



# Transition Toolbox

A Guide for Families as They Exit Early  
ACCESS

Early  
ACCESS

The Iowa Department of Education, as the lead agency, partners with the Department of Public Health, Department of Human Services, Child Health Specialty Clinics, and Iowa's Area Education Agencies to provide Early ACCESS services.

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The Transition Toolbox is designed for Early ACCESS service coordinators to use with families who are going through the transition process with their child from:

- Early ACCESS (IDEA Part C) to other services or
- Early ACCESS to special education (IDEA Part B).

There are six steps in the Transition Toolbox:

1. Beginning the Transition Process
2. Transition Planning
3. The Transition Planning Meeting
4. Evaluation for Special Education
5. Transition Plan: The IEP Process
6. Putting the IEP into Action

The expectation is that a service coordinator reviews each step with the family. Some families will want to complete up to steps three or four, while others may want to complete all six steps. Each step has additional handouts and worksheets for families who may want additional information. The steps in the Toolbox are intended to be given to the family ONE at a time. The use of the Toolbox is designed to align with the Early ACCESS transition timeline as described in federal and state law. The materials enhance and support the transition process to allow children and families to experience a smooth and seamless transition from early intervention services.



# Transition Introduction

## A Guide for Families

Soon your child will turn three years old. It is time to begin planning for transition. Transition simply means changing from one program to another. During this time, you, your family, your service coordinator and others, will be discussing options for your child once Early ACCESS services end. This information is intended to help you understand and move through transition from Early ACCESS.

Transition can be an exciting time, one that can provide new opportunities for your child and family. It can also be a time of great change and adjustment. A coordinated set of activities prepares your child and family for leaving Early ACCESS to enter special education or other community programs.

# Transition Questions & Answers

## ***What happens when our child reaches age three and will no longer receive Early ACCESS services?***

You know your child's and family's needs better than anyone. Therefore, you and your family are the most important part of each step in the transition from Early ACCESS to your child's next setting. Your Early ACCESS Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) team will collaborate with you about your hopes and preferences for your child throughout your time in Early ACCESS. As your child nears age three, the information gathered over time, along with new input, will be written on a transition plan, becoming a part of your child's IFSP.

If you agree, your child may be evaluated to see if they qualify for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part B 619 (special education services for children ages three through five). Another option is to transition to other community programs. The transition plan supports the adjustment of your child and family to the new setting.

## ***What types of programs or community settings are available after our child turns three?***

Examples of programs/services your child could attend at age three include, but are not limited to:

- preschool classroom in a school district
- Head Start classroom
- private or local preschool
- child care center
- walk in services at an area education agency or local school district

## ***When does transition planning begin?***

Part of your participation in Early ACCESS includes planning for what happens for your child beyond their third birthday. Between the time your child turns two years three months and two years nine months of age, a written transition plan is developed by the IFSP team, which includes your family. A transition planning meeting will be held within this same time frame.

### ***What is included in the transition plan?***

The plan will include written activities and supports that will be needed to prepare your family and child to exit Early ACCESS and move into a new setting. The plan will build on your child's strengths, abilities, and needs at this time. Transition activities are implemented in collaboration with your family, members of your child's IFSP team and program staff from the new setting when required. This promotes positive relationships and helps you and your child prepare for and adjust to the new setting.

In addition to the written activities, family involvement is also documented as part of the plan as well as the people responsible for completing steps and activities. This helps everyone know what to expect. For children eligible for special education, the plan must include the services and support that will be needed between the time your child turns three through the remainder of the school year.

### ***How do I know if our child is eligible for special education services?***

There will be a meeting with your family, your service coordinator, and your area education agency staff who are knowledgeable about special education for children at the age of three. Everyone at the meeting is provided the information they need to participate and make informed decisions about a preschool transition. During the meeting, the team will review the information in your child's IFSP, including the evaluation and assessment data. You and your child's IFSP team will share information about your child's capabilities, preferences, interests, and needs with the preschool staff. At this point the team will decide if additional assessment information will be needed in order to determine eligibility for special education services.

### ***What happens if our child is eligible for special education services?***

You will no longer have an IFSP and your child will have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Every child who receives special education services must have an IEP. The IEP describes your child's special education program, including services and supports based on the unique needs of your child. When developing an IEP, the IEP team will carefully consider your child's strengths, needs, and interests. In order to develop an IEP, an IEP meeting will be held.

Your family, your Early ACCESS service coordinator, and others from your IFSP team will be invited to the meeting. The IEP team will include area education agency (AEA) consultants who completed assessments of your child, local school district representatives, and at your request, other individuals that may have knowledge of your child. Your child's Early ACCESS record will be shared with the AEA to ensure a smooth transition and continuity of services.

### ***What if our child is not eligible for special education services?***

Your child will still have a transition plan created as part of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). However, the activities and supports will reflect a transition to other community agencies or programs that can meet the needs of your child and family.

The transition plan may include any of the following programs:

- local preschool
- child care center
- family child care provider's home
- Head Start classroom

You may choose to continue with what your child is currently doing during the day if that meets your needs.

