting. Such notebooks may include:

- medical records that are important, including shot (immunization) records;
- important documents like birth certificate, Medicaid card, and photos of your child; and
- copies of previous evaluations and current IFSP under the Infant-Toddler Program.

In addition to keeping a notebook for your child's records, you might consider doing the following before the IEP meeting:

- Review the education rights of your child and your rights as a parent or guardian.
- Write down what you see as your child's strengths and areas of difficulty.
- Make a short list of things you would like your child to be able to do now and throughout his or her life.



### **During the IEP Meeting**

As the parent or guardian, you are a member of the IEP team. You have valuable information and advice to give. During the IEP meeting, please:

- Speak up about what you believe should be in your child's IEP.
- Ask questions about any part of the meeting or the IEP that is not clear to you.
- Discuss thoroughly the placement for your child and the special education and related services that will be provided.

### **After the IEP Meeting**

You will receive a copy of your child's IEP after the IEP meeting. Your child's IEP will help you keep up with your child's progress and help as you work with your child at home.

It is important to continue the communication between you and the school after the IEP meeting. Some suggestions to help you communicate with your child's teacher could be to:

- Ask what types of parent activities are available at your child's school.
- Talk with your child's teacher on a regular basis.
- Do not hesitate to contact the school with any questions you may have.

If you and the PSU cannot agree on what is needed for your child, then you should refer to the "Procedural Safeguards" section of your copy of *Parents Rights and Responsibilities in Special Education*.

### **Preschool Placement**

You will receive a written notice describing your child's special education placement and related services.

You will then be asked to sign a "Consent for Services" before your child receives special education and related services from the PSU.

Children who are eligible for special education and need related services will begin receiving them from the PSU on their third birthday, unless your child turns three when school is not in session. If your child's birthday is during the summer, your child's services will start at the beginning of the next school year.

### **What Options Should You Consider if Your Child is Not Eligible for the PSU Preschool Program Special Education and Related Services?**

As part of the transition planning process, your Infant-Toddler Program EISC will provide you with information about other appropriate community resources that may help with meeting your child's and family's needs after the child turns three. Some of these options may include:

- Head Start
- Community preschools and childcare centers
- Community recreation programs
- Reading room story hours
- Mom's morning out programs
- Cooperative play groups
- Care Management for At-Risk Children (CMARC) program (health department)



## Helpful Hints for a Smooth Transition

Transition involves talking and working together with others in your home, school, and community. The following activities and tips have been useful to North Carolina families involved in the transition process:

1. Start early and be prepared to ask questions. You can never begin the transition process too soon. Keep a simple electronic or paper journal about your child's activities, interests, and milestones. Medical reports and previous evaluation summaries are important. This notebook will quickly provide information to your child's service provider during that transitional period. Think about these early years as a time to learn more about the programs in your community.
2. Consider visiting and touring your child's future school(s) with and without your child.
3. Check buildings, including restrooms and classrooms, for accessibility features that meet your child's needs. Be prepared to share any ideas that have worked for you with your child (such as behavior strategies, communication systems, likes, and dislikes).
4. Work with your child's new teacher to plan for a successful transition that might include specific morning routines or other activities to ease the shift to school.
5. Explain to your child's teacher how you can be reached when questions arise.
6. Encourage communication between your school personnel and private providers who work with your child.
7. Find out what the Preschool Program offers for new families and choose how you will participate (such as open house, observation scheduling).
8. Meet as many school employees as you can who will be a part of your child's school day (such as secretary, bus driver, janitor, teacher, principal, and others).
9. Make a plan with your child's new teacher for specific times when the two of you can talk during the year. Together, plan other ways you can communicate with each other on a regular basis, like a notebook system, phone calls, or email.
10. Ask about ways to link with other families in your community (such as parent-to-parent support groups, Family Resource Center, Health Department resources, Cooperative Extension Services).
11. Ask about transportation, if needed.
12. Talk with other families of children who have already moved into the Preschool Program.
13. If local support groups are not available, contact the Family Support Network (FSN) at (800) 852- 0042 or the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC) at (800) 962-6817.
14. Attend the PTA or PTO meetings of your school.

Adapted from *Families and the Transition Process: Primary Style*,  
Kentucky Early Childhood Transition Project



# Transition Checklist

Use this checklist to help you keep track of what steps have taken place.



