

A GUIDE TO PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN TRANSITIONING FROM EARLY INTERVENTION



2010

Early Childhood Direction Center
c/o Women & Children's Hospital of
Buffalo

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Check the VESID website (<http://www.vesid.nysed.gov>) for new information on preschool eligibility and Special Education programs/services.



DEAR PARENTS:

Your child is getting ready to transition from the Early Intervention Program into Preschool Special Education. This handbook will provide you with some general guidance about the transition process, including:

- Transition planning
- The Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE)
- Continuity of services
- Age eligibility for Preschool Special Education Services
- The transition conference
- Transition process checklist
- Eligibility for Preschool Special Education
- Preschool evaluations
- You're an important member of the team
- Preparing for your CPSE meeting
- Services available in Preschool Special Education
- Your role

The Early Childhood Direction Center (ECDC) can talk with you if you have individual questions or concerns that relate to your child, family or school district.

You can contact the ECDC by phone at
716-880-3875 or 1-800-462-7653
by e-mail at rmalinowski@kaleidahealth.org
or visit our website at www.wchob.org/ecdc

TRANSITION PLANNING

Some children currently receiving Early Intervention Services will move to Preschool Special Education; others will be connected to community programs or resources and some will no longer need specialized services. Regardless of what programming decisions are made, a transition plan must be developed for all children approaching their third birthday and currently receiving Early Intervention Services. The transition plan will:

- Review progress made
- Identify community resources needed by and available to assist your child and family
- Determine whether your child needs to be referred to Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE)
- Provide timelines to ensure continuity of services
- Establish the date for EI services to end
- Provide steps to help your child adjust to a new setting
- Include the Transition Plan in the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)



If you have questions and concerns about your child's transition plan, you can share these concerns with your EI service coordinator or call the Early Childhood Direction Center at 716-880-3875

THE COMMITTEE ON PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION (CPSE)



The Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) reviews many kinds of information to determine which children are eligible to be served, what services are needed, and where and how often services are delivered. The CPSE consists of the Chairperson, someone who evaluated your child or can interpret the evaluation results, teachers, service providers, a county representative, an EI representative at your *written* request and YOU.

Other information about the CPSE:

- Each school district in NYS must have a Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE)
- The NYS Education Department (NYSED) is the oversight agency
- Your School District maintains a register of children in EI who are *potentially* eligible for CPSE
- The CPSE reviews referrals made by your EI team or by YOU to determine your child's eligibility (if you refer your child yourself you must still meet the 3rd birthday requirements in order to ensure continuity of services—see pg. 4)
- The CPSE develops an Individualized Education Program (IEP) if your child is determined eligible (see "Eligibility for CPSE" on page 8)



CONTINUITY OF SERVICES

Your child's transition from EI to CPSE is dependent on the child's third birthday. Eligibility for EI will end when one of the following occurs:

- The day before their third birthday, if your child is not found eligible for preschool services.
- You choose to have your child transition to preschool special education on the first eligible date

For your child to continue to receive services in the EI Program AFTER their third birthday they must be found eligible for preschool services by the Committee on Preschool Special Education.

Continuation of EIP (Early Intervention Program)

If you wish for your child to continue in the Early Intervention (EIP) after their 3rd birthday and they have been found eligible for Preschool Special Education Services, they can do so. How long they continue in EIP is based on these timeframes. If your child:

- Turns three on or before August 31 your child can continue EIP until September 1 of that year (*i.e., Susie turns three on March 22, so she can stay in EI until September 1 of that year*)
- Turns three on or after September 1 your child can continue in the EIP until January 2 of the next calendar year (*i.e., John turns three on October 16, so he may stay in EI until January 2 of the next calendar year*)

Your child cannot receive Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education Services at the same time.