With your approval, a transition planning meeting will be held with you, your service coordinator, current Early ACCESS service providers, and staff who may potentially provide services to your child in the new setting. Prior to the meeting, your service coordinator will request your permission to send your child's record to the other community agencies you are considering for your child. This will provide everyone in the meeting the information needed to participate and make informed decisions about the move to a new setting. During the meeting, the team will review the information in your child's IFSP including the evaluation and assessment data. You and your child's IFSP team will share information about your child's capabilities, preferences, interests, and needs with the new program staff. Together, you will decide what will be needed in order for your child to be successful in the new setting.

# Step One: Beginning the Transition Process

## During Transition Step One...

### *Our family may:*

- ❖ Talk about transition with our service coordinator and other providers.
- ❖ Think about our child, considering both their skills and challenges, in order to begin the transition journey.
- ❖ Answer the questions on the worksheets as best we can so we have a clear picture of our child and our hopes and dreams for them.
- ❖ Talk to family, friends, other parents of children with and without special needs, and community agencies to learn more about options for our child and the transition process.
- ❖ Decide if we want a friend or relative to participate in the transition planning meetings with us.

### *Our Service Coordinator will:*

- ❖ Offer our family information about transition and related community resources.
- ❖ Support our family as we begin the transition process, between the time our child turns two years three months and two years nine months of age.
- ❖ Begin the transition planning process by including transition outcomes in the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).
- ❖ Schedule a transition planning meeting with our family, the service coordinator, and other team members, at least 90 days before our child's third birthday.

# Summary: Beginning the Transition Process

- ❖ The most important part of each step of the transition process is the information and experience we share about our child.
- ❖ Transition is a journey and not one point in time.
- ❖ Developing a vision for our child will guide the transition process.
- ❖ Learning about community resources available to us now and after the transition from Early ACCESS is an essential part of the journey.

## Building Our Vision for Our Child

- ❖ Our vision for our child is a picture of what we want for our child in the future.
- ❖ A vision begins with a value; something that is important to us.
- ❖ Many families want similar opportunities for their children: to have friends, be part of the community, and get an education.
- ❖ Having a vision for our child will lead the way for setting goals and determining services that move us towards our vision.

Following are some visions families have for their children:

*“I would like my daughter to be safe and be able to interact with peers in the community now and when she is an adult.”*

*“We work to ensure that our daughter has every opportunity to learn and grow, so that she can have good communication skills with the people around her, meaningful relationships with people in her life, and feel satisfied in her life.”*

*“We would like our son to progress to his full potential, knowing that his teachers will work with us to make this happen.”*

## Tasks for Step One:

- ✓ Community resources that will remain constant in our family's life through transition have been discussed.
- ✓ Community resources that our family may need to add to our life have been discussed.
- ✓ Our family has talked to our service coordinator about our vision for our child.



## Notes:

Additional step one resources in appendix:

- Questions to Consider to Build Our Vision
- Special Information About Our Child
- Individual Strengths & Family Vision Worksheet
- Organizational Tips

# Step Two: Transition Planning

## During Transition Planning...

### *Our family may:*

- ❖ Participate in the transition planning process at the level that feels comfortable for us.
- ❖ Share our hopes and dreams for our child.
- ❖ Review the transition law (see copy in *Appendix*).
- ❖ Visit programs where services may be provided after our child turns three.
- ❖ Decide whether or not to sign the consent form for Release and *Exchange of Information from Early ACCESS* to the new setting (not required if going to an area education agency or school district program).
- ❖ Decide if we want a special education evaluation in order to determine eligibility for those services.

### *Early ACCESS staff will:*

- ❖ Share information as requested by our family.
- ❖ Review information to determine if our child is potentially eligible for special education.
- ❖ Answer any questions our family may have.
- ❖ Help our family set up and get ready for visits to various options for services when their child turns three.

### *Special education staff will:*

- ❖ Participate in the transition planning meeting for our child if potentially eligible for special education.
- ❖ Discuss possible services and places where services might be provided.
- ❖ Consider our family's concerns about the transition.

# Summary: Transition Planning

- ❖ When our child leaves Early ACCESS services, there is a range of programs and services that may be available for our child.
- ❖ Depending on program requirements, they may attend a local preschool, child care center, family child care provider's home, Head Start, or a preschool classroom operated by our school district.
- ❖ For children eligible for special education, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, which includes us, will assist in making individualized plans and support service decisions.
- ❖ If our child is not potentially eligible for special education, the team will assist us to find appropriate programs, if we are interested.

## *Questions to ask:*

- ❖ Is additional assessment needed to make the decision about our child?
- ❖ Who can we call if we have questions?
- ❖ What different ways can services be provided?
- ❖ What services best meet our child's needs and vision?

## *Tips for visits to programs, services, or child care options...*

- ❖ Determine if our family is eligible.
- ❖ Work with our service coordinator to make an appointment. Visit only at the time scheduled.
- ❖ Upon arrival, check in at the office or with the director.
- ❖ Write down questions to ask the teacher or child care provider.
- ❖ At the end of the visit, schedule another time to talk about our child with the director, child care provider, or teacher.
- ❖ Ask for suggestions to help ease our child into the setting.

## Tasks for Step Two:

- ✓ Transition requirements were explained.
- ✓ Options for services were listed and discussed.
- ✓ Consent was obtained from our family for release of records, as appropriate.
- ✓ Visits to potential programs our child may attend after their 3rd birthday were completed.



