Early Childhood Transitions in North Carolina:

A Parent's Guide to the Infant-Toddler and Preschool Programs

Dear Parent,

Congratulations on your child's progress through the North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program. We have provided this booklet to help you be a successful partner in the planning for your child's transition from your current services in the Infant-Toddler Program to the Preschool Program.

The transition process has a standard set of procedures, but it is designed to be flexible and responsive to individual families. We understand that parents have individual preferences for how, when, and with whom they plan. You can decide how you wish to participate in the transition process.

We understand that everyone's feelings, wishes, and reactions are unique and based on their own culture, language, experiences, and situations. Your family has its own practices and beliefs, which should be respected by the service providers on your child's transition planning team.

We also know that families communicate in many languages and styles, and parents need information that allows them to understand their choices. This process acknowledges the variety of languages used by children and their families. You have the right to ask for interpreters and translators and to involve advocates and cultural mediators.

The service providers you work with will explain and give you choices about how to prepare for, make, and review changes as part of the transition process. You should feel comfortable with providers and satisfied with services. You have rights protected by law and have choices about how to best proceed for you and your child.

If you have any questions or concerns about anything in this booklet, or about your child's transition, please address these with the members of your child's transition team.

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Introduction

Transition means change. It happens in everyone's life in many different ways. Some of us look forward to change, while others don't like it. Either way, change is a part of life. Perhaps one of the best things we can do for our children is teaching them to deal with change. Transition in early intervention services means going from one program to another, such as:

- from the hospital to your home, or
- from infant-toddler services to preschool services, or
- from preschool services to kindergarten.

These mark what may be the first of many transitions, including educational transitions. They show the end of one service and the beginning of another.

When your child turns three, responsibility for funding services changes from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services to the Public Schools of North Carolina. This transition on the third birthday involves a change in who pays for your child's services, and it involves new providers or teachers, and different settings. Discussions and planning meetings will take place with your Early Intervention Service Coordinator (EISC) before your child turns three and you can talk about your options and the transition process.

Because you know your child best, you are your child's best advocate. Decisions about your child's services and programs should not be made without you. This handbook has been written to support and guide you at each step of the transition process. At some time in the future, you may share your copy of this handbook with another parent or family member of a young child. Hopefully, you will be able to share your successful transition experiences with this person, too!

Comparison of the NC Infant-Toddler Program and the Preschool Program

There are similarities and differences between the Infant-Toddler Program (Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA]) and the Preschool Program (Part B of IDEA). The following is a brief comparison of the two programs. If you have further questions, please discuss them with your Early Intervention Service Coordinator (EISC) and/or the Preschool Coordinator with your local school system.

North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program (Part C)

State Lead Agency:

Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, Women's and Children's Health Section, Early Intervention Branch

Local Lead Agency:

Children's Developmental Services Agency (CDSA)

Ages Served:

Children, ages birth to three years, with special needs

Eligibility:

Eligibility is based on evaluation and assessment results. A child must meet one of the two following eligibility categories:

Developmental Delay – A child is considered to have a developmental delay if he or she is considerably behind other children of the same age in one or more of the five areas of development (cognitive, communication, physical, social-emotional, and adaptive).

Established Conditions – A child is considered to have an established condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay. Examples include genetic disorders, neurological disorders, severe prematurity, vision impairment, hearing loss, and autism.

North Carolina Preschool Program (Part B)

State Lead Agency:

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Exceptional Children Division, Office of School Readiness

Local Lead Agency:

Local Education Agency (LEA); local school system

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:

Eligibility is based on observation, screening, and evaluation results. Results are presented to an IEP team. IEP stands for Individual Education Program. You are an important member of this team. Eligibility categories include:

- Developmental delay
- Autism spectrum disorder
- Deaf-blindness
- Deafness, hearing impairment
- Other health impairment
- Orthopedic impairment
- Speech or language impairment
- Visual impairment, including blindness
- Traumatic brain-injury
- Serious emotional disability
- Multiple disabilities
- Intellectual disability
- Specific learning disability

North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program (Part C), continued

Focus:

The North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program focuses on meeting the needs of both your child and family. The Infant-Toddler Program offers a variety of early intervention services to help young children ages birth to three years who have special needs. The Infant-Toddler Program strives to educate families on how to best meet each child's needs.