1. My LEA/PSU has been notified of my child's potential eligibility (at two years, six months for all enrolled children).
2. The Transition Planning Meeting has been held to develop the Transition Plan and a timeline of activities.
3. A referral to the Part B Preschool Program has been made with my consent.
4. All needed screenings and evaluations have been completed for my child.
5. Eligibility for special education services has been determined for my child.
6. I have helped gather copies of the following records and information for my PSU:
  - Birth certificate
  - Proof of residence
  - Physical exam
  - Shot (immunization) record
  - Medicaid card (if applicable)
  - Emergency contact (family members, doctor, special instructions in case of an emergency)
  - Infant-Toddler Program records
  - Other preschool program records
  - Hospital, clinic, or medical records (if applicable)
7. If my child is not eligible for special education services from my LEA/PSU, other choices have been discussed with my Early Intervention Service Coordinator and/or the IFSP/IEP teams.
8. If my child is eligible, I have visited my PSU's preschool sites or other community program options for my child.
9. I have talked with my child's current service providers about possible changes in services at age three.
10. My child's IEP meeting has been held and goals for the coming year have been set (may be completed 30 days before age three).
11. Placement for my child has been determined based on my child's unique needs identified in the IEP.
12. If needed, transportation has been arranged.
13. I have met and talked with my child's new teacher(s) and therapist(s).

# Information about My Child



Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Use this before going to the transition meeting to help gather your thoughts about your child's likes, your concerns, and what you think might help. Take it to the meeting with you.)

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Things I love about my child:               | Here's what my child does well:                                  | My child really likes these:                     |
| Right now, I am most concerned about:       | I would like to be involved in my child's program in these ways: | My child learns more easily when:                |
| I think these services would help my child: | Other help our family could use:                                 | I would like my child to do these in the future: |

Adapted from *Families and the Transition Process: Primary Style*  
Kentucky Early Childhood Transition Project



## Common Abbreviations and Acronyms

|              |   |              |   |
|--------------|---|--------------|---|
| <b>ADA</b>   | Americans with Disabilities Act                         | <b>ECAC</b>  | Exceptional Children’s Assistance Center                          |
| <b>ADD</b>   | Attention Deficit Disorder                              | <b>ECATS</b> | Every Child Accountability & Tracking System                      |
| <b>ADHD</b>  | Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder                | <b>ECE</b>   | Early Childhood Education   |
| <b>AIDS</b>  | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome                     | <b>ECSE</b>  | Early Childhood Special Education                                 |
| <b>Arc</b>   | The Arc<br>(formerly Association for Retarded Citizens) | <b>ECTA</b>  | Early Childhood Technical Assistance                              |
| <b>ASHA</b>  | American Speech-Language-Hearing Association            | <b>EHS</b>   | Early Head Start  |
| <b>ASL</b>   | American Sign Language                                  | <b>EI</b>    | Early Intervention  |
| <b>AT</b>    | Assistive Technology                                    | <b>ED</b>    | Emotional Disability  |
| <b>AU</b>    | Autism  | <b>EISC</b>  | Early Intervention Service Coordinator                            |
| <b>BIA</b>   | Bureau of Indian Affairs                                | <b>ESY</b>   | Extended School Year  |
| <b>CA</b>    | Chronological Age                                       | <b>FAPE</b>  | Free Appropriate Public Education                                 |
| <b>CEC</b>   | Council for Exceptional Children                        | <b>FERPA</b> | Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act                         |
| <b>CDSA</b>  | Children’s Developmental Services Agency                | <b>FSN</b>   | Family Support Network  |
| <b>CNS</b>   | Central Nervous System                                  | <b>HI</b>    | Hearing Impairment <u>including</u> Deafness                      |
| <b>CP</b>    | Cerebral Palsy  | <b>HS</b>    | Head Start  |
| <b>CMARC</b> | Care Management for At-Risk Children                    | <b>ICC</b>   | Interagency Coordinating Council                                  |
| <b>COSF</b>  | Child Outcomes Summary Form                             | <b>I/DD</b>  | Intellectual/Developmental Disability (mild, moderate, or severe) |
| <b>CSHS</b>  | Children’s Special Health Services                      | <b>IDEA</b>  | Individuals with Disabilities Education Act                       |
| <b>DA</b>    | Developmental Age                                       | <b>IEP</b>   | Individualized Education Program                                  |
| <b>DAP</b>   | Developmentally Appropriate Practice                    | <b>IFSP</b>  | Individualized Family Service Plan                                |
| <b>dB</b>    | decibel   | <b>LEA</b>   | Local Education Agency  |
| <b>D/B</b>   | Deaf/Blind  | <b>LICC</b>  | Local Interagency Coordinating Council                            |
| <b>DCFW</b>  | Division of Child and Family Well-Being                 | <b>LRE</b>   | Least Restrictive Environment                                     |
| <b>DD</b>    | Developmental Disability or Developmental Delay         | <b>MA</b>    | Mental Age  |
| <b>DDC</b>   | Developmental Day Center                                | <b>MD</b>    | Multiple Disabilities   |
| <b>DHHS</b>  | Department of Health and Human Services                 | <b>MDE</b>   | Multidisciplinary Evaluation                                      |
| <b>DPI</b>   | Department of Public Instruction                        | <b>MTSS</b>  | Multi-Tiered System of Support                                    |
| <b>EC</b>    | Exceptional Children                                    | <b>NAEYC</b> | National Association for the Education of Young Children          |

