



Early Intervention Transition Q&A

Facts for Early Care and Education Programs

In the special education continuum, “transition” occurs multiple times, including from Infant/Toddler EI to Preschool EI and from Preschool EI to K-12 school-age special education. This Q&A summarizes facts about the EI transition processes to support Early Care and Education programs so they can be informed partners alongside families and EI providers.

Question: Why does transition occur?

Answer:

Infant/Toddler EI, Preschool EI, and K-12 education are administered (or managed) differently. In Pennsylvania, the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) administers early intervention in collaboration with both the PA Department of Human Services (DHS) and the PA Department of Education (PDE).

- **Infant/Toddler EI in Allegheny County** - The Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) Office of Behavioral Health contracts with The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers to provide evaluations, service coordination, and developmental monitoring. Early Intervention services are provided by one or more of 12 contracted provider agencies.
- **Preschool EI in Allegheny County** - Depending on where you live in Allegheny County, two different Intermediate Units administer preschool EI—Mt. Oliver Intermediate Unit 2/Pittsburgh Public School District (PPS) and the Allegheny Intermediate Unit 3 (AIU).
- **School-Age Special Education in Allegheny County** School-age (K-12) special education services are administered by the PA Department of Education (PDE) and Bureau of Special Education. Special Education services are provided by the Local Education Agency (LEA), which includes both public school districts and charter schools.

Question: When does transition occur?

Answer:

- In Infant/Toddler EI, a transition planning meeting is held with the family six months to 90 days before the child’s third birthday to discuss and plan for transition.
- Some children may exit EI before or at age 3 if they’ve met all of their developmental goals and/or are no longer eligible for services.
- For children interested in transitioning from Infant/Toddler EI to Preschool EI, a new evaluation may be completed.
- If a child is eligible to transition to Preschool EI, an IEP will be developed before their third birthday and services should begin no later than 14 days after the child’s third birthday.
- In Preschool EI, transition planning starts the year before a child is old enough to enroll in kindergarten or first grade.
- In February of the child’s transition year, kindergarten transition meetings occur between the Preschool EI program, the school district, and the family.
- The family will complete an “intent to register” form and will work with the school district through the school-age evaluation process.
- If the child continues to remain eligible for special education services, an IEP should be developed so that services are in place on the first day of kindergarten.



Question: If a child received Infant/Toddler EI, will they automatically receive Preschool EI? If a child received Preschool EI, will they automatically receive special education in Kindergarten?

Answer:

No, a child who received Infant/Toddler EI will not automatically receive Preschool EI and a child who received Preschool EI will not automatically receive school-age services. This is because:

- A child may exit early intervention because they have met their developmental milestones and no longer qualify.
- The eligibility criteria changes with each transition.
 - From Infant/Toddler EI to Preschool EI, children are no longer able to qualify on the eligibility criteria of "informed clinical opinion" (qualifying based on the professional opinion of the evaluator, even if the child did not qualify based on assessment).
 - From Preschool EI to K-12, children can no longer qualify for services based on having a "developmental delay."
- During all transitions, the legal guardian must provide consent/permission. Guardians must be an active participant during the transition process.

Question: What if a child is no longer eligible for services after a transition?

Answer:

- If a child who was eligible for Infant/Toddler EI does not qualify for Preschool EI, the family may pursue private non-special education services through insurance or private pay (for example, outpatient speech therapy). The family may also request further screening or an evaluation at a later point if developmental concerns continue.
- School-age children who do not qualify for special education may also pursue private non-special education services (for example, outpatient therapy). School-age children with a documented disability who are not eligible for special education may qualify for accommodations in the general classroom under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- If a child did not previously qualify for EI but concerns arise in the K-12 setting, the guardian can request a special education evaluation by contacting the school in writing.

Question: How can Early Care and Education (ECE) programs support transition?

Answer:

- ECE programs can be open to inviting evaluators to come into their program, especially during the transition process. This allows evaluators to conduct observations or evaluations of a child in their current early learning environment, and also allows the child's current program to provide input.
- ECE programs can also offer to participate in planning meetings at the parent's request. Parents are entitled to invite other relevant individuals to meetings pertaining to their child's services.
- ECE programs can be aware of approaching transitions ahead of the child's third birthday and when they're preparing to enter kindergarten. Programs can ask families if they've had a transition meeting and discuss any achievements or areas that need additional support.

