



# Early Intervention to Early Childhood Transition Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

## Transition Planning Conference (TPC)

### What information will my service coordinator share with the school district prior to the Transition Planning Conference (TPC)?

Typically, a referral packet will include the most current Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and evaluation reports. As you review your child's file, decide what additional information you would like to share. If there is any material that you do not want to share, please advise your service coordinator. You should feel comfortable with the information you choose to share. Your child's referral packet is an important part of the transition process.

### How can I prepare for the Transition Planning Conference (TPC)?

- ✓ Review the Transition Workbook (*When I'm 3, Where Will I Be?*) provided by your service coordinator.
- ✓ Review your family's current Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) and reports.
- ✓ Talk to your service provider(s) about your child's progress and successful strategies they used.
- ✓ Decide if you want to share additional information such as medical reports, information from outside services your child received, and/or videos or photos of your child.
- ✓ Reach out to Angela Krambeer, our Child and Family Connections Parent Liaison, who can help you prepare for the transition meeting. Angela has personal experience with the transition process. She can be reached at 815-477-4720 x238 or [angela.krambeer@opad.org](mailto:angela.krambeer@opad.org).
- ✓ Fill out the Parent Page: *Things I Want You to Know About My Child* on page 15 of *When I'm 3, Where Will I Be?*
- ✓ Write down all of your questions and bring them with you to the Transition Planning Conference (TPC).

### What will be discussed at the Transition Planning Conference (TPC)?

- Information about your child including strengths and struggles, reason(s) for referral to Early Intervention (EI), and current goals that the team is working on
- Potential services available through your school district including types of classrooms and supports within the classrooms
- Services available during the summer through your school district
- Registration and evaluation process for your school district's program
- Visits to early childhood classrooms in your school district
- The school district's Domain Review process—what it looks like and when it starts
- The Individualized Education Program (IEP) process
- Transportation for your child
- Next steps of the transition process

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### **Can I delay the transition process or put it on hold for my child until after he or she turns 3?**

Since the transition process is voluntary, you have the right to refuse participation; however, we encourage all families to engage in the transition process in order to be better informed about your child's options when he or she turns 3. If you decide to delay or stop the transition process, please contact your service coordinator. If you choose to put the transition process on hold and then decide to make a referral to your school district after your child turns 3, a new timeline will commence. Parents have the right to make a referral for Special Education services in writing. The school district has 14 school days from the time they receive the referral to respond, in writing, whether they agree or disagree to evaluate the child. The district must advise the parents of their right to request a due process hearing to challenge its decision. For more information, please consult Chapter 3, page 17 of **Educational Rights & Responsibilities: Understanding Special Education in Illinois -The Parent Guide** which can be found at <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Parent-Guide-Special-Ed-Aug20.pdf>.

## THE EVALUATION PROCESS

### **What is the purpose of the evaluation process?**

The purpose of the evaluation process is to help members of your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team paint a complete picture of your child.

### **Who is on the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team?**

Parents, a general education teacher, a special education teacher, a representative from your school district, someone who is qualified to interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results, and other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding your child. The student may attend and participate if the parent(s) decide he/she should be present.

### **What is the difference between an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?**

The major difference between an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is that an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) focuses on the child and family, and the services that a family needs to help them enhance the development of their child. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) focuses on what the child needs in order for him or her to receive a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE).

### **What is a Domain Review?**

A Domain Review is a meeting to review existing information provided by parents and evaluators or observations by teachers and related services providers to determine what, if any, additional information is needed to find if a child is eligible for special education and related services. The Domain Review is based on the needs of each individual child. It covers all areas related to the suspected educational disability, including, if appropriate academic achievement, functional performance, cognitive functioning, communication, health, hearing/vision, motor abilities, and social/emotional status. Parents should be encouraged to share any additional concerns about their child and what effect this may have in the school setting.

### **When does the Domain Review take place?**

The school district or special education cooperative representative will contact the parents about participating in a Domain Review after the Transition Planning Conference (TPC).