|                  |   |                    |  |
|------------------|---|--------------------|--|
| <b>NC ICC</b>    | North Carolina Interagency Coordinating Council   | <b>SC</b>          | Service Coordinator or Service Coordination                      |
| <b>NC Pre-K</b>  | North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten   | <b>SDI</b>         | Specially Designed Instruction                                   |
| <b>NICU</b>      | Neonatal Intensive Care Unit  | <b>SEA</b>         | State Education Agency   |
| <b>OCR</b>       | Office of Civil Rights  | <b>Section 504</b> | Portion of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended            |
| <b>OI</b>        | Orthopedic Impairment   | <b>Section 619</b> | The portion of IDEA that deals solely with the preschool program |
| <b>OT</b>        | Occupational Therapy or Occupational Therapist  | <b>SEE</b>         | Signing Exact English  |
| <b>Part B</b>    | Part of IDEA that regulates educational services to children with disabilities ages three to twenty-one   | <b>SI</b>          | Speech or Language Impairment                                    |
| <b>Part C</b>    | Part of IDEA that regulates educational services to children with disabilities ages birth to thirty-six months  | <b>S/L</b>         | Speech and Language  |
| <b>PL</b>        | Public Law  | <b>SLD</b>         | Specific Learning Disability                                     |
| <b>PL 94-142</b> | Education for All Handicapped Children Act, now IDEA  | <b>SLP</b>         | Speech-Language Pathologist                                      |
| <b>PL 99-457</b> | Amendment to PL94-142 that authorized early intervention for infants and toddlers with disabilities and required preschool services for three- to five-year-olds, currently called IDEA | <b>SLT</b>         | Speech and Language Therapy or Speech-Language Therapist         |
| <b>PSSP</b>      | Private School Services Plan  | <b>SSI</b>         | Supplemental Security Income                                     |
| <b>PSU</b>       | Public School Unit  | <b>ST</b>          | Speech Therapy or Speech Therapist                               |
| <b>PT</b>        | Physical Therapy or Physical Therapist  | <b>TBI</b>         | Traumatic Brain Injury   |
| <b>PWN</b>       | Prior Written Notice  | <b>TDD</b>         | Telecommunication Device for the Deaf                            |
| <b>RN</b>        | Registered Nurse  | <b>TSG</b>         | Teaching Strategies Gold   |
|                  |   | <b>VI</b>          | Visual Impairment, including blindness                           |



## Glossary of Terms

**Adapted Physical Education (APE)** – student-centered continuum of specially designed instruction for physical education provided by teachers licensed in physical education (may also have certification in adapted physical education, CAPE). Preschools do not have a physical education curriculum but movement, motor skills and physical activity are part of the [Foundations for Early Learning and Development](#) which frame expectations.



Preschool programs are not required to provide APE services for all students as physical education is not provided to all preschoolers without disabilities. However, schools are not relieved of the ‘duty to provide physical education to those students who have unique needs requiring physical education’ as a part of that student’s special education and related services (OSERS letter to Tymeson, 2013). Eligibility for adapted physical education is determined by the IEP team in the same way specially designed instructional needs are decided for any other area.

**Advocacy** – trying to ensure that the services appropriate for you and your child are received. You are the best advocate for your child. You know your child best.