## NOTES:

Additional step two resources in appendix:

- When Visiting a Preschool or Child Care
- Visiting Notes
- Transition requirements

# Step Three: The Transition Planning Meeting

## At the Transition Planning Meeting...

### *Our family may:*

- ❖ Share information
- ❖ Ask questions
- ❖ Talk about our child's strengths, interests, and needs
- ❖ Share concerns

### *Our Early ACCESS team will:*

- ❖ Initiate discussion about current services our child is receiving;
- ❖ Discuss potential services;
- ❖ Discuss community-based options;
- ❖ Provide information about family rights;
- ❖ Complete a written plan with our input;
- ❖ Obtain a written parental consent for evaluation for special education, referred to as a Full and Individual Initial Evaluation for Special Education, if appropriate.

## Summary: Transition Planning meeting

- ❖ Includes us, our service coordinator and other area education agency personnel working together.
- ❖ Will be held sometime between when our child is between the age of two years three months and two years nine months.
- ❖ Will include a discussion on options for the period from our child's third birthday through the remainder of the school year if eligible for special education.
- ❖ Will result in a written plan that includes steps and activities to *support us and our child* as Early ACCESS ends and new programs or services begin.

## Tasks for Step Three:

- ✓ The transition meeting was held.
- ✓ There is a written transition plan.
- ✓ Authorization for release and exchange of information is signed, if needed.
- ✓ Eligibility for the next potential setting was discussed.



**NOTES:**

Additional step three resources in appendix:

- Ideas for preparing children for a new setting or program

# Step Four: Evaluation for Special Education

During an evaluation for special education...

## *Our family may:*

- ❖ Share with the team what we feel is important about our child and family;
- ❖ Ask questions about anything that is unclear about the evaluation, referred to as a Full and Individual Initial Evaluation, to determine if our child is eligible for special education;
- ❖ Work with the team to schedule evaluation activities at our child's best time, perhaps mornings or after naps.

## *Early ACCESS staff will:*

- ❖ Share records, evaluation, and assessment information on file;
- ❖ Invite special education staff to observe our child;
- ❖ Answer any questions our family and the special education teams may have;
- ❖ Contact the Area Education Agency if our child is potentially eligible for special education services.

## *Special education staff will:*

- ❖ Explain and plan the evaluation for special education with our family;
- ❖ Locate records and evaluation information already on file;
- ❖ Decide what new information is needed;
- ❖ Provide a team to evaluate our child;
- ❖ Complete the evaluation and share the results with our family prior to our child's 3rd birthday.

## *IEP team will:*

- ❖ Set up a meeting to go over the results of the evaluation and make plans for our child's next steps.

# Summary: Special Education Evaluation

- ❖ We must give written consent for a special education evaluation to occur.
- ❖ It is important to share with the evaluation team what our child likes to do, is interested in, and how well they do during daily routines and activities.
- ❖ Information for the evaluation may come from reviewing our child's records in Early ACCESS, interviewing us and providers, observing our child during activities, and completing tests and assessments. Some of the information may be gathered in natural, play-like settings or other assessment activities.

Some of the areas looked at by our team during an evaluation, may include:

- Hearing and vision
- Health and medical history
- Developmental history
- Thinking and problem solving (cognitive or academics)
- Talking, listening, and understanding (communication)
- How your child moves (fine motor; gross motor, physical)
- Self-help skills (adaptive behavior)
- Interactions with others (social/emotional behavior)

*Some questions to ask:*

- What will be done as part of the evaluation and why?
- What information might the team expect to learn?
- What does our family want you to know about our child?
- May a family member be present when our child is evaluated?
- How can we help?

## Tasks for Step Four:

- ✓ Records from Early ACCESS were reviewed.
- ✓ Evaluation by the multidisciplinary team was completed within the allotted time.
- ✓ Information from our family was considered.
- ✓ Our family was introduced to the Family Educator Partnership program in our area.
- ✓ The meeting to go over the results of the evaluation and plans for our child is scheduled.



## NOTES:

Additional step four resources in appendix:

- A Look at Our Child's Development

# 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 Six: Putting the IEP Into Action!

## *Our family may:*

- ❖ Ask questions and be open to new ideas;
- ❖ Help staff at the new program understand our child;
- ❖ Communicate with staff about helping our child be successful in the new program;
- ❖ Help our child feel excited and confident about this transition.

## *Special education staff will:*

- ❖ Welcome our child and family;
- ❖ Ask questions and be open to new ideas;
- ❖ Arrange for the IEP to be carried out;
- ❖ Consider our family's needs in making decisions;
- ❖ Communicate with our family and staff from Early ACCESS.

## Summary:

- ❖ As with any new Individualized Education Program (IEP), questions may arise, and decisions will need to be made.
- ❖ It's important for us and other members of our IEP team to discuss programming and any questions that arise, to share information, and to make decisions that are in the best interest of our child.

### *What topics might we consider?*

- Health records, including immunizations
- Medications
- Toileting
- Special diet
- Transportations
- Staff orientation or training
- Special equipment
- Registration forms

### Other topics may include planning:

- for our child's first days in a new program and finding ways to make those transitional days successful;
- a trial visit to the new classroom or a tour of the bus.

The key to assuring a smooth transition from an IFSP to an IEP is good communication among all who know and care for our child. As we talk together, we will begin to think of many creative ideas to help our child enjoy the steps ahead. If problems arise, they can be discussed in an atmosphere of openness and respect.