KIDS MOVING TO CPSE

Under Public Law 2548 of the Early Intervention regulations, the Early Intervention Official (EIO) is required to notify the school district in which your child resides of the child's potential eligibility for Preschool Special Education services. This notification can only occur after you have given Parental Consent and must occur at least 120 days prior to the first date of eligibility. This process is known as Notice to CPSE and leads to eligibility determination for preschool special education services

AGE ELIGIBILITY FOR PRESCHOOL SERVICES



If your child has been determined eligible to receive Preschool Special Education Services, by the CPSE you can choose to begin Preschool on or before your child's third birthday. This is identified as First Eligibility for 4410 Services (A 4410 program or service provider has been approved by the state education department to provide services for preschoolers with disabilities):

- If your child's birthday falls between January 1 and June 30, your child is eligible on January 2 of the year they turn three (i.e., *Jackson's birthday is April 15. If Jackson is found eligible he can begin receiving preschool services on January 2, when he is 2 years 9 months old*).
- If your child's birthday falls on or after July 1, between July and December, your child is eligible on July 1 of the year they turn three (i.e., *Samantha will be three on December 27. If she is found eligible she can begin preschool services on July 1, when she is 2 years and 7 months old*).

THE TRANSITION CONFERENCE



The purpose of the Transition Conference is to determine whether your child should be referred to Preschool Special Education programs and services and to review program options that will be available to your child and family if your child is found eligible. The Transition Conference must be held *at least 90 days* before your child is first eligible for preschool services. If it is determined that your child should be referred for preschool special education services, you *must provide consent* to the CPSE to proceed with the evaluation process. This process might include review of existing information/assessments/evaluation results or require new evaluations. *Remember if your child turns three and the CPSE has not determined eligibility, your child will not receive any services from either EI or CPSE.*

Parents *must* be notified and given the chance to participate in the Transition Conference. However if you choose not to participate in the conference, the EIO should notify you in writing about the information that would be discussed at the conference including the fact that your child's eligibility for EIP will end on the day before your child's third birthday, unless your child is evaluated and found eligible for services under the CPSE.

Benefits of a Transition Conference

- Develops positive partnership between you and the CPSE
- Produces a unified plan to meet your child's needs and strengths
- Complies with the state requirements for both the EIP and CPSE
- Saves time for everyone
- Creates a more understandable and efficient CPSE meeting
- Discusses:
 - ⇒ Evaluation Process and Options
 - ⇒ Eligibility Determination
 - ⇒ Program and Service Options
 - ⇒ Transportation

TRANSITION PROCESS CHECKLIST



| | |
|---|---------------|
| Child's Name: | |
| Date of Birth: | |
| Date First Eligible for Preschool Services (4410): | |
| Last Eligible Date for Early Intervention Services: | |
| Service Coordinator: | Phone Number: |
| School District: | |
| CPSE Chairperson: | Phone Number: |

| ITEM DESCRIPTION | TIMEFRAME | PARENTAL CONSENT | DATE COMPLETED |
|--|---|------------------|----------------|
| Discuss transition with service coordinator whether it is appropriate to notify CPSE chair of child's potential eligibility under preschool services | Six months prior to child's third birthday | | |
| Create transition plan for either exiting EI or transitioning to CPSE | At the IFSP meeting no later than six months prior to child turning three | | |
| Notify CPSE chair of potential eligibility | At least 120 days before the child is first eligible for preschool services | √ | |
| Transition conference arranged by service coordinator along with parent and CPSE chair/designee | At least 90 days before child is first eligible for preschool services | √ | |
| Consent for evaluation given to CPSE chair | | √ | |
| Decision made to remain in EI or move to CPSE | At Transition Conference | | |
| Determine start date for CPSE to begin | At CPSE meeting | | |

If you have access to a computer the following site is an easy way to figure out the important dates in the transition process. By just plugging in your child's birthday the calculator will give you the corresponding timeline. If you don't have access to a computer call the ECDC and we will let you know the dates that are important for your child's transition to occur smoothly.

Early Intervention Calculator for determining timeframes:
<http://eservices.nysed.gov/ei/>



ELIGIBILITY FOR CPSE

A preschool student with a disability is a preschool child who, because of mental, physical, or emotional reasons, has been identified as having a disability and can receive appropriate educational opportunities from special programs approved by the NYS Department of Education.

