

Transition

Introduction and Intent

Transition planning is an ongoing process while a child is enrolled in *Early On*. Practitioners use a variety of planned and timely strategies with the child and family before, during, and after the transition to support successful adjustments and positive outcomes for both the child and family (DEC RP TR2). Shortly after the child turns 2 years old, specific transition requirements come into play. These requirements center on a Transition Plan, Notification, and Transition Conference. Federal and state regulations clearly identify steps in the process and timelines that must be met in order to ensure a smooth transition. Both *Early On* and the Local Education Agency (LEA) have responsibilities for providing information and resources throughout the process. Specifics around this process such as timelines, content, required participants, roles of the Service Coordinator and necessary documentation are provided. Data about meeting specific parts of these transition requirements are collected and reported to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) for further reporting to the federal government. For more information about the Part C to Part B Early Childhood Transition timeline please see the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center graphic at this [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center graphic](#) link. This section includes information regarding:

- Transition Plan
- Notification
- Transition Conference
- Federal Statute
- Federal Regulations
- *Early On* Michigan Part C of IDEA State Plan
- Related Forms and Documents

Transition Plan

A transition plan is required to be developed for all children who will be exiting from *Early On* at the time of or near their 3rd birthday. It is a written document that captures the planning to support a child and family as they prepare to exit Part C services at or near three years of age. The plan documents the support to the child and family to help assure the child's successful participation, engagement and independence in the next learning environment.

The transition plan is not a stand-alone document or a singular activity. It's a process and it is included in the content of an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). Depending on the age at which the child begins participating in *Early On*, the plan will need to be developed during an initial, periodic or annual IFSP meeting.

Timelines

The transition plan is developed as part of an IFSP not fewer than 90 days and, at the discretion of all parties, not more than 9 months before the toddler is three years old. This creates what is often referred to as the transition window from when a child turns 27 months through 33 months of age.

This six-month transition window allows for selecting, based on the child's anticipated exit date, the most appropriate timing for the IFSP meeting during which the team will develop the transition plan. If performed too early, before knowing the new learning environment, the plan will not be meaningful. If performed too late, when the transition date is imminent, the plan will not allow for implementation of the activities included.

The written transition plan may document some activities, discussions, steps and services that are planned for the upcoming months.

If a child is found eligible for *Early On* after 33 months, a transition plan must be part of the initial IFSP. Additional details regarding requirements for children who are referred to *Early On* close to their third birthday, or late referrals, are outlined in the **Referral** chapter of this Manual.

Content

The transition plan, as part of the content of an IFSP, is built upon the child and family's unique strengths and needs. A meaningful, individualized transition plan will also be based on an understanding of the anticipated new learning environment, allowing for thought about what will best support the child. Consideration should be given regarding how to support the family and child's transition both out of early intervention and into another program without early intervention services. Practitioners exchange information before, during, and after transition about strategies and practices most likely to support the child's successful adjustment and positive outcomes (DEC RP TR1). The federal regulations specify four steps that must be taken to prepare for a successful transition:

Step 1: *Discussions with, and training of, parents, as appropriate, regarding future placements and other matters related to the child's transition;*

Step one is consistent with the strong support within *Early On* for building the knowledge of parents so they are

better equipped to address the developmental needs of their child and the active participation of families in determining their child's services and service settings. The early intervention process, from initial contacts through transition, must be dynamic and individualized to reflect the child's and family members' preferences, learning styles and cultural beliefs.

Discussions or trainings for families related to transition might include activities such as:

- providing specific information about visiting possible programs,
- linking with families who have gone through the transition process, or
- discussing tips to consider when observing preschool programs.

Federal regulations highlight two specific topics as part of the future placement discussions/trainings.

1. Reviewing the child's future placement options after *Early On* ends.

Early On recognizes that families have the right and responsibility to make informed decisions about choices and options for their child. These rich discussions with families and providers assist families in making informed choices about service delivery options. Supporting families in becoming more informed about transition options will strengthen their level of participation and comfort with the change.

