

# When I'm 3, where will I be?

A FAMILY'S TRANSITION WORKBOOK



December, 2007

Names and contact information  
I don't want to forget.

Name and Title	Address	Phone/Email
Service Coordinator:		p:
		e:
Public School Contact Person:		p:
		e:
Community Preschool:		p:
		e:
Community Programs:		p:
		e:
		p:
		e:
		p:
		e:

# When I'm 3, where will I be?

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**Illinois Birth-5 Transition Guidance Committee  
Family Transition Workbook Subcommittee  
Illinois State Board of Education  
Illinois Department of Human Services**

# Acknowledgements

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## **Illinois State Board of Education**

Early Childhood Education Division  
Child Find  
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## **Illinois Department of Human Services**

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Illinois Early Intervention Training Program

## **Chicago Public Schools #299**

## **Livingston County Special Services Unit**

## **Child and Family Connections Offices**

#3, serving Lee, Whiteside, DeKalb, Stephenson, Carroll and Jo Daviess counties  
#4, serving Kane and Kendall counties  
#6, serving northwest suburban Cook county  
#14, serving Henry, Peoria, Stark, Woodford and Tazewell counties  
#15, serving Grundy, Kankakee, LaSalle and Will counties  
#19, serving Clark, Coles, Cumberland, DeWitt, Douglas, Edgar, Macon, Moultrie, Piatt and Shelby counties

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# Table of Contents

Letter to Families.....	4
Transition at a Glance .....	6
<b>The Transition Process</b> —One Step at a Time	
<b>Step 1</b> Dreams For My Child .....	7
<b>Step 2</b> Sharing Information.....	11
<b>Step 3</b> Transition Planning Conference.....	13
<b>Step 4</b> Evaluation .....	17
<b>Step 5</b> The IEP Meeting.....	21
<b>Step 6</b> Where Will I Be Now That I'm 3? .....	29
Resources for Families .....	33
Glossary .....	37

## Dear Families,

**Welcome to *When I'm 3, Where Will I Be? A Family's Transition Workbook*.** This workbook was developed by parents and early intervention and school personnel to provide information as you approach your child's transition from Early Intervention services. We hope it will be useful to you and your family.

It may seem as if Early Intervention (EI) has just started and it is already time to talk about change. Transition from EI is a time of change, and change can be a challenge for all of us. Families that shared their stories and experiences in this workbook want you to know that transition can also be an exciting time as you and your family move on to new experiences, learn new things, develop new partnerships and continue to shape new hopes and dreams for your child. We hope you use the stories, insights, and resources shared in this workbook to better understand the transition process. The more you know about transition, the more comfortable you will feel as you and your child get ready to move beyond EI together.

A formal transition process begins when your child is 2 years 6 months of age. This workbook will take you step by step through the six-month transition process. If you feel that you need more time, you can begin this process sooner. The supports, meetings and services that will be provided to you throughout the transition process are tailored to meet your needs. We want you and your child to be ready to leave Early Intervention services when your child turns 3.

You will receive information about preschool programs and services in your community. You will learn how those services can be individualized so your child will be successful in the new early childhood setting. Children receiving EI services and who are determined eligible for Early Childhood Special Education must have a plan for those services. As you can see, this transition process is more than just one meeting or one document. We encourage you to participate in the complete transition process and take advantage of all the supports and services that will be available to you.

The parents, early intervention and school personnel who contributed to *When I'm 3, Where Will I Be? A Family's Transition Workbook* hope you use this as a resource and a planner on this journey. Every journey begins with the first step. So, let's begin by taking a deep breath and focusing on your child. The following Parent Page: My Child and Family is yours to use as you get ready for the next step.

With warm regards,

The Family's Transition Workbook Committee

# Parent Page: My Child and Family

Important people in our family

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Things we enjoy doing as a family

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How early intervention services have helped my child

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My family, friends and I can help my child do these things

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These are some of my hopes for my child and family

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# Transition at a Glance

**At every IFSP meeting** you will have the chance to talk about any transition questions or concerns.

**When your child is 2 years 6 months**, your service coordinator will work with you to put together a referral packet. You will be asked to sign consent to send your child's referral packet to the school district or special education cooperative.

**When your child is between 2 years 6 months and 2 years 9 months**, your service coordinator will arrange for a Transition Planning Conference.

**When your child is 2 years 9 months**, you will have a Transition Planning Conference with your service coordinator and one person representing your local school district.

**When your child is between 2 years 9 months and 3 years**, your local school district or special education cooperative may arrange to evaluate your child. The information in your child's referral packet plus any new evaluations will be used to determine if your child is eligible for special education and related services.

**On or before your child's 3rd birthday**, you will help to write an Individualized Education Program (IEP) as a member of the IEP Team if your child is eligible for special education and related services.

If your child is not eligible for special education and related services, your service coordinator will help you find other opportunities for young children in your community.



# The Transition Process

## One Step at a Time

# 1



## STEP 1

### Dreams For My Child

#### What Do I Want For My Child at Age 3?

As you and your child get ready to transition from Early Intervention (EI) services, it is time to think about where your child might be at 3. Some parents find it helpful to think about what their child's early childhood experience might look like. Each community in Illinois offers different options for preschool-age children. A good beginning point when you start thinking of transition is to explore the options for young children in your community. Some of those options might include:

#### Community Programs

- Community preschools and other programs
- Park district preschools and other activities
- Faith-based preschools
- Agency-run preschools
- Head Start
- Child care

#### School District Programs

- State-funded Pre-kindergarten or Preschool for All
- Early Childhood Special Education
- Tuition-based programs

The transition period is a good time for you to begin visiting preschool programs in your community. When you visit an early childhood site, you will have an opportunity to see what various programs look like. Many parents find it helpful to picture their child as part of the group.

