



## Supporting Families Through the Transition Process From Infant/Toddler Early Intervention to Preschool Early Intervention

During times of transition, it is important for families to have information so you can make decisions and have a smooth and seamless process. This guide will help you plan and learn about procedures. It has timelines for when your child turns three and leaves the Infant/Toddler Early Intervention (EI) program and transitions to the Preschool EI program.

Although EI is a birth to school-age program, at age three, the state funding source changes, and as a result, your child's services and providers typically change based on their needs. Changes in services can be aligned to the transitions your child may have because of participating in PA Pre-K Counts, Head Start, child care, or other early childhood education programs. What will not change is that

your child's services will continue to meet their needs and their goals and outcomes.

As your child nears their third birthday, your Infant/Toddler EI program will help you connect with the Preschool EI program and/or other community programs so you can work together and understand similarities and differences between programs and the evaluation process.

### The Transition Process

Transition planning should begin at the first meeting with your service coordinator. Transition is a process rather than an event. It is individualized for each child and is based on your family and your child's unique circumstances and needs.

Planning for your child's transition will start the year before your child turns three. Planning is done whether you decide to continue Preschool EI services or not. At this point, your Infant/Toddler EI program and your Preschool EI program work together to identify children who are old enough to transition to a preschool program. They are also gathering information to share with you and preparing for transition meetings. At an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting, the Infant/Toddler EI team will talk with you about your child's transition to a preschool EI service and/or a community program.

Things to discuss with your service coordinator about your child's transition:

- Is your child in an early childhood education program, such as day care, child care, or Head Start? Will they continue at the same program or change at age three?
- If you have older children, did they attend an early childhood education program? If so, at what age?
- Does your child participate in activities with other children in your community? If not, would they like to participate in these activities?
- How does your child handle changes in their routine?
- What are your child's strengths, likes, and interests?
- What are your concerns as your child transitions?
- What would you want someone new to know about your child?

## The IFSP

As your child transitions, your EI team must include in the IFSP the steps to support the transition of your child. With your help, this may include steps, such as:

- Gathering information, support and guidance you need
- Preparing your child for changes in services

- Helping your child adjust to a new setting
- Sharing information on upcoming meetings and timelines

With your service coordinator, you can discuss activities that will help your child develop. These may include sports, music, dancing, story hours at the library, trips and vacations, as well as early childhood education programs.

## Transition Timelines

- Your service coordinator will talk with you about transition when your child begins to receive EI services so you know about the transition process and can plan together.
- As early as nine months but no later than 90 days, before your child's third birthday, the Infant/Toddler EI program will work with the Preschool EI program on your child's transition. With your permission, information about your child, including evaluation, assessment information and copies of your child's IFSP, will be shared with the local Preschool EI program.
- The programs will work with you to schedule a transition meeting at a place and time that works for you. The meeting will be held in your native language or other mode of communication used by your family. An interpreter can be provided if needed. At least a month before the meeting, you will receive a letter with the date and time of this transition meeting.
- If your child is first starting EI services within 45 days of their third birthday, these timelines will look different. Please talk with your EI program to find out more about what the process will look like for your child.

## The Transition Meeting

At this meeting, you, your Infant/Toddler service coordinator, and a representative from the Preschool EI program will meet to talk about the process for eligibility for the Preschool EI program. At this time, the Preschool EI representative will discuss next steps and provide information about their program. You can share information about your child's progress, your priorities, and any questions or concerns you have.

## Evaluation and Eligibility

If your child will transition to Preschool EI, it is important to understand the differences in evaluation and eligibility criteria from Infant/Toddler EI.

Because there are some differences between these two programs, your child may be eligible for Infant/Toddler EI, but not eligible for Preschool EI. When you talk with your service coordinator about transition, you can ask more about the evaluation process and what will happen next. If your child may be eligible for Preschool EI and you would like to receive services, an evaluation will occur. Some Preschool EI programs will complete a new evaluation for your child, and some may use an evaluation that has already been done by the Infant/Toddler EI program. If a new evaluation is done, this is a time to share

with the Preschool evaluation team progress your child has made, strategies you have used in teaching your child, and any concerns you have. This will help the evaluation team as they work with you in determining next steps.

If your child is eligible for Preschool EI and you choose to continue with services, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is completed prior to your child's third birthday. Preschool EI services should begin no later than 14 days after your child turns three. If your child is no longer eligible for EI services at the time of transition, the Infant/Toddler program will meet with you to discuss next steps. This meeting should include a discussion about your child's development and other community supports that your family may find helpful.

INFANT/TODDLER EI ELIGIBILITY	PRESCHOOL EI ELIGIBILITY
<p>To be eligible for the Infant/Toddler EI program, a child must have one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A diagnosis that may result in a delay</li> <li>• A developmental delay</li> <li>• Informed clinical opinion of one of the above two criteria</li> </ul>	<p>The Preschool EI program has two criteria for eligibility. A child must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have either a developmental delay or a disability as identified through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), <b>and</b></li> <li>• Be in need of special education and related services</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> A child cannot be eligible for preschool EI based only on informed clinical opinion.</p>

## In Conclusion

Communication between you and the EI team is essential. Since you know your child best, your involvement in the process at every step is important. Transition is a time to celebrate. You can find answers to questions you have and make a plan for your child's learning and growth. The EI staff who work with you and your child are a resource to guide you through transition and assist you as you make decisions about the future.

## For More Information

- Key resources that may be of interest to you as you support your child's learning and development  
[www.eita-pa.org/families/](http://www.eita-pa.org/families/)

- PA Department of Human Services Information for Children  
[www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Children/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Children/Pages/default.aspx)
- PA Department of Education information on services, programs, and information that support children and families  
[www.education.pa.gov/about/Resources/ResourcesFamilies/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.education.pa.gov/about/Resources/ResourcesFamilies/Pages/default.aspx)
- Options in PA to find child care and early learning programs  
[www.findchildcare.pa.gov/](http://www.findchildcare.pa.gov/)
- PA's federally funded parent training center  
[www.pealcenter.org/](http://www.pealcenter.org/)

