

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

This insert provides an overview of recent changes to the transition process. While the process has changed, the intent and philosophy has not. The process is easier when families, providers from ESS, preschools and other early childhood services work together as a team. An open, collaborative approach will help ensure a smooth and effective transition for your child and family.

CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

NOTIFICATION/REFERRAL: Notification/Referral is a formal process to notify your local school district that your child is potentially eligible for special education. Notification/Referral is a formal request asking that your child be evaluated to determine whether he/she is eligible for special education. The information that can be shared (without your written permission) in the notification/referral request is limited to your child's name, date of birth, your address and phone number. Your ESS Service Coordinator will ask for your written permission to share other information such as recent evaluations and current IFSP with the school district. This additional information is important as it helps the special education process.

OPT-OUT: You have the right to opt-out of making a notification/referral to your local school district. If you choose to opt-out of making a notification/referral, you must sign the opt-out form and return it to your ESS Service Coordinator within 7 calendar days. You have the option of changing your mind later and allowing the local school district to be notified that your child is potentially eligible and that you would like to refer your child at that time.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSITION PROCESS

THE TRANSITION PLAN

Planning for transition begins when your child turns 27 months, or earlier if your child is found no longer eligible for ESS, or as soon as possible if your child enters ESS after 27 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 few months. As part of the transition plan, the IFSP Team, which includes you, will **decide whether or not your child is potentially eligible for preschool special education** and discuss the notification/referral process. Your ESS Service Coordinator will also explain your right to opt-out of making a notification/referral.

Unless you choose to opt-out, your ESS Service Coordinator will send a notification/referral for special education to your local school district. This is a request that the school district consider your child for special education eligibility. Your ESS Service Coordinator will ask for your written permission to share other information such as recent evaluations and your child's current IFSP with the school.

REFERRAL

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 business days. You are 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)

The IEP Team may decide that they need more information 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 school has 60 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. They must also provide you copies of evaluation reports and other information 5 days in advance of the meeting.

EVALUATION

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, also known as a code. To be eligible your child's disability must negatively impact their educational performance.

DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY

Within 30 days after your child is found eligible for special education, the IEP Team meets to begin to develop 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 provide consent, provide partial consent, refuse consent 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)

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 the child's Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

DETERMINATION OF EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT

To ensure a smooth transition, your ESS Service Coordinator will schedule and facilitate a Transition Conference with you and your local school district. The Transition Conference must happen after a notification/referral has been made, but at least 90 days before your child turns 3. At this conference you will 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

TRANSITION AT A GLANCE

