

North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program Procedural Guidance

Reference: Transition to Pre-School and Other Programs Policy

Transition from the Infant-Toddler Program

Introduction

Children receiving early intervention services from the NC Infant-Toddler Program (NC ITP) must transition out of the Program at the age of three years and may experience other transitions while in the North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program. Families must be informed that the entitlements afforded them and their children under the NC ITP end at the child's third birthday.

Assisting the family with transitions, including negotiation of timelines and participants, is a major role of the Service Coordinator. The Service Coordinator must involve the family in planning transitions and provide appropriate assistance and attention to ensure that transition is as smooth as possible. The Individualized Family Service Plan team, facilitated by the Service Coordinator, must develop outcomes for the Individualized Family Service Plan related to transition from the NC ITP.

A child and family may make numerous transitions while in the Infant-Toddler Program. Examples of such transitions include hospital to home, agency to agency, provider to provider, home to center-based, and from the Infant-Toddler Program to the Preschool Program or other community settings.

Families have the right and responsibility to make informed decisions about their choices and options. This may include having the opportunity to visit programs and agencies before decisions are made, having discussions with providers or with other families using those services, reviewing videotapes or written materials, etc.

Communities must develop and design their own local transition procedures, based upon the needs of families in the community and local resources.

Supporting families to become more informed about community transition options is important. Service providers should be careful to present facts only rather than personal bias or prejudice.

Transition Processes from the Infant-Toddler Program at Age Three Years

1. Transition Planning Meeting

Program options are reviewed for the toddler receiving services for the period from the toddler's third birthday through the remainder of the school year. Written authorization from the parent to make any referrals, other than to make the child known to the Local Education Agency/ Public School Unit (LEA/PSU) is required.

- A. Each family of a toddler who is receiving early intervention services is included in the development of the transition plan.

- B. A transition plan is added to the toddler’s IFSP between the ages of 2 years 3 months and 2 years, 5 months for all children enrolled in NC ITP. Any child enrolled between the ages of 2 years, 6 months and 2 years, 9 months will have the Transition Planning Meeting completed as part of the Initial IFSP meeting.
- C. The transition plan in the IFSP must include:
 - i. Discussion of parental rights and what “transition” means, with individualized steps and activities for the toddler and his or her family to exit from the NC ITP.
 - ii. Any transition services and other activities the IFSP Team identifies as necessary to support the transition of the toddler and his or her family.
 - iii. Discussions with, parents, as appropriate, about program options (including preschool special education services, Head Start, childcare and other community services) that may be available when child is no longer eligible for Part C.
 - iv. Plans for Child Find Notification. The Family is to be informed that child find notification information will be transmitted to the LEA/PSU when child turns 2 years, 6 months; and that the LEA/PSU will be contacting the family within 30 days of notification. With parental consent, transmission of additional information to the LEA/PSU to ensure continuity of services from Part C to the Part B program, including a copy of the most recent child and family assessments and most recent IFSP.
 - v. Procedures to prepare the toddler for changes in service delivery, including steps to help the child adjust to, and function in, a new setting.
- D. The steps included in the transition plan must support the toddler’s transition to one of the following:
 - i. preschool services under Part B;
 - ii. early education, Head Start, Early Head Start, or childcare programs; or
 - iii. other appropriate services.
- E. With written parental authorization, inform the new provider about the child and family to ensure continuity of services. This includes providing evaluation and assessment information and a copy of the current Individualized Family Service Plan. New providers may include the LEA/PSU or other community programs offering services to young children.
- F. These meetings must be conducted:
 - i. in settings and at times that are convenient for the family and
 - ii. in the native language of the family or other mode of communication used by the family unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.
- G. Meeting arrangements must be made with, and prior written notice provided to, the family and other participants early enough before the meeting date to ensure that they will be able to attend. Required participants for a meeting conducted to develop the Transition Plan include:
 - i. the parent or parents of the toddler;
 - ii. other family members, as requested by the parents, if feasible to do so;

- iii. an advocate or person outside of the family, if requested by the parents;
- iv. the designated NC ITP service coordinator;
- v. a person or persons directly involved in evaluations and assessments; and
- vi. persons who will be providing services to the toddler and family, as appropriate.

H. **For families who choose not to determine eligibility for Part B Services**, the Service Coordinator and family develop a transition plan within the context of an IFSP Meeting. The transition plan should include steps to support a smooth transition from the Infant-Toddler Program to the other community programs, as specified by the family, by the child’s 3rd birthday.

