



Your Child's *Journey* Early Transitions

A Parent's Guide to Transition Planning from Early Childhood
to Preschool Services in South Carolina



One Stop for Families

Family Connection of S.C. is South Carolina's Parent Training and Information Center (PTI).

We offer workshops, community events, and peer-to-peer support to connect you to the services your child may need.

The Family Connection staff are trained to help parents navigate each stage of your child's journey and charter a course for success.

Let us help you!

Our work focuses on five key areas:

- Parent Support
- Education
- Healthcare
- Training
- Advocacy



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Call the Family Information Center • Monday through Friday • 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
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A stylized illustration of a landscape. The top left shows green hills. Below them is a yellow-green field with small white flowers. The bottom left corner shows a small red object, possibly a flower or fruit. The right side of the image is a solid purple background with a pattern of concentric, wavy lines.

Dear Families,

The purpose of this guide is to help you understand how to prepare for a successful transition for your child from IDEA, Part C services, to IDEA, Part B preschool special education services and BabyNet. This handbook has been written to support you at each step of the transition process. We believe you are your child's best advocate and are an equal partner and decision maker on your child's team.

Sincerely,

Family Connection of South Carolina

From Family Focused to Child Focused

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), children who qualify may receive special education services. From birth up to age 3, services are provided by BabyNet in SC. Early intervention services and goal planning for your child and family are defined in an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

The Part B preschool program focuses on your child's educational needs. Children ages three through five years old are provided educational supports to enable them to participate in daily activities and have access to the general curriculum.



Here is a brief comparison of the IDEA/Part C early intervention program and IDEA/Part B preschool special education services.

C

IDEA Part C Early Intervention

Family Focused

Lead Agency:

South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

Ages Served: Infants and toddlers, birth to age three, with developmental delay or disabilities.

Eligibility: Infant or toddler has a delay in one or more of the five designated areas of development; or has a condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay.

Timeline: 45 days to complete evaluation once parental consent and completed referral is received.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP): A written plan of services that your child and family will receive.

Location: Services occur in child's natural setting, such as in home or childcare center.

B

IDEA Part B Preschool

Child Focused

Lead Agency:

South Carolina Department of Education, Office of Special Education Services (OSES)

Local Lead Agency: Local school district

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: child must meet criteria as having a disability as defined by IDEA, and a determination must be made that the disability affects their learning.

Timeline: 60 days from the time referral is completed and parental consent is signed and submitted to complete evaluation.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A legal document that states a child's education goals and the services and supports the school will provide, must be written within 30 calendar days after a child is determined eligible.

Location: Supports and services are provided in preschool type setting.

What is Transition?

Leaving and entering a program requires formal planning and preparation. A transition meeting can be held as early as age 2 years and 3 months, but no later than 2 years and 9 months. Your service coordinator and IFSP team will work closely with you to make sure you are as prepared as possible to support your child's transition to an early childhood setting(s). If your child is eligible for preschool special education services, important decisions about your child's future educational needs will be discussed.



2 YEARS, 3 MONTHS TO 2 YEARS, 9 MONTHS: Transition meeting is scheduled and transition plan is written. (Transition meeting can be held during six-month IFSP review).

2 YEARS, 9 MONTHS: Plan for initial Part B evaluation is written and given to parent(s) for consent.

2 YEARS, 11 MONTHS: Evaluation is completed and eligibility is confirmed.

Transition Planning

- Around your child's second birthday, you and your service coordinator will begin working on next steps for your child. This is called transition planning.
- The transition plan will be included as part of the IFSP and will contain important time frames for helping map out the transition process. You must give parental consent to send information about your child to the school district or any other agencies. Without consent, there could be a break in services.
- Through the transition planning process, you and your service coordinator will develop a plan to make sure that your child's needs are being met and that the transition will be successful.
- In the transition meeting, preschool services your child may be eligible to participate in will be discussed.

If determined eligible for services:

3RD BIRTHDAY: IEP is written and parental consent is obtained. Part C services end.

If 3rd birthday occurs in the spring or summer, IEP team should discuss ESY services. **If child turns 3 in summer,** the IEP team will

determine the date when services under the IEP will begin.

Parent(s) receive family outcomes survey.