Questions the service provider/coordinator can encourage families to consider when discussing options include:

- What do I hope and dream for my child?
- Where would my child be attending if he/she didn't have a developmental delay or disability?
- Where do I want my child to play and learn with other children in age-appropriate settings?
- What does my child need in order to grow and develop?

Exploring all placement options for children potentially eligible for Preschool Special Education services; such as community-based preschool, Head Start programs, private preschools or itinerant services; helps ensure services to children ages 3 through 5 years are provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE) to the greatest extent possible. If the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily, more restrictive or specialized settings should be considered.

At least two placement options; such as a Head Start program or a private preschool; must be documented on the transition plan.

2. Reviewing the child's program options for the period from the child's third birthday through the remainder of the school year. These options could be the same options as options discussed for when *Early On* will end. For circumstances when the toddler will turn three years old before the end of a preschool program year, *Early On* must review program options from the third birthday through the remainder of the school year for that toddler. Sometimes it might not be in the best interest of the child to start a preschool program that has only a few weeks remaining before a summer recess. Discussing options, including extended school year (ESY), with families will help assure the best program fit for the child.

Step 2: *Procedures to prepare the child for changes in service delivery, including steps to help the child adjust to, and function in, a new setting.*

These procedures should support a child's independence, socialization and participation in the next setting. Develop expectations for the child, including what steps and supports are most needed for the child to be successful in the new setting. These steps are unique for each child based on the anticipated new setting and the child's strengths and needs.

Step 3: *Confirm the Child Find information about the child has been transmitted to the LEA following notification procedures and procedural safeguards.*

If the child is transitioning to Preschool Special Education, this confirmation includes the transmission of any additional information needed by the LEA to ensure continuity of services from *Early On* to a Preschool Special Education program. Additional information may include a copy of the most recent evaluation and assessments of the child and the family and most recent IFSP.

Step 4: *Identify transition services and other activities that the IFSP team determines are necessary to support the transition of the child.*

Any new service needed to support the transition of the child or family will be documented in the service section of the IFSP. Any new service must begin within 30 days of parent consent to the service.

Transition Plan Meeting Requirements

Development of the transition plan must be documented within the IFSP. The IFSP meeting to develop the transition plan must:

- 1) be conducted at times and in settings that are convenient to the family,
- 2) be in the native language or mode of communication used by the family, unless clearly not feasible to do so,
- 3) be arranged with, including written notice provided to, the family and other participants early enough before the meeting date to ensure that they will be able to attend, and
- 4) ensure the required participants are invited, which include:
 - a) parent(s) or legal guardian(s)
 - b) service coordinator
 - c) as appropriate, persons who will be providing *Early On* transition services
 - d) person(s) directly involved in conducting any evaluations and assessments*
 - e) other family members, as requested by the parent or guardian, if feasible to do so
 - f) an advocate or person outside of the family, if the parent requests that the person participate

*If the person who conducted any evaluations and assessments is unable to attend, arrangements must be made for the person's involvement through other means (e.g. telephone call, knowledgeable authorized

representative attend, making pertinent records available at the meeting).

Role of Service Coordinator

The service coordinator discusses options with the family and helps the family gather information about transition options in their community. The service coordinator will:

1. facilitate the development of a timely transition plan to preschool or, if appropriate, to other services,
2. coordinate translation or interpreter services for the meeting, as needed
3. send and maintain meeting notice to invited participants, and
4. assure the transmission of information about the child to the LEA, to ensure continuity of services, including evaluation and assessment information and copies of IFSPs that have been developed and implemented.

Documentation

The four transition steps listed above in the **Content** section must be documented within an IFSP. If *Early On* is unable to contact a parent to schedule and conduct the transition plan meeting, documentation of the attempts must be included in the child's file.

Documentation of the transition plan, or transition plan data, is required to be uploaded to the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) to reflect the appropriate timely or untimely data code. Codes and data definitions may be found within the CEPI (Center for Educational Performance) MSDS manual.

Early On notification supports the Part B Child Find provision of identification, location and evaluation of each child eligible for services under Preschool Special Education. *Early On* and the LEA under Part B have a responsibility under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to ensure a smooth transition for each child potentially eligible for Part B.