### Here are some questions to keep in mind when you visit an early childhood classroom:

- \* Are the children happy?
- \* Are the children actively engaged with teachers, classroom materials and other children?
- \* Would this be a safe, comfortable place for my child?
- \* Does the preschool allow and encourage full participation by children with different personalities, backgrounds and abilities?
- \* Will my child receive the support needed to be successful in this preschool?
- \* How are families involved?
- \* Does the room arrangement encourage active exploration and play for all the children?
- \* What is the ratio of staff to children?
- \* How are the staff trained and supervised?
- \* Will my child like it here?
- \* Can I picture my child in this classroom?

If your child is eligible for Early Childhood Special Education services, visiting preschool programs will help you be more confident in your role as a member of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. Together the IEP team makes the decision about where your child will receive special education and related services. You will learn more about your role on the IEP team throughout this workbook.

If your child is not eligible for Early Childhood Special Education services, visiting community programs for young children will help you decide your child's next step.

You can use this Parent Checklist to think about and plan for this part of the transition process.



## Parent Checklist

- In our family, we talked about our dreams for our child.
- We visited community preschools and programs.

This is what is in our community: \_\_\_\_\_

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Places I went: \_\_\_\_\_

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People I talked to: \_\_\_\_\_


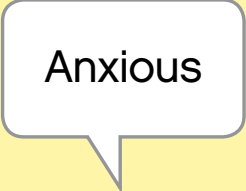
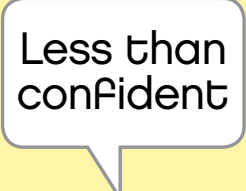

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## How Do I Feel About My Child's Transition?

The transition from EI services brings new experiences and new challenges. Each family adjusts to all of the changes in their own way and in their own time. During the transition process, you will probably experience a range of feelings. This page describes some typical feelings and some positive strategies that parents have used during their transition process.

If you are Feeling:	Remember:
 <p>Hopeful</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* You have good reason to feel hopeful; you are entering into a new journey with your child. Your input will help shape and guide that experience.</li> <li>* You will find support and encouragement as you form relationships with other parents and professionals.</li> <li>* You will develop positive partnerships through your experiences.</li> </ul>
 <p>Anxious</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Many parents are concerned when their children will be away from them for longer periods of time.</li> <li>* Many parents recall experiencing more anxiety than their children.</li> <li>* Change can be scary; change can be exciting.</li> <li>* You will be able to take pride in sharing new experiences with your child.</li> <li>* Adjusting to a new and different setting takes energy and effort.</li> <li>* You might find it easier to manage feelings of anxiety by focusing on your child's strengths and planning for the next step.</li> </ul>
 <p>Less than confident</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* You are an expert on your child.</li> <li>* The insight you have gained from personal experience is as important as the information gathered by professionals.</li> <li>* Your perceptions are needed to develop a complete picture of your child.</li> <li>* Your confidence will grow as you gain experience in supporting your child's education in the new setting.</li> <li>* Sharing with another parent who has been through the transition process may help you sort through what you want to do next.</li> </ul>
 <p>Ready</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Many parents are ready for their child to move on to the next step of preschool.</li> <li>* You may be seeking more independence for your child and looking for opportunities for your child to be with other children.</li> <li>* This workbook offers information and tools to use as you move through transition and plan for your child's preschool years.</li> </ul>

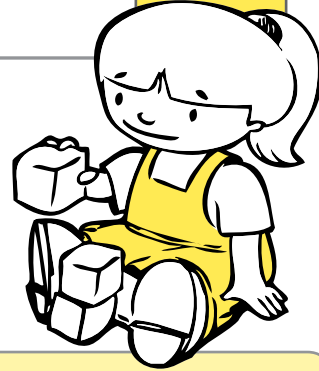
# Transition Timeframe

The highlighted areas of the timeframe show when each step of the transition process usually starts. If you want some or all of the steps started earlier, talk about your concerns and questions with your service coordinator.

Transition Steps	Every IFSP	2 yrs. 6 mon.	2 yrs. 7 mon.	2 yrs. 8 mon.	2 yrs. 9 mon.	2 yrs. 10 mon.	2 yrs. 11 mon.	3 yrs.
Talk about transition questions and concerns	X							
Service coordinator sends referral packet to school district or special education cooperative with parent's written consent		X						
Service coordinator sets up Transition Planning Conference		X	X	X				
Parent, service coordinator and school district or special education cooperative representative attend Transition Planning Conference					X			
Local school district or special education cooperative includes parents in Domain Review process					X	X		
School district or special education cooperative completes evaluations with parent's consent						X	X	
IEP team including parents meets to determine child's eligibility							X	X
If child is eligible, IEP team writes IEP							X	X
IEP team implements IEP								X

# The Transition Process

## One Step at a Time



### STEP 2

## Sharing Information

All children in Early Intervention (EI) services are entitled to a smooth and effective transition by their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. The transition process begins when your child is 2 years 6 months of age. Transition begins this early because it gives you and early intervention, school and other early childhood professionals time to meet, share information and plan.

