

A Parent's Guide to the Part C to Part B Transition (Age Two Turning Three)



What This Handout Covers

This guide supports families of two-year-olds moving from Part C Early Intervention (EI) to Part B Preschool Special Education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It outlines timelines, what to expect, how to prepare, and what to do after the meeting—so services begin on or before your child's third birthday.

The Big Picture: What Changes at Age Three

- ✓ **Part C (Birth–Age Three):** Family-centered services in natural environments (home, community). Plan is an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) with family outcomes.
- ✓ **Part B (Age Three–21):** School-based services. Plan is an Individualized Education Program (IEP) with annual goals and services to support access, participation, and progress in the preschool curriculum in the **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**.

Timeline at a Glance

- ✓ Six to nine months before the third birthday: Transition conference; district explains next steps.
- ✓ Three to six months before third birthday: District requests consent to conduct an assessment and should provide you with a copy of your Procedural Safeguards in your native language; evaluations occur (psychologist, speech pathologist, occupational therapist, educational specialist, as needed).
- ✓ By the third birthday: Eligibility/IEP meeting; if eligible, services start no later than the third birthday.

Tip: Put your child's third birthday on your calendar and set reminders four to six weeks ahead to confirm status.

Parent Preparation Checklist

Organize Your Thoughts

- ✓ How will a transition from Early Start to the school district fit into your life?
- ✓ What are your resources (time, transportation, child care, community supports)?
- ✓ What other family responsibilities and commitments will affect scheduling?
- ✓ What are your preferences and priorities?

Think About Your Child's Strengths

- ✓ Identify what your child needs to learn to develop new skills and abilities.
- ✓ Write down your thoughts.
- ✓ Bring questions, concerns, and input to all meetings.

Keep Records

- ✓ Keep a notebook or digital folder with notes, dates, and contacts.
- ✓ Organize all documents you receive during the transition process (IFSP, assessments, IEP paperwork).

Gather Information

- ✓ Explore programs for young children in your community; note what fits your child and family.
- ✓ Contact parent-to-parent support resources (ask your Service Coordinator).

Community Preschool and Child-Care Options

Gather Information

- ✓ **Parent Participation Preschool Classes:** Offered by adult education programs, community colleges, and some city parks and recreation departments.
- ✓ **California State Preschool Program (CSPP):** Some income requirements; full-day when child-care need is documented. CSPP must reserve spaces for three and four-year-olds with IEPs.
- ✓ **Head Start:** Federally funded; income eligibility; prioritizes four-year-olds and children with disabilities; seats reserved for children with IEPs.
- ✓ **California Alternative Payment Program (CAPP):** Voucher program for eligible families; usable with a range of licensed providers.
- ✓ **Private Preschool and Child Care:** Parent is responsible for tuition. If eligible for special education, the district explains how services are delivered when enrolled privately.

Planning ahead: Many programs have waitlists or fixed enrollment windows. Contact programs at least six months before the third birthday.

Prepare Your Family for the Transition Process

- ✓ Map out who will do what and when (forms, appointments, transportation).
- ✓ Plan for child care for other children during evaluations.
- ✓ Plan for transportation to evaluations and meetings.

How to Prepare for the Initial IEP Meeting

Prior to the Meeting

- ✓ Arrange child care so you can fully participate.
- ✓ Confirm that your Early Start Service Coordinator and a general education preschool teacher were invited.
- ✓ Respond to the district's formal IEP invitation (accept or request a new time).
- ✓ Request an interpreter or accessible formats if needed.
- ✓ Request for reports to be provided in your native language if needed.
- ✓ Request to see evaluation reports ahead of the IEP meeting so that you have time to read them in advance.
- ✓ Let presenters know you may ask them to pause anytime you need clarification.

If Your Child Is Found Eligible

- ✓ Request the school calendar and a daily/weekly schedule listing services, minutes, location, and provider.
- ✓ Share your concerns about your child's needs and your family's capacity for the proposed schedule and location.
- ✓ Ask about any unfamiliar services (what, where, who will be providing, how progress is measured).
- ✓ If it is too much to process, request to continue the meeting on another date before consenting. You do not need to sign consent at the IEP meeting.
- ✓ If the offer conflicts with work or child care, ask about options (alternate times/locations, transportation for your child, phased start).