## Tasks for Step Six:

- ✓ Our child made a successful transition from Early ACCESS.
- ✓ We discussed all issues that arose.
- ✓ We communicated well during this time of change.



NOTES:

Additional step six resources in appendix:

- Communication Tips for Parents
- Early Intervention Terms and Acronyms

# Appendix

## **Step One: Beginning the Transition Process**

### **Additional Resources**

- Questions to Consider to Build Our Vision
- Special Information About Our Child
- Individual Strengths & Family Vision Worksheet
- Organizational Tips

# Questions to Consider to Build Our Vision

To help build your vision, start with what you know about your child now and then think about what you would like for your child in the future. A vision statement inspires commitment from others and leads to a plan that everyone can carry out. Your vision statement will change as your child grows and is able to add their hopes and dreams. For now, this is your vision statement for them.

- What does a **GREAT LIFE** look like for our child (in terms of their level of independence, social life, spiritual life, education, job or vocation, home environment, etc.)?
- Based on our child's **ABILITIES**, what *hopes* and *dreams* do we have for their life (academically, socially, vocationally, etc.)?
- What **ABILITIES** do we see in our child that we want to nurture and encourage?
- How do we envision our child living a *dignified, purposeful, fulfilling, and impactful life*?
- What **challenges** need to be addressed and overcome to achieve these *hopes* and *dreams*?
- What does a **GREAT LIFE** for our child look like *now, in 5 years, in 10-15 years, and in 25+ years*?
- What **community and family supports** do we use? What additional *supports* could be helpful?

Source: Vision Planning: What's Your Vision of a Great Life for Your Child? July 20, 2017 by Phillip C. Clark, posted in Special Needs Planning. <https://enablesnp.com/2017/07/20/vision-planning-whats-your-vision-of-a-great-life-for-your-child/>

# Special Information About Our Child

## Our child's:

- ❖ special abilities
  
- ❖ favorite toys or playthings
  
- ❖ favorite foods
  
- ❖ favorite games, activities, songs
  
- ❖ special people such as siblings, friends, grandparents, etc.

## What:

- ❖ quiets our child:
  
- ❖ scares our child:
  
- ❖ excites our child:

## Things:

- ❖ that are difficult for our child:
  
- ❖ that come easily for our child:

What does everyone who works with our child need to know?

Is there other special information or are there any concerns we wish to share?

Places our child spends time and how our child does in these settings:

	Place	Things that go well	Things that are difficult
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

# Individual Strengths and Family Vision Worksheet

Soon there will be a meeting to review, discuss, and consider educational plans for your child. Use this worksheet as a summary of information to share with your team. Your vision will help guide the development of a transition plan.

- ★ Things we want to find out at the transition meeting:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ★ What vision do we have for our child's future?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ★ Are there any concerns about our child's educational program that we would like to discuss at the meeting?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ★ Things we would like our child to learn:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ★ Things that could be done at home to help our child be more successful:

# Organizational Tips

A family that is going through the transition process receives many forms, medical and educational evaluations, and other important pieces of information. It is a good idea to keep this information organized and together in a central location, so it can go with you to appointments. You will want easy access to this information in the future as your child grows and begins new programs and possibly sees new doctors. If you keep the information updated and organized, it will save you from searching frantically for names, dates, medical information, developmental milestones, etc. when you need them.

Save:

- Dates child achieved developmental milestones
- Results of evaluations, hearing tests, vision screenings, any other test
- Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) forms
- Other plans that are created for our child (health plan, behavior plan, etc.)
- Medical records, including immunizations (dates, locations)
- Copies of documents given to agencies such as waivers or supplemental security income
- Reasons for medical treatment or hospitalizations
- Instructions from doctors, therapists, and other medical providers
- Samples of child's work
- Articles or information learned about our child's disability or delay
- Suggestions given to us by professionals

Here are some ideas for organization of the information:

- ✓ Put all the information into a large 3-ring binder. Use labeled dividers. Add the information as soon as it is received.
- ✓ Use an accordion type expanding file to separate and maintain information. Label contents.
- ✓ Use a large notebook with pockets.
- ✓ Save items electronically in labeled folders.

## **Step Two: Transition Planning Additional Resources**

- When Visiting a Preschool or Child Care
- Visiting Notes
- Transition requirements

# When visiting a preschool or child care setting...

*Picture your child as part of the class and consider these questions:*

Do the children appear to be happy?

Are they actively involved with materials and other children?

Does this program appear to match the way our child learns?

How is communication encouraged?

Does this program appear to match our family's values and respect our ethnic traditions?

Would our child be in this setting if they did not have a developmental delay or disability?

How are families involved?

How many children per adult are in this program?

Is the travel time from our home to the setting reasonable for a young child?

How do adults interact with children?