The Part C regulations state that at least 90 days prior to a toddler's exit from *Early On*, if that toddler is potentially eligible for services under Part B, *Early On* must notify the State Education Agency (SEA) and the LEA where the toddler resides, that the toddler on his or her third

birthday will reach the age of eligibility for services under Preschool Special Education.

Potentially Eligible

Michigan defines potentially eligible for Preschool Special Education as any child found eligible and receiving Michigan Mandatory Special Education (MMSE) supports and services prior to two years, nine months while receiving services under Part C. Any toddler potentially eligible for Preschool Special Education is transitioned to supports and services under Part B of IDEA, Section 619 (Preschool Special Education) by age three.

Local Education Agency (LEA) Notification

LEA Notification consists of ensuring that the local district knows of the children who are currently receiving MMSE supports and services while receiving services under Part C. Notification should be delineated in your local process with agreements with the local district.

One way to ensure LEA notification is by regularly sharing a list of personally identifiable information for toddlers residing in the LEA who are receiving MMSE services. Another way to ensure LEA notification could be holding regular meetings with local districts to share notification information.

The invitation to the transition conference is a required component and may be considered an additional reminder to support LEA notification. In some instances, the ISD is the designated LEA representative at the transition conference. In these instances, the LEA must have a documented agreement with the ISD detailing the extent of representation at the transition conference. Most often, these agreements are documented in an ISD Plan, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Letter of Agreement (LOA).

Note: The LEA is responsible for conducting the initial individualized education program (IEP) team meeting involving students in the district and should conduct; or authorize the ISD through a written agreement to conduct; such meetings.

Role of Service Coordinator

The role of the service coordinator is to ensure that the family is informed and understands the notification process as it pertains to transition for children who are potentially eligible for Preschool Special Education. The service coordinator reviews with the family the details of the notification to the SEA/LEA. This includes

reviewing with the family what information is shared automatically through the data system.

1. The service coordinator may need to explain that the data collecting system (MSDS) is the same for children under *Early On/Part C* and *Preschool Special Education/Part B*. The Service Coordinator may also want to share with the family what LEA they reside in and that the LEA must protect their confidential information as an educational record with all safeguards under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Transition Conference

Description

A transition conference is a meeting to discuss any services the toddler may receive under *Preschool Special Education* or other appropriate services. The conference meeting provides an opportunity for families to learn about their LEA's program and services and for the LEA representative to learn about the child and the family. The conference is required for toddlers transitioning from *MMSE* to *Preschool Special Education/Part B*. It helps ensure that parents are provided complete and accurate information regarding the services available to children transitioning from *Early On/MMSE*.

For a toddler who is not potentially eligible for *Preschool Special Education*, with approval of the family, *Early On* must make reasonable efforts to convene a conference among the lead agency, the family, and providers of other appropriate services for the toddler to discuss appropriate service that the toddler may receive. The transition conference may be combined with the IFSP meeting to develop the transition plan.

Timelines

With family approval, conduct a transition conference at least 90 days (and at the discretion of all parties up to 9 months) prior to child's 3rd birthday for toddlers who are potentially eligible for *Part B*. Approval by the family is not required to be in writing and can be verbal consent.

Documentation

Although much rich discussion takes place at the conference, the required documentation includes the date the meeting was convened and the participants.

If *Early On* is unable to contact a parent to schedule and conduct the transition conference meeting, documentation of the attempts must be included in the child's file.

Documentation of the transition conference is also required within the MSDS for the correct data code indicating whether the plan was timely or untimely, within the transition window. Codes and the data dictionary are found within the CEPI MSDS manual.

Transition Conference Meeting Requirements

The transition conference meeting requirements are the same as those for the IFSP meeting to develop the transition plan. An LEA representative who is able to provide information and answer questions regarding the continuum of supports and services available through the local school district is required to be invited to this meeting if the child is potentially eligible for Part B/Preschool Special Education.

While a face-to-face meeting among all participants is preferable, participation by teleconference and/or videoconferencing are acceptable methods for the transition conference.

