

TRANSITION FROM FAMILY-CENTERED EARLY SUPPORTS AND SERVICES:

A Guide for Families and Staff



New Hampshire Department of Education,
Bureau of Special Education

New Hampshire Department of
Health and Human Services,
Bureau of Developmental Services

SPRING 2011

OUR TRANSITION PHILOSOPHY

The transition from Family Centered Early Supports and Services (ESS) to preschool special education and other community services is a time of change. Change usually causes stress. We can reduce this stress and make transition a positive experience for all involved by working as a team of families, preschools, early supports and services, and all other early care and education staff working with the family.

Effective teams establish open communication, share information and promote understanding and respect. All team members – families and staff – need knowledge and skills regarding the transition process and how to work together. They need to know their roles in developing each child and family's plan for transition as well as regulations, procedures and timelines that guide the transition process. The process needs to have a comfortable pace as families become aware of the events and decisions that need to be made prior to entry into the school district or other community services for children of preschool age. It is in the best

interest of the children, families and staff to have the transition timeline of support begin well before age three and include follow-up activities.

The transition of a child and family from Family Centered Early Supports and Services doesn't happen to families. It happens with families as they direct the overall process and share what they know about their child. We believe that when families and staff work together as a team, the best possible transitions occur for children and families and the agencies that serve them.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	Introduction
5	The Transition Process
6	When does the transition process start?
7	What are Transition Plans?
9	What is a Transition Conference?
10	What does it mean if my child is potentially eligible for preschool special education?
11	How do we determine if my child is potentially eligible for special education and should be referred to the school district?
12	Working for Children and Families Using Different Approaches
16	What happens when a referral to preschool special education is made?
18	Overview of the Preschool Special Education Transition Process
20	Transitions from Early Supports and Services to Preschool Special Education for Children who have Vision and/or Hearing Loss
21	Transition At a Glance
22	Transition Timeline-Putting It All Together
24	Transition Tips for Families
25	Tips for Preparing your Child for Transition
26	Transition Dictionary
30	Acknowledgements
31	Sample Transition Plan
32	Transition Resources

INTRODUCTION

The transition from Family Centered Early Supports and Services (ESS) to services for a preschool-aged child is a major milestone for families. Transition presents many opportunities as well as challenges. Parents who have been through this transition may tell you that while you can never be totally prepared for emotions that may surface, it helps to know the steps in the transition process and to understand how you can participate. Your ESS Service Coordinator will work with you to help you learn more about your role and the steps in the transition process. This process can be easier when families, providers from ESS, preschools, and other early childhood services work together as a team. An open and collaborative approach will help to ensure a smooth and effective transition for your child and family.

The purpose of this guide is to help families and professionals understand their roles and responsibilities in the transition process. It also includes a **Transition Dictionary** to clarify the language used during the transition process and to encourage clear communication among all team members.



THE TRANSITION PROCESS

All children transition out of Family Centered Early Support and Services (ESS). Some children meet all of their goals prior to reaching the age of three and are discharged from ESS. Other families choose to leave prior to their child's third birthday. Eligibility for ESS ends when your child turns three. Regardless of when and why your child is leaving ESS, a Transition Plan will be developed with you to help ensure a smooth transition.

There are a number of transition options to consider. There may be community based services that can support your child's and family's developmental needs including Head Start, community or private preschool, playgroups, continued Area Agency services, or other specialized services. Some of these options may require an application, but your ESS Service Coordinator will help you with this. You may also consider preschool special education



programs through your local school district. It is important to know that not all children who receive ESS qualify for preschool special education services. However, ALL children, regardless of whether they qualify for preschool special education, will be linked to community resources to assist their family in supporting their development. As part of the Transition Planning process, your ESS Service Coordinator will discuss all these options with you and help you to review and plan for this important milestone.

WHEN DOES THE TRANSITION PROCESS START?

Your ESS Service Coordinator will assist you through the transition process. Your ESS Service Coordinator serves as a link between your family and other community services, including preschool special education services. The key to ensuring your child's developmental needs are met in a timely fashion (i.e. no service gap at age 3) is to develop a written Transition Plan. The Transition Plan becomes part of your IFSP and is required for all families. The written Transition Plan begins the process and are developed and included in the IFSP:

- As soon as possible for a child found eligible for ESS after 24 months of age
- When a child who is less than 24 months of age is determined to be no longer eligible for ESS, or
- Beginning at 24 months of age for a child in ESS

If your child and family's IFSP Team determines that your child no longer requires ESS before he/she is 2, a written Transition Plan will be developed with you to provide you with available community resources and to ensure that you know who to contact if you feel that your child may need services at a later date.

WHAT ARE TRANSITION PLANS?