When your child is 2 years 6 months of age, your service coordinator will ask you to sign consent so a referral packet can be sent to your local education agency (LEA). If you want your child's information sent to other preschool programs in your community, tell your service coordinator. Your child's referral packet will be sent after you sign for consent. Without your consent, your service coordinator will not be able to send your packet and your child's transition process will be delayed. If you have concerns or questions about sharing information, you may want to discuss them with your parent liaison or service coordinator.

You may want to start the transition process before your child is 2 years 6 months. Some families want more time to plan; some families are concerned about what will happen if their child turns 3 during the summer; some families are concerned about their child's complex medical needs. If you would like to start transition earlier, tell your service coordinator as soon as possible.

### Remember

The referral packet will be sent to your local school district or special education cooperative. Ask your service coordinator where the information will be sent. Write important names and contact information on the inside of the front cover of this workbook.

*“The future belongs to those of us who believe in the beauty of our dreams...”*

*—Eleanor Roosevelt*

## Putting Together Your Referral Packet

Typically, a referral packet will include the most current IFSP and evaluations. As you review your child's file, decide what additional information you would like to share. If there is any material that you do not want to share, tell your service coordinator. You should feel comfortable with the information you choose to share. Your child's referral packet is an important part of the transition process.

At this point, you probably have a lot of questions about transition. Your service coordinator is there to help answer your questions and explain the complete process. Use the Parent Checklist to help you keep track of the things you have done so far.



### Parent Checklist

Date I signed consent to send my child's referral packet:

---

Date referral packet sent:

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Referral packet sent to:

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Things I put in the referral packet:

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Date, time and location for Transition Planning Conference:

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

# The Transition Process

## One Step at a Time

# 3

## STEP 3

### Transition Planning Conference

When your child is 2 years 9 months of age, your service coordinator will hold a Transition Planning Conference that will include you, your service coordinator and a school district representative. You may want to invite other professionals or family members who know your child or representatives from community programs you might be considering. The Transition Planning Conference is an opportunity for you to learn about your school district and for the school district representative to learn about your child. It is not a meeting for making decisions about eligibility, services or where your child might go to school.

#### Before the Transition Planning Conference:

- \* Review your child's EI records.
- \* Talk to your service providers about your child's progress and successful strategies they used.
- \* Decide if you want to share additional information such as medical reports, information from outside services your child received, videos or photos of your child.
- \* Talk to your Child and Family Connections (CFC) parent liaison.
- \* Fill out the Parent Page: Things I Want You to Know About My Child. (page 15)
- \* Write down all of your questions and bring them with you to the Transition Planning Conference.

#### Topics to Talk about:

- Information about your child
- Possible services available in your community and through your school district or special education cooperative
- Services available during the summer in your community and through your school district or special education cooperative
- Registration and evaluation process for your community programs, school district or special education cooperative
- Visits to early childhood classrooms in your community and school district or special education cooperative
- The IEP process
- Transportation for your child
- The district Domain Review process—what it looks like and when it starts
- The next step of the transition process





# Parent Checklist

I attended the Transition Planning Conference on: \_\_\_\_\_

I put all of the important contact information on the front page of this workbook.

Others who attended the Transition Planning Conference:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Things I learned at the Transition Planning Conference:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent training available to help me understand the evaluation process and IEP:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Things that will happen next:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Parent Page: Things I Want You to Know About My Child



These are things I want everyone to know about my child:

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These are things I am concerned about now:

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This is how my child communicates with me and other people:

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These are ways my child likes to learn new things:

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This is what my child does when he or she needs help:

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These are things I would like my child to learn over the next 6-12 months:

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# Parent-to-Parent

How are you  
doing so far?

Are there questions  
you still want to ask?

What is your  
next step?

Who are the  
people you need  
to talk to?

# The Transition Process

## One Step at a Time

# 4



## STEP 4

### Evaluation

Your school district or special education cooperative representative will contact you about participating in a Domain Review after your Transition Planning Conference. The purpose of a Domain Review is to figure out if additional information is needed before your IEP team can determine if your child is eligible for Early Childhood Special Education services. The domain form is used to keep track of the Domain Review. This form can be filled out at a meeting that you attend with other IEP team members. It may also be filled out by your child's IEP team, and one team member will review the form with you. The domain form is also called the Identification of Needed Assessments form.

Even though you and your child received services through Early Intervention, there is no automatic eligibility for Early Childhood Special Education services. You will be involved in helping the school district or special education cooperative gather needed information to help determine if your child is eligible.

It is very helpful to share what you know about your child with other IEP team members. You know your child best. You know what your child has learned already. You know what your child likes and dislikes and how your child likes to play. The Parent Page: Things I Want You to Know About My Child that you completed on page 15 can be used again as a helpful planning tool for the evaluation process.

### Remember

The ideas and information you share are part of the Domain Review Process. You will have the opportunity to ask questions about what others have included on the form.

Using the completed domain form, your child's IEP team needs to be able to answer these four questions:

- 1 Does your child have a disability?
- 2 What are your child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance?
- 3 Does your child's disability have an adverse affect on your child's ability to participate in and benefit from age-appropriate activities?
- 4 Does your child need special education and related services?

If your child's IEP team, including you, has enough information to answer all of these questions after the Domain Review, your child does not need additional evaluations. However, if your child's IEP team cannot answer all four questions, the team will decide what additional evaluations are needed to help determine eligibility and plan for your child's education.

School districts cannot evaluate your child without your informed, written consent. Before you give your consent, make sure that you understand the five W's of evaluation:

- ★ **Why** are these evaluations needed?
- ★ **Who** will do the evaluations and how will the evaluations be completed?
- ★ **What** information will be gathered through the evaluations?
- ★ **Where** will the evaluations be done?
- ★ **When** will the evaluations be scheduled and completed?