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### **Would it be helpful for me to share what I know about my child with other Individualized Education Program (IEP) team members?**

Yes! You know your child best. You know what your child has learned already. You know what your child likes and dislikes and how your child likes to play. Sharing answers to the following questions will help you better inform the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team members:

- *What are some things you want everyone to know about your child?*
- *What are some things that you are concerned about now?*
- *How does your child communicate with you and others?*
- *What are ways your child likes to learn new things?*
- *What does your child do when he or she needs help?*
- *What things would you like your child to learn over the next 6-12 months?*

### **Are additional evaluations needed after the Domain Review is completed?**

It depends on whether your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team can answer the following questions:

1. Does your child have an educational disability?
2. What are your child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance?
3. Does your child's educational disability have an adverse effect on your child's ability to participate in and benefit from age-appropriate activities?
4. Does your child need special education and related services?

If your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, including you, has enough information to answer all of these questions after the Domain Review, your child does not need additional evaluations. However, if your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team cannot answer all four questions, the team will decide what additional evaluations are needed to help determine eligibility and plan for your child's education.

### **Do evaluations require my consent?**

Yes. School districts cannot evaluate your child without your informed, written consent. When you sign consent, your child's evaluation process will continue.

### **What does the evaluation process look like?**

The evaluation is individualized for your child. Evaluations can be conducted by one person or a team of professionals at the school. You can ask where and how your child will be evaluated. You may be asked to share information through an interview or as part of a questionnaire. The questions may be about your child's birth and medical history, developmental milestones and progress, and home and family environments. As you can see, the evaluation process brings together different types of information about your child. Your input is an important part of your child's evaluation.

### **Will I be able to review evaluation reports prior to the eligibility meeting?**

Yes. At least three days before either an eligibility meeting and Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting, parents must be given copies of all written materials that will be reviewed during any meeting. Copies will be provided by mail, in-person or other available method. This includes evaluation results, collected data, all Individualized Education Program (IEP) documents, etc. Parents of older children may wish to request to review logs regarding the delivery and minutes of related services provided to their child at any time.

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# The Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting

## Part One: Eligibility

### **I don't have anyone to watch my child during the meeting. Can I bring my child with me to the meeting?**

Yes, you can bring your child to the meeting.

### **Can I bring therapists and/or my service coordinator to the meeting?**

YES! You can invite whomever you wish to attend the meeting. It is YOUR child's meeting.

### **Isn't my child automatically eligible for special education if he or she has an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)?**

Even though the parents and the child received services through Early Intervention, there is no automatic eligibility for Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services. Parents will be involved in helping the school district gather needed information to help determine if the child is eligible.

### **How is eligibility determined?**

Using the results of the evaluation, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team will discuss whether your child is eligible for special education and related services based on one or more eligibility categories. Your Individualized Education Program (IEP) team can decide to use "developmental delay" to determine eligibility as long as your child also meets the requirements of one of the other eligibility categories. Ask your Individualized Education Program (IEP) team to explain the eligibility categories to you. For more information, please consult Chapter 4, pages 25-34 of **Educational Rights & Responsibilities: Understanding Special Education in Illinois -The Parent Guide** which can be found at <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Parent-Guide-Special-Ed-Aug20.pdf>.

### **What happens if a child is found to be ineligible for Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services?**

For a child who is determined to be ineligible, the team should consider the individual needs of the child and potential community programs or services for which she/he may be eligible. The Transition Planning Conference (TPC), Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) exit meeting, or the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting where the child is found to be not eligible are appropriate times to discuss other options at the time of transition that may meet the needs of the child and family. In addition, if the parents do not agree with the findings of the evaluations or the determination to ineligibility, the parents have the right to request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE). For more information, please consult Chapter 3, page 23 of **Educational Rights & Responsibilities: Understanding Special Education in Illinois -The Parent Guide** which can be found at <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Parent-Guide-Special-Ed-Aug20.pdf>.