Available Services

Infant-Toddler Program services are available to eligible children and their families. Services must be provided in a natural environment. Infant-Toddler Program services include:

- Assistive technology services and devices
- Audiological services
- Service coordination
- Family training, counseling and home visits
- Health services
- Medical services
- Nursing services
- Nutrition services
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Psychological services
- Respite services
- Sign language and cued language services
- Social work services
- Special Instruction (also known as Community Based Rehabilitative Services)
- Speech-language therapy
- Transportation
- Vision services

North Carolina Preschool Program (Part B), continued

Focus:

The North Carolina Preschool Program focuses on your child's educational needs. The North Carolina Preschool Program offers a variety of services to help young children ages three to five years. The Preschool Program strives to educate the child to enable him or her to participate in daily activities.

Available Services

Preschool Program services are available to children who are eligible for special education and related services as appropriate. Placement should be in the most natural and least restrictive environment (LRE). Preschool Program services may include:

- Early identification and screening
- Multidisciplinary evaluations
- Special education (services in the home, school-based or itinerant)
- Related services such as:
  - Audiology
  - Counseling
  - Interpreting
  - Medical services for evaluation purposes
  - Occupational therapy
  - Orientation and mobility
  - Physical therapy
  - School nurse
  - Social work
  - Speech-language therapy
  - Transportation

North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program (Part C), continued

Type of Plan Used:

The North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program uses the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). The IFSP team, with you as a member, will decide what outcome you want on the IFSP.

The IFSP will:

- be responsive to your family's concerns, resources, and priorities;
- set outcomes for the functional needs of your child and your family;
- list the services your child and family need to assist with achieving the established outcomes;
- be discussed and written in your family's preferred language and way of communicating;
- be approved by your family before implementation;
- be supportive of your family's values; and,
- be reviewed at least every six months.

Service Delivery Model:

- Participation in the North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program is voluntary.
- Your main contact for services is your Early Intervention Service Coordinator (EISC) from your local Children's Developmental Services Agency (CDSA).
- Planning is done before and during IFSP development. You, your EISC, and other service providers on your IFSP team decide what services are needed, who will provide the services, and where they will be provided.
- A variety of local programs and professionals can be used to provide needed services. These may be provided in the home, in community settings, or in other natural environments where children without special needs participate. Service options may vary from community to community.

North Carolina Preschool Program (Part B), continued

Type of Plan Used:

The LEA will develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The Preschool IEP Team, with you as a member, will decide what educational goals will be on the IEP.

The IEP will:

- reflect your child's educational, developmental and functional needs through annual goals;
- specify the services your child will receive, for how long, and how often ;
- provide services in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), which for preschoolers is the natural environment; and
- generally be written for one year, reviewed at least annually, and revised as appropriate.

Service Delivery Model:

- Participation in the North Carolina Preschool Program is voluntary.
- Your main contact for services is your child's teacher or therapist employed by your local school district.
- Planning is done at the IEP meeting, where you are considered a full team member. Special education and related services are coordinated through the LEA.
- During the IEP meeting, annual goals are developed based upon the child's evaluation and present level of performance. After the goals are developed, the team determines services to be delivered. The team also identifies where and for how long services will be provided.

North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program (Part C), continued

- Your child must leave the North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program at age three. Children who are eligible will move into the Preschool Program coordinated by the Local Education Agency (LEA). Other services that your child may participate in, such as Head Start, regular preschool, etc., will be discussed with you during the transition planning process.
- The Care Coordination for Children (CC4C) program through your local Health Department or other community agencies may be available to assist you in coordinating services for you and your child beyond the Infant-Toddler Program. You may discuss this with your EISC.

Cost of Service:

Parents may be asked to pay for some services on a sliding fee scale. Your service coordinator can provide information about payment for services.

The following Infant-Toddler Program services must be provided at no cost to your family: child identification and screening, service coordination, developmental evaluations and assessments, development and review of the IFSP, and activities related to making sure that your rights are protected.