## During the Evaluation

When you sign consent, your child's evaluation process will continue. The evaluation is individualized for your child. Evaluations can be conducted by one person or a team of professionals, at your home, preschool or school district. You can ask where and how your child will be evaluated.

You may be asked to share information through an interview or as part of a questionnaire. The questions may be about your child's birth and medical history, developmental milestones and progress, and home and family environments.

### Informed Consent Means:

You have been fully informed about why your consent is needed in your native language or other mode of communication.

You understand and agree in writing to the activity that has been described to you.

You understand that your consent is voluntary and can be revoked at anytime.

Source: IDEA, 2004, 34CFR Section 300.9

As you can see, the evaluation process brings together different types of information about your child. Your input is an important part of your child's evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation process is to help members of your child's IEP team paint a complete picture of your child.



Remember, you know your child best. If there is anything that you do not understand,



The more you understand, the better you will feel about making decisions as an active member of your child's IEP team.

**Your child's IEP team will be involved in the evaluation process.  
The IEP team members include:**

- ✦ YOU!
- ✦ A regular education teacher
- ✦ A special education teacher
- ✦ A representative from your school district
- ✦ Someone who is qualified to interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results
- ✦ Other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding your child, including related service professionals
- ✦ Your child, whenever appropriate

Source: IDEA, 2004, 34CFR Section 300.305

### **Parent-to-Parent Tips and Strategies:**

- ✦ Ask for a copy of all evaluation reports.
- ✦ Ask someone from the IEP team to talk about the results with you.
- ✦ Take time to read the evaluation reports before the IEP meeting.
- ✦ Discuss the evaluation reports with your spouse, partner or other family members.
- ✦ Discuss the evaluation reports with your EI providers or others that are important in your child's life.
- ✦ Make sure the results reflect an accurate picture of your child.
- ✦ Write down any questions or comments you have regarding the reports.
- ✦ Bring your copy of the evaluation reports with you to the IEP meeting.
- ✦ Read more about the evaluation process in *A Parent's Guide: The Educational Rights of Students with Disabilities* ([www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net)).



# Parent Checklist

- I participated in a domain meeting and/or I reviewed the form on \_\_\_\_\_
- I signed the form giving consent for my child to be evaluated \_\_\_\_\_
- My child's evaluations were scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_
- My child's evaluations were completed on \_\_\_\_\_
- I reviewed the results of evaluations or someone reviewed the results with me on \_\_\_\_\_
- The date for the IEP meeting is \_\_\_\_\_

"We were not sure if our district would provide the services we thought our son needed. Everyone was on the same page, and Nathan received everything we wanted. Our advice to other parents would be to read about your child's disability and about your rights. Also, talk to other parents, your therapists and the people at your district."

—Nathan's mother

# The Transition Process

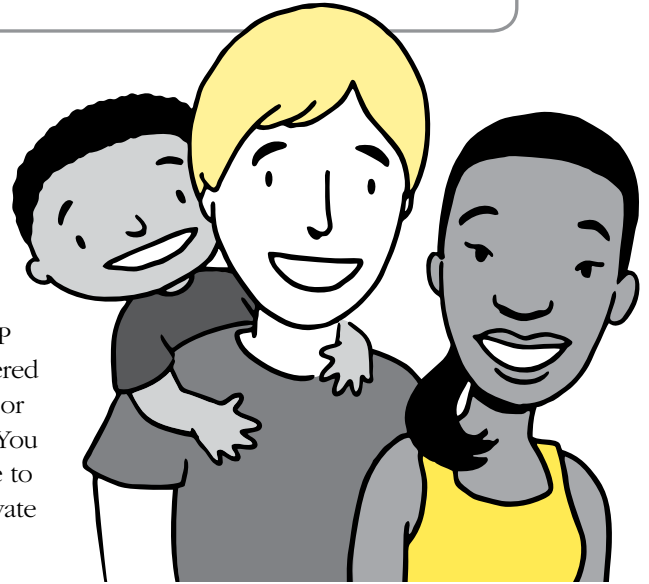
## One Step at a Time

# 5

### STEP 5

## The IEP Meeting

When your child's evaluation is complete, it is time for the IEP team to meet and discuss the information that has been gathered from the evaluation or outside sources. You probably met all or most of your child's IEP team during the evaluation process. You can invite others to attend the IEP meeting. Some parents like to invite their EI service coordinators or service providers or private service providers. Be sure to let your contact person from the school district know who to invite to the IEP meeting.



Throughout this workbook, we emphasize how important it is for you to be an active member of your child's IEP team. You have a lot of information and insight about how your child learns, what your child can do, and what you want your child to learn next. The Parent Page: Getting Ready For Your IEP (page 25) will help you collect some of your thoughts, ideas and concerns to share at the IEP meeting.

### Your child's IEP meeting accomplishes two separate tasks:

- 1 The IEP team determines if your child is eligible for special education and related services.
- 2 If your child is eligible, then the IEP team writes the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Sometimes both of these tasks are completed in one meeting; sometimes it takes two meetings. Let's take a look at each part of the IEP meeting.

### Determining Eligibility

During the first part of the IEP meeting, everyone reviews the results of all of the evaluations. You can request a copy of the evaluation reports before the meeting. The IEP meeting is a time for you to ask questions about the results and to share what you know about your child. Remember, the purpose of the evaluation is to try to capture a full picture of your child, including the things that your child can do well and the things that are difficult for your child.

