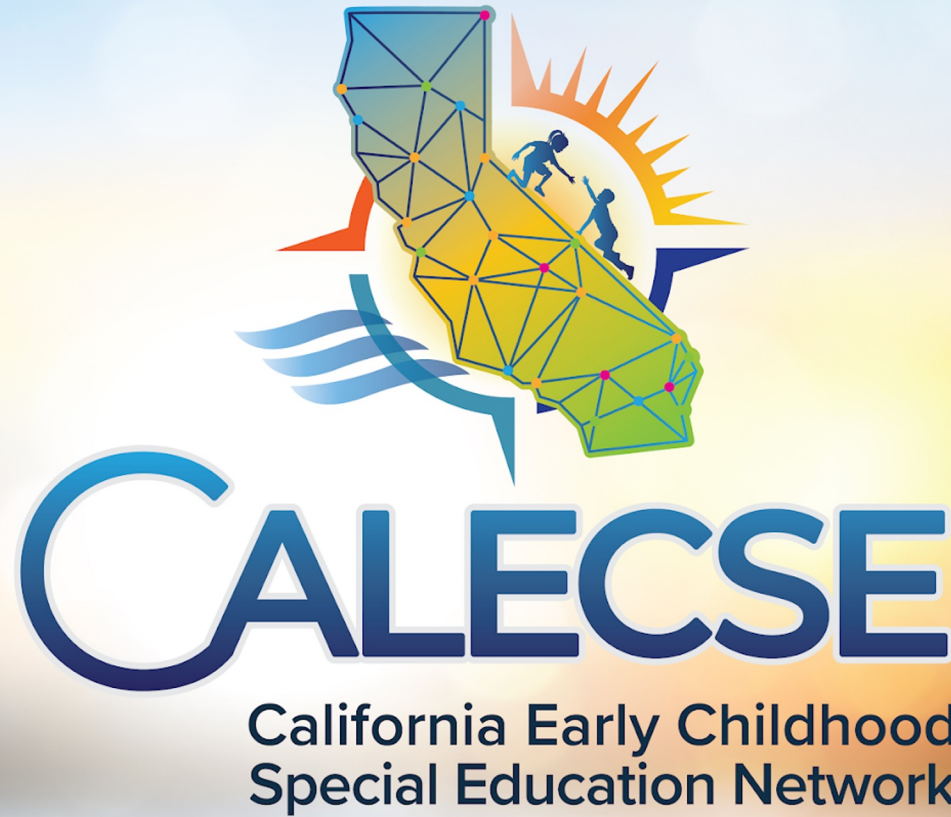




**Early Education Interagency Collaboration
Tools for Reviewing and Updating Interagency Agreements
and Framing Continuous Cycles of Collaboration**

April 29, 2024



CaIECSE

California Early Childhood Special Education Network

Funded by the CDE



Implementation Leadership

Co-Executive Director- Dr. Scott Turner, East San Gabriel Valley SELPA
Co-Executive Director-Melanie Hertig, Irvine Special Education/SELPA
Project Coordinator-Marion Springett, Saddleback Valley USD



