

THE TRANSITION FROM EARLY INTERVENTION TO PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES:

AN OVERVIEW FOR FAMILIES

Prepared by the Early Childhood Direction Centers/New York City

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HOW TO BEGIN:

Your early intervention service coordinator will speak to you about options for your child when s/he is no longer age eligible for early intervention services. This discussion may occur at the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting closest to your child's second birthday and should certainly occur before your child is two and a half years old. One option you may select would be a referral, with your written permission, to the local Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) to request an evaluation to determine if your child is eligible for preschool special education services. This evaluation, and any recommended preschool special education services, will be provided at no cost to you.

AGE ELIGIBILITY:

In order for your child to continue to receive early intervention services past her/his third birthday, the CPSE must determine that your child meets the eligibility criteria to receive preschool special education services. This **must** occur before your child's third birthday.

If the CPSE determines that your child is not eligible for preschool special education services, your child's early intervention services will end the day before her/his third birthday.

If determined eligible for services by the CPSE, children who turn three between January 1st and August 31st may remain in early intervention until August 31st of the year they turn three. If determined eligible for services by the CPSE, children who turn three between September 1st and December 31st may remain in early intervention until December 31st of the year they turn three.

NOTIFICATION:

Approximately 120 calendar days prior to your child's first age eligibility for preschool special education services, your early intervention service coordinator, with your written permission, will send a written notification to the CPSE of your child's potential transition to the preschool special education system.

Children who turn three between January 1st and June 30th are first eligible for preschool special education services on January 2nd of the year they turn three. Children who turn three between July 1st and December 31st are first eligible for preschool special education services on July 1st of the year they turn three.

TRANSITION CONFERENCE:

If you are unsure whether you would like a referral to the CPSE for your child, you may ask your service coordinator to arrange a transition conference between you, the CPSE administrator (a NYC Department of Education employee) and the service coordinator.

REFERRAL:

Approximately 120 calendar days prior to your child's third birthday, your early intervention service coordinator, with your written permission, will send a written referral to the CPSE. The CPSE administrator will then send you a packet of information which includes an explanation of your due process rights, a consent for evaluation form and a list of the New York State Education Department (SED) approved preschool special education evaluation sites. Your child's current early intervention provider may or may not be an approved preschool special education evaluation site. When you receive the packet, you should select an evaluation site. If you need assistance choosing an evaluation site, you may contact your early intervention service coordinator, the CPSE administrator or the Early Childhood Direction Center (ECDC) in your borough (contact information is located on page 5).

DUE PROCESS RIGHTS:

Federal and New York State law guarantee that parents of children who are receiving or being evaluated for special education services have legal rights. These due process rights are explained in the packet of information from the CPSE administrator. They will be explained to you in more detail **before** you sign consent to have your child evaluated for the first time. If you have any questions about your rights, you can ask the evaluation site staff member who is explaining the system to you, the CPSE administrator or the ECDC in your borough.

FOSTER CARE:

For children who are in foster care, it is very important that the CPSE administrator and the preschool special education evaluation site contact the child's foster care agency case worker to determine whether a surrogate parent needs to be appointed.

EVALUATION:

As a parent, it is your responsibility to select an evaluation site from the list in the packet and promptly call to schedule an appointment with the site you choose. The consent for evaluation form must be brought with you to your first meeting at the evaluation site. After your due process rights have been explained to you, if you wish to have your child evaluated, you must sign the consent form. In some instances the CPSE administrator may be the person to obtain written consent from you. You may withdraw your consent for evaluation, in writing, at any point during the evaluation process, **before** the Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed. During your first meeting with the evaluation site representative, you will be asked questions to determine if your child's evaluation needs to be conducted in a language(s) other than English.

Your child's evaluation will consist of a social history interview with you, a psychological evaluation and a physical examination (in most instances you will be given a form to be filled out by your child's pediatrician). Other evaluations may be performed, if needed, to determine if your child has an educational disability. Examples of additional evaluations include, but are not limited to, speech, occupational or physical therapy evaluations. With your permission, the preschool evaluation site will determine if your child's most recent evaluations from early intervention can be used. You may also submit any other evaluations of your child. In addition, an observation of your child by a member of the evaluation team will occur.