You will be asked if you agree or disagree with the evaluation results. If you disagree, you have options similar to the options you had in Early Intervention. Talk with your service coordinator and the IEP team about your concerns. You can also refer to the Evaluation and IEP sections of *A Parent's Guide: The Educational Rights of Students with Disabilities*.

Using the results of the evaluation, the IEP team will discuss whether your child is eligible for special education and related services based on one or more eligibility categories. Your IEP team can decide to use “developmental delay” to determine eligibility as long as your child also meets the requirements of one of the other eligibility categories. Ask your IEP team to explain the eligibility categories to you. You can read about the eligibility categories in *A Parent’s Guide: The Educational Rights of Students with Disabilities* or on the Illinois State Board of Education website: [www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net).

If the IEP team agrees that your child IS eligible for special education and related services, the next step of the process is to write your child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP).

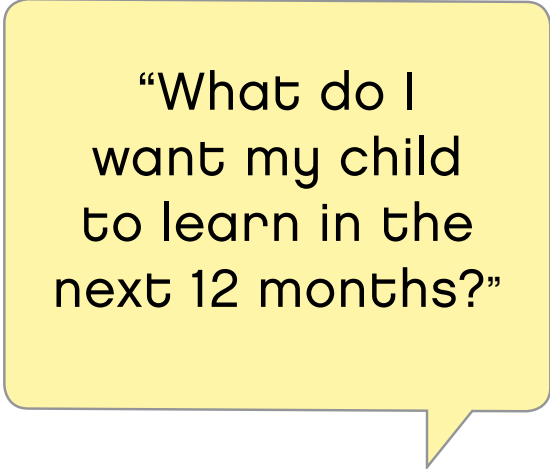
If the IEP team agrees that your child is NOT eligible for special education and related services, then your service coordinator can help you find other community early childhood opportunities for your child. Your school district may also be able to provide you with ideas about other opportunities available in your community.

## Writing the IEP

In Early Intervention, your family and child’s outcomes and activities were written on an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). When your child is 3, the educational plan will be written on an Individualized Education Program (IEP). To see a comparison between Early Intervention and Special Education, look at the chart on page 26-27.

The IEP is the plan that will guide your child’s special education and related services. You will continue to have an important role on the IEP team as your child’s Individualized Education Program is written. Some parents find it helpful to review a blank IEP form before the meeting so they will have an idea of what the document will look like and what the IEP team will discuss at the meeting.

After reviewing the evaluation results and determining eligibility, it is time for the IEP team to talk about the goals for your child. It is helpful when everyone who will implement the IEP participates in writing the annual goals. Measurable annual goals are the things that you and the other members of the IEP team would like to see your child learn in 12 months. The goals written by the IEP team will reflect the things that your child needs to learn in school.



“What do I want my child to learn in the next 12 months?”



## What is included in an IEP?

- \* Statement of the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance
- \* Information on how the child's disability affects the child's participation in age-appropriate activities
- \* Statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals, designed to meet the child's needs and enable the child to be involved in and make progress in age-appropriate activities
- \* Description of how the child's progress will be measured
- \* Timeline for providing periodic reports on the child's progress
- \* Statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services available to the child
- \* Statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided to enable the child to make progress and participate in curricular, extracurricular and nonacademic activities and to be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and nondisabled children
- \* Projected date for the beginning of services and the anticipated frequency, location and duration of services and modifications

IDEA, 2004, Sec. 614(d)

After the IEP team has written measurable annual goals, everyone will discuss the supports and related services your child will need in order to make progress on the goals and participate in age-appropriate activities. You might hear the phrase “educationally relevant” during the IEP meeting when you talk about related services. Your child's related services need to be connected to your child's right to make progress in school and to participate in age-appropriate activities.

### Remember

Related services are required when the services are necessary to enable your child to benefit from special education.

Related services could include physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, adapted physical education, recreation therapy, social work, psychological services, counseling, orientation and mobility and audiology services.

Related services are determined on an individual basis by your child's IEP team.

Your child's annual goals and related services will be individualized to meet your child's needs. After the IEP team has written annual goals and decided on related services, the next part of the IEP meeting is to talk about placement or where your child will receive the special education and related services written in the IEP. Your child's IEP team must consider a regular education preschool setting as the first option for placement.

Special education and related services are not a “place”. Special education and related services are individually designed and planned to meet your child's needs. Your child's special education and related services can be given in a variety of different settings. Some of those settings could be community preschool or child care programs, park district preschools, Head Start, state-funded Pre-kindergarten or Preschool for All programs, or Early Childhood Special Education programs in your school district. The decision of your child's placement will be made by the IEP team during the meeting.

Another term you will hear quite often is “least restrictive environment” (LRE). When we talk about LRE, we mean an educational setting where children with and without disabilities can learn, play and grow. Services and supports that children with disabilities receive in their LRE are designed to meet their developmental, functional and academic needs.

Other important decisions that the IEP team will make include Extended School Year services (ESY), how progress will be measured, and when you will receive progress reports. After the IEP is written, you will be asked to sign consent for services to start. Special education and related services can not begin without your informed, written consent. The initial IEP must be in effect by your child’s third birthday.