The written Transition Plan is part of your Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP). This important document lays out a timeline of steps that ensure that your child and family transition smoothly from ESS.

Since all children transition from ESS, a well-written Transition Plan for each individual child and family is essential. Your ESS Service Coordinator will discuss the various options that may be available for your child and family after your child turns three. ESS can help you to evaluate all your options and decide what will best meet your child and family's needs. The Transition Plan should include time to research community supports, make site visits to preschools or other programs, and complete all necessary paperwork.

Since ESS has been working with you and your child, your ESS Service Coordinator can be an ally.



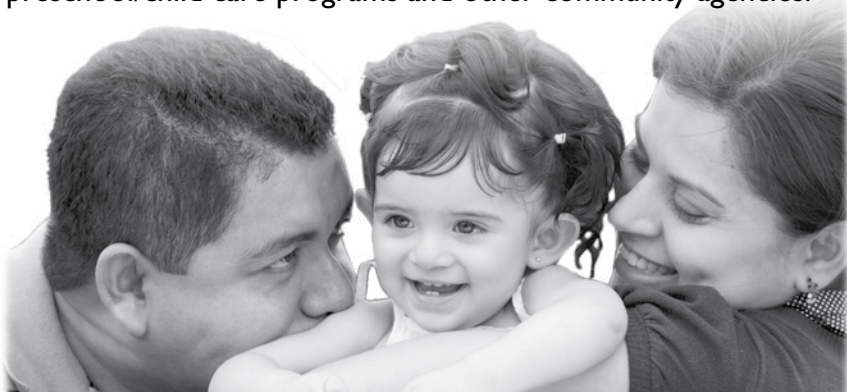
The laws governing ESS requires that a written Transition Plan:

- Supports your family in exploring future service options;
- Lists activities to prepare your child for transition;
- Lists parent training and information resources;
- Includes, with your consent, referrals to your local school district, local area agency family support, or other community resources;
- Includes, with your consent, arrangements for facilitating a Transition Planning conference with your local school

district

- If your child might not be eligible for services from your school district, includes bringing together your family and team to discuss other services that might be helpful to your child and family.

The Transition Planning process provides an opportunity to talk with your IFSP Team about your child's and family's options after your child's third birthday. This is a great time to celebrate your child's successes and accomplishments and to plan for the future. Some activities that could be discussed in developing the Transition Plan are visiting and applying to Head Start, local preschool/child care programs and other community agencies.



WHAT IS A TRANSITION CONFERENCE?

A Transition Conference with the school district and other agencies as appropriate is a meeting that is coordinated and facilitated by your ESS Service Coordinator. By law, ESS is required to hold the Transition Conference not more than 9 months before but not less than 90 days before your child turns 3. Your consent is required to invite the school district and any other agencies to the Transition Conference.

The purpose of the Transition Conference is to:

- Identify any transition services needed by your child and family;
- Establish steps for your child and family to exit from ESS services; and
- Review your child's program options for the period from his or her third birthday through the remainder of the school year.
- Update your child's Transition Plan in the IFSP

At the Transition Conference, the IFSP Team will also determine whether your child is *potentially eligible* for preschool special education and discuss making a referral for preschool special education to your local school district.

Transition Conference participants include:

- Your family and other persons requested by your family
- Your ESS Service Coordinator and other service providers as appropriate
- And may include the Local Education Agency (LEA)/school district representative

The law requires that ESS invite a school district representative to the Transition Conference and school districts are required by their own regulations to participate in it. Every effort is made by your ESS Service Coordinator to find a mutually agreeable time for you and the school district representative when scheduling the Transition Conference. However, if a mutually agreeable time cannot be found, the Transition Conference must be held not less than 90 days before your child turns 3 regardless of whether the school district representative can attend.

The Transition Conference is a time for you ask questions not only of your ESS Service Coordinator but of others attending the Transition Conference. They are a resource for you. Make sure that you understand the Transition Plan for your child and the important role you plan in your child's transition.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN IF MY CHILD IS POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE FOR PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION?

The decision about whether a child is *potentially eligible* for preschool special education is made by the IFSP Team during the Transition Conference. This means that the IFSP Team, which includes you, believes that your child should be referred to special education to see if your child needs additional supports and services through the school district after your child turns three. It does not mean that your child is eligible for special education. Special education has different eligibility criteria and not all children receiving ESS will be eligible for special education. Once the IFSP Team determines that your child is *potentially eligible* your ESS Service Coordinator will secure your written consent to send a formal referral to your local school district.

HOW DOES THE IFSP TEAM DETERMINE IF MY CHILD IS *POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE* FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION AND SHOULD BE REFERRED TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT?