### **Can early intervention services continue past the child's third birthday?**

No. To continue to receive state and federal funding for services, a three-year old child MUST meet Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B special education eligibility. Early intervention services cannot continue past the child's third birthday.

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## The Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting Part Two: Developing the IEP

### **Can school staff decide my child's placement prior to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting?**

No. Placement requires a team discussion and parents are part of the team. Decisions cannot be made prior to any Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting.

### **Can an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) be used for a child from age three through five years who is eligible for Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services?**

Yes. For children from three through five years of age, an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) may be used for Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services, as long as it meets special education requirements for participants, timelines and notice/consent procedures. The Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) would be developed by the Local Education Agency (LEA) staff, must meet the requirements of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) would have a new start date, and would be in effect for one year. If an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is used, this does not mean the child "remains in early intervention", but instead means that Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services are being provided using an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). Parents must be provided an explanation of the differences between an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and an Individualized Education Program (IEP), and must provide informed, written consent for using an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

### **What is included in an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?**

- Statement of the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance
- Information on how the child's educational disability affects the child's participation in age-appropriate activities
- Statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals, designed to meet the child's needs and enable the child to be involved in and make progress in age-appropriate activities
- Description of how the child's progress will be measured
- Timeline for providing periodic reports on the child's progress
- Statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services available to the child
- Statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided to enable the child to make progress and participate in curricular, extracurricular and nonacademic activities and to be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and nondisabled children
- Projected date for the beginning of services and the anticipated frequency, location and duration of services and modifications

### **What is Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and why is it important?**

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is a requirement that children with an educational disability shall be educated to the maximum extent possible with their typically developing peers. The benefits of an inclusive education include that typical peers serve as models; natural friendships develop within the child's home community; children with disabilities learn new academic and social skills within natural environments; all children learn to value diversity; and general education classrooms are better able to meet the needs of all children as a result of additional instructional resources, staff development for general and special educators, a more flexible curriculum, and adapted instructional delivery systems.

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### **What types of classrooms are there in Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)?**

It varies by district but most districts offer 2 different placements:

- **Blended-** This option would be considered if there is reasonable evidence that a child cannot make progress in the general education classroom. An even mix of children with and without an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Typically placed if a child requires more targeted or adult support. More restrictive than General Education.
- **Self-Contained** - Only children who receive Special Education services and supports. The child receives specially designed instruction through a special education class for the majority of the school day. The child is included, with support, in general education classes, when appropriate. The most restrictive setting within a general education building.

### **What if I disagree with the recommendations of services put in place?**

You have options similar to the options you had in Early Intervention. Talk with your service coordinator and the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team about your concerns. Additionally, you can refer to Chapter 3: Evaluation; Chapter 6: Individualized Education Program (IEP); and Chapter 11: Conflict Resolution of **Educational Rights & Responsibilities: Understanding Special Education in Illinois -The Parent Guide** which can be found at <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Parent-Guide-Special-Ed-Aug20.pdf>.

### **What if the school district says there is no room in the program for my child?**

State and federal regulations require school districts to serve children who are transitioning from early intervention and who are eligible for Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) on or before their third birthdays. The Local Education Agency (LEA) must provide services and the placement option listed in the Individualized Education Program (IEP). Schools may not make placement decisions based solely on factors such as the following:

- Category of educational disability
- Severity of educational disability
- Configuration of delivery system
- Availability of educational or related services
- Availability of space
- Administrative convenience
- Funding concerns cannot be used as a reason for not providing appropriate programs or services. If funding is a problem, your local school district must explore other ways of serving your child.