Eligibility for CPSE is:

- Based on an individual evaluation in student's native language
- Determined by multidisciplinary team
- Dependent on multiple sources of information
 - ⇒ Evaluation
 - ⇒ Interview
 - ⇒ Observation

Extent of Delay:

- A 12 month delay in one or more functional areas; or
- A 33% delay in one functional area; or
- A 25% delay in each of two functional areas; or
- At least 2.0 standard deviations below the mean in one functional area, or at least 1.5 standard deviations below the mean in each of two functional areas
- Functional areas include:
 - ⇒ Adaptive—self-help in areas like dressing and eating
 - ⇒ Cognitive—thinking, figuring things out, problem solving
 - ⇒ Motor—moving fine muscles development like grasping
 - ⇒ Speech and Language—talking, understanding and communicating
 - ⇒ Social Emotional—getting along with others, coping

A child can also be eligible by meeting the criteria for a developmental diagnosis of:

- autism
- deafness
- deaf-blindness
- hearing impairment
- orthopedic impairment
- other health impairment
- traumatic brain injury
- visually impaired, including blindness

Information on the official New York State definition and the criteria described here can be obtained from the ECDC.

PRESCHOOL EVALUATIONS



When your child begins the transition process from EI services to Preschool Special Education Services, the CPSE chairperson must notify you when they have received the referral for your child from the Early Intervention Official. The chairperson must obtain your written consent to start the evaluation process. CPSE chairs and approved evaluators will review existing assessments and evaluations to determine if these assessments fulfill the requirements for determining your child's eligibility. It may be decided that additional evaluations are needed.

An evaluation is a careful examination of a child's skills, strengths and weaknesses to determine current levels of functioning and how best to plan for your child. What can he do? What does he like to do? What kinds of things should he be encouraged to do next? The evaluation process consists of gathering the following kinds of information:

- Physical examination
- Individual psychological evaluation
- Social history
- Observation of your child in a natural environment (home, child care site)
- Assessment of need for transportation
- Other appropriate assessments, such as a *Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)*—this is a mandated evaluation component for a child whose behavior impedes or affects his/her learning or that of others. For more information, go to <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/functionbehav.htm>

PRESCHOOL EVALUATIONS CONT.



Family Interview

During the evaluation process you will be asked to share information about your child. How does your child act at home? How has your child developed over time? What are your child's strengths and needs? What are your child's interests? What is your child's temperament? Questions such as these will be an important part of your child's evaluation.

Testing

The formal testing includes all areas of development:

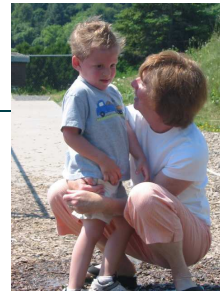
- *motor*—moving, including gross motor for skills like walking and climbing and fine motor for tasks like coloring and cutting
- *cognitive*—thinking, figuring things out, problem solving
- *speech/language*—talking, understanding, communicating
- *adaptive*—self-help in areas like dressing and eating
- *social/emotional*—getting along with others, coping
- *physical*—general health overview

For some children, the evaluation team might administer other assessments which, when reviewed in combination and compared to accepted milestones for child development, will determine the nature of your child's delay.

You can participate in the evaluation process by...

- Talking about your concerns about your child's development
- Filling in paperwork and answering questions
- Describing how your child is at home
- Identifying how your child's development has changed over time
- Sharing what your child does well

YOU ARE A TEAM MEMBER



The laws about Preschool Special Education identify parents as members of the CPSE. The Committee on Preschool Special Education is responsible for creating the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) which is designed to identify the programs and services to meet your child's educational needs. Your child's IEP is developed by a team that includes you, other individuals who may be present are:

- ⇒ a parent of a child with a disability from the school district
- ⇒ a representative from the district
- ⇒ teachers (general and special education)
- ⇒ other persons having knowledge of the child (related service providers)
- ⇒ an individual who can interpret the evaluation results
- ⇒ a representative from the county
- ⇒ an EI representative can be a member at the written request of the parent
- ⇒ you and the district can agree in writing that certain members of CPSE be excused from the meeting

That is quite a crowd! To help you feel part of the team your district should:

- give you at least 5 days notice about where and when the meeting will be held
- reschedule the meeting if it is inconvenient for you to attend (let them know as soon as possible)
- provide copies of report summaries if you request them
- let you know who will be attending the meeting
- come to the meeting prepared with knowledge and information about your child that will guide the team in developing the IEP, not present you with an IEP that has already been completed before the meeting

PREPARING FOR YOUR CPSE MEETING



Before your child's CPSE meeting, think about your answers to the questions below. All of these issues can and should be considered at the CPSE meeting. Your views and priorities for your child are important and should help guide the meeting!