## Parent Checklist

- I attended the IEP meeting on \_\_\_\_\_
- The IEP team determined eligibility \_\_\_\_\_
- My child’s IEP was written \_\_\_\_\_
- I signed consent for my child’s IEP to begin \_\_\_\_\_
- My child’s special education and related services will begin on \_\_\_\_\_

“I thought Kenny would never adjust to school, and that he would regress. When my son turned 3, I was still grieving that he wasn’t going to go to regular preschool where his two brothers went. Now that I look back, I think the only thing I would do differently is breathe more and grieve less.”

—Kenny’s mother

# Parent Page: Getting Ready For Our IEP

What has my child learned this year?

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What are my child's strengths and special interests?

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What are my concerns for my child's education?

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What do I want my child to learn next?

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What are the supports and services I think my child may need to make progress on the next set of goals?

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# Comparing Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education Services

	Early Intervention	Special Education
<b>Governing Federal laws</b>	Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004)	Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004)
<b>Ages for services</b>	Birth to 3	3 through 21
<b>Goal of the program</b>	Helping the family meet the developmental needs of their child with a delay or disability	Educating the child with a delay or disability
<b>Evaluation</b>	Two or more professionals from different disciplines complete a developmental evaluation of all five areas of development.	A team of professionals completes an evaluation in the area(s) of suspected disability.
<b>Eligibility</b>	A child must have a 30 percent delay in one area of development or a documented medical condition, as determined by the Illinois Department of Human Services, Bureau of Early Intervention.	A child is found eligible using one of the eligibility categories for special education and related services.
<b>Service delivery model</b>	Parents and caregivers enroll their child in EI services. The type(s), frequency, location and duration of services, including individuals providing services, are determined through the IFSP process.	Local education agencies (LEAs) are required to provide special education and related services to eligible individuals, ages 3 through 21 years. Services are determined by the IEP team.
<b>Family involvement</b>	Families must be involved in the process to develop the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).	Parents must be a member of any team (e.g., planning and placement) that makes decisions regarding the education of their child.

	Early Intervention	Special Education
Service coordination	Each eligible infant or toddler is assigned a service coordinator who coordinates services and assists the family throughout their involvement in the EI system.	Although service coordination is not required, a case manager is assigned to each child with an IEP. The case manager is usually someone on the child's IEP team.
Type of plan	An Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) documents the family functional outcomes developed by the team. IFSPs are reviewed at least every six months with the service coordinator and rewritten annually by the IFSP team.	An Individualized Education Program (IEP) documents the child's measurable annual goals, services and program; the IEP also describes how progress will be measured. The IEP team reviews the IEP annually.
Services	All EI services are provided to support the family's ability to meet their child's developmental needs and the family's desired outcomes.	Special education is an educational service or program that is instructional in nature. Related services (such as occupational therapy, physical therapy or speech and language therapy) are provided when they are required in order to assist a child in obtaining benefit from the special education program.
Location of services	EI services are provided in natural environments such as the child's home or in other sites in the community, where infants and other toddlers without disabilities participate. Services are provided in the context of the family's normal routines.	Children with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment and with their typically developing peers. A child may receive services in a more restrictive environment only when the IEP team determines that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.
Cost of services	Families are billed on a sliding fee scale and insurance plans are billed.	Children are provided a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).
Transition	The transition process for families begins when the child is 2 years 6 months of age. A Transition Planning Conference will be held at least 90 days before the child's third birthday.	A LEA representative will participate in the Transition Planning Conference. If a child is determined eligible for Early Childhood Special Education services, the IEP will be developed by the child's third birthday.

# Parent-to-Parent

It's Time To Take A Break!

Play with your child

Take a walk

Watch a movie  
with your Family

Do something just for you

Take a nap

Talk with  
a friend

Listen to music

Take a deep breath

How are you feeling now?

# The Transition Process

## One Step at a Time

# 6

### STEP 6

## Where will I be now that I'm 3?



Going to preschool for the first time is a new experience for any family with a young child. Just as you were part of services in Early Intervention, you will be part of your child's new early childhood experience. Remember that you are always an important part of your child's team. Your team will be most effective when everyone builds trust and uses open communication. Now that you are nearing the end of the transition process, helping your child get ready for school is the next step. We want to give you a sense of what a preschool classroom might look like and how your child will spend the day.

Preschool classrooms are fun, safe places that offer young children opportunities to learn, make friends and develop new skills. Whatever the name of your child's program, you will find some similarities in all early childhood settings. Early childhood classrooms often have learning centers such as a library, dramatic play, art, writing, fine motor and blocks. A typical day might begin with circle time in which children talk about what will happen that day. Center time is scheduled throughout the day. Centers focus on play and children learning through play. A day at preschool goes by quickly.

### Remember

When children with and without disabilities learn and play together they are more likely to improve academic performance and increase communication and socialization skills.

"It was the first day of school and our daughter was to ride the bus to school.

We waited outside for the yellow bus to come down our street. She was dressed in her shorts and had her book bag on, ready for school. I was nervous for her to ride the bus to school, but when the bus pulled up the smile on her face relieved my nerves.

She walked up the stairs, turned around and waved good-bye. I watched as the bus drove down the street until it was out of sight."

—Jamie, a proud mom

For many parents, preschool may be the first time their child will spend part of the day away from home. Often parents talk about feeling anxious when their child begins preschool. Questions like “Will my child be OK?” or “How will the teacher know what my child wants?” are typical. Using this workbook will help you and your child feel prepared for the first big day of preschool.

There are many ways you and your child can prepare for this new adventure into early childhood. Take a look at the tips and strategies on this page. Pick the ones that you want to do with your child.

