



ANNOUNCEMENT: EI-09 #10
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING
BUREAU OF EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

ISSUE DATE: May 18, 2009
EFFECTIVE DATE: May 18, 2009
SUNSET DATE: On-Going

SUBJECT:	Transition of Toddlers to Preschool or Other Community Services
TO:	Early Intervention Program Leadership
FROM:	Harriet Dichter Deputy Secretary, Office of Child Development and Early Learning

Harriet Dichter

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this announcement is to provide updated guidance, at the request of Early Intervention personnel, on transition procedures previously issued announcement: EI 09 # 03. (The highlighted paragraph on page 3 is the only change in the Announcement)

- Toddlers transitioning from the Infant/Toddler Early Intervention (EI) program to the Preschool EI program or other community settings at age three
- Infants/Toddlers who are transitioning to other community services prior to age three
- Procedures for evaluation of children who are potentially eligible for EI services and are within 90 days of their third birthday

BACKGROUND:

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA), Parts B (619) and C; Pennsylvania Act 212 (Early Intervention Services System Act); Pennsylvania EI Services, Chapter 4226; and Chapter 14, Special Education Services and Programs, are the applicable statute and regulations for children transitioning in EI.

In addition, IDEA Amendments of 2004 at 637 (a) (9) (c) require states, and Act 212 requires Pennsylvania, to establish steps for children to exit the Infant/Toddler EI program when the child no longer meets the eligibility criteria for EI services.

DISCUSSION:

Transition planning is a collaborative, extensive, and dynamic series of conversations and activities. Parents should be fully informed about EI so they understand that EI services are available to help them support their child's development and that these services may change over time due to the child's needs and age. Transition should be viewed as a process rather than a specific event. The process should begin early to promote and ensure continuity of service(s) and provide families with a seamless system of Early Intervention. It is critical that transition planning be embedded in the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) supports and services for all eligible children and families. By including the family from the beginning and encouraging their participation as part of the team throughout their Early Intervention experience, the family's capacity to support the growth and development of their child can be enhanced.

Infants/Toddlers to Preschool or Other Community Services

Prior to April 2 of each year, or on a quarterly basis, the Infant/Toddler EI programs shall identify the aggregate number of children who will turn three during the upcoming year (July 1-June 30) that are potentially eligible for the Preschool EI program. The Infant/Toddler EI programs shall share this information with their Preschool EI program partners.

A transition meeting that includes, at a minimum, the family, a representative of the Infant/Toddler EI program, and a representative of the Preschool EI program shall be scheduled for each toddler. The transition meeting shall be scheduled in accordance with IDEA Amendment at §637 (a) (9) (A) (ii) (II) that specifies that the transition meeting for a child who may be eligible for Preschool EI services must be held at least 90 days, (but at the discretion of all parties, not more than 9 months) before the child is eligible for preschool services.

Children receiving Early Intervention services should participate in early childhood education programs with their same age peers as much as possible. Infant/Toddler EI program staff should provide anticipatory guidance to families as they make preschool setting decisions for their child including the timelines for registering and the age cut off of such programs. Transition planning should include strategies for assuring that services change to meet the changing developmental needs of the child rather than changing simply because funding streams change. Changes in services can be aligned to the transitions a child may have as a result of participating in Pre K Counts, Head Start, child care or other early childhood education setting. For example, to lesson multiple transitions, Infant/Toddler services could continue in whole or in part until the child is age eligible for an early childhood program.

In the case of a toddler who may not be eligible for Preschool EI services the Infant/Toddler EI program, with the approval of the toddler's family, shall make reasonable efforts to convene a meeting to discuss other community services/supports that may be available to the toddler. This meeting shall include the family, representative(s) from the Infant/Toddler EI Program and representative(s) from appropriate community services.

Letters of invitation for transition to the Preschool EI program or to other community services should include the components of the attached Invitation letters that are included in this announcement. Invitation letters must be sent to the family, Preschool EI program and other participants no later than 30 days before the scheduled transition meeting date, unless the parties all agree to meet within shorter timelines.