Be sure to complete and return the survey.

3 YEARS, 3 MONTHS: Review IEP and discuss adjustment to new program. Determine any needed changes.

What Happens Before my Child Turns 3?

Referral:

Your service coordinator will send a formal transition referral to your local school district when your child is two and a half years old. This starts the school district's process for scheduling the eligibility determination process. You must give parental consent before any information about your child is sent to the school district or any other agencies to ensure there is not a break in services.

Eligibility:

A variety of assessment tools and strategies are used to gather information about your child, including information shared by you.

To be eligible for preschool services, your child must meet criteria as:

- **having a disability as defined by IDEA**

AND

- **it must be determined the disability affects their learning.**





Part B of IDEA defines disability(s) in the following categories:

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

If your child is found eligible for preschool special education, you will participate in a meeting to develop your child's Individual Education Program (IEP). You are part of the IEP team. Typically, your early intervention providers and others who know your child well will participate in the IEP meeting.

What is an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?

An IEP is a written legal document for your child that lays out the plan of special education instruction, supports and services your child will need to make progress and thrive in school. It is developed, reviewed, and revised in a meeting in keeping with certain requirements of law and regulations.

The IEP has two general purposes:

- 1 to establish measurable annual goals for the child.

AND

- 2 to state the special education and related services that the school will provide to, or on behalf of, the child.





An IEP must be developed before special education services can begin and must contain the following:

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

You should receive a copy of the IEP.

Who Pays for Services?

Services for preschool children (ages 3 through 5) are provided free of charge through the public-school system. IDEA/Part B Preschool services are available to children who are eligible for special education and related services as appropriate. Your child's placement should be in the most natural and least restrictive environment (LRE), which for this age-group, is often childcare or preschool settings.

Preschool Placement

You and your child's team will consider specific programs available for your child. Some of these settings could be in a childcare center or family childcare environment, or an early childhood setting, such as:

- Public or private preschools.
- Head Start centers.
- Preschool classes offered by the public-school system to eligible children ages 3 through 5.
- Early childhood special education classrooms, if your child is eligible for preschool special education.

Once you have decided on the type of setting for your child, your service coordinator or service provider can help you set up appointments to visit the potential program sites.





Inclusion

Inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities promote healthy development, learning, and a sense of belonging, helping all children reach their full potential.

As you consider placement options for your child, you may wish to consider the following factors that can be used to identify high quality preschool programs and services:

Access – means providing a wide range of activities and environments for every child by removing physical barriers and offering multiple ways to promote learning and development.

Participation – means using a range of instructional approaches to promote engagement in play and learning activities, and a sense of belonging for every child.

Supports – refers to broader aspects of the system such as professional development, incentives for inclusion, and opportunities for communication and collaboration among families and professionals to assure high quality inclusion.





When your child is preparing to exit IDEA/Part C services, you have the right to:

- A transition plan with outcomes, supports, and services needed to support exit from IDEA/Part C when your child turns three years old.
- Notification to your local school district that your child is potentially eligible for preschool services.
- Referral to your school district and/or other community programs.
- A transition conference with your school district or with an early childhood/preschool program of your choosing.

Rights and Responsibilities as a Parent or Guardian under Part B

As a federal education program, you and your child have rights under IDEA, Part B. If at any time you think you or your child's rights have been violated, you have the right to file a written state complaint about services received or denied. You may also request mediation and or a due process hearing to resolve disagreements.

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

- to have confidentiality.
- to have access to your child's educational records.
- to participate in meetings related to special education services and placement.
- the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to your child.
- to obtain an independent educational evaluation (IEE) for your child.
- to receive prior written notice relating to the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child.
- to give or deny your consent before the school may take certain actions with respect to your child.
- to receive an explanation of all procedures for resolving disputes.

A special thank you to all those involved in the collaboration and development of this guide:

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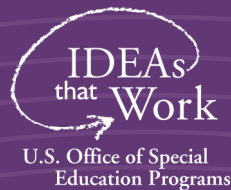
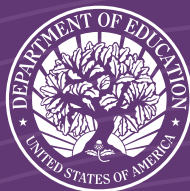
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#RaisingAwareness #PromotingInclusion #MakingConnections
for families of children with disabilities or special needs