If Your Child Is Not Found Eligible

- ✓ Ask about district preschool programs and how to enroll.
- ✓ Ask the general education teacher for recommendations that match your family's wants and needs.
- ✓ Seek community opportunities (library story time, parent-child classes, playgroups) to build skills with peers.

Registration, Transportation, and Child Care

Registering for School

- ✓ Ask which documents are required for registration beyond evaluation paperwork.
- ✓ Confirm the school/site address where services will be provided.
- ✓ Request a visit before the first day to meet staff and see the classroom and playground.
- ✓ Share special equipment or health needs and ask how this will be communicated to staff.
- ✓ Schedule time to complete registration before the third birthday.
- ✓ Ask about meals/snacks and how diapering or toilet training is handled.

Transportation and Child Care

- ✓ If transportation is offered in the IEP, ask: who greets my child on arrival, who ensures boarding at dismissal, where pick-up/drop-off occurs, and what seating/restraints are used?
- ✓ If you need coordination with child care, ask whether the district can pick up near home and drop off at child care (or the reverse). If not, plan alternatives.
- ✓ If the proposed school schedule conflicts with work or child care, ask the district to review options.

How to Prepare Your Toddler for Transition to Preschool

Talk Early and Often

- ✓ Begin talking about the change with your child in simple, positive language.
- ✓ Describe the “new school,” meeting new friends, teachers, songs, and playtime.
- ✓ Read picture books about preschool; label what your child might see and do.

Practice Short Separations

- ✓ Practice brief separations with a trusted caregiver; start short and extend gradually.
- ✓ Use a predictable good-bye routine—hug, high-five, and a time you will return (e.g., “I will see you after lunch time.”)

Build Familiarity

- ✓ Visit the school if possible; meet the teacher, see the classroom, playground, and backpack hooks.
- ✓ Take photos, look at them often, and make a simple “school book” to read daily or ask if the school provides a similar book.

Spark Curiosity and Practice Group Time

- ✓ Point out school buses and talk about riding (if applicable).
- ✓ Attend gentle group experiences (library story hour, playgroups, nursery programs).
- ✓ Coach greetings, offering toys, taking turns, and asking for help.
- ✓ Ask your Early Start provider for personalized ideas; talk with other parents about what worked.

Names and Numbers to Remember

Early Start Service Coordinator: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Early Start Program Manager: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Regional Center Service Coordinator: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

School District/Education Contact: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

School District/Education Contact: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Dates to Remember

Transition Planning Conference/IFSP (with district representative):

Date: _____ Time: _____

Medical Evaluation (if applicable):

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Developmental Evaluation (district):

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Final IFSP:

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

IEP Meeting (district): Eligibility decision and, if eligible, development of the IEP.

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Family Transition Activity Checklist

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- ☐ We talked about preschool in simple, positive words.
 - ☐ We read picture books about preschool and new routines.
 - ☐ We practiced short separations and lengthened them over time.
 - ☐ We visited the new school (or reviewed photos/videos, if a visit was not possible).
 - ☐ We made a small “school book” with photos and read it daily.
 - ☐ We practiced arrival routines (hang backpack, wash hands, greet teacher).
 - ☐ We pointed out buses/cars and practiced safe walking and waiting.
 - ☐ We attended group activities to practice sharing and turn-taking.
 - ☐ We asked our Early Start provider for individualized tips.
 - ☐ We talked with other families about helpful strategies.

Notes

Adapted from: California Department of Developmental Services, Early Start Section, and California Department of Education, Special Education Division, *Effective Early Childhood Transitions: A Guide for Transition at Age Three—Early Start to Preschool* (Sacramento: WestEd Center for Prevention and Early Intervention, 2013).

This handout provides general information and is not legal advice. Local procedures vary by district.