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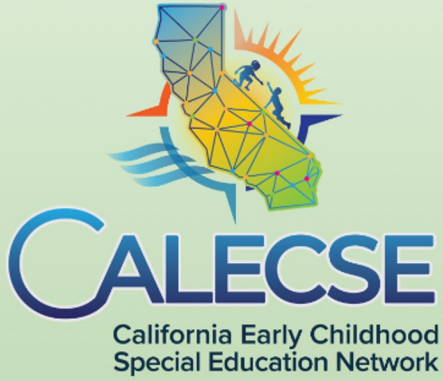
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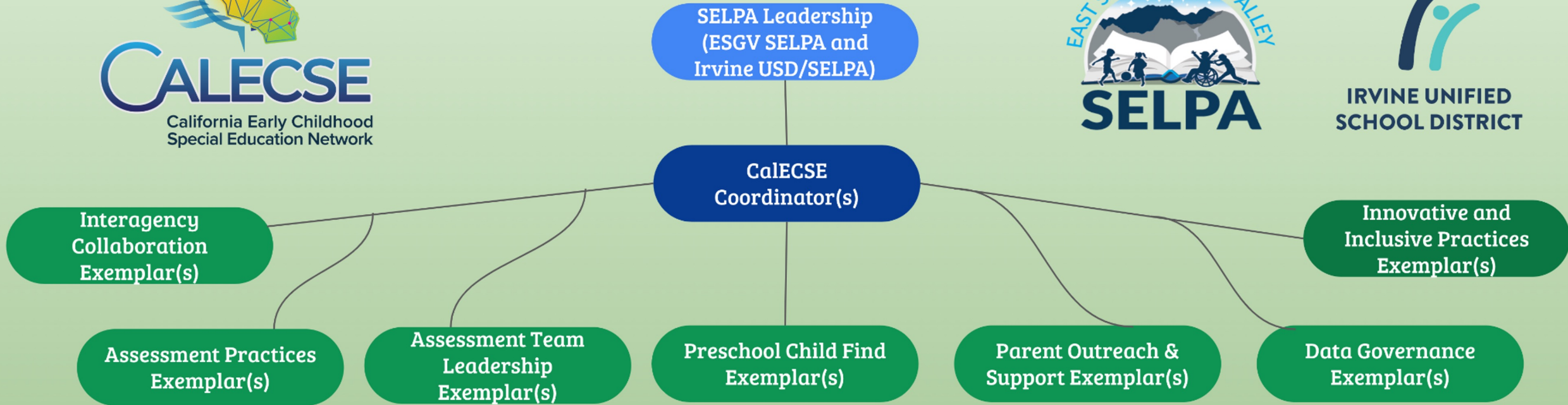
CalECSE is a new technical assistance project funded under the California Department of Education (CDE) that will support Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA)s, County Offices of Special Education (COEs), and other Agency Partners in the areas of IDEA Part C to B Transitions, Preschool Assessment Practices, and Preschool Child Find by providing technical assistance, professional learning, and demonstration of tangible practices *that have been proven successful*.

The CalECSE Network *leverages collaboration amongst agencies, disseminates resources, highlights existing exemplar practices, and provides direct technical assistance* to improve the capacity, knowledge, collaboration, and implementation of evidence-based practices across agencies throughout California.

The CalECSE Network is committed to *improving outcomes* for children and their families by *eliminating and addressing barriers* to successful transition for California's youngest children with disabilities.



CalECSE Network



Geographic Technical Assistance Facilitators/Leads



CalECSE Network

Interagency Collaboration

**Lucia Garay, Interagency Collaboration
Exemplar Lead - LEA, CalECSE Network**

**Heather DiFede, Interagency Collaboration
Exemplar Lead - LEA, CalECSE Network**

**Sarah Franco, Interagency Collaboration
Exemplar Lead - Regional Center Agency,
CalECSE Network**



Best Practices to Establishing Successful Regional Part C to Part B Transitions:

Tools for Reviewing and Updating Interagency
Agreements
and Framing Continuous Cycles of Collaboration

Successful Part C to B Interagency Collaborations & Agreements

Collaborative Development:

- Include agreed-upon processes for each transition step
- Include all education partner agencies in all discussions
- Focus on function over form or format of the agreement
- Remain family-centric
- Have processes to develop consensus on each item/element
- Consider limitations and challenge status-quo
- Have an allocated time commitment to discuss, collaborate, & develop
- Commitment to annual review/revision and cyclic staff training on the agreement



Requirements for Interagency Agreements

CCR Title 17. Public Health
Division 2. Health and Welfare Agency
Department of Developmental Services Regulations
Chapter 2. Early Intervention Services
Subchapter 4. Service Coordination
Article 2. Interagency Agreements



- (a) Regional centers and LEAs shall develop and maintain local interagency agreements.
- (b) Local interagency agreements shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - (1) The responsibilities of each LEA and regional center for meeting the terms of the agreement;
 - (2) Procedures for coordination of child find activities with local public agencies and regional centers to identify infants and toddlers who may be eligible for early intervention services;
 - (3) Specific procedures for coordination of referrals for evaluation and assessment;
 - (4) Procedures for the assignment of a service coordinator;
 - (5) Interagency procedures for identifying the responsibilities of the regional center and LEA for completing the evaluation and assessment and determining eligibility within the time requirements contained in Section 52086 of these regulations, when an infant or toddler may receive services from both the regional center and LEA;
 - (6) Procedures for the timely exchange of information between regional Centers and LEAs;
 - (7) Mechanisms for ensuring the availability of contacts at regional centers and LEAs at all times during the year;



Requirements for Interagency Agreements (cont.)

