



# **Our Journey Continues From IFSP to IEP**

**A Parent's Guide to Transition  
Planning from Early  
Intervention to Preschool  
Services  
in New Jersey**

**NJ EIS**

NJ EARLY  
INTERVENTION  
SYSTEM  
BIRTH TO THREE

Dear Families,

The purpose of this guide is to help you understand how to prepare for a successful transition for your child from Early Intervention Services (Individuals with Disabilities Act – Part C) to Preschool Special Education Services (IDEA – Part B). This presentation has been written to support you at each step of the transition process. We believe you are your child's best advocate and are an equal partner and decision maker on your child's team.

Sincerely,

New Jersey Early Intervention System



# Meet Our Team

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This presentation was created through a partnership with the four Regional Early Intervention Collaboratives. The REIC's are committed to providing a family-centered, family driven, culturally sensitive system of services and supports.

## From Family Focused to Child Focused

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), children who qualify may receive special education services. From Birth up to age three, services are provided by the New Jersey Early Intervention System. Early intervention services and goal planning for your child and family are defined in an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

The Part B preschool program focuses on your child's educational needs. Children ages three through five years old are provided educational supports to enable them to participate in daily activities and have access to the general curriculum.



## IDEA Part C

### Early Intervention - Family Focused

**Lead Agency:** New Jersey Department of Health

**Ages Served:** Infants and Toddlers, birth to age three, with developmental delay or disabilities

**Eligibility:** Infant or Toddler has a delay in one or more of the five designated areas of development or has a condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay.

**Timeline: 45 Days to complete evaluation and Initial IFSP** once parental consent and completed referral is received.

**Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP):** A written plan of services that your child and family will receive.

**Location:** Services occur in child's natural setting, such as in home or childcare center.

## IDEA Part B

### Preschool - Child Focused

**Lead Agency:** New Jersey Department of Education

**Local Lead Agency:** Local Education Agency (LEA)

**Ages Served:** Children, ages three to five years, with disabilities. Five-year-olds who are eligible for kindergarten are not served through the Preschool Program.

**Eligibility:** Child must meet criteria as having a disability in one of the classification categories as defined by IDEA, and a determination must be made that the disability affects their learning.

**Timeline:** The LEA has **90 days from the time referral is completed and** parental consent is signed and submitted to complete evaluation; if the child is found eligible, to initiate Special Education and Related Services.

**Individualized Education Program (IEP):** A legal document that states a child's educational goals and the services and supports the school will provide, must be written within 30 calendar days after a child is determined eligible.

**Location:** Supports and services are provided in the least restrictive environment.



## **When Your Child is Preparing to Exit IDEA/ Part C Services You Have the Right To:**

- A transition plan with outcomes, supports, and services needed to support your child's exit from IDEA/ Part C when your child turns three years old.
- Notification to your local school district that your child is potentially eligible for preschool services.
- Referral to your school district and/or other community programs.
- A transition conference with your school district or with an early childhood/preschool program of your choosing.



## What Is Transition?

Leaving and entering a program requires formal planning and preparation. A transition planning conference can be held as early as age 2 years and 3 months, but no later than 2 years and 9 months.

Your Service Coordinator and IFSP team will work closely with you to make sure you are as prepared as possible to support your child's transition to an early childhood setting(s). If your child is eligible for preschool special education services, important decisions about your child's future educational needs will be discussed.



### 2 YEARS, 3 MONTHS TO 2 YEARS, 9 MONTHS:

Transition meeting is scheduled,  
and transition plan is written.

(Transition meeting can be held  
during six-month IFSP review.)

### 2 YEARS, 9 MONTHS:

Plan for Initial Part B evaluation is  
written and given to parent (s) for  
consent.

### 2 YEARS, 11 MONTHS:

Evaluation is completed and  
a determination of eligibility is made.

# Transition Planning

- Around your child's second birthday, you and your Service Coordinator will begin working on next steps for your child. This is called transition planning.
- The transition plan will be included as part of the IFSP and will contain important time frames for helping map out the transition process. You must give parental consent to send information about your child to the school district or any other agencies. Without consent, there could be a break in services.
- Through the transition planning process, you and your Service Coordinator will develop a plan to make sure that your child's needs are being met and that the transition will be successful.
- In the transition meeting, preschool services your child may be eligible to participate in will be discussed.

## If determined eligible for services:

Prior to the 3RD BIRTHDAY: IEP is written and parental consent is obtained.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday Part C Services end.

If child turns 3 in summer, the IEP team will determine the date when services under the IEP will begin.