All aspects of the toddler's current EI services, including: location of services, providers of services, and frequency and duration of services shall be reviewed at the transition meeting so that appropriate planning for the toddler's transition can occur. The appropriate transition steps and services that will be taken to support the toddler's transition shall be documented on the transition page of the IFSP and shall at a minimum include:

- Discussions with the toddler's family regarding future service options;
- Preparation of the toddler for changes in service delivery, including activities to help the toddler adjust to, and function in, a new setting;
- With parental consent, transmission of information about the toddler, including evaluation and assessment information and copies of the toddler's IFSP, to the local Preschool EI program, to ensure continuity of services.

Should any changes to the IFSP be anticipated between the transition meeting and when the toddler transitions, the Infant/Toddler program shall invite their Preschool Early Intervention program partners to meet either in person or on the phone to discuss those changes. Any change in services or service location during the program year should be based on the needs of the toddler.

If the initial transition meeting occurs six or more months prior to the toddler's third birthday, the transition plan shall be updated at least quarterly from the time of the transition meeting. The updated plan shall include documentation of the progress toward implementing transition activities. The Preschool EI program shall be invited to any meeting related to updating the transition plan and shall also receive a copy of the updated plan.

The transition process between the Infant/Toddler EI program and the Preschool EI program shall be included in the local interagency agreement. Local interagency agreements related to transition shall include the following: participant attendance for the transition meeting; location of the meeting and follow up correspondence; transfer of information and timelines for the transfer of information; transition point person from each agency; and evaluation procedure agreements. Infant/Toddler and Preschool EI programs are encouraged to meet regularly to discuss general transition issues, concerns and/or procedures.

Procedures for evaluation of children who are potentially eligible for EI services and are within 90 days of their third birthday shall also be included in the local interagency agreement. The interagency agreement should include provisions so that the child presenting for EI within 90 days of his/her third birthday is referred to the Preschool EI program for evaluation. While this facilitates the development of an IEP by the child's third birthday, there is still the need for service delivery in the interim as required by IDEA. The local interagency agreement should include provisions for this service delivery, by either EI program, consistent with Part C timelines. Infant/Toddler EI programs shall be responsible for funding these services until the child's third birthday.

Pennsylvania follows the 3rd Circuit order that Infant/Toddler services are pendent if there is a dispute over services to be provided by the Preschool EI program. Pendency is the continuation of the services set forth in the child's IFSP when a dispute arises at the time the child is transitioning into the preschool Early Intervention program at age three (3) and the family requests a formal hearing to resolve the dispute.

Training

Infant/Toddler and Preschool EI personnel who work directly with at-risk children and children with disabilities shall receive the necessary training on the coordination of transition services on an annual basis. Training activities shall be available and listed on the Infant/Toddler and Preschool program's training and technical assistance plan in order to ensure that the appropriate transition services are implemented throughout the Infant/Toddler and Preschool EI programs.

Children under 3 years of age exiting the Infant/Toddler EI program when they are no longer eligible for Early Intervention services

IDEA Amendments of 2004 at §637 (a) (9) (C) requires states to establish steps for children to exit the Infant/Toddler EI program. When infants, toddlers and families that have benefited from EI services have reached developmental milestones and/or have successfully completed their IFSP goals prior to transition at age 3, steps shall be taken to exit the infant or toddler from the

Infant/Toddler EI Program. If the initial reason for referral to the Infant/Toddler EI program was related to the five at-risk categories outlined in Chapter 4226.25, families are eligible for tracking.

The basis for the determination that the Infant/Toddler is no longer eligible for EI services may include, but is not limited to, ongoing progress monitoring or an MDE/IFSP team determination. All the requirements related to eligibility determination as outlined in PA EI regulations at §4226.22 and §4226.61 must be followed.