2. Child Find- LEA Notification

- A. In NC, all children enrolled for Part C are deemed to be potentially eligible for Part B and parental consent is not required for Child Find -LEA Notification.
- B. Child Find notification is required for all potentially eligible children who will soon reach the age of three.
- C. All children enrolled in Part C prior to age 2 years, 6 months will be included in a Child Find notification list of children turning 2 years, 6 months that will be transmitted electronically, with password protection, to the LEA/PSU, on a monthly basis.
- D. Notification for all children found eligible for Part C at or after 2 years, 6 months is to be provided to the LEA/PSU as soon as possible and in a method that expedites the transmission of the Child Find notification (e.g., by email, fax, or phone).
 - i. For children referred between 90 and 45 days prior to child’s third birthday, Child Find notification is required.
 - ii. For children referred less than 45 days prior to the child’s third birthday, Child Find notification requires parental consent.
- E. The required information for Child Find notification from the CDSA must include: date of Child Find notification, first and last name of the potentially eligible child, parent name, address, phone, date of birth, home language. It may also include parent email address, and early intervention service coordinator (EISC) name. Each Child Find notification must be provided to the appropriate LEA/PSU representative where the potentially eligible child resides.
- F. The LEA/PSU will be contacting the family within 30 days of notification. (For additional information, refer to the Policy on Transition to Preschool and Other Programs.)

3. Transition Planning Conference

- A. For children enrolled in the NC ITP prior to age 2 years, 6 months, a Transition Planning Conference (TPC) must be held between 2 years, 6 months and 90 days prior to the child’s third birthday. The TPC must include the EI Service Coordinator, the family, and with the approval of the family, other appropriate parties to discuss any services that the child may need upon exiting from the NC ITP. Other appropriate parties may include the LEA/PSU, other community programs offering services to young

children, or any other person or service providers who might help support the child's transition from the NC ITP.

- B. The North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program Meeting Invitation is to be sent to the family, and other appropriate parties far enough in advance of the meeting to allow the parents the opportunity to invite anyone they would like to the meetings and give all parties time to prepare. If any changes are made to the provision of early intervention services, Prior Written Notice must also be given, as these changes require an IFSP review. (For additional information, please refer to the Policy on Transition to Preschool and Other Programs.)
 - i. Review and discuss the previously developed transition plan, including individualized steps, activities, and services to prepare the child for changes in service delivery and help the child adjust to and function within a new setting.
 - ii. If appropriate, review and discuss with the parent about the need for service coordination beyond age three and facilitate referral to the appropriate community provider.
- C. Update the Individualized Family Service Plan steps to support the transition of the child from the Infant-Toddler Program. The addition of appropriate outcomes, activities, and timelines would require an IFSP review.
- D. The Service Coordinator must convene a transition planning conference with the following persons:
 - i. Parent,
 - ii. Local Education Agency representative,
 - iii. Representative of the evaluative agency if the child has been evaluated, and
 - iv. Any other person or service providers who might help support and develop the transition plan.
- E. **For families who choose not to determine eligibility for Part B Services**, the Service Coordinator and family conduct a Transition Planning Conference to review and discuss the previously developed transition plan. The transition plan should include steps to support a smooth transition from the NC ITP to the other community programs, as specified by the family, by the child's 3rd birthday. Additionally, provide the appropriate LEA/PSU contact information for the parents' reference.
- F. For children referred, determined eligible, and enrolled in Part C services at or after the age of 2 years, 6 months, the Transition Planning Meeting and Transition Planning Conference may be combined into one meeting if certain requirements are met.

These meeting requirements include:

- i. Written notice is sent in enough time for all parties to participate (meeting invitation for TPM, TPC, and IFSP)
- ii. Informed prior written consent must be obtained prior to the provision of any EI services
- iii. Contents of the IFSP must be fully explained to the parents
- iv. Meeting must be held in a setting and at a time that is convenient for the family
- v. Meeting must be held in the native language of the family or other mode of communication used

by the family unless it is clearly not feasible to do so

- G. Complete closure of the child's record by the Children's Developmental Services Agency the day before the child's third birthday.

Upon a child's third birthday:

- A. The LEA/PSU assumes responsibility for ensuring a free and appropriate public education and guaranteeing protection of child and family rights.
- B. The Individualized Education Program becomes effective. If a child becomes eligible over the summer, an Individualized Education Program may be written for services to begin at the beginning of the school year if the child is not eligible for extended school year.

Eligibility Categories for the Preschool Program

The term "preschool children with special needs" includes all three- and four-year-old children and those five-year-old children who are ineligible for kindergarten and who, because of permanent or temporary cognitive, communicative, social-emotional, or adaptive disabilities, are unable to have all of their developmental needs met in a normal environment without special education and related services. Preschool children may become eligible for services upon reaching their third birthday. Categories of eligibility, along with other details about Preschool Program services, can be found on the NC Department of Public Instruction website, and the NC Office of Early Learning, www.ncpublicschools.org/earlylearning/