If the 3rd birthday occurs in the spring or summer, IEP team should discuss Extended School Year (ESY) services.

IEP must be reviewed at least annually to determine if any changes are required in order to meet your child's educational needs.



# What Happens Before my Child Turns 3?

## **Referral:**

At least 90 days before your child's third birthday, your Service Coordinator will send your child's name, date of birth, and contact information to the local school district unless you chose not to do so (opt out).

## **Evaluation:**

A variety of assessment tools and strategies are used to gather information about your child, including information shared by you.



# Eligibility

When the evaluation is completed, eligibility is determined collaboratively at a meeting. In general, to be eligible for special education and related services a student must have a disability, as defined by IDEA.

The classification Preschool Child with a Disability applies to a child between the ages of 3 and 5 years old who is experiencing a 33% delay in one developmental area, or a 25% delay in two or more areas as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures.

The developmental delay must be in one or more of the following areas:

- Physical, including gross motor, fine more, and sensory (vision and hearing)
- Intellectual
- Communication
- Social and emotional
- Adaptive

Or has an identified disabling condition, including vision or hearing, that adversely affects learning or development and who requires special education and related services.

If your child is found eligible for preschool special education, you will participate in a meeting to develop your child's Individual Education Program (IEP). You are part of the IEP team. At the parent's request your Part C Service Coordinator and others who know your child well will participate in the IEP meeting.



**What is  
an IEP?**



# What is an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

An IEP is a written legal document for your child that lays out the plan of special educational instruction, supports and services your child will need to make progress and thrive in school. It is developed, reviewed and revised in a meeting in keeping with certain requirements of law and regulations.

## **The IEP has two general purposes:**

1. To establish annual goals for the child; and
2. To state the special education and related services that the school will provide to, or on behalf of, the child.





## **An IEP Must be Developed Before Special Education Services Can Begin and Must Contain the Following:**

- Your child's present level of performance - what your child can do and is not able to do
- Annual goals to address delays
- 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)
- The extent to which your child will participate with non-disabled children in general early childhood educational programs
- Any supplementary aids, services, modifications and/or accommodations your child needs
- Starting date and length of time the services will be offered
- The method or procedures that will be used to measure if the annual goals have been met and how you will be regularly informed of your child's progress
- Documentation of the IEP team members who attended.

**You will receive a copy of the IEP when it is completed.**



## Who Pays for Services?

Services for preschool children (ages three through five) are provided free of charge through the public school system. IDEA Part B Preschool services are available to children who are eligible for special education and related services as appropriate. Your child's placement should be in the most natural and least restrictive environment (LRE). The school will review appropriate program options with you.

You and your child's team will consider specific programs available for your child. Settings can include but are not limited to:

- Regular early childhood inclusion program and receiving special education and related services in the regular early childhood program
- Separate special education class, separate school, or residential facility

Once you have decided on the type of setting for your child, your case manager can help you set up appointments to visit the potential program sites.



# Inclusion

Inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities promote healthy development, learning, and a sense of belonging, helping all children reach their full potential.

As you consider placement options for your child, you may wish to consider the following factors that can be used to identify high quality preschool programs and services:

**Access** - means providing a wide range of activities and environments for every child by removing physical barriers and offering multiple ways to promote learning and development.

**Participation** - means using a range of instructional approaches to promote engagement in play and learning activities, and sense of belonging for every child.

**Supports** - refers to broader aspects of the system such as professional development, incentives for inclusion, and opportunities for communication and collaboration among families and professionals to assure high quality inclusion.



## **Rights and Responsibilities as Parent or Guardian under Part B**

As a federal education program, you and your child have rights under IDEA/ Part B. If at any time you think you or your child's rights have been violated, you have the right to file a written state complaint about services received or denied. You may also request mediation and/or a due process hearing to resolve disagreements.

In brief, your rights as a parent under IDEA/ Part B are:

- to have confidentiality
- to have access to your child's educational records
- to participate in meetings related to special education services and placement
- the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to your child
- to obtain an independent educational evaluation (IEE) for your child
- to receive prior written notice relating to the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child
- to give or deny your consent before the school may take certain actions with respect to your child
- to receive an explanation of all procedures for resolving disputes



# **A Special Thank You to All Those Involved in the Collaboration and Development of this Presentation:**

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Your Child's Journey Early Transitions  
Family Connection of South Carolina

New Jersey Department of Education  
Parent's Rights in Special Education Handbook (PRISE)

Pacer Center  
Pacer.org

National Association for the Education of Young  
Children (NAEYC)