In making the determination that a child is *potentially eligible* for special education, the IFSP Team should consider the following factors:

- Does your child have a perceived delay/concern/issue in any of the 5 domains (Physical, Cognitive, Social/Emotional, Communication, and Adaptive)?
- Does your child's delay/concern/issue impact education and functional performance (how your child shows skills and behaviors)?
- Does your child require specialized instruction?
- Does your child's delay/concern/issue impact their ability to access the curriculum/participate in typical preschool activities?
- Is your child not meeting developmental milestones?
- Are your child's current gains in performance a result of services?
- Is your child at risk without continued services?
- Does your child have emergent skills (newly developing skills and activities)?

These questions can help guide you and the rest of the IFSP Team in making a decision about whether a child is *potentially eligible* for special education. As a parent you have the right to refer to special education at any time or to choose not to refer to special education. If your IFSP Team is unsure about whether your child is *potentially eligible*, the IFSP Team, with your permission, should make a referral to special education.

WORKING FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES USING DIFFERENT APPROACHES

Services for infants and toddlers and preschool aged children with delays or disabilities are all provided under the same federal law – the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA is broken up into sections or parts – Part C which covers children ages birth through 2 years and Part B that covers children aged 3 to 21 or graduation with a regular high school diploma, whichever comes first. Both ESS and Preschool Special Education support children with disabilities. However, each system has a different purpose and philosophy for delivering services.

In ESS, services are provided to both the family and the child. The IFSP can include both family and child outcomes. The purpose and design of ESS is to help a child develop and build the family's capacity to care for their child. Special Education provides eligible children with disabilities a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) as determined in their Individualized Education Program (IEP), in the least restrictive environment (LRE).



Below is a chart of some of the differences between ESS and Special Education.

	ESS Family Centered	SPECIAL EDUCATION Child Centered
PURPOSE	Maximize a family’s ability to understand & care for their child’s developmental needs	Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment
HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE	IFSP Team determines the outcomes with an emphasis on the family’s priorities	IEP (Individualized Education Program) Team, which includes the parents, determines child’s goals & objectives
PLANNING DOCUMENT	IFSP (Individualized Family Support Plan) includes outcomes desired for child and family	IEP (Individualized Education Program) includes measureable annual goals & objectives that enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum
SERVICES PROVIDED	Specific family centered early supports and services needed to achieve the outcomes	Special education/ specialized instruction and related services

Federal and state laws outline the transition process for children transitioning from ESS to preschool special education. Both the federal law (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004) and NH state regulations (HeM 510 for ESS and the NH Rules for the Education of Children with Disabilities for special education)

include family rights to assist you in supporting your child. It is important that you know your rights and how you can be involved in the process.

YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS

- You have a right to participate in all meetings throughout ESS, the transition process and in preschool special education
- You are a member of your child's IFSP and IEP Teams
- You have a right to see your child's records both in ESS and in preschool special education
- You must be notified in writing about important decisions regarding your child's services (Written Prior Notice)
- Your written consent is required for all steps in the ESS and special education process including evaluation, determining eligibility and providing services

IN ADDITION, IN PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION, PARENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- A signed IEP in place on or before your child's third birthday, even if his or her birthday occurs during the summer
- Receive information in a way that is understandable to you
- Be provided with an interpreter or translator, if needed
- Invite your ESS Service Coordinator (or others) to IEP meetings during transition
- Receive 10 day advance notice of IEP meetings
- Request access to information 5 days prior to an IEP meeting

- Provide written consent at each step in the special education process (disposition of referral, evaluation, determination of eligibility, IEP and placement)
- Request an IEP Meeting at any time to discuss progress or concerns
- Take 14 days to review and make a decision about IEP Team proposals at every step of the process

In both ESS and preschool special education, there are processes in place to help resolve disagreements if you should not agree with your IFSP or IEP Team. As part of the transition process, the school district representative will provide you a copy of the Procedural Safeguards. However, before acting on any of your procedural safeguards, please ask for another meeting to discuss and ask more questions. If you have questions about working with your IFSP or IEP Team, consider talking with the Parent Information Center on Special Education (listed in the **Resources** section of this book) about strategies.

In addition to the laws that regulate the transition process, each Area Agency has entered into an agreement with their local school districts concerning how the transition process will happen and timelines for the steps. These collaborative Interagency Agreements help professionals from both ESS and preschool special education work together to ensure that families like yours experience a smooth and successful transition from ESS to preschool special education. The chart on the following pages (18-19) outlines the steps and timelines in the transition process. Ask your ESS Service Coordinator about the timelines for these steps in your region.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A REFERRAL TO PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION IS MADE?