North Carolina Preschool Program (Part B), continued

- The LEA may have a variety of service options available for the child. These options might include home-based, school-based, or itinerant (traveling teachers) services.
- The main contact for continued services or a change in services will be your child's teacher.
- Continued special education services are available as your child grows older; however, eligibility requirements must be met.
- All decisions about services are made by the IEP team. You are a full member of the team.

Cost of Service:

Services included in the IEP are provided at no cost to the family. Under Federal law, this is called FAPE: Free Appropriate Public Education.

Child Find: If we suspect your child has a disability, the Infant-Toddler Program is required to send limited information (your child's name, date of birth, and date of enrollment in early intervention, along with your family's name, address, and phone number) to public school personnel responsible for child find. This information can be sent as early as your child's second birthday. Only the IEP team can determine eligibility for Preschool Program services.

Rights and Responsibilities as a Parent or Guardian under Part B (Preschool Services)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) provides you, as a parent or guardian of a child with a disability, with certain rights in regard to obtaining and continuing services for your child. Many of these rights are similar to those you have with the Infant-Toddler Program (IDEA-Part C). If you have been receiving services through the Infant-Toddler Program, a transition meeting will be held as early as nine months before, but no later than 90 days before your child's third birthday to discuss possible service options and goals.

In brief, your rights under IDEA-Part B are:

Evaluation

If you believe that your child has a disability, your child can be evaluated at no cost to you to determine eligibility for services.

Written Consent

You must give your informed written consent before your child is evaluated and/or receives special education services.

Written Notice

You must be notified in writing before any action is taken that may change your child's education or IEP.

Confidentiality of Information

The information stored and used by the LEA about your child will be kept confidential and made available to you on request. This information is stored and released in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

Due Process

It is the intent of the LEA to provide appropriate services to your child and resolve any disagreements at the local level. However, if you disagree with your child's identification, evaluation or provision of services, contact your LEA's Director of Exceptional Children. He or she will give you a Handbook on Parents' Rights, which will explain your child's educational rights and the procedural safeguards guaranteed to you as a parent or guardian.

Steps for Transition from the Infant-Toddler Program to Preschool Program Services

From age two to three, there are important times when meetings should happen so your child's early intervention services and supports are not disrupted.

Step 1

Transition Planning

- Around your child's second birthday, you and your early intervention service coordinator (EISC) will begin working on a transition plan.
- The transition plan will be included as part of the IFSP and will contain important time frames for helping map out the transition process.
- Through the transition planning process, you and your EISC will develop ways to make sure that your child's needs are being met and that the transition will be successful.

Referring Your Child to the LEA

- Children in the Infant-Toddler Program may be referred to the LEA for Preschool Program services nine months before their third birthday for evaluations needed to determine eligibility for the Preschool Program.
- If your child has a vision or hearing problem, or has complicated or intense service delivery needs, the LEA may be notified and a preliminary face-to-face meeting with the LEA may occur twelve months before your child's third birthday so that appropriate planning can begin for your child.
- If your child is three years or older and not receiving Infant-Toddler Program services, you may refer your child directly to the LEA if you have concerns. Upon receipt of the referral, the LEA will provide you with a copy of the most current Handbook on parents' rights.

Step 2

Transition Planning Conference

- As early as nine months before your child's third birthday, but no later than three months (90 days) before your child's third birthday, a transition planning conference will be held with you, your EISC, current service providers and others who may be working with your child and family after your child turns three.
- If your child is potentially eligible for Preschool Program services, a representative from the LEA will be invited to the conference, with your permission.
- At this conference, you and your child's team will review your child's outcomes on the IFSP, including transition planning activities; share information about your family's concerns and priorities; and talk about the range of service options that may be available to your family and child after the age of three (see page 14, What Options Should You Consider?).
- Depending on what services you are exploring for your child at age three, you may be asked to give consent for your child to receive certain evaluations or assessments by school or other agency staff to help determine eligibility for these programs and services.