## Parent-to-Parent Tips and Strategies:

- Talk to my child about going to school.
- Make a list of community and district preschool options I enjoyed.
- Visit preschools and take pictures of the room, building and playground.
- Share pictures with my child when we talk about going to school.
- Read stories with pictures and watch videos about young children going to preschool.
- Make a picture book of what children do during a preschool day.
- Include pictures of who will kiss my child good-bye and welcome my child home after school.
- Make arrangements to visit the classroom with my child before the first day of school.
- Ask the teacher to give my child a tour of the classroom.
- Show my child where to hang his or her backpack and coat.
- Ask the teacher if my child can bring a transitional object or photo book to class for the first month of school.
- Encourage my child to play alone for short periods of time.
- Encourage my child to play with other children somewhere away from my home such as a friend's house.
- Encourage my child to make simple choices between two items such as what toy to play with or what afternoon snack to have.
- Encourage my child to begin taking care of his or her own things such as hanging up a coat or putting away toys.
- Encourage my child to request help when needed.
- Celebrate our accomplishments!



## Sarah's Story

As I look back on my daughter's transition from early intervention, I remember having many mixed emotions. It was exciting to think of my daughter going on to preschool. Yet I was nervous about all the changes that would take place for Sarah and our family. What I know I'll never forget is the support my early intervention providers gave me to better understand that important next step, what options I might consider, and what I could do to help this transition work for Sarah. I asked many questions over those last six months, went to meetings and then asked more questions. When Sarah started early childhood special education that November, I was excited because I knew she was in the best environment with an excellent IEP.

My daughter and I learned a lot in early intervention. When I talk to transitioning parents today I share my story and encourage them to ask questions, use available resources, explore their communities and take advantage of all the Illinois Early Intervention system offers to them.

Sarah has had several transitions over the years. The lessons we learned transitioning from Early Intervention have helped us throughout Sarah's life.

We learned that it is important to be involved and stay involved in our child's IEP team. As a team we celebrated each of Sarah's small and large successes.

We learned that it is OK to disagree and it is OK to ask questions and it is OK to share our feelings.

Perhaps the most important lesson we learned is that the relationships we build with others extend beyond one meeting, once a year. The relationships that we built have supported Sarah in becoming the accomplished young woman she is today.

—Sarah and Sarah's mom



# Resources For Families

As families look beyond their child's 3rd birthday, they often feel a need to expand their resource and support network. Many parents of young children with special needs find it helpful to reach out to others for support or information. Some parents feel that they can never find enough information; others feel overwhelmed by all of the information that is available. This resource section is a starting point to help you find other sources for information and support.

When your child turns 3 you may want to expand your support network. Sharing your questions and concerns with new people can be difficult at first. Take the time to look for one source of information or one support group until you find what works for you. Keep a list of the resources that provide you with the best support. Write down the names of all of the helpful people you meet along the way in an address book or in this workbook.

Parents of young children with special needs find that networking becomes an important part of their lives. Through your resource and support networks, you will have opportunities to learn from other parents and share your knowledge and insights with others.

## Parent-to-Parent

Some parents find that the most helpful information they gather comes from talking with other parents that understand the questions, thoughts and feelings that come with entering a new school or early childhood program. Networking with other parents can help you to feel that you are not alone. Other parents can offer new ideas or strategies to try. Your parent liaison or service coordinator can help you connect with parents in your area.

## Parent Groups

Many parent groups meet on a regular basis to discuss topics related to parenting young children, special needs information, or special education. Some parent groups are specific to a disability, others are more broad-based. Some parent groups are local, regional or state-wide while others are based in a school district or special education cooperative. You can find out about parent groups through your parent liaison, service coordinator, school district or other parents.

## The Internet

Websites can be a useful place to turn for information. Many parent groups and support and advocacy organizations have websites. By searching under a specific topic or disability, you can find several web-based sources of information. You can also find links to websites by visiting some of the starting points given in this section.

## Remember

Ask other parents where they have found valuable resources.

Be careful with information you find on websites.

Cross-reference what you find on a website with other sources.

Go to recommended websites for accurate information.

## Good Starting Points

### **Illinois State Board of Education** *www.isbe.net*

The parent section of the ISBE website listed under special education offers information for parents on topics including early childhood special education; parent training; projects that work with parents such as Project CHOICES and STAR NET; and the Parent Training and Information Centers: Designs for Change ([www.designsforchange.org](http://www.designsforchange.org)), Family Matters ([www.fmptic.org](http://www.fmptic.org)), and Family Resource Center on Disabilities ([www.frcd.org](http://www.frcd.org)).

You can also download a copy of *A Parent's Guide: The Educational Rights of Students With Disabilities* in English and Spanish.

### **Illinois Department of Human Services** *www.dhs.state.il.us*

The website provides information about IDHS programs for persons with developmental disabilities, mental illness, or substance abuse problems and their families. Information for families with young children include resources on disability and medical services, child care, financial assistance and programs that offer assistance to low-income families.

### **Illinois Early Learning Project** *www.illinoisearlylearning.org*

Illinois Early Learning Project is a source of evidence-based, reliable information on early care and education for parents, caregivers and teachers of young children. The website offers printable tip sheets for caregivers and parents; frequently asked questions pages; a customized question answering service; a statewide calendar of events for parents and caregivers; an easy-to-use database of links to “the best of the Web” on topics related to early care and education; and periodic online chats.

### **Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse** *www.eiclearinghouse.org*

The Clearinghouse website offers information on health, education, disability and developmental concerns about your children through a vast collection of books, journals, videos/DVDs, CD-ROMs, special publications and brochures.