CCR Title 17. Public Health
Division 2. Health and Welfare Agency
Department of Developmental Services Regulations
Chapter 2. Early Intervention Services
Subchapter 4. Service Coordination
Article 2. Interagency Agreements



- (8) Procedures for interagency IFSP development when infants and toddlers may be eligible for early intervention services from the regional center and the LEA or other state or local programs or services;
 - (9) Procedures to ensure the provision of services during periods of school vacations when services are required on the IFSP;
 - (10) Transition planning procedures which begin at least six months prior to a toddler's third birthday pursuant to Section 52112 of these regulations;
 - (11) Procedures for resolving disputes between regional centers and LEAs;
 - (12) Procedures for the training and assignment of surrogate parents; and Title 17, California State Regulations Page 29 of 41
 - (13) Procedures for accepting transfers of infants or toddlers with existing IFSPs.
- (c) Local interagency agreements shall be dated and signed by representatives of the regional center and LEA.
- (d) Interagency agreements shall be reviewed by both parties annually, revised as necessary, dated, and signed by both parties.

Authority cited: Sections 95009 and 95028, Government Code. Reference: Section 1435(a)(10, Title 20 United States Code; Sections 303.1, 303.174, 303.523 and 303.524, Title 34 Code of Federal Regulations.

Reviewing your Interagency Agreement

Make Plans to Review/Revise/Develop Your Regional Interagency Agreement



- Identify key SELPA and Regional Center (RC) leaders to co-lead the review effort and define roles/responsibilities
- Establish a timeline and meeting dates
- Identify key Stakeholders from Part-C and Part-B (these may change depending on topics being reviewed for the agreement)
- Send invitations and be specific about topic and need for commitment through the process

Why conduct a cross-agency review?

To provide agencies the opportunity to identify what is working and what changes are needed to improve practices and procedures

Process:

- Start with setting norms for collaborative conversations and how collaborative agreements will be made (consensus, multi-voting, etc.)
- Review mandated timelines and current agreement section on Referrals so everyone has the same basic understanding
- Develop a protocol for discussing each topic and seek consensus on the process
- Identify what is working and what changes are needed to improve practices and procedures
- Document the agreements at each step/meeting

Interagency Approach



Interagency Approach (cont.)



Process (Cont.):

Once all areas of the agreement have been reviewed discussed and revised as needed, based on agreements, select a format for the revised document and set responsibilities and timeline for the final draft to be ready to route for signatures

Obtain/review/create locally developed transition materials and forms specific to the areas discussed and modified (may happen concurrent to IA document drafting/revision)

Once signed, work across agencies to schedule and provide interagency trainings on the IA. (There may be different partners involved in trainings, specific to agreement topics such as transitions, assessments, services, etc.)

Schedule an annual revision of the agreement and practices in place to assure agreements developed by the LEAs and Early Start agencies are followed

If interagency procedures are identified to be no longer effective, revise the procedures and document them in a new/revised agreement

Checklist for Reviewing Interagency IDEA Part C and Transition to Part B Documents

Adapted for CalECSE from: Annotated Version OSEP Checklist for Reviewing Transition Documents under Section II.A.10 of the IDEA Part C Grant Application. ***<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/Grants-C-Transition-Checklist.pdf>***



Checklist for Reviewing Interagency Part C and Transition to Part B Documents



This review of Interagency Agreement for Transition from IDEA Part C to IDEA Part B was conducted by representatives from the following agencies:

LEA - School District(s) (Part B): _____

LEA - SELPA(s) (Part B): _____

Regional Center (Part C): _____

LEA Part C: _____

Other Community-based Early Childhood or Family Support Entities: _____

IDEA Part C Early Childhood Transition Requirements	Transition Policy <i>(Describe/reference current written policies/procedures in place and specify the agency that implements them and 'owns' the documents)</i>	Transition Agreement <i>(Which section of your most recent Agreement addresses this element?)</i>	Issue <i>(Does the wording in your agreement or written policies address this core issue to the transition process?)</i>	Required Action <i>(What action steps do you need to take to address any discrepancies identified?)</i>
A. Child Find Activities				
<i>The agreement must include procedures for coordinating child find activities with local public agencies and regional centers to identify infants and toddlers who may be eligible for early intervention services</i>				
B. Transition Planning Procedures which begin at least six months prior to a toddler's third birthday				
1.) Transition Notification				
<i>The lead (Part-C) agency must notify the (part B) LEA (where the toddler receiving Part C services resides) that a toddler who is receiving Part C services and who is potentially eligible for services under the Part B section 619 preschool program will shortly turn three years old and exit the Part C program. (34 CFR §303.209(b))</i>			<i>The Agreement must ensure that the LEA receives the transition notice.</i>	