Step 3

Gathering Information/Evaluation Process

- Before special education and related services begin with the LEA, an individualized multi-disciplinary evaluation must be conducted in your child's native language or way of communicating. The purpose of this multi-disciplinary evaluation is to decide whether your child has a disability that affects his or her learning.
- Evaluation information that is already available must be current and relevant to be used by the IEP team for decision making. Any information you can provide regarding your child's medical, educational, or social history may be helpful. If you agree, you will need to sign release of information forms so these records can be sent to your LEA.
- Any needed evaluations for your child will be completed by a multi-disciplinary team.
- A variety of assessment tools, strategies, and techniques are required to gather information to establish your child's eligibility. If your child is eligible, the information will help in writing the IEP.
- After the evaluations have been completed, a written report will be given to you. This report will include the evaluation results and recommendations, which should be explained to you in a way that you will understand.

Step 4

Meeting with the IEP Team (Preschool Program) to Determine Eligibility

- After all the evaluations have been completed, you will be contacted to meet with the IEP team (of which you are a member).
- If your child is eligible for the Preschool Program, an IEP and placement decision might be made immediately or at a later scheduled meeting. An IEP will be written within 30 days of your child's third birthday. Services will begin on your child's third birthday, unless your child turns three when school is not in session. You and the school might also agree to allow your child to remain in the EI program until the end of a school term.
- If your child is found ineligible to receive Preschool Program services after all the evaluations have been completed, the IEP team will suggest other possible service options for your child, as noted in Step 2.

Who Will Attend the IEP Meeting?

You are an important member of the IEP team and should attend the IEP meeting. Other members who must be invited to the IEP meeting are:

- With your permission, your EISC or referring agency personnel or teacher or representative from the current service provider (for children with vision or hearing problems, a representative from the Office of Education Services);
- An LEA representative who may be the supervisor of special education, preschool coordinator, the principal, or another designee, who is able to provide or supervise the provision of special education and to commit financial resources;
- A teacher qualified to provide regular early childhood education (this may be the same person as the special education teacher if that teacher holds a birth-to-kindergarten license);
- A teacher or service provider qualified to provide special education;
- A person knowledgeable about evaluation results (may be the special education supervisor or teacher); and
- Additional members that you or the school believes are necessary may also be invited. This might include a teacher or therapist who is currently working with your child, a physician, a supportive friend, or other family members. The school must inform you about the other people who are invited to the meeting.

Tasks of the Meeting

- Before the IEP meeting, you should receive a copy of the Handbook on Parents' Rights that explains your rights under the Preschool Program (which becomes effective on your child's third birthday if your child qualifies);
- Determining eligibility, if this has not yet been completed (once your child becomes eligible for Preschool Program services, an IEP must be written within 30 days);
- Developing and signing the IEP to become effective on your child's third birthday;
- Making placement decisions; and
- Completing paperwork.

Writing the IEP

The IEP team will discuss and develop goals for your child. This team will decide what special education and related services are needed, based upon the goals written on the IEP.

An IEP must be developed before placement in special education and must contain the following:

- Your child's present level of performance – what your child is able to do and 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 regular 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 (determine) if the annual goals have been met and how you will be regularly informed of your child's progress; and
- Documentation of the IEP team members who attended.

Before the Meeting

Many parents find it helpful to keep a notebook of important records. Whatever you decide to keep in this notebook will help your child, you, and the preschool personnel at the IEP meeting. Such notebooks may include:

- Medical records that are important, including shot (immunization) record;
- Important documents like birth certificate, Medicaid card, Social Security number;
- Copies of previous evaluations and current IFSP under the Infant-Toddler Program; and
- Pictures of your child.

In addition to keeping a notebook for your child's records, you might consider doing the following before the IEP meeting:

- Review the education rights of your child and your rights as a parent or guardian;
- Write down what you see as your child's strengths and areas of difficulty;
- Make a short list of things you would like your child to be able to do now and throughout his or her life.