Role of Service Coordinator

The service coordinator role for ensuring timely transition conference includes:

1. explain the purpose of the conference meeting to the parent,
2. ask if the parent would like to invite other family members or anyone outside of the family,
3. schedule the conference in collaboration with the family and all transition partners,
4. as needed, coordinate translation or interpreter services for the meeting,
5. send and maintain meeting notice to invited participants,
6. facilitate the conference meeting discussion, and
7. assure documentation of the conference meeting date and participant.

Federal Statute

[Sec 636 individualized family service plan](#)

Federal Regulations

[§303.209 Transition to preschool and other programs](#)

[§303.342\(d\) Accessibility and convenience of meetings](#)

[§303.342\(e\) Parental consent](#)

[§303.343\(a\) IFSP Team meeting and periodic review](#)

[§303.344 Content of an IFSP](#)

State Level Expectations/Guidance

Early On Michigan Part C of IDEA State Plan

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Transition to preschool and other programs (§ 303.209)

The State has developed procedures for transitioning infants and toddlers under the age of three and their families from *Early On*. Some of the toddlers are eligible for early childhood special education programs under Part B and MMSE, while others are eligible for related special education services defined in the MARSE. Still others will exit *Early On* with sufficient growth in their development to no longer require special services.

As required in regulation when the Part C lead agency (MDE) is the State Education Agency (SEA), an intra-agency agreement was drafted for submission to USED. That intra-agency agreement between the unit within the MDE Office of Great Start/Early Childhood Development and Family Education (OGS/ECD FE) administering Part C and the unit within MDE OGS/Preschool and Out-of-School Time Learning administering Part B, section 619, ensures administrative oversight of the transition requirements outlined in statute and regulation.

Transition notification to SEA and LEA

All toddlers receiving services under MMSE may be eligible for, and therefore are considered "potentially eligible" for, preschool special education services under Part B of the Act. For any toddler receiving *Early On* services, and who may be eligible for preschool services under Part B of IDEA, Federal regulations require a notification be sent to the SEA and the Local Education Agency (LEA) where the child resides. The report notifies the SEA and the LEA that the toddler will reach the age of eligibility for services under Part B of the Act on his or her third birthday.

The following expectations regarding transition notification apply:

- A. Notification must occur not fewer than 90 days before the toddler's third birthday.
- B. If the toddler is determined eligible for early intervention services under *Early On* more than 45 days, but less than 90 days before that toddler's third birthday, and s/he may be eligible for preschool services under Part B of the Act, the local lead agency, as soon as possible after determining the child's eligibility, notifies the SEA and LEA for the area in which the toddler resides.
- C. If the toddler is referred to *Early On* fewer than 45 days before that toddler's third birthday and the toddler may be eligible for preschool services under Part B of the Act, the local lead agency refers the toddler to the SEA and LEA for the area in which the toddler resides; but the lead agency is not required to conduct an evaluation, assessment, or an initial IFSP meeting.

The lead agency must disclose to the SEA and to the LEA where the toddler resides, the following personally identifiable information under the Act, as allowed under § 303.401(d):

- A. The child's name.
- B. The child's date of birth.
- C. Parent contact information (including parents' names, addresses, and telephone numbers).

The local lead agency for Part C will send a communique to the child's resident local education agency (LEA) that the child has received support from Part C, has been determined potentially eligible for Part B, and will shortly turn three years old and exit the Part C program. This notification will also serve as the SEA notification regarding a toddler exiting Part C and potentially eligible for Part B, section 619. In addition, the local lead agency for Part C will confirm notification to the SEA via the state student data system. The notifications to both LEA and SEA shall occur not fewer than 90 days prior to the child's third birthday as required by 34 CFR 303.209(b). For children found eligible for Part C services more than 45 days but less than 90 days before that toddler's third birthday, the notification will take place as soon as possible after determining the toddler's eligibility. The notifications to the SEA and LEA will include the child's name, date of birth, and parent contact information (including names, addresses, and telephone numbers).

Transition conference to discuss services

For a child who is potentially eligible for preschool services under Part B of the Act:

With the approval of the family, the local lead agency convenes a conference, among the lead agency, the family and the LEA, not fewer than 90 days and at the discretion of all parties, not more than nine months, before the toddler's third birthday to discuss any services the toddler may receive under Part B of the Act.