Additional questions we have:

## *Options to visit:*

*(Note: Some districts do not have multiple options for special education)*

Program:

Address:

Phone #:

Program:

Address:

Phone #:

Program:

Address:

Phone #:

# Visiting Notes

Program:

Address:

Phone #:

Scheduled date of visit:

Time of visit:

Meeting with the following people:

Things we liked:

Questions we have:

Comments:

## Transition Requirements

### Implementation Guidance to Area Education Agencies Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part C Transition from Early ACCESS

#### **Legal Requirements:**

IDEA 2004 [20 USC 1437 (a)(9)(A-C) and 20 USC 1436 (a)(8)] requires the Lead Agency (Iowa Department of Education) and Regional Grantees (area education agencies) to provide a description of the policies and procedures to be used to ensure a smooth transition for toddlers receiving early intervention services under Part C to preschool, school, other appropriate services, or exiting the Part C (Early ACCESS) program. The description must include how:

- the families of such toddlers and children will be included in the transition plans;
- the Lead Agency or Regional Grantees will notify the local educational agency for the area in which such a child resides that the child will shortly reach the age of eligibility for preschool services under part B;
- in the case of a child who may be eligible for such preschool services, with the approval of the family of the child, convene a conference among the lead agency, the family, and the local educational agency not less than 90 days (and at the discretion of all such parties, not more than 9 months) before the child is eligible for the
  - preschool services, to discuss any such services that the child may receive;
  - in the case of a child who may not be eligible for such preschool services, with the approval of the family, make reasonable efforts to convene a conference among the lead agency, the family, and providers of other
  - appropriate services for children who are not eligible for preschool services under part B, to discuss the
  - appropriate services that the child may receive;
  - to review the child's program options for the period from the child's third birthday through the remainder of the school year; and
  - to establish a transition plan, including, as appropriate, steps to exit from the Part C program.

**281—120.209(34CFR303) Transition to preschool and other programs.**

**120.209(1) Application requirements.** The department must include the following in its application:

*a.* A description of the policies and procedures the state will use to ensure a smooth transition for infants and toddlers with disabilities under the age of three and their families from receiving early intervention services under this chapter to:

- (1) Preschool or other appropriate services (for toddlers with disabilities); or
- (2) Exiting the program for infants and toddlers with disabilities.

*b.* A description of how the state will meet each of the requirements in sub rules 120.209(2) through 120.209(6).

*c.* An intra-agency agreement between the department's program that administers Part C of the Act and

the department's program that administers Section 619 of Part B of the Act (early childhood special education). To ensure a seamless transition between services under Parts C and B of the Act, the intra-agency agreement must address how the department will meet the requirements of sub rules 120.209(2) through 120.209(6) (including any policies adopted by the lead agency under 34 CFR §303.401(d) and (e)), sub rule 120.344(8), rule 281—41.124(256B,34CFR300), and 281—sub rules 41.101(2) and 41.321(6).

*d.* Any policy the department has adopted under 34 CFR §303.401(d) and (e).

**120.209(2) Notification to the department and appropriate AEA.**

*a.* The department must ensure that:

(1) Subject to paragraph 120.209(2) "b," not fewer than 90 days before the third birthday of the toddler with a disability if that toddler may be eligible for preschool services under Part B of the Act, the public agency responsible for providing Early ACCESS services to the toddler notifies the department and the AEA for the area in which the toddler resides that the toddler on the toddler's third birthday will reach the age of eligibility for services under Part B of the Act, as determined in accordance with state law;

(2) Subject to paragraph 120.209(2) "b," if the toddler is determined to be eligible for Early ACCESS services more than 45 but less than 90 days before that toddler's third birthday and if that toddler may be eligible for preschool services under Part B of the Act, the public agency responsible for providing Early ACCESS services to the toddler, as soon as possible after determining the child's eligibility, notifies the department and the AEA for the area in which the toddler with a disability resides that the toddler on the toddler's third birthday will reach the age of eligibility for services under Part B of the Act, as determined in accordance with state law; or

(3) Subject to paragraph 120.209(2) "b," if a toddler is referred to Early ACCESS under rules 281—120.302(34CFR303) and 281—120.303(34CFR303) fewer than 45 days before that toddler's third birthday and that toddler may be eligible for preschool services under Part B of the Act, the public agency that would be responsible for determining the child's eligibility under this chapter, with parental consent required under rule 281—120.414(34CFR303), refers the toddler to the department and the AEA for the area in which the toddler resides; however, no agency is required to conduct an evaluation, assessment, or an initial IFSP meeting under these circumstances.

*b.* The department must ensure that the notification required under subparagraphs 120.209(2) "a"(1) and (2) is consistent with any policy that the state has adopted, under 34 CFR §303.401(e), permitting a parent to object to disclosure of personally identifiable information.

**120.209(3) Conference to discuss services.** The department must ensure that:

*a.* If a toddler with a disability may be eligible for preschool services under Part B of the Act, the public agency responsible for Early ACCESS services, with the approval of the family of the toddler, convenes a conference, among that agency, the family, and the AEA of the toddler's residence not fewer than 90 days—and, at the discretion of all parties, not more than nine months—before the toddler's third birthday to discuss any services the toddler may receive under Part B of the Act; and

*b.* If the public agency determines that a toddler with a disability is not potentially eligible for preschool

services under Part B of the Act, the public agency, with the approval of the family of that toddler, makes reasonable efforts to convene a conference among that agency, the family, and providers of other appropriate services for the toddler to discuss appropriate services that the toddler may receive.