During the IEP Meeting

As the parent or guardian, you are a member of the IEP team. You have valuable information and advice to give. During the IEP meeting, feel free to:

- Speak up about what you believe should be in your child's IEP;
- Ask questions about any part of the meeting or the IEP that is not clear to you;
- Discuss thoroughly the placement for your child and the special education and related services that will be provided; and
- Request a copy of your child's IEP. (This will help you keep up with your child's progress as well as work with your child at home.)

After the IEP Meeting

You will receive a copy of your child's IEP after the IEP meeting. It will help you keep up with your child's progress and help as you work with your child at home. It is important to continue the communication between you and the school after the IEP meeting. Some suggestions to help you communicate with your child's teacher could be to:

- Ask what types of parent activities are available at your child's school;
- Talk with your child's teacher on a regular basis; and
- Do not hesitate to contact the school with any questions you might have.

If you and the LEA cannot agree on what is needed for your child, then you should first ask for "mediation." If mediation does not settle the differences, you may proceed to a "due process" hearing. These procedures have been developed to protect the educational rights of your child. These procedures can help both you and the LEA work out a difference in opinion and come up with a solution. (See your copy of the Handbook on Parents' Rights.)

Remember, a Due Process hearing is intended to be used as a last resort. Both you and the LEA can ask for a hearing when normal discussions and mediations cannot produce a solution.

Step 5

(May be done at the time the IEP is developed.)

Preschool Placement

- In addition to being a part of the IEP team, you will receive a written notice describing your child's special education placement and related services.
- You will then be asked to sign a "Consent for Placement" before your child receives special education and related services from the LEA.

Children who are eligible for special education and needed related services will begin receiving them from the LEA on their third birthday, unless your child turns three when school is not in session. If your child's birthday is during the summer, your child's services will start at the beginning of the next school year.

What Options Should You Consider if Your Child is Not Eligible for the LEA Preschool Program?

As part of the transition planning process, your Infant-Toddler Program EISC will provide you with information about other appropriate community resources that may help with meeting your child's and family's needs after the child turns three. Some of these options may include:

- Head Start
- Community preschools and child care centers
- Community recreation programs
- Library story hours
- Mom's morning out programs
- Cooperative play groups
- Care Coordination for Children (CC4C) program (health department)

Helpful Hints for a Smoother Transition

Transition involves talking and working together with others in your home, school, and community. The following activities and tips have been useful to North Carolina families involved in the transition process.

- Start early. You can never begin a transition process too soon. Keep a simple journal (notebook) about your child's activities, interests, and milestones. Medical reports and previous evaluation summaries are important. This notebook will quickly provide information to your child's service provider during that transitional period. Think about these early years as a time to learn more about the programs in your community.
- Be prepared to share any ideas that have worked for you with your child (such as behavior strategies, communication systems, likes, and dislikes).
- Ask your child's teacher if your child can bring a comfort item from home (such as a stuffed animal or favorite toy) during the transition period.
- Explain to your child's teacher how you can be reached when questions arise.
- Visit and tour your child's future school with and without your child.
- Encourage communication between your school personnel and private providers who work with your child.
- Find out what the Preschool Program offers for new families and choose how you will participate (such as open house, observation scheduling).
- Meet as many school employees as you can who will be a part of your child's school day (such as secretary, bus driver, janitor, teacher, principal, and others).
- Ask your child's new teacher for a list of times when the two of you can talk during the year. Find out other ways you can communicate with each other on a regular basis, like a notebook system, phone calls, or email.
- Ask about ways to link with other families in your community (such as parent-to-parent support groups, Family Resource Center, Health Department resources, Cooperative Extension Services).
- Ask about special transportation, if needed.
- Check buildings to see if they are accessible for your child. Look at how the room is arranged and restroom adaptations.
- Talk with other families of children who have already moved into the Preschool Program.
- If local support groups are not available, contact the Family Support Network (FSN) at (800) 852-0042 or the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC) at (800) 962-6817.
- Attend the PTA or PTO meetings of your school.