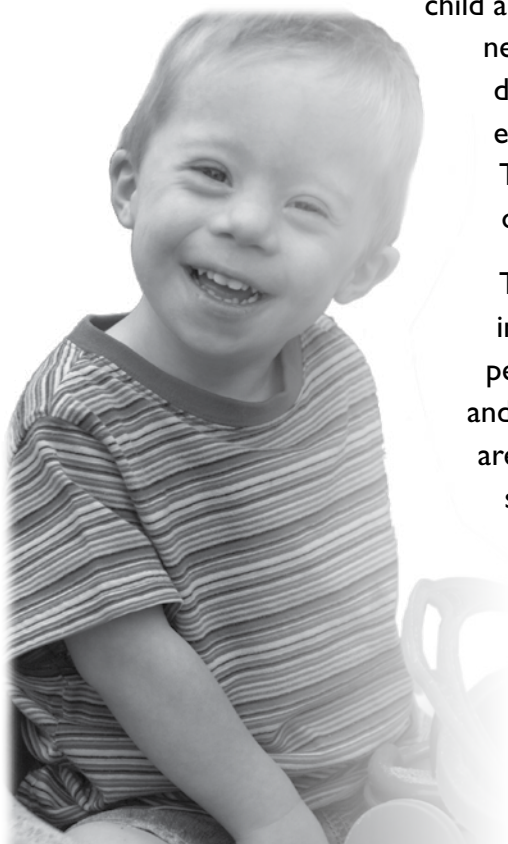
The special education process begins with a referral to your local school district. Referrals to special education can be made by anyone, including the family themselves. According to HeM-510 (NH ESS State rules) ESS is required to have parent permission in order to make a referral to a school district. Regardless of who or when a referral is made, once the school district receives a referral they must act on it.

After the school district receives the referral, they must schedule a meeting with the parents and other members of the Individual Education Program (IEP) team, within 15 calendar days. This meeting is held to discuss all available information about your

child and to see if the IEP Team needs more information to determine if your child is eligible for special education. This is called the Disposition of Referral meeting.

The IEP Team is a group of individuals, primarily school personnel, service providers, and you, the parent(s), that are responsible for making all special education decisions.

When you attend a Disposition of Referral meeting (and any other IEP meeting), you are participating as a member of the IEP Team. Your voice is important.



If the IEP Team decides that they need more information about your child to determine eligibility for special education, your written parental permission is required to conduct any evaluations or observations. Evaluations are not only to determine eligibility but also to help determine what your child needs and the services your child requires to receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The IEP Team has 45 calendar days to complete the evaluation.

Based on the information provided by you and ESS, along with any evaluations the IEP Team may have done, the IEP Team determines if your child is eligible for special education under one or more of the qualifying disability categories. To be eligible your child's disability must negatively impact their educational and/or functional performance and require specialized instruction. For preschool children, the IEP Team will consider how your child's disability impacts them in typical preschool activities such as play and circle time as well as social development and pre-academic skills.

Within 30 days after your child is found eligible for special education, the IEP Team must meet to develop the Individualized Education Program (IEP). Sometimes this happens at the same meeting when eligibility is determined. You have 14 calendar days to sign the IEP and may either choose to agree, agree with exceptions, or disagree. Also, remember if you have questions or would like another meeting, just ask. The IEP is reviewed/revised annually, and must be in place at the start of each school year.

After you and the school district have signed the IEP, the IEP Team determines where your child's education will take place. This is called "placement". Placement is decided on an individual basis and options may include a variety of settings. Placement, however, must be in your child's Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) where all the services and supports listed in the IEP can be delivered.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSITION PROCESS

- 1 Planning for transition begins when your child turns 2, or earlier if your child is found no longer eligible for ESS, or as soon as possible if your child enters ESS after 24 months of age. At this time, a written Transition Plan is developed and becomes part of your child's IFSP. The Transition Plan lays out the steps and a timeline for what will happen over the next year.

THE TRANSITION PLAN

- 2 At least 90 days, but no more than 9 months, before your child turns 3, your ESS Service Coordinator will schedule and facilitate a Transition Conference. The purpose of this conference is to talk with the school district about whether your child is *potentially eligible* for special education and about making a referral. You will also talk about the program options for your child, create a plan for the transition process with the school, and update the Transition Plan in the IFSP.

THE TRANSITION CONFERENCE

- 3 With your written permission your ESS Service Coordinator will send the local school district a referral for special education at or immediately following the Transition Conference. This is a request that the school district consider your child for special education eligibility.

REFERRAL

- 4 After the school receives a referral, they must hold a meeting with you and other members of the Individual Education Program (IEP) team, within 15 calendar days. The parent is a member of the IEP Team. This meeting is to discuss all available information about your child and to see if the IEP Team needs more information to determine if your child is eligible for special education.