**120.209(4) Transition plan.** The department must ensure that for all toddlers with disabilities:

- a.* The appropriate public agency reviews the program options for the toddler with a disability for period from the toddler’s third birthday through the remainder of the school year and each family of a toddler with a disability who is served under this chapter is included in the development of the transition plan required under this rule and sub rule 120.344(8);
- b.* The appropriate public agency establishes a transition plan in the IFSP not fewer than 90 days— and, at the discretion of all parties, not more than nine months—before the toddler’s third birthday; and
- c.* The transition plan in the IFSP includes, consistent with sub rule 120.344(8), as appropriate:
  - (1) Steps for the toddler with a disability and the toddler’s family to exit from the Part C program; and
  - (2) Any transition services that the IFSP team identifies as needed by that toddler and the toddler’s family.

**120.209(5) Transition conference and meeting to develop transition plan.** Any conference conducted under sub rule 120.209(3) or meeting to develop the transition plan under sub rule 120.209(4) (which conference and meeting may be combined into one meeting) must meet the requirements in sub rules 120.342(4), 120.342(5), and 120.343(1).

**120.209(6) Applicability of transition requirements.** The transition requirements in subparagraphs 120.209(2) “a” (1) and (2), paragraph 120.209(3) “a,” and sub rule 120.209(4) apply to all toddlers with disabilities receiving services under this chapter before those toddlers turn age three.

## **Step Three: Transition Planning Meeting Additional Resources**

- Ideas for preparing our child for a new setting or program
- A comparison: Early Intervention, IDEA Part C to Special Education, IDEA Part B

# Ideas for Preparing Our Child for a New Setting or Program

- Schedule a visit or a series of visits to the new setting.
- Talk about how the new setting is different from home and also how the new setting is the same as home.
- Talk about how our child will get to the new program or setting.
- If possible, do a trial run so our child will be prepared. If our child will be transported on a bus, ask the program for a trial bus ride and go along.
- Help our child learn to sit and pay attention, in a group, by attending the public library story hour.
- Ask our local librarian for help finding good books to share that deal with changes and new beginnings in settings or programs.
- If our child has a favorite story or song, ask the new teacher or child care provider if they would incorporate it into the plans in the first day or two.
- Make a storybook with pictures of the new people and places our child will see.
- Have a calendar to cross off the days until our child begins in the new setting.
- Talk about what will happen when the new program begins and share that having different feelings is OK.
- At home before our child begins the new program, practice some of the new routines and activities that will be used in the new setting.
- Let our child make simple choices throughout the day. For example, show two shirts so a choice can be made. Let our child decide what's for lunch. Children need practice in making choices to increase independence, to feel in control, and to build self-esteem.

## Comparison: Early Intervention IDEA Part C & Special Education Part B

<b>IDEA Part C: Early ACCESS is Iowa’s Early Intervention System</b>	<b>IDEA Part B: Special Education</b>
Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) serves children, ages birth to 3rd birthday, and their families	Individualized Education Program (IEP) Serves learners ages 3-21 years
Early ACCESS services support parents and families to help their children learn and grow throughout their everyday activities and routines and develop to their fullest potential.	Special education services for preschool-aged (3-5) children provide support to enable them to be active and successful in routines and activities in regular early childhood programs and prepare them for the future.
Children eligible for Early ACCESS services have a 25% delay in one or more areas of development or have a diagnosed condition that causes developmental delays.	Learners eligible for special education services and support must have a disability under the IDEA (“disability”) and a need for special education services and support.
Services are available at no cost to families.	Services are available at no cost to families, referred to as Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).
Family-centered services are provided in the home or in the child's natural environment. Natural environments are defined as settings that are natural or typical for same-aged infants or toddlers without a disability.	Special education services are to be provided with peers without disabilities in settings referred to as regular early childhood programs (RECP). The continuum of how services are provided is defined as Least Restrictive Environment.
Measurable child and family outcomes are developed to address the needs of the child and the family.	Measurable child goals are developed to address participation and progress in appropriate activities typical for young children. The Iowa Early Learning Standards describe age appropriate expectations.
Interventions are embedded into family routines and activities that are important to the family.	Specially designed instruction supports preschool children’s participation in activities embedded throughout the day, and social learning opportunities are the foundation of instruction.
Iowa’s Early ACCESS system involves partnerships with families and community partners to provide appropriate services, resources and support for families and children, birth to 3.	Special education involves engaging educators and families in diagnosing, designing, and delivering Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) to meet the unique needs of the learner with a disability.
An IFSP can be modified at any time, with reviews required every six months.	An IEP can be amended at any time, with reviews required annually.

A service coordinator is required to be a single point of contact and to work with the family to implement an IFSP.

For children transitioning from Early ACCESS, special education staff from the Area Education Agency may be designated as a contact to participate in the transition planning.

## **Step Four: Evaluation Additional Resources**

- A Look at Our Child's Development

# A Look at Our Child's Development

<i>Area of development:</i>	<i>Some things our child knows or can do in this area:</i>	<i>Some things I would like our child to learn in this area:</i>
<p><b>Communication/Language:</b> This area includes skills such as naming objects, answering questions, listening, and following directions through the use of gestures, signs, pictures, or verbal language.</p>		
<p><b>Self-Help:</b> This area includes the skills of daily living such as dressing, feeding, toothbrushing, and toileting.</p>		
<p><b>Cognitive:</b> This area involves skills in thinking and problem solving including pre-math (counting, matching colors, and sorting things) and pre-reading (enjoying books, looking at the pictures, listening to stories, having favorite books and characters).</p>		
<p><b>Fine Motor:</b> Activities in this area involve the small muscles that you use when doing things like stringing items, using play dough, building with Legos, and exploring use of pencils and markers.</p>		
<p><b>Gross Motor:</b> Activities in this area involve the large muscles of the body such as walking, jumping, running, catching, and throwing.</p>		