Adapted from *Families and the Transition Process: Primary Style*,
Kentucky Early Childhood Transition Project

Transition Checklist

(Use this checklist to help you keep track of what steps have taken place)

1. My child has been referred to my LEA (at 2 years, primarily for children with vision and hearing problems or with complicated or intense service delivery needs; at 2 years, 3 months for all other children). ☐
2. The Transition Planning Meeting has been held and a Transition Plan and a timeline of activities have been developed. ☐
3. All needed screenings and evaluations have been completed for my child. ☐
4. Eligibility for special education services has been determined for my child. ☐
5. I have helped gather copies of the following records and information for my LEA:
   - Birth certificate ☐
   - Proof of residence ☐
   - Physical exam ☐
   - Shot (immunization) record ☐
   - Social Security number ☐
   - Medicaid card (if applicable) ☐
   - Emergency contact (family members, doctor, special instructions in case of an emergency) ☐
   - Infant-Toddler Program records ☐
   - Other preschool program records ☐
   - Hospital, clinic, or medical records (if applicable) ☐
6. If my child is not eligible for special education services from my LEA, other choices have been discussed with my Early Intervention Service Coordinator and/or the IEP team. ☐
7. If my child is eligible, I have visited my LEA's preschool sites or other community program options for my child. ☐
8. I have talked with my child's current service providers about possible changes in services. ☐
9. My child's IEP meeting has been held and goals for the coming year have been set (may be done 30 days before age 3). ☐
10. Placement for my child has been determined, based on my child's IEP. ☐
11. If needed, transportation has been arranged. ☐
12. I have met and talked with my child's new teacher(s) and therapist(s) ☐

Information about My Child

Child's Name: _____ **Date:** _____

(Use this before going to the transition meeting to help gather your thoughts about your child's likes, your concerns, and what you think might help. Take it to the meeting with you.)

These things please me most about my child:	Here's what my child does well:	My child really likes these:
Right now I'm most concerned about:	I would like to be involved in my child's program in these ways:	My child learns more easily when:
I think these services would help my child:	Other help our family could use:	I would like my child to do these in the future:

Adapted from *Families and the Transition Process: Primary Style*
Kentucky Early Childhood Transition Project

Your Community Resources

(Use this page to list programs and services in your community)

Agency Name and Address	Telephone	Contact Person

Organization of Your Child's Notebook

Your Child's Notebook or Records

Materials Needed:

3-ring notebook

Tab dividers

Directions: Cut out each label from the next page and insert in tab dividers.

Tab Dividers for Your Child's Notebook

IFSPs/IEPs	IFSPs/IEPs
Evaluation Reports	Evaluation Reports
Medical Reports	Medical Reports
Correspondence from Program/School	Correspondence from Program/School
Conference/Meeting Notes	Conference/Meeting Notes
Medication Log	Medication Log
Telephone Log	Telephone Log
Program Observation Notes	Program Observation Notes
Key Personnel	Key Personnel
Parent Resources	Parent Resources
Brochures and Pamphlets	Brochures and Pamphlets
Rights and Responsibilities	Rights and Responsibilities
Sample of My Child's Work	Sample of My Child's Work
Medical Expenses/Insurance Information	Medical Expenses/Insurance Information
Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous

Common Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
Arc	The Arc (formerly Association for Retarded Citizens)
ASHA	American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
ASL	American Sign Language
AU	Autism
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
CA	Chronological Age
CEC	Council for Exceptional Children
CDSA	Children's Developmental Services Agency
CNS	Central Nervous System
CP	Cerebral Palsy
CC4C	Care Coordination for Children
CSHS	Children's Special Health Services
DA	Developmental Age
DAP	Developmentally Appropriate Practice
dB	decibel
D/B	Deaf/Blind
DD	Developmental Disability or Developmental Delay
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
EC	Exceptional Children
ECAC	Exceptional Children's Assistance Center
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECSE	Early Childhood Special Education
ECTA	Early Childhood Technical Assistance
EI	Early Intervention
EISC	Early Intervention Service Coordinator
ESY	Extended School Year
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
FSN	Family Support Network
HI	Hearing Impairment including Deafness
HS	Head Start
ICC	Interagency Coordinating Council
ID	Intellectual Disability (mild, moderate or severe)
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
IFSP	Individualized Family Service Plan
LD	Specific Learning Disability
LEA	Local Education Agency
LICC	Local Interagency Coordinating Council
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
MA	Mental Age
MD	Multiple Disabilities
MDE	Multidisciplinary Evaluation
MR	Mental Retardation
MR/DD	Mental Retardation/Developmental Disability
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
NC-ICC	North Carolina Interagency Coordinating Council