DECISION MAKING MEETING (DISPOSITION OF REFERRAL)

5

The IEP Team may decide that they need more information about your child to determine if your child will qualify for special education and that they want to conduct an evaluation. Your written permission for any evaluation is required. The IEP Team has 45 calendar days from the date you sign permission to complete the testing and hold an IEP Team meeting to determine if your child is eligible for special education.

EVALUATION

6

Based on the information provided by ESS and you, along with any evaluations the school may have done, the IEP Team determines if your child is eligible for special education and determines a disability classification. To be eligible the child's disability must negatively impact their educational and/or functional performance and require specialized instruction.

DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY

7

Within 30 days after your child is found eligible for special education, the IEP Team meets to begin developing the IEP. Sometimes this happens at the same meeting where eligibility is determined. You have 14 calendar days to sign the IEP and you may choose to agree, agree with exceptions, disagree or request another meeting. The IEP must be agreed upon and signed by both you and the school district by your child's third birthday.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

8

After the IEP has been signed by you & the school district representative, the IEP Team determines your child's educational placement to implement the IEP. Placement is decided on an individual basis and options may include a variety of settings. Placement, however, must be in your child's Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

DETERMINATION OF EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT

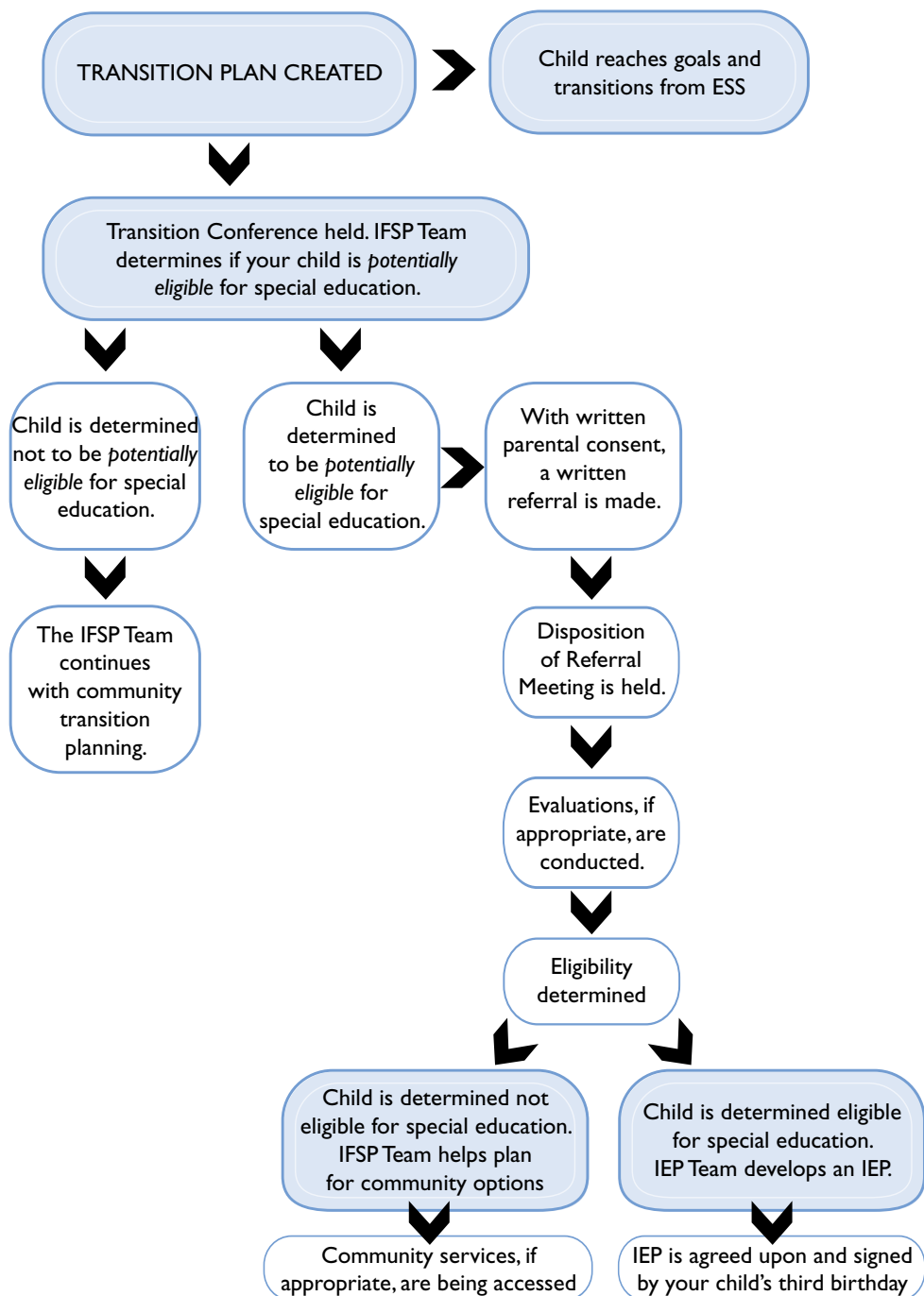
TRANSITIONS FROM EARLY SUPPORTS AND SERVICES TO PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE VISION AND/OR HEARING LOSS