For a child who is not potentially eligible for preschool services under Part B of the Act:

With approval of the family, the local lead agency makes reasonable efforts to convene a conference among the lead agency, the family, and providers of other appropriate services for the toddler to discuss appropriate services that toddler may receive.

Transition plan

A transition plan is required for all toddlers with disabilities. The local lead agency must:

- A. Review the program options for the toddler with a disability for the period from the toddler's third birthday through the remainder of the school year;
- B. Ensure the family of a toddler with a disability who is served under Part C is included in the development of the transition plan; and
- C. Establish a transition plan in the IFSP, not fewer than 90 days and at the discretion of all parties, not more than nine months, before the toddler's third birthday.

The transition plan is embedded in the IFSP and includes the steps to exit from *Early On*, and the steps and services to be taken to support the smooth transition of the child to preschool programs or related services under Part B of IDEA (to the extent that those services are appropriate and the child is eligible), or to other services that may be available (if appropriate, particularly for those toddlers exiting *Early On* and who are not

currently eligible for MMSE). The regulations (§ 303.344(h)(2)) identify the following steps to support a smooth transition for toddlers and their families:

- A. Have discussion with, and offer training of parents, as appropriate, regarding future placement and other matters related to the child's transition;
- B. Identify procedures to prepare the child for changes in service delivery, including steps to help the child adjust to, and function in, a new setting;
- C. Confirm that the Child Find information about the child has been transmitted to the LEA or other relevant agency, following notification procedures and procedural safeguards, and also transmit any additional information needed by the LEA to ensure continuity of services from *Early On* to a Part B program or related services. This additional information may include a copy of the most recent evaluation and assessments of the child and the family and most recent IFSP developed; and
- D. Identify transition services and other activities that the IFSP team determines are necessary to support the transition of the child.

Transition conference and meeting to develop transition plan

The conference to discuss transition services and the meeting to develop the transition plan:

- A. May be combined into one meeting.
- B. Must be conducted:
 - a. In settings and at times that are convenient for the family; and
 - b. In the native language of the family or other mode of communication used by the family, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.
- C. Requires that:
 - a. The meeting arrangements be made with, and written notice provided to, the family and other participants early enough before the meeting date to ensure that they will be able to attend.
 - b. The contents of the IFSP be fully explained to the parent, and informed written consent must be obtained prior to the provision of early intervention services described in the IFSP.
 - c. Each early intervention service must be provided as soon as possible after the parent provides consent for that service.
- D. The following participants are included:
 - a. The parent or parents of the child.
 - b. Other family members, as requested by the parent, if feasible to do so.
 - c. An advocate or person outside of the family, if the parent requests that the person participate.
 - d. The service coordinator designated by the local lead agency to be responsible for implementing the IFSP.
 - e. A person or persons directly involved in conducting the evaluations or assessments.
 - f. As appropriate, the persons who will be providing early intervention services to the child or family.

- g. The LEA or providers of other appropriate services.
- E. If a person or persons directly involved in conducting the evaluations or assessments is unable to attend the meeting, arrangements must be made for the person’s involvement through other means, including one of the following:
 - a. Participating in a telephone conference call.
 - b. Having a knowledgeable authorized representative attend the meeting.
 - c. Making pertinent records available at the meeting.

Periodic Review of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Annual Meeting to Evaluate the IFSP

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Circumstance	Process
If a Transition Plan is due,	Then a Periodic Review is required, unless the Transition Plan is developed during an Initial IFSP Meeting or Annual Meeting to Evaluate the IFSP. Parental signature is needed if services are added.
If a Transition Conference is due,	Then a Periodic Review may be combined with the Transition Conference, as long as the requirements of both the Periodic Review and Transition Conference are met.

Related Forms, Documents and Resources

- [Division for Early Childhood \(DEC\) Recommended Practices \(RP\)](#)
- [Mission and Key Principles for Providing Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments](#)
- [Part C to Part B Early Childhood Transition Timeline for SPP/APR Indicators C-8A, 8B, 8C, B11 and B-12](#)