**Assessment** – individual evaluation of a child's performance and/or development. This information about a child can be used in educational and intervention planning. The planning process may or may not result in special education instruction and services.

**Assistive Technology Device** – any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability. The term does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, or the replacement of that device.

**Assistive Technology Service** – any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. The term includes:

- (a) The evaluation of the needs of a child with a disability, including a functional evaluation of the child in the child's customary environment.
- (b) Purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices for use by children with disabilities.
- (c) Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing assistive technology devices.
- (d) Coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs.
- (e) Training or technical assistance for a child with a disability or, if appropriate, that child's family.
- (f) Training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education or rehabilitation services), employers, or other individuals who provide services to, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of that child. (Authority: 20-U.S.C 1401(2); 34 CFR 300.6)

**Areas of Disability** – any of the disability conditions that qualify a child between the ages of three through twenty-one years for special education under Part B of IDEA.

**Child Find Notification** – required notification to be sent to public school personnel responsible for child find, for all children enrolled in ITP who are at least thirty months of age, of limited information to include: child’s name and date of birth, along with your name, address, email, preferred language, EISC, and phone number. Child Find notification is also sent for children determined eligible for Part C less than 90 days before their third birthday.



**CMARC (Care Management for At-Risk Children)** – an early childhood program, provided by local health departments, that coordinates services with Medical Providers to ensure appropriate health and medical care, developmental and social supports for children at risk for, or diagnosed with, developmental disabilities, social or emotional problems, and chronic illnesses ages birth to five years old.

**Coaching** – an adult learning strategy that is used to build the capacity of a parent or caregiver to improve existing abilities, develop new skills, and gain a deeper understanding of practices for use in current and future situations.

**Cognitive** – the brain process used for thinking, reasoning, understanding, and judging.

**Developmental** – the steps or stages of mental, physical, and social growth in individuals.

**Due Process** – the legal procedures or steps available to protect the individual rights of the child.

**Early Intervention Service Coordinator (EISC)** – the person assigned to coordinate the planning and delivery of early intervention services to children from birth to age three who are enrolled in the NC Infant-Toddler Program.

**Evaluation** – the process used to find out if a child has a disability, developmental delay, or established condition and requires special education. This process can include parent reports, teacher reports, observations of the child, reviewing records, and formal and informal assessments.

**Exceptional Children Program** – the exceptional children program ensures that all children with disabilities, ages three through twenty-one, have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepares them for further education, employment, and independent living.

**General Education** – the general education curriculum is the same curriculum as for nondisabled children and is based on a State’s academic content standards for the grade in which a child is enrolled. For preschool-aged children the [North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development](#) serves in the role of academic content standards.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** – the federal law that provides the guidelines for special education services for children birth through age twenty-one. Part B outlines services for children ages three through twenty-one, and Part C outlines services for children birth to age three.

**Individualized Education Program (IEP)** – a written education plan designed to meet the individual special education and related service needs of a child eligible for services.

**Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)** – a written plan designed to meet the needs of an infant or toddler and his or her family eligible for services.

**Inclusion** – to have an opportunity to participate in activities available to all children with and without disabilities in the community.

**Intervention** – all of the efforts made on behalf of the child with a disability (or at risk for developing a disability) to help the child make progress in the development of skills needed to participate in everyday and family routines within the natural environment.

**Local Education Agency (LEA)** – local public school district or charter school, also known as Public School Unit (PSU).

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** – means that, to the maximum extent possible, children with disabilities are educated with children who do not have disabilities as required by IDEA.

**Multidisciplinary** – a type of team approach for providing evaluation and intervention. Professionals from several disciplines (such as speech-language pathology, psychology, special education) work together to evaluate and serve children and families.

**Natural Environment** – settings that are natural or normal for the child's same-age peers without disabilities.

**Outcomes** – statements of expectations or changes that families want for themselves and their children as a result of Part C early intervention services, written in Individualized Family Service Plans.

**Procedural Safeguards** – all rights that are guaranteed to the parent and child with a disability under the IDEA.

**Referral** – a written request to the PSU when a child is suspected of having a disability and to determine if the child needs special education and related services.

**Related Services** – supportive services required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education. A child must be determined eligible for special education in order to receive related services. Some examples of related services under Part B include, but are not limited to, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech-language pathology services, recreation, counseling services, parent counseling and training, audiology, and transportation.