NICU	Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
OCR	Office of Civil Rights
OHI	Other Hearing Impairment
OI	Orthopedic Impairment
Part B	Part of IDEA that regulates educational services to children with disabilities ages 3 through 21
Part C	Part of IDEA that regulates educational services to children with disabilities ages birth to 36 months
PL	Public Law
PL94-142	Education for All Handicapped Children Act, now IDEA
PL99-457	Amendment to 94-142 that authorized early intervention for infants and toddlers with disabilities and required preschool services for 3 to 5 year olds. Currently called IDEA
PT	Physical Therapy or Physical Therapist
RN	Registered Nurse
SC	Service Coordinator or Service Coordination
SEA	State Education Agency
Section 504	Portion of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended
Section 619	The portion of IDEA that deals solely with the preschool program
SED	Serious Emotional Disability
SEE	Signing Exact English
SI	Speech or Language Impairment
S/L	Speech and Language
SLP	Speech-Language Pathologist
SLT	Speech and Language Therapy or Speech-Language Therapist
SS	Social Security
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
ST	Speech Therapy
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
TDD	Telecommunication Device for the Deaf
VI	Visual Impairment, including blindness

Glossary of Terms

Advocacy - Trying to ensure that the services appropriate for you and your child are received. You are the best advocate for your child. You know your child best.

Assessment - Individual evaluation of a child's performance and/or development. This information about a child can be used in educational and intervention planning. The planning process may or may not result in special education instruction and services.

Categorical Disability - Any of the disability conditions that qualify a child ages 3 through 21 for special education under Part B of IDEA.

Care Coordination for Children (CC4C) - A service coordinated by local health departments that serves your children at risk for, or diagnosed with, developmental disabilities, social or emotional problems, and chronic illnesses.

Cognitive - The brain process used for thinking, reasoning, understanding, and judging.

Developmental - The steps or stages of mental, physical, and social growth in individuals.

Due process - The legal procedures or steps available to protect the individual rights of the child.

Early Intervention Service Coordinator (EISC) - The person assigned to coordinate the planning and delivery of early intervention services to children from birth to age three who are enrolled in the N.C. Infant-Toddler Program.

Evaluation - The process used to find out if a child has a disability, developmental delay, or established condition and requires special education. This process can include parent reports, teacher reports, observations of the child, reviewing records, and formal and informal assessments.

Goals - Broad, general target areas or skill development written by the IEP team.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) - The federal law that provides the guidelines for special education services for children birth through age 21. Part B outlines services for children ages 3 through 21, and Part C outlines services for children birth to age 3.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) - A written education plan designed to meet the individual special education and related service needs of a child.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) - A written plan designed to meet the needs of an infant or toddler and his or her family.

Inclusion - To have an opportunity to participate in activities available to all non- disabled children in the community.

Intervention - All of the efforts made on behalf of the child with a disability (or at risk for developing a disability) to help the child make developmental and educational progress.

Local Education Agency (LEA) – Local public school district or charter school.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) - Means that, to the maximum extent possible, children with disabilities are educated with children who do not have disabilities. Required by IDEA.

Multidisciplinary - A type of team approach for providing evaluation and intervention. Professionals from several disciplines (such as speech-language pathology, psychology, special education) work together to evaluate and serve children and families.

Natural Environment - Settings that are natural or normal for the child's age peers who have no disability.

Outcomes - Statements of expectations or changes that families want for themselves and their children as a result of early intervention services, written in Individualized Family Service Plans.

Procedural Safeguards - All rights that are guaranteed to the parent and child with a disability under Subpart E of IDEA.

Referral - A written request for a child to be individually tested/evaluated to determine if the child has a disability and needs special education and related services.