Because of the complexity of the needs of children who have vision and/or hearing loss, especially those children who are Deafblind, it is recommended that more time be given to ensure a smooth transition. This time will allow for early information sharing and for resource allocation including hiring and training for staff, environmental modifications, teaching strategies and techniques, equipment needs and communication programming.

Below are additional recommendations for transition for children with vision and/or hearing loss, including Deafblindness, to ensure a smooth transition.

- Transition planning should begin no later than age 2 in order to coordinate between ESS and preschool special education staff. This includes preschool staff participation in home visits and therapy sessions to learn more about your child's needs.
- Teachers of the visually impaired, teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing and or a Deafblind specialist must be actively involved in all aspects of the transition process.
- It is imperative for all preschool staff (including paraprofessionals) to have a full understanding of vision and/or hearing loss (including Deafblindness) and the impact on learning and functioning. Additionally, training in amplification, environmental modifications, tactile based teaching, and control of sensory input and skills of daily living may be needed. *Training may be provided at no cost to the school district through the NH Deafblind Project (226-2900) and/or the M.I.C.E. program (228-1028)*

TRANSITION AT A GLANCE



TRANSITION TIMELINE-PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The following chart outlines the tasks in the transition process along with timelines and who is responsible.

WHEN: Your child is 24 months or younger and is ***no longer eligible*** for ESS

WHO: ESS Service Coordinator

WHAT: Coordinates the IFSP Team meeting to develop and implement a written Transition Plan, including, as appropriate, steps to exit the program. The Transition Plan is part of the IFSP. The plan includes supporting your family's exploration of future options; activities to prepare your child for transition; parent training and information. All team members get a copy of the Transition Plan.

WHEN: After your child transitions out of ESS

WHO: Community Services

WHAT: Your child receives community services

WHEN: Your child is 24 months or younger and remains eligible for ESS

WHO: ESS Service Coordinator

WHAT: Coordinates the IFSP Team meeting to develop and implement a written Transition Plan, including, as appropriate, steps to exit the program. The Transition Plan is part of the IFSP. The plan includes supporting your family's exploration of future options; activities to prepare your child for transition; parent training and information. All team members get a copy of the Transition Plan.

WHEN: At least 90 days and not more than 9 months before your child turns 3

WHO: ESS Service Coordinator

WHAT: Facilitates arrangements for and conducts a Transition Conference including ESS staff, your family, and school district and/or other community service staff.

THE TRANSITION CONFERENCE IS TO:

Review your child's program options for the period from his/her third birthday through the remainder of the school year

Update the Transition Plan with the school district and other community agencies

Determine if your child is *potentially eligible* for preschool special education

WHEN: At or immediately following the Transition Conference but no later than 90 days before your child turns 3

WHO: ESS Service Coordinator

WHAT: With the your written consent, makes a written referral to the school district and/or other community services or resources deemed appropriate in the Transition Plan.

Refers to Area Agency for continued services if appropriate

WHEN: Within 15 days of the school district's receipt of referral

WHO: IEP Team

WHAT: The IEP Team conducts disposition of referral meeting and determines what action needs to be taken regarding the referral (disposition of referral) and provides written notice to you regarding those decisions.

This meeting can be combined with the Transition Conference.

WHEN: Within 45 days of receiving written consent to evaluate

WHO: IEP Team

WHAT: Coordinates completion of evaluations and develops a written summary report of the evaluations.

Determines if your child is eligible for preschool special education.

WHEN: Within 30 days from date of IEP Team meeting to determine eligibility

WHO: IEP Team

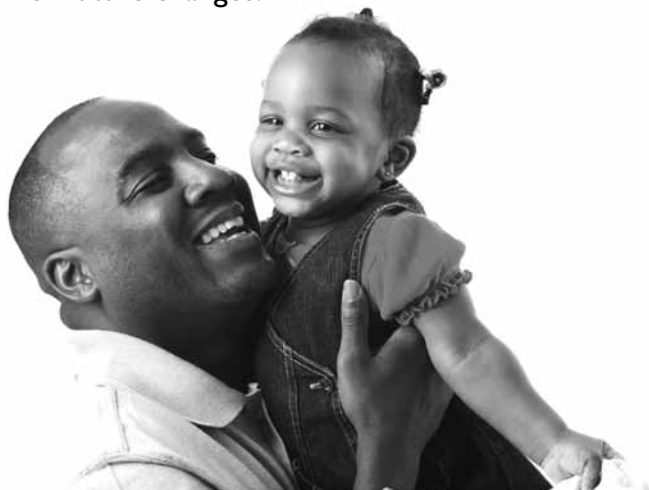
WHAT: Develops the IEP outlining the supports and services your child needs to receive a free appropriate public education.