**Screening** – the process used to review a child's developmental milestones. The purpose of developmental screening is to identify children who may need further observation and evaluation based on concerns related to their progress.





**Service Delivery** – the ways in which early intervention and special education and related services will be provided to the child.

**Special Education** – specially-designed instruction, provided at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability.

**Therapy** - A specialized service to support the unique needs of a child. The most common therapies under related services in the public schools are:

**Occupational therapy** – student-centered continuum of services provided by a licensed occupational therapist (OT) or a licensed and supervised occupational therapy assistant (supervised OT Assistant). These services assist a student to engage in meaningful and/or necessary occupations that allow a student to participate in and benefit from special education. These occupations may include student role/interaction skills, learning academics and process skills, personal care, play and recreation, written communication, and community integration and work.

**Physical therapy** – student-centered continuum of services provided by a physical therapist (PT) provider who is licensed by the state to provide evaluation (PT) and interventions (PT or supervised PT Assistant) to improve student mobility, participation, and independence. PT providers work to ensure staff and student safety and wellness. Physical therapy works collaboratively, providing expertise, intervening, training and/or consulting for access, problem-solving, and equipment to ensure a student's body does not keep them from learning, playing, and participating throughout their school day.

**Speech or language therapy** – student-centered continuum of services provided by a licensed speech language pathologist who performs assessment and intervention in the areas of communication disorders such as an impairment in fluency, articulation, language, or voice that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Language may include function of language, the content of language, and the form of language.

**Transition** – The process of moving from one place or program to another. Young children with disabilities will move at age three from Part C into Part B (if determined eligible) and/or other appropriate community resources.



## More Information

We sincerely hope this handbook will be useful. It is our goal to help you create a smooth transition process through these early years. If you have additional concerns or questions, please contact one of the following:

1. About your child's Infant-Toddler Program services:  
Call or write your local Children's Developmental Services Agency (CDSA), or  
North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program Part C Program Coordinator  
Division of Child and Family Well-Being, Early Intervention Section  
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services  
1916 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1919  
(919) 707-5520, website: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/child-and-family-well-being/north-carolina-infant-toddler-program-nc-itp/find-your-childrens-developmental-service-agency-cdsa>
2. About our child's Part B Preschool Program services:  
Call or write your Public School Unit (PSU) or Preschool Coordinator,  
Office of Early Learning, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction  
2075 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2075  
(984) 236-2100, website:  
<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/office-early-learning-oei>
3. About the law:  
Contact your PSU or consultants for dispute resolution,  
Office of Exceptional Children, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction  
6356 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-6356  
(984) 236-2100, website:  
<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/exceptional-children/parent-resources#dispute-resolution>
4. About other resources  
Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC)  
(800) 962-6817, email: [ecac@ecacmail.org](mailto:ecac@ecacmail.org), website: [www.ecac-parentcenter.org](http://www.ecac-parentcenter.org)  
Family Support Network of NC  
(800) 852-0042, website: <https://fsnnc.org>  
North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities  
(800) 357-6916, email: [info@nccdd.org](mailto:info@nccdd.org), website: <https://nccdd.org>  
North Carolina Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Help  
Line (800) 737-3028, email: [CYSHCH.Helpline@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:CYSHCH.Helpline@dhhs.nc.gov)

This handbook was developed to help families understand what happens when their child makes the transition from the Infant-Toddler Program to the Preschool Program.

Feel free to copy any materials in this handbook. You may fill in your local resources.

We hope you find this handbook useful. Please feel free to send corrections or additional information to the Transition Committee at the North Carolina Interagency Coordinating Council, 1916 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1916. Telephone: (919) 707-5520.

### Acknowledgements

This handbook was adapted from the following resources:

1. *Families and the Transition Process: Primary Style*, Kentucky Early Childhood Transition Project, 1995.
2. *Steps Ahead at Age 3*, Bridging Early Services Transition Taskforce, 1995.
3. *Transitions: A Time for Change, An Opportunity for Growth*, Family Outreach Center for Understanding Special Needs, Inc., 1994.
4. *First Steps: Transitions to Early Childhood Special Education*, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1993.
5. *A Family's Introduction to Early Intervention in Pennsylvania*, Instructional Support System of Pennsylvania, 1st printing, 1998.

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