



# The Transition Process From Early Intervention to School-Age Programs: Guidelines to Support Parents

## Introduction to the Transition Considerations

Significant changes occur for all of us at different times in our lives. When children in preschool early intervention reach the age of 5 or 6, they will move on to a school-age program. Examples of school-age programs are public schools, charter schools, and home education programs. During this transition to a school-age program, it is important for families to have as much information as possible about the process. The Bureau of Special Education (BSE) and the Bureau of Early Intervention Services (BEIS) have developed this guide to help families learn more about transition from preschool early intervention to a school-age program.

## The Transition Process

Planning for your child's transition will start the year before your child is old enough to enroll in kindergarten or first grade. At this point, your preschool early intervention program and your school district or local charter school are working together to identify children who are old enough to transition to a school-age program. They are also gathering information to share with you and preparing for upcoming transition meetings.

At an individualized education program (IEP) meeting, the preschool early intervention team will begin talking with you about your child's transition to a school-age program. With your help, a transition plan for your child will be developed. This transition

plan may include dates for upcoming meetings, activities in your local area for children who are entering a school-age program, as well as timelines for meetings and other activities.

The early intervention preschool team will hold meetings for the parents/guardians of school age eligible children. The purpose of these meetings is for parents/guardians to meet members of their local school district or charter school, discuss options for their child, and determine next steps. **By February 1**, you will receive a letter from your preschool early intervention program about this meeting. It is called the **Notice of Your Child's Transition to School Age Meeting**. This letter will have information about the school age transition meeting, options for registering your child for school-age programs, school-age evaluations, and contact information.

After you receive this letter, a preschool early intervention team member will contact you with a date, time, and location for a transition meeting with your school district or charter school. This meeting will be held by the end of February. As a parent, you are very important to the planning process. You are encouraged to attend this transition meeting and any additional planning activities even if you are not sure your child will transition to kindergarten or first grade.

### Transition Meeting

At the transition meeting, you will meet school district or charter school staff. The preschool early intervention staff will talk with you about your plans for your child in the upcoming school year.

You will be asked to complete the **Intent to Register** form. The form will ask you whether or not you intend to register your child with your local school district or charter school. For some parents/guardians who are thinking about other options for their child, for example, private school or home education program, additional discussions will occur regarding these options.

If you decide to have your child go to kindergarten or first grade in your school district or charter school, you will indicate this on the **Intent to Register** form. At that time, the preschool early intervention staff will share your child's most recent

preschool evaluation and IEP with your school district or charter school.

To receive school age special education services, your child must be eligible to receive special education services, and be enrolled in a local school district or charter school. The school district or charter school staff will also discuss the following options regarding your child's program. The options below will be listed in the **Notice of Options for Your Child's Transition** form that will be provided to you.

**Option 1:** You and the school district or charter school can agree to adopt and implement your child's preschool early intervention IEP.

**Option 2:** You and the school district or charter school can decide to adopt the preschool early intervention IEP with revisions.

**Option 3:** You and the school district or charter school can decide whether a reevaluation is necessary. If so, the school district or charter school will conduct a reevaluation. If your child is eligible for school-age services, an IEP will be developed once the reevaluation report has been completed.

**Option 4:** You and the school district or charter school can decide to waive the reevaluation and develop an IEP.

Dates for kindergarten and school registration/enrollment will be provided to you. It is important that you register your child for school. Attending the transition meeting does not mean that your child is officially registered.

If your child will be kindergarten age during the upcoming school year and you do not know if your child should move on to kindergarten, you can discuss this during the meeting. If your child is kindergarten age and your child will not be going to the school district or charter school, your child can continue to receive preschool early intervention services (as long as he/she remains eligible) during the upcoming year. While parents have the option of having their child remain in early intervention, the preschool early intervention program staff will

discuss the advantages of having your child transition to school-age programs with children of the same age.

If your child is old enough for first grade in the upcoming school year, or you have registered your child for kindergarten, preschool early intervention services will end the first day of school in your district.

### IEPs for School-Age Programs

All children currently eligible for special education services in preschool early intervention and registered with the school district or charter school remain eligible for special education unless the school district, charter school, or preschool early intervention program completes a reevaluation that determines the child is no longer eligible for special education. All eligible children must have an IEP in place by the beginning of the school year. The school district or charter school will work collaboratively with parents to develop IEPs for children that are appropriate and provide educational benefit. In the event that you do not agree with the IEP, you may request mediation or a due process hearing. In the event of a disagreement, the district or charter school will continue to provide special education services described in the preschool early intervention IEP until the disagreement is resolved.

### Frequently Used Terms in School-Age Programs

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** – is an IDEA requirement indicating that children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, must be educated with children who are not disabled, to the maximum extent appropriate. Removal of children with disabilities from the general education environment occurs only when the nature and/or severity of their disabilities are such that education in general classes, with the use of supplementary aids and services, cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

**Local Education Agency (LEA)** – is a school district, charter school, or other educational entity responsible for providing a free, appropriate public education in accordance with Pennsylvania Department of Education statutes, regulations, and policies with or without support from other agencies.

**Supplementary Aids and Services** – are aids, services, and other supports provided in general education classes or other education-related settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.

**Types of Special Education Support** – Learning Support, Life Skills Support, Emotional Support, Deaf and Hearing Impaired Support, Blind and Visually Impaired Support, Speech and Language Support, Physical Support, Autistic Support, Multiple Disabilities Support

**Amount of Special Education Support** – The following words and terms have the meanings listed unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

- **Full-time.** Special education supports and services provided by special education personnel for 80 percent or more of the school day.
- **Itinerant.** Special education supports and services provided by special education personnel for 20 percent or less of the school day.
- **Supplemental.** Special education supports and services provided by special education personnel for more than 20 percent but less than 80 percent of the school day.

It is very important for parents to be involved in the transition to school-age process from the beginning. By asking questions and being involved, you are able to continue to support the growth and development of your child. The transition of your child to school-age programs is an opportunity to celebrate. Your child has developed many new skills and accomplished many outcomes in preparation for the future!

# **Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**

**Tom Wolf**, Governor

## **Department of Education**

**Pedro A. Rivera**, Secretary

**Matthew Stem**, Deputy Secretary, Elementary and Secondary Education

**Ann Hinkson-Herrmann**, Director, Bureau of Special Education