### **Illinois Life Span Project** *www.illinoislifespan.org*

Illinois Life Span is a statewide information, referral and advocacy resource for people with developmental disabilities and their families. The Advocacy Toolbox section of the website includes information on early intervention, early childhood special education, government benefit programs, advocacy training, support groups, recreation and leisure providers and programs, assistive technology, respite services and special needs future planning among other topics. Toy resources for children with special needs are also on the website.

**Illinois Parents** *www.illinoisparents.org*

Illinois Parents links parents and those who work with families to local programs, services and community agencies. Illinois Parents collects and shares information about parenting classes, library services, support groups and other services for parents statewide.

**Family Village Project** *www.familyvillage.wisc.edu*

The Family Village is a website for children and adults with disabilities, their families, and their friends and allies. Family Village brings together thousands of online resources in an organized, easy-to-use directory. The centerpiece of Family Village is the library, where visitors can find information on over 300 diagnoses. Visitors can also learn about assistive technology, legal rights and legislation, special education, leisure activities and much more. A large listing of disability-specific support organizations is also available.

**National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities** *www.nichcy.org*

NICHCY serves the nation as the central source of information on disabilities in children. This extensive web resource offers many useful and informative publications on many topics of importance to families that have children with special needs. Information is available in English and Spanish.

**You can also Find resources through:**

- \* Park district and special recreation organizations
- \* Local libraries
- \* Pediatric medical centers, hospitals and therapy centers
- \* Bookstores



# Glossary

## **Academic Achievement**

A child's pre-academic or academic skills and progress.

## **Developmental Milestones**

Physical or behavioral signs of development or maturation of infants and children. Rolling over, crawling, walking, and talking are considered developmental milestones and provide important information regarding the child's development.

## **Domain Review**

A review of existing information provided by the parents, and evaluations or observations by teachers and related services providers to determine what, if any, additional information is needed to find if a child is eligible for special education and related services. The Domain Review is conducted by the IEP Team and other qualified professionals. It covers all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, academic achievement, functional performance, cognitive functioning, communication status, health, hearing/vision, motor abilities, and social/emotional status.

## **Early Childhood (EC)**

Most commonly thought of as the age range from 3-5 years. Classrooms or programs that serve children with or without disabilities might be called Early Childhood Programs.

## **Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)**

Special education and related services provided by the public school district for children 3-5 years of age that have been identified as having a disability.

## **Early Intervention providers**

Professionals enrolled in the Illinois Early Intervention system that provide services and support to families who have children ages birth to 3 with special needs. Individual providers can include physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, developmental therapists, social workers/counselors, nurses, dietitians and others.

## **Extended School Year (ESY) services**

Special education and related services that are provided to a child with a disability beyond the normal school year of the public agency. The services are provided in accordance with the child's IEP at no cost to the parents of the child.

## **Functional Performance**

Skills or activities that are not considered academic or related to a child's academic achievement. "Functional" is used in the context of routine activities of daily living.

## **Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA, 2004)**

The authorizing federal legislation that mandates special education and related services for individuals with disabilities, birth through 21.

### **Part B**

The section of IDEA '04 that focuses on the requirements for providing special education and related services for children and young adults, 3 through 21 years.

### **Part C**

The section of IDEA '04 that focuses on the requirements for providing services and supports for children birth to 3 years, and their families.

## **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

A written statement for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by an IEP Team during an IEP meeting.

## **Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team**

A group of individuals that is responsible for developing, reviewing or revising an IEP for a child with a disability. The IEP Team includes: the parents of the child; at least one regular education teacher; at least one special education teacher; the representative of the public school; an individual who can interpret the educational implications of evaluation results; and others who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child.

## **Identification of Needed Assessments Form**

The form that is used as part of the Domain Review process in reviewing information about a child in the areas of academic achievement, functional performance, cognitive functioning, communication status, health, hearing/vision, motor abilities, and social/emotional status.

## **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

The requirement that children with a disability shall be educated to the maximum extent possible with their typically developing peers.

## **Local Education Agency (LEA)**

The public school district or other entity that is responsible for providing education to children with and without disabilities.

## **Measurable Annual Goals**

Written by the IEP Team to indicate what specific academic and functional skills a child will learn through special education and related services over a 12 month period.

## **Referral Packet**

The packet of information about a child that is sent from Child and Family Connections to the public school district or community preschool. The referral packet can only be sent with informed written consent from the child's parent or legal guardian.



## **Related Services**

Developmental, corrective, and other individually designed supportive services provided to help a child with a disability benefit from special education. Related services can include speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, recreation, psychology and counseling, social work, orientation and mobility and others.

## **Regular Education Environment**

A classroom setting where typically developing children participate in academic and nonacademic activities.

## **Special Education**

Specially designed instruction to meet the needs of a child with a disability.

## **Special Education Cooperative**

Many school districts throughout Illinois have joined together to form cooperatives. Each cooperative is given responsibilities according to its member districts. Some responsibilities may include participating in transition, providing evaluations, writing and implementing IEPs, and providing related services.

## **Supports and Services**

Include therapeutic, educational, and behavioral supports that are provided by members of the IEP team to enable a child with a disability to make progress on their goals and to participate in activities with children that do not have a disability.

## **Transition Planning Conference**

The meeting that takes place when a child receiving early intervention services is 2 years 9 months of age. The child's parent, a service coordinator, and a representative from the school district are required to attend this meeting.





# When I'm 3, where will I be?

A FAMILY'S TRANSITION WORKBOOK