IDEA Part C Early Childhood Transition Requirements

- A. Child Find Activities
- B. Transition Planning Procedures which begin at least six months prior to a toddler's third birthday
 - 1.) Transition Notification
 - 2.) Transition Conference
 - 3.) Transition Plan
- C. Other Part C (various procedures)
- D. Specific procedures for the coordination of referrals for evaluation and assessment with Part B
- E. Procedures for resolving disputes between regional centers and LEAs
- F. Procedures for training and assignment of surrogate parents (CCR, Title17)
- G. Local interagency agreements must be dated and signed by authorized representatives of the LEA(s) and the regional center(s)
- H. Interagency agreements must be reviewed by both parties annually, revised as necessary, dated, and signed by both/all parties

IDEA Part B Early Childhood Transition Requirements

- A. IEP development by 3rd birthday
- B. Participation in the Transition Conference
- C. Must have policies and procedures for the coordination of evaluation and assessments, including any collaborative assessments with Part C
- D. Invite Part C to the initial IEP, at parent request
- E. The IEP team must consider an IEP that contains the IFSP content, including the Natural Environment statement
- F. LEAs must have procedures to ensure the provision of transition services during school vacations

Sample Part C Interagency Agreements



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[Interagency Agreements - Single Agency](#)

[Interagency Agreements - Multiple Agencies](#)

[Template ES Interagency Agreement](#)

[ECTA Sample Interagency Agreements](#)

Interagency Collaborations and Agreements

*Additional Necessary Collaborative
Conversations*

Implementation of the Agreement



How will it be disseminated?

When will agency staff be informed ***and trained?***

When will family empowerment/resource centers and community agencies in early childhood be informed? and

What will make it a valid, functioning part of the transition system in our region?

How often will the partners meet to discuss processes and to measure success?



Monitoring and Evaluation of the Agreement

How often do the partners meet to ensure the system works?

How/when can changes be made?

Are there protocols outside the signed agreement that need to be periodically reviewed?

Who is responsible for scheduling meetings and sending out reminders?

Who will facilitate the meetings?

Who is responsible for documenting the meeting and communicating information to others?



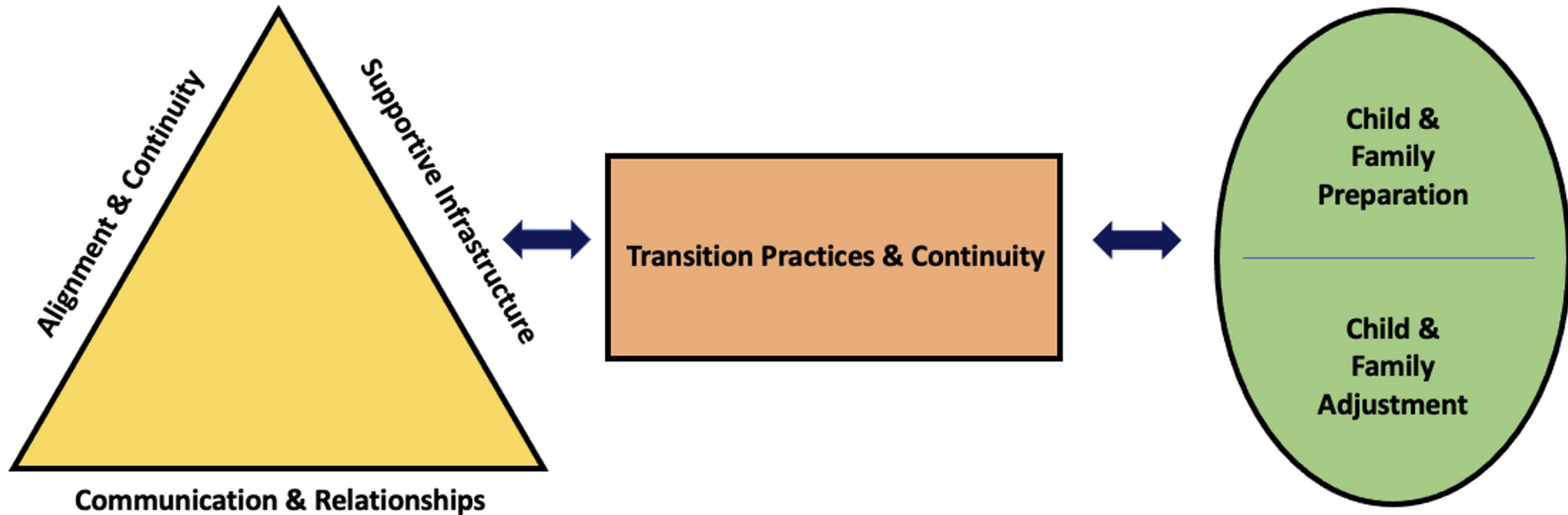
Duration, Interagency Dispute Process, and Signatures