Related Services - Supportive services required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education. Related services for a child are discussed and decided during the IEP meeting. A child must be receiving special education in order to receive related services. These services may be provided by either consultation or direct service. Some examples of related services under Part B include occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech-language pathology services, recreation, counseling services, parent counseling and training, audiology, and transportation.

Screening - The process of quickly looking at a child's development to find out if that child is having any problems. Screening is used to recommend children for more in-depth evaluation and assessment.

Service Delivery -
The way in which special education and related services will be provided to the child.

Therapy - A specialized treatment for certain conditions. The most common therapies under related services in the public schools are:

- Occupational therapy - A service provided by or under the direction of a certified occupational therapist. This therapy focuses on using the hands and fingers, coordinated movement, self-help skills (eating, dressing, toileting, etc.), and sensory integration.
- Physical therapy - Services provided by or under the direction of a licensed physical therapist. Physical therapy helps the child improve his or her use of the muscles, joints, bones, and nerves.
- Speech or language therapy - The services provided by or under the direction of a licensed speech-language pathologist. This service focuses on helping the child communicate better by improving the way a child makes word sounds (clearer speech); the quality of voice (correcting for pitch, nasality, etc.); and being able to express and/or understand verbal communication (talking back and forth).

Transition - The process of moving from one place or program to another. In special education, transition means moving from one program to another or, for older children, moving out of the school setting. Young children with disabilities will move at age three from Part C into Part B or other appropriate community resources.

More Information

We sincerely hope this handbook will be useful. It is our goal as parents and professionals to help you create a smooth transition process through these early years. If you have additional concerns or questions, please contact one of the following:

- **about your child's Infant-Toddler Program services:**

  Call or write your local Children's Developmental Services Agency (CDSA); or
  North Carolina Infant-Toddler Part C Program Coordinator, Division of Public Health, WCHS, Early Intervention Branch

  1916 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C. 27699-1916 (919) 707-5520, website: www.beearly.nc.gov

- **about your child's Part B Preschool Program services:**

  Call or write your local education agency (LEA) or
  Preschool Coordinator, Office of Early Learning
  North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
  2075 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C. 27699-2075
  (919) 218-8384, website: www.dpi.state.nc.us/earlylearning

- **about the law:**

  Contact your LEA or consultants for dispute resolution, Exceptional Children Division,
  North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
  6356 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C. 27699-6356
  (919) 807-3969, website: http://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/parent-resources/dispute-resolution

  Disability Rights North Carolina
  (919) 856-2195, email: info@disabilityrights.nc.org, website: www.disabilityrightsnc.org

- **about other resources:**

  Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC)
  (800) 962-6817, email: ecac@ecacmail.org, website: www.ecac-parentcenter.org

  Family Support Network of N.C.
  (800) 852-0042, website: www.fsnnc.org

  North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities
  (800) 357-6916, email: info@nccdd.org, website: www.nccdd.org

  North Carolina Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Help Line,
  (800) 737-3028, email: CYSHCN.Helpline@dhhs.nc.gov

This handbook was developed to help families understand what happens when their child makes the transition from the Infant-Toddler Program to the Preschool Program.

Feel free to copy any materials in this handbook. You may fill in your local resources.

We hope you find this handbook useful. Please feel free to send corrections or additional information to the Transition Committee at the NC-ICC, 1916 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC, 27699-1916. Telephone: (919) 707-5520.

Acknowledgements

This handbook was adapted from the following resources:

1. *Families and the Transition Process: Primary Style*, Kentucky Early Childhood Transition Project, 1995.
2. *Steps Ahead at Age 3*, Bridging Early Services Transition Taskforce, 1995.
3. *Transitions: A Time for Change, An Opportunity for Growth,* Family Outreach Center for Understanding Special Needs, Inc., 1994.
4. *First Steps: Transitions to Early Childhood Special Education*, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1993.
5. *A Family's Introduction to Early Intervention in Pennsylvania,* Instructional Support System of Pennsylvania, 1st printing, 1998.

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Early Intervention Branch,
Women's and Children's Health Section, Division of Public Health,
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

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Children Division www.ncpublicschools.org/ec

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