### **For a child whose third birthday is in late spring/summer, can Extended School Year (ESY) services be provided without using the regression formula for school-aged children?**

Yes, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team must decide the need for Extended School Year (ESY) services on an individual basis. Besides regression, the team must consider the nature and severity of the child's educational disability, degree of impairment, rate of progress and availability of other services. It might be more helpful to consider what summer services may be necessary for the child to receive Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE). Because brain research demonstrates significant opportunity for learning during the early childhood years, the team can use that as justification for taking advantage of such "windows of opportunity" during breaks in the school year. In addition, particular consideration should be given to children who need instruction in self-help skills such as dressing or eating, or who need continued structure to develop behavioral control. If the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, including the parents, determines that services are not needed over the summer for the child to receive Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE), the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team may note the first day of the next school year as the date services will begin.

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**Where can I find more information about my child's rights?**

Please refer to **Educational Rights & Responsibilities: Understanding Special Education in Illinois -The Parent Guide** which can be found at <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Parent-Guide-Special-Ed-Aug20.pdf>.

**How much does it cost for early childhood services?**

There are no additional charges for early childhood services received while your child attends school. Some school districts do charge registration fees for all children.

**What is the ratio of children to adults?**

This varies by district and type of classroom.

**Does my child have to take the bus?**

No. You can provide drop off and pick up if you choose. Some families opt out of transportation because they may have reservations about their child riding the bus. Each school has their own pick up and drop off procedures so be sure to ask the school about them.

**I would like my child to ride the bus but I am concerned about my child's safety.**

Buses that transport children ages 3-5 are equipped with five-point STAR restraints to ensure children safely remain in their seats.

**Can the bus pick up and drop off at my child's daycare?**

Most districts will pick up and/or drop off at any daycare that is within the school district's boundaries.

**Does my child have to be potty trained before going to my district's preschool?**

No. Your child does not need to be potty trained to participate in your district's preschool.

**How does parent/teacher communication take place?**

If your child is found eligible, placement will be determined and your child will be assigned a classroom teacher. Teachers communicate using a variety of ways including email, communication notebooks, classroom apps like Dojo and Seesaw, and texting apps. Your child's teacher is your partner in education and two-way communication is a critical component of ensuring your child's success.

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## The Acronyms of Special Education

504	Education Plan providing protections within ADA	FAPE	Free and Appropriate Public Education
AAC	Augmentative and Alternative Communication	FBA	Functional Behavior Assessment
AAD	Adaptive/Assistive Device	FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
ABA	Applied Behavioral Analysis	HQT	Highly Qualified Teacher
ABC	Antecedent, Behavior, Consequence	IA	Instructional Assistant
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Act
ADLs	Activities of Daily Living	IEE	Independent Educational Evaluation
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution	IEP	Individual Education Program
AEP	Alternative Education Placement	IFSP	Individualized Family Service Plan
AIM	Accessible Instructional Materials	ILCS	Illinois School Code
APE	Adaptive Physical Education	ISBE	Illinois State Board of Education
APR	Annual Performance Review	ITP	Individualized Transition Plan
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder	LEA	Local Education Agency
ASL	American Sign Language	LEP	Limited English Proficiency
AT	Assistive Technology	LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress	MDEC	Multidisciplinary Educational Conference
BIP	Behavioral Intervention Plan	MDR	Manifestation Determination Review
CAI	Computer Assisted Instruction	NCLB	No Child Left Behind A
CAP	Corrective Action Plan	OHI	Other Health Impairment
CBA	Curriculum Based Assessment	OT	Occupational Therapy
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations	PBIS	Positive Behavioral Incentive Program
CLD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse	PT	Physical Therapy
DD	Developmental Delay	PWN	Prior Written Notice
DOE	Department of Education	RS	Related Service
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders	RTI	Response to Intervention
ECE	Early Childhood Education	SLD	Specific Learning Disability
ECSE	Early Childhood Special Education	SLP	Speech and Language Pathologist
EI	Early Intervention	SLI	Speech or Language Impairment
ELL	English Language Learners	SPED	Special Education
ESL	English as a Second Language	TDD	Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf
ESY	Extended School Year	TPC	Transition Planning Conference

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