How will conflicts that may arise be resolved?
What informal process is/will be in place?
What formal process can be accessed as needed
(that aligns to the conflict resolution process in
the Agreement)?
What period-of-time does the agreement cover?
(January – December; July – June)
Who are the authorized signatories for each of
the agencies involved?
What will be the process and timeline for
obtaining signatures?

Frame for Continuous Cycles of Collaboration

Transition Conceptual Framework*



* Beth Rous and Christine Teeters Myers (2006). *Strategies to Support Transition for Children with Special Needs: National Focus Group Findings, Technical Report #1*. Lexington, KY: Human Development Institute at University of Kentucky. *Ideas that Work*, National Early Transition Center

Interagency Structures and Supports are Critical to the Transition Process



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Strategies that Work*:

- ✓ A **supportive infrastructure** to guide the transition process that includes written materials for staff and families, forms that support specific transition activities, transition plans, interagency agreements, specific transition policies that address parental choice and program options, dedicated personnel for transition planning, and support from administration for staff participation in transition planning and activities.
- ✓ Attention to **relationships and communication** between agencies to help create a seamless system of transition by attending and participating in interagency meetings, staff meetings, and IFSP and IEP meetings; encouraging dialogue between agency staff; and providing training opportunities for staff that occur across agencies and programs.
- ✓ **Continuity and alignment** between sending and receiving programs that includes coherence across programs in terms of curriculum and expectations, continuity of related services personnel from the sending to the receiving environment, and alignment in relation to the conscious and transparent connections that are made between program curriculum and expectations.

* Beth Rous and Christine Teeters Myers (2006). *Strategies to Support Transition for Children with Special Needs: National Focus Group Findings, Technical Report #1*. Lexington, KY: Human Development Institute at University of Kentucky. *Ideas that Work, National Early Transition Center*

Specific Transition Practices Must be Clearly Defined and Systematically Implemented



- ✓ **Preparation of families and children for transition** that includes family participation in meetings, especially transition specific meetings, sharing of information with families as part of transition planning, and specific workshops designed for parents as a way of helping them better understand the transition process.
- ✓ **Program visitation** that includes family visits to programs being considered for their child's placement, child visits to a receiving program, and staff visits between the receiving and sending programs which also promote communication between staff.
- ✓ **Instructional activities** designed to help children and families with transition, including instructional activities to support the individual child's preparation for a new setting in terms of skills and competencies, and program-wide activities designed for both the child and family, such as home visits, formal orientation events, and written materials to support transition planning (e.g., transition packets, handbooks).
- ✓ **Community resources** that strengthen the relationship of children and families to schools and help families understand their rights under IDEA, community and neighborhood resources to support the child and family in participating in general community activities, and support groups that help families meet other families who have children with special needs and can provide additional support during the transition process.

Resources



[Successful Interagency Communications](#)

[OSEP Letters and Q&A](#)

November 2023 OSEP Early Childhood Transition Questions and Answers

March 2023 OSEP Letter to Nix

February 2011 OSEP Letter to Hutton

[DaSy Data Sharing Agreement Checklist](#)

[Eligibility, Services, and Policy Differences Between IDEA Part C and