The evaluations should be completed and forwarded by the evaluation site to the CPSE administrator within 20 school days from the date you signed the consent form. The CPSE administrator then reviews the material and schedules a CPSE meeting to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) within 10 school days of receiving the evaluations. Prior to the CPSE meeting, the evaluation site may review with you the results of the evaluations. The CPSE administrator will mail a summary of the evaluations, in your dominant language, and notification of the date and time of your child's CPSE meeting to you. If you wish to have copies of the entire evaluations, you must request them from the CPSE Administrator. If you wish to participate in the meeting, but are not able to attend on the scheduled date and/or time, you must inform the CPSE administrator of your desire to attend the meeting and request to have the meeting rescheduled. **Otherwise, the meeting may take place without you.**

COMMITTEE ON PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION MEETING:

At the CPSE meeting it will be determined, based on the results of the evaluation, what, if any, services your child is eligible to receive. Present at this meeting with you are the required members of the CPSE: a regular education teacher, a special education teacher or related service provider, the CPSE Administrator, a professional who can interpret the instructional implications of the evaluation results and if your child receives early intervention services, a representative of your child's early intervention program (such as your service coordinator). A CPSE Parent Member (the parent of another child who is receiving special education services) will also attend the meeting unless you waive their participation. If you wish, you may bring other individuals with you (i.e., a friend, a family member, a representative of the evaluation site, an advocate, a physician, etc.) to the meeting.

The evaluations will be reviewed to determine if your child meets the eligibility criteria that has been established by SED. Eligibility criteria for preschool special education services are similar to the eligibility criteria for early intervention services. **However, the types and amount of services recommended may be different from the early intervention services your child receives.** If your child does not meet the eligibility criteria, an IEP will not be developed and your child's early intervention services will end on the day before your child's third birthday. If you disagree with the eligibility determination, you may request an additional evaluation. If your child is deemed eligible to receive services s/he will be classified as a **Preschool Child with a Disability** and an IEP will be developed. The IEP will include short and long term goals and objectives, recommended preschool special education services and adaptive equipment (if needed). If transportation is needed, including any special transportation requirements, it **must** be documented on the IEP.

The meeting will include a discussion about how your child's needs can be met in the least restrictive environment (LRE). A recommendation will be made for preschool special education services based on the SED's approved service models which are described below. If your child is recommended to receive related services and/or special education itinerant teacher services (SEIT), it is your responsibility - if you want your child to attend an early childhood education program (i.e., childcare, HeadStart, Universal Pre-kindergarten or nursery school, etc.) - to locate, enroll and pay for (if there is a fee) the early childhood program. The recommended related and/or SEIT services will be provided at no cost to you. At the meeting, a discussion will occur about whether your child requires services for either a ten or twelve month school calendar.

In addition, as part of this meeting, the Child Outcome Survey form (which includes information on your child's development) will be reviewed with you.

CONTINUUM OF SERVICES FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN NEW YORK STATE:

The level of service that appropriately meets your child's special education needs will be discussed during the IEP meeting. Following is a brief description of the options that are currently available in New York State; they are listed in order of what is considered the least restrictive to the most restrictive environments:

Related Services are services provided by an appropriately certified or licensed professional. Examples include, but are not limited to, speech therapy (ST), physical therapy (PT), occupational therapy (OT), audiology, counseling services, parent counseling and education, school social work, vision education services and hearing education services. If two or more related services are recommended, the CPSE administrator will designate one of the

related service providers as the coordinator.

Special Education Itinerant Teacher Services (SEIT) are provided by a certified special education teacher who travels to your child to provide services. The SEIT teacher is an employee of an SED approved preschool special education program. If SEIT services and one or more related services are recommended, the SEIT teacher serves as the coordinator of all the services. SEIT services must be provided at least two hours per week. **Related services** and **SEIT** may be provided at a location including, but not limited to, an approved or licensed prekindergarten, HeadStart program, childcare location, therapist's office or your home.

