

# Step Five: The Individualized Education Program (IEP) Process

## Preparing for the IEP Meeting...

### *Our family may:*

- ❖ Be ready to tell what our child is doing now;
- ❖ Consider possible goals for the IEP;
- ❖ Consider inviting a relative or friend to go to the initial IEP meeting with us;
- ❖ Visit the potential settings of programs to determine which setting would best meet our vision for our child and family;
- ❖ Talk with family members and friends about our hopes for our child and family;
- ❖ Imagine a typical day for our child, and consider what steps could be taken to make it happen;
- ❖ Request for our Early ACCESS Service Coordinator and service providers to be invited to participate in the IEP meeting.

### *Early ACCESS staff will:*

- ❖ Answer questions our family may have;
- ❖ Help us identify our child's strengths, preferences, interests and needs;
- ❖ Share the Procedural Safeguards Manual for Parents (Parent Rights) with you;
- ❖ Help us identify routines that are important to our child and family;
- ❖ Consider possible goals for the IEP;
- ❖ Participate in the IEP meeting to discuss and determine the Early Childhood Outcome statements;
- ❖ Provide information and resources to support a smooth transition when your child turns three.

## *Special education staff will:*

- ❖ Answer questions from our family;
- ❖ Discuss with the you what will help your family and child have a successful transition;
- ❖ Consider possible goals for the IEP;
- ❖ Choose a date for the IEP meeting at a mutually agreeable time and place;
- ❖ Invite Early ACCESS Service Coordinator and Early ACCESS providers to the IEP meeting to discuss and determine the Early Childhood Outcome statements;
- ❖ Provide us with a written notice of the IEP meeting that contains information regarding participants, date, time, and location.

## Summary: The IEP Process

- ❖ Eligibility for Early ACCESS differs from eligibility for Special Education beginning at age 3;
- ❖ Decisions about eligibility for special education and IEP must be developed before our child's 3rd birthday;
- ❖ Our child will transition from an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) to an Individualized Education Program (IEP), if eligible;
- ❖ Our Early ACCESS Service Coordinator will talk with us about possible settings where our child may receive special education services.

## Constructing the IEP:

- ❖ Observations, assessments, evaluations, and reflections will help develop our child's IEP - our child's written plan of goals, supports and services.
- ❖ Information about our child's strengths, interests, and preferences will be used to write goals to address our child's needs.
- ❖ The IEP team, including us, other family members, Early ACCESS and special education staff, our local school district, along with other invited parties, all contribute to the decisions about IEP services, including location.
- ❖ As team members, we will be asked to describe our child's current development, along with the progress we would like to see our child make during the next year.

# Rights for Students who Receive Special Education Services:

- ❖ Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) - School districts and area education agencies are responsible for providing FAPE for each child eligible for special education, from birth through 21 years.
- ❖ Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) - Children who receive special education services have the right to be educated with peers without special needs to the maximum extent appropriate. Special education is not a place, but rather, a service.

## Tasks for Step Five:

- ✓ Procedural Safeguards Manual for Parents (Parental Rights) was discussed at the IEP meeting and a printed copy was offered to us.
- ✓ IEP meeting was held, agreement was reached, and an IEP was written.
- ✓ Discussion and decision-making included our family, Early ACCESS staff and special education staff.
- ✓ Consent for initial IEP services was signed.



**NOTES:**

No Additional Step Five Resources In Appendix

## **Step Five: No Additional Resources**