<p><b>Social/Emotional:</b> This area includes doing tasks independently of parents, sharing, taking turns, following rules, participating in routines, playing by self and with others.</p>		
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## **Step Five: No Additional Resources**

## **Step Six: Putting the IEP Into Action!**

### **Additional Resources**

- Questions Families May Ask About the New Program
- Communication Tips for Parents
- Select Early Intervention and Special Education Terms and Acronyms

## Questions Families May Ask About the New Program

- Can our child visit the new school with us?
- Can we do a trial run on the school bus?
- How are food and snacks handled?
- Has the teacher identified the times when our child needs special help?
- When and how does the teacher prefer to communicate with us as parents?
- What activities are there for families at the new program?
- What supplies should we provide?
- What suggestions do you have for easing our child into the new program?

## Questions Children May Have

- Who are all these people?
- Can my trusted adult stay with me for a while?
- Can I play with all these toys?
- Can I bring my blanket to school?
- What if I get tired or hungry?
- Who will help me?
- Will I like it here?
- How long do I stay?
- Do I go every day?

## At this point...

You have practiced ways of transition planning that you can use again in the future. All transitions go more smoothly when your family and service providers work through the process together, by building on your hopes, sharing your knowledge about your child, your understanding of the law, and your creative ideas.

# Communication Tips for Parents

Adapted from: <https://www.askresource.org/resources/communication-tips-for-parents-educators> <https://www.askresource.org/resources/communication-matters>

- **Listen.** The better you hear and understand their point of view, the better equipped you are to challenge it if you disagree.
- **Be aware of body language.** There are lots of ways to communicate and body language often speaks louder than words.
- **It is natural to resist change.** Remember that change is stressful for most people, particularly if it makes them feel like they are less in control.
- **Stay positive.** Ask yourself what you can learn from difficult or stressful situations, and keep in mind the goal you are trying to reach.
- **Give educators a chance.** Just because you accept an offer, it doesn't mean you can't ask to make changes later.
- **Ask for clarification** whenever you need it.
- **What we say and what others hear is often different.** Both are impacted by personal viewpoint, experiences, assumptions, and judgments.
- **Expect and be open to full explanations** of the reasons educators have for recommending a particular course of action for the child.
- **Know your own emotional triggers.** Do your best to think through situations that you know are upsetting to you and plan for how you can respond or calm yourself in the moment.
- **Respond, don't react.** A reaction is an expression of feelings. A response is a more thoughtful expression of facts and feelings.
- **Use "I" statements, not "you" statements.** Take ownership of your feelings and views.
- **Look for common ground.** Building on areas of agreement can help to bridge gaps of disagreement.
- **Ask for time for careful consideration** of the options when you feel you need it.
- **Give things time to work.** Most programs need time to test their effectiveness for an individual child.
- **Boil it down to the essentials** and build from there.
- **Put the really important stuff in writing.** Taking the time to write a formal letter to make a request helps you organize your thoughts and evidence, creates a clear record, and lets educators know this is an issue you take very seriously.

Additional Resources:

[https://www.askresource.org/filesimages/ASK%20Info%20Sheets/A\\_Parent's\\_Guide\\_to\\_Educational\\_Advocacy.pdf](https://www.askresource.org/filesimages/ASK%20Info%20Sheets/A_Parent's_Guide_to_Educational_Advocacy.pdf)

<https://iowaideainformation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Family-and-Educator-Partnership-FEP-Pamphlet.pdf>

# Select Early Intervention & Special Education Terms and Acronyms

A selection of acronyms and definitions is below. A full list of acronyms and definitions for Early ACCESS is available at:

<https://educateiowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/Early%20Intervention%20Terms%20and%20Acronyms.pdf>

And for Special Education is available at:

<https://educateiowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/Special%20Education%20Terms%20and%20Acronyms.pdf>

Term	Acronym	Explanation
Accessible Instructional Materials/Accessible Educational Materials	AIM/AEM	Materials that provide the same educational information found in textbooks, pamphlets, etc. in a different format. Examples include Braille, large print, audio, and digital text. (May also be referred to as AIM; AEM is the newer, broader term for accessible materials.)
Americans with Disabilities Act	ADA	A federal civil rights law that protects people with disabilities at work, school, and in public places.
Area Education Agency	AEA	The state of Iowa is divided into nine AEAs. Each AEA provides local school districts with support and assistance.
Assistive Technology	AT	Any service or device, including software or equipment, that helps people work around their challenges. Examples include pencil grips, text to speech, or word prediction software.
Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act	CAPTA	Federal funding and guidance provided to states in support of prevention, assessment, investigation, prosecution, and treatment activities related to child abuse and neglect.
Child Health Specialty Clinics	CHSC	A community-based public health agency located at the University of Iowa, with satellite offices statewide, that serves Iowa children and youth with special health care needs.

Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Decision Description – See Below	ECO	A summary of a child’s functioning in each of the following three early child outcome areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive social-emotional skills, including social relationships</li> <li>• Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, including early language/communication</li> <li>• Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs</li> </ul>
Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs	CYSHCN	Children and youth who have or are at increased risk of developing chronic conditions and require services beyond those required by others of the same age.
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	DHH	A hearing loss which impacts an individual’s life.
Department of Human Services	DHS	Iowa’s agency that provides public assistance programs to the state’s residents in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistance programs</li> <li>• Family services</li> <li>• Health care</li> <li>• Mental health and disability services</li> </ul>
Disability Suspect	DS	A term indicating that a disability is suspected that may be impacting a child’s performance in school. This would trigger the need for a Full and Individual Initial Evaluation (IEE).
Division of Child and Community Health, University of Iowa	DCCH	A division of the Carver College of Medicine that focuses on child health with an approach that recognizes the importance of family, school, and community to a child’s health.
Early ACCESS	EA	Iowa’s system for providing early intervention services for infants and toddlers, birth to age 3, with a developmental delay or disability. This program includes support to parents to help their children learn and grow.

Early Childhood Outcomes	ECO	<p>The goal of early intervention and special education is to enable young children with disabilities to be active and successful participants during their early childhood years and in the future. The three Early Childhood Outcomes areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive social-emotional skills (social relationships)</li> <li>• Acquires and uses knowledge and skills (early language/communication)</li> <li>• Uses appropriate behaviors to meet their needs</li> </ul>
Early Childhood Special Education	ECSE	Services and supports for children with special needs ages 3–5 that are provided by AEAs and local school districts.
Early Hearing, Detection, and Intervention	EHDI	A statewide hearing program that ensures all newborns and toddlers are screened and identified as early as possible and provided with services.
Early Intervention/Early ACCESS	EI/EA	A system of services that helps babies and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities. The focus is on helping eligible babies and toddlers learn skills that typically develop from ages 0–3.
Family and Educator Partnership	FEP	A program that develops and sustains partnerships between families, educators, and community providers to promote success for all children and youth with disabilities
Family Guided Routines Based Intervention	FGRBI	A program that develops and sustains partnerships between families, educators, and community providers to promote success for all children and youth with disabilities.
Free Appropriate Public Education	FAPE	Special education and related services that are free and appropriate for a student’s unique needs, guaranteed under IDEA.
Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act	HIPAA	A federal law that ensures the confidentiality and security of an individual’s protected health information (PHI).

Individualized Education Program	IEP	A document that outlines the special education goals, services, and supports of a child who has been determined to have a disability and is in need of special education. This document is reviewed annually to determine if changes in services and supports are needed.
Individualized Family Service Plan	IFSP	A plan that guides the family and their child during the early years of development, from birth to age 3. A child who is found to be eligible can qualify for an IFSP and receive early intervention services.
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	IDEA	A federal law which guarantees the educational rights of individuals with disabilities.
Iowa Department of Education	IDOE, IDE, DE	The education agency in the state of Iowa.
Iowa Department of Public Health	IDPH	A partnership of local public health, non-profit organizations, health care providers, policymakers, businesses, and others working together to protect and improve the health of Iowans.
Iowa Family Support Network	IFSN	A website which includes information and referral for Early ACCESS, along with Family Support Services and Group-Based Parenting Programs.
Iowa IDEA Information	i3	An online and accessible platform for procedures, guidance, and resources related to Early Intervention and Special Education.
Least Restrictive Environment	LRE	The environment in which a child receives appropriate supports and services while learning with nondisabled peers.
Local Education Agency	LEA	The local school district.

Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program	MIECHV	A program that gives pregnant women and families, particularly those considered at-risk, necessary resources and skills to raise children who are physically, socially, and emotionally healthy and ready to learn.
Occupational Therapy	OT	Provides help for people to fully engage in all aspects of life, including school, work, and play. Examples could be assistance in areas of daily living such as cooking, dressing, eating, or driving.
Office of Special Education Programs	OSEP	A division of the U.S. Department of Education focused solely upon special education.
Part B		The section of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act that outlines the requirements for services to school children ages 3–21.
Part C		The section of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act that outlines the requirements for services to infants and toddlers ages 0–3.
Physical Therapy	PT	Specially designed exercises and equipment to help people improve or regain their physical abilities.
Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance	PLAAFP	A section of an IEP that provides a summary of academic achievement and functional performance.
Primary Service Provider	PSP	The lead resource of an early intervention team who will serve as the primary point of contact with the family.
Prior Written Notice	PWN	A written notice to families providing information on the proposed or refused actions as a part of the IFSP/IEP process.
Procedural Safeguards		Explanation of the specific rights and responsibilities of the family in the special education process. Translations of the manual are available in seven languages: English, Arabic, Bosnian, Laotian, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Reevaluation (Part B)		An assessment conducted every three years, or as necessary, to determine continued eligibility and the best way to meet the student's learning needs.
Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program	SWVPP	A preschool program available to Iowa residents, with or without disabilities, who reach age 4 on or before September 15 of the school year.
Service Coordinator	SC	The team member of an early intervention team who serves as the primary point of contact with the family.
Special Education	Sp.Ed./Sped	Supports and services provided to eligible individuals to address their unique needs.
Speech Language Pathologist	SLP	An expert in communication who assess, diagnose, and treat individuals with communication and swallowing disorders.
Visual Impairment	VI	Impairment to vision that adversely affects an individual's learning. This includes partial sight and blindness.