Special Class in an Integrated Setting is provided by an SED approved preschool special education program and includes both children with and without disabilities. The classroom staff includes at least one special education teacher and one paraprofessional, other early childhood education teachers and paraprofessionals may also work in the classroom. Each child in this type of program receives services for a minimum of 2 1/2 hours per day. Children approved for a special class in an integrated setting may also receive related services as part of their program.

Special Class is provided by an SED approved preschool special education program. All the children in this type of class are classified as preschool children with disabilities. Each child in this type of program receives services for at least 2 1/2 hours per day. Children approved for a special class may also receive related services as part of their program.

Residential Program is a special education program that is provided for a minimum of five hours per day, five days a week by an SED approved preschool special education program. Children approved for a residential program may also receive related services. Placement in a residential program must be approved by the New York State Commissioner of Education.

APPROVAL OF PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES:

At the conclusion of the CPSE meeting, if you agree with the recommendations, you will be asked to sign the consent for services form. If your child is eligible to receive preschool special education services, you may choose instead to continue your child's early intervention services until they age out of the early intervention system. If you choose this option, the CPSE may have to meet again to determine if the recommended services are still appropriate. **Your child may not receive early intervention and preschool special education services at the same time.**

The CPSE administrator can then authorize the services to begin immediately. If the CPSE develops a recommendation for special education services (special class, special class in an integrated setting or SEIT) and those services are not available, the CPSE can offer **partial service options** until the recommended services become available. If you did not attend the CPSE meeting, the consent for services form will be sent to you by mail. **Services may not begin without your written consent.** The total amount of time from your signature on the consent for evaluation form to approval from the DOE should not exceed sixty school days.

If you do not agree with the recommendations and you cannot resolve the issue at the CPSE meeting you may request, in writing, mediation and/or an impartial hearing. An impartial hearing, in contrast to mediation, is a more formal and legally binding process. If you need additional information on mediation and the impartial hearing process you may contact the CPSE administrator, the Early Childhood Direction Center in your borough, or one of the advocacy organizations listed on the following page.

WE HOPE THIS MATERIAL IS USEFUL TO YOU. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE INFORMATION INCLUDED IN THIS BOOKLET, OR ABOUT SERVICES FOR YOUR CHILD, PLEASE CONTACT THE EARLY CHILDHOOD DIRECTION CENTER IN THE BOROUGH WHERE YOU LIVE; THE TELEPHONE NUMBERS ARE LISTED BELOW.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DIRECTION CENTERS (ECDC), funded by the New York State Education Department, provide free confidential information and referral to parents and professionals about services for young children with diagnosed or suspected special needs.

BRONX

Early Childhood Direction Center
AHRC New York City
2488 Grand Concourse, #337
Bronx, NY 10458
(718) 584-0658

BROOKLYN

Early Childhood Direction Center
United Cerebral Palsy of NYC, Inc.
160 Lawrence Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11230
(718) 437-3794

MANHATTAN

Early Childhood Direction Center
New York Presbyterian Hospital
435 East 70th Street, #2A
New York, NY 10021
(212) 746-6175

QUEENS

Early Childhood Direction Center
Queens Center for Progress
82-25 164th Street
Jamaica, NY 11432
(718) 374-0002 ext. 465

STATEN ISLAND

Early Childhood Direction Center
Staten Island University Hospital
242 Mason Avenue, 1st Floor
Staten Island, NY 10305
(718) 226-6670

In New York City, the following agencies also provide information, referral and advocacy assistance to families of children with special needs:

Advocates for Children, Inc. (212) 947-9779
Parent to Parent New York, Inc. (718) 494-4872
Resources for Children with Special Needs, Inc. (212) 677-4650
Sinergia, Inc. (212) 643-2840