When an infant/toddler is determined to be no longer eligible for EI, the service coordinator should arrange a planning meeting with the team, including the family. This meeting shall be scheduled as soon as possible, but no later than fifteen calendar days after the determination has been made that the infant/toddler is no longer eligible for EI services. The planning meeting should address concerns and issues the family may have related to child development and include discussion about linking the child and family to other community supports. Discussion from the planning meeting, follow-up activities, and dates for completion of such activities must be documented and signed by the parent and the service coordinator. The transition plan form, included in the IFSP/IEP, should be utilized for this documentation.

If a parent disagrees with the eligibility determination all appropriate procedural safeguards shall be reviewed and discussed with the family, and made available to the family upon request. If a family disagrees with the determination and requests a due process hearing, an independent evaluation can be conducted at no cost to the family to assist in the resolution of the disagreement.

NEXT STEPS:

1. Infant/Toddler and Preschool EI Programs should implement the procedures included in this announcement and disseminate this announcement to EI providers.
2. EI-09 # 03 is obsolete with issuance of this announcement.

**INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A TRANSITION MEETING FOR
PRESCHOOL EARLY INTERVENTION**

Date Sent/Given to Parent/Guardian	
Child's Name	
Name and Address of Parent/Guardian	
	<< Name and Address of Preschool Agency >>

Dear << Parent/Guardian >>

We are sending this invitation so that you can participate in a meeting to plan for a successful transition for your child. This meeting is required to be held at least 90 days prior to the child's third birthday.

The purpose of this meeting is to begin the process for determining eligibility for the Preschool Early Intervention (EI) program and to discuss your child's progress and family concerns and priorities as they relate to transitioning. You may invite an advocate or any other person who you choose to invite.

In order to ensure a smooth transition, the Preschool EI program representative will be at the meeting to provide information about the Preschool EI program. While no placement or service decisions are typically made at this meeting, the Preschool EI program representative will provide information on how the Preschool EI program determines eligibility and plans for Early Intervention services if your child is found eligible for Preschool Early Intervention. With your permission, the Preschool EI program representative will receive a copy of the IFSP/IEP that includes the transition plan.

The team meeting has been tentatively scheduled as follows:

<i>Date</i>		<i>Time</i>		<i>Location</i>	

If this time, date, or location is not convenient, please contact me as soon as possible so we can arrange a mutually convenient time and place. Please contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Contact Person and Position	
Address	
Telephone	

Please respond to this invitation by checking the appropriate option below and returning this form to the contact listed above (by mail or in person) as soon as possible.

<input type="checkbox"/>	I will participate in the meeting as scheduled.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I wish to participate in the meeting but the date, time, and/or location are not convenient. Please contact me to make other mutually agreeable arrangements.
I need the following accommodations so that I may participate in the meeting:	
Parent/Guardian Signature	Daytime Telephone
	Date

	<< Name and Address of Preschool Agency >>
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INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A TRANSITION MEETING

Date Sent/Given to Parent/Guardian	
Child's Name	
Name and Address of Parent/Guardian	

Dear << Parent/Guardian >>

We are sending this invitation so that you can participate in a meeting to plan for a successful transition for your child.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss community options for your child as he/she leaves the Infant/Toddler Early Intervention program. To help with planning, we've invited _____ from _____ to attend.

The team meeting has been tentatively scheduled as follows:

<i>Date</i>		<i>Time</i>		<i>Location</i>	

If this time, date, or location is not convenient, please contact me as soon as possible so we can arrange a mutually convenient time and place. Please contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Contact Person and Position	
Address	
Telephone	

Please respond to this invitation by checking the appropriate option below and returning this form to the contact listed above (by mail or in person) as soon as possible.

<input type="checkbox"/>	I will participate in the meeting as scheduled.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I wish to participate in the meeting but the date, time, and/or location are not convenient. Please contact me to make other mutually agreeable arrangements.
I need the following accommodations so that I may participate in the meeting:	
Parent/Guardian Signature	Daytime Telephone
	Date