TRANSITION TIPS FOR FAMILIES

- Think about what you want for your child's future. Sharing information and insights about your child will help to ensure that ESS, preschool special education, and/or community agencies make the best decisions about programs and services.
- Organize your child's records and have them available.
- Be prepared for meetings. Decide in advance what you want to share and the questions you want to ask. Write information down ahead of time so you will be sure to remember everything.
- Bring someone to the meetings with you. Bringing another person with you to take notes and to be another pair of ears or for emotional support can help.
- Learn about the transition and special education process. Becoming more educated about the process and what you can expect will help to ease your anxiety about the transition.
- Ask questions. If you need additional information, have concerns, or are unclear about something, don't be afraid to speak up. Asking questions also helps to minimize the chances of miscommunication or misunderstandings. Statements such as "I am concerned about..." or "Tell me more about..." are helpful.
- Bring a picture of your child as well as information you have about your child's strengths and needs. Share what your child does at home and what you have seen him/her do in other settings.
- Listen and consider what other team members are saying.
- Ask for time to review information and documents presented. Remember that you have 14 days at every step of the special education process to make a decision.

TIPS FOR PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR TRANSITION

1. Get information or training on strategies to help prepare your child for transition and adjusting to a new setting.
2. Take your child to visit the community agencies, programs, schools, therapists etc. that you are considering transitioning your child to.
3. Talk with your child about the upcoming transition, including helping them say good-bye to ESS providers.
4. Read books with your child about transition. Call the Family Resource Connection for recommendations.
5. Work with your ESS Service Coordinator and others as appropriate to identify activities that you and your family can use to help prepare your child for and adjust to preschool services, recreational programs, child care, or other community services.
6. Remember that change is a part of life and helping your child appreciate who has been important helps the child be prepared for future changes.



TRANSITION DICTIONARY

AREA AGENCY – Non-profit agency designated by the Bureau of Developmental Services/Department of Health and Human Services to provide services to persons with developmental disabilities of all ages in a region.

CHILD WITH A DISABILITY – Child ages 3-21 with a disability who requires special education and related services.

DISABILITY CATEGORY – Under NH special education regulations, there are 15 disability categories that are used to describe the disability that requires the child be provided special education and related services.

DISPOSITION OF REFERRAL – When a child is referred to a school district, the school district must convene the IEP Team, which includes the parent within 15 calendar days to decide what needs to happen next. This meeting is known as the ‘disposition of the referral meeting.’

ELIGIBLE CHILD – Term used by Family-Centered Early Supports and Services (ESS) for a child, birth through age 2 with a developmental delay, at risk for substantial developmental delay, or with an established condition with a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay.

ELIGIBILITY – Conditions and/or information that show that Family-Centered Early Supports and Services are needed for infants and toddlers or that special education and related services are needed for a child age 3-21.

ESY – (EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR) SERVICES – Special education and related services that are provided to a child age 3-21 with a disability when school is not typically in session, if determined by the IEP Team to be needed.

EVALUATION – Procedures used by qualified personnel to determine a child’s initial and continuing eligibility for ESS or special education.

FAMILY – Parent(s), legal guardian(s), or surrogate parent with legal responsibility for making decisions about the care, education and treatment of a child with a disability

FAMILY CENTERED EARLY SUPPORTS AND SERVICES (ESS) – A wide range of supports, such as information, guidance, instruction, therapeutic interventions, and emotional support, provided under public supervision by qualified personnel to meet the developmental needs of a child, birth through age 2, with a disability and his/her family. This is a federal program known as Part C of the IDEA.

IEP TEAM – A group of individuals, primarily school personnel, service providers, and the parent(s), responsible for making all special education decisions.

IFSP TEAM – Family members, ESS Service Coordinator, other ESS providers, representatives of other agencies providing supports to the eligible child and family, and/or any other individuals chosen by the family.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) – Written document that describes the special educational services that a child (ages 3-21 with disability) will receive.

INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN (IFSP) – Written plan for Family Centered Early Supports and Services for a child, birth through age 2, with a disability and his/her family.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT ACT (IDEA 2004)

– Federal law with requirements about Family-Centered Early Supports and Services for a child age birth through age 2 with a disability and his/her family (covered in Part C of IDEA) and for special education and related services provided through school districts for a child with a disability age 3 through 21 (covered in Part B of IDEA).

INFORMED CONSENT – Acknowledgement by signature that the parent understands and gives permission for carrying out of the activity for which consent is sought.

LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA) – School district responsible for providing educational services to a child age 3 through 21.

LEA (LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY)

REPRESENTATIVE – A required member of the IEP Team, the LEA Representative must be qualified to provide or supervise preschool special education, be knowledgeable about the curriculum, and know about the resources of the district.

LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE) – Setting where a child with a disability is educated to the maximum extent appropriate with children without disabilities.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY EVALUATION – Evaluation and assessment of a child conducted by qualified professionals from two or more different disciplines, and which includes the family.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS OR SETTINGS – Places and situations where a child (birth-2) without a disability lives, plays, and grows.

PLACEMENT – The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) in which your child will receive special education and related services described in their IEP.

POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION –

The IFSP Team determines a child has concerns rising to the level of needing to be referred to special education. This determination is made at the Transition Conference.

PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS – Defined procedures and processes under federal and state laws that protect the rights of the family and eligible child or a child with an educational disability.

REFERRAL – A formal request made to the local school district for evaluation to determine whether the child is eligible for special education.

RELATED SERVICES – Support services that are determined at the IEP meeting to be needed by a child in order to benefit from special education. Examples include: assistive technology, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech/language therapy, or special transportation.

SAU – School Administrative Unit

SERVICE COORDINATOR – Individual who, together with a family, has responsibility for accessing, coordinating, and monitoring service delivery for a child birth through age 2 with a disability and his/her family; responsibilities include facilitating development of a Transition Plan to enable the family to access the area agency, community supports or preschool services when a child is no longer eligible for Family-Centered Early Supports and Services.

SPECIAL EDUCATION – Specially designed instruction to meet the unique educational needs of a child with a disability, age 3 through 21.

TRANSITION CONFERENCE – coordinated by the ESS Service Coordinator to update the Transition Plan with the school district and other agencies, as appropriate, and to review program options from the child’s third birthday through the remainder of the school year.

TRANSITION PLAN – component of the IFSP that addresses transition from Family Centered Early Supports and Services (ESS) to the public school system, area agency services for a child 3 years of age or older or other community services.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guide was originally developed in 2005 and revised in 2011 to reflect changes in federal and state laws and regulations. It was revised by the Parent Information Center (PIC) with funding from the Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Developmental Services Part C ARRA Funds. Additionally, the staff of Supporting Successful Early Childhood Transitions (SSECT), a PIC project funded by the NH Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education coordinated the revision process.

In addition, we wish to thank the families, ESS providers, Preschool Special Education Administrators and Coordinators who worked throughout the process to provide information, insight, and assistance in the revision of this guide.



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

**American Recovery
and Reinvestment Act**



SAMPLE TRANSITION PLAN

Transition plan for _____ Date of birth _____

WHAT WILL WE DO?	WHO WILL DO THIS?	WHEN WILL WE DO THIS?*	DATE COMPLETED
Transition Plan initiated at IFSP Meeting.			
Decision made regarding referral to special education.			
Written referral made to special education and/or other community service.			
Submit request to have AA eligibility determined.			
Transition Conference scheduled with family, ESS, school, others as appropriate.			
Information sent to school, other community services.			
Evaluation to determine eligibility for special education.			
Eligibility for AA services determined.			
IEP developed.			
IEP services implemented.			
Desired community services in place.			
Follow-up contact with family to assess outcome of transition.			

I participated in the development of this plan.

Parent approval

Date plan approved

Service coordinator

Date

RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

PARENT INFORMATION CENTER

Provides telephone assistance and
free training for families about ESS and special education
603-224-7005 or toll-free at 1-800-947-7005
or visit our website at www.picnh.org.

NH FAMILY VOICES

Supporting families with children with special health care needs
Toll Free In State: (800) 852-3345 X 4525 or (603) 271-4525
<http://www.nhfv.org/>

NH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, BUREAU OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES, FAMILY CENTERED EARLY SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

(603) 271-5060 or online at:
[https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/programs-services/disability-care/
developmental-services/birth-3-family-centered-early-supports](https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/programs-services/disability-care/developmental-services/birth-3-family-centered-early-supports)

PRESCHOOL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NETWORK (PTAN)

Includes a searchable database for Preschool Special Education
contact information • 603-206-6800 or <http://ptan.seresc.net/>

CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL

Assisting families in finding child care programs
<http://nhccrr.org/>