- Are there aspects of your child's behavior that you believe interfere with learning? If so what?
- What are your child's strengths and weaknesses?
- What methods have you found to be effective in supporting your child's growth and development?
- How well does your child interact with other children their age?
- Do you want support for increasing your child's social skills?

You should leave the meeting with a clear understanding of:

- your child's strengths and weaknesses
- the goals that will be worked on for the school year
- the methods and services that will be used to reach these goals
- how the teacher/therapists will keep you informed about your child's progress

If you disagree with any recommendations that have been made, identify the recommendation and talk about it. If you and the other members of the committee don't reach agreement after talking the issue through, ask to meet again. It is helpful to put your concerns in writing.

And finally...

Don't leave the CPSE meeting until you understand the recommendations that have been made. If you disagree with any portion of the IEP, make sure the minutes of the meeting document your disagreement.



THE SERVICE OPTIONS FOR PRESCHOOLERS WITH A DISABILITY

Preschool children with a disability can receive services at sites such as:

1. *Related Services.*

- Home
- Nursery School
- Child Care Center
- Pre-Kindergarten
- Head Start
- Special Education Preschool

This option provides your child with the services of one or more therapists such as OT, PT, Speech, to meet his/her special needs. Preschool students may receive (RSO) related services only. The therapist works with your child a specified number of times each week determined by CPSE , and provides information and strategies to your family and the providers of any community based typical programs your child might attend. The location of the services will be decided at the CPSE meeting.

2. *Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT).*

This option provides a child with the services of a special education teacher. A preschool child may only receive SEIT services. The SEIT works directly with your child and family and/or staff to support your child's learning at least two hours each week. Some children who receive SEIT, may be placed in a special class program for either half or full day, including integrated programs with/without students with disabilities. The CPSE will decide on the location of this service.

At your CPSE meeting, Options 1 & 2 must be considered for your child before more restrictive program options.

New York State's system allows for the provision of related services and SEIT within general education preschool and/or day-care environments as well as in the child's home.

3. Special Class in an Integrated Setting (SCIS).

In this model, a child with special needs is placed in a class that contains both typical children and other children with special needs. There is a special education teacher and assistants who work with the children. Related services are delivered in SCIS programs as identified in your child's IEP. Children attend these programs along with typical peers.

4. Special Class.

This is a class of no more than 12 children, all of whom have special needs. It is staffed by a special education teacher, and one or more assistants. Related services staff meet with each child as described in your child's IEP.

The location of services will be decided at the CPSE meeting.

In All Cases...

The CPSE arranges for the appropriate amount of services to meet your child's special educational needs while ensuring that they are being served in the least restrictive environment (LRE). In other words, as much as possible, kids should be "just kids."

YOUR ROLE



After the IEP is developed, there are some things you can do to make sure it is working well:

- Get to know your child's service provider—you can share information about things that are working and identify challenges that your child may have. An informational handout that you can use as you share this information is "All About Me." To download a free copy, go to the Syracuse ECDC website:
<http://ecdc.syr.edu/AllAboutMeDownload.htm>.
- Have regular conferences or other agreed upon ways to communicate—the methods of informing you about your child's progress is now required to be part of the IEP. You might use notebooks, phone calls or meetings.
- Observe and listen to your child
 - ⇒ How is your child reacting at home?
 - ⇒ Are there behaviors that interfere with development or daily activities?
 - ⇒ Are there new skills you have seen?
- Share information with all team members that you think will impact your child.
- An important thing to remember about any plan is that it must be reviewed regularly to make sure that it matches your child's strengths and needs.

You are a decision-maker. It may take some practice, but you can do it!! You have a right, protected by law, to be heard, participate, disagree and ask for changes. Remember, laws don't enforce themselves. Even if you feel nervous...speak up, ask questions, share your opinions about your child. If you disagree with any part of this process there is guidance available to help you make sure your rights are being upheld.

Procedural Safeguards Notice

<http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/prosafenotice/septcover.htm>

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When you have questions about young children, call us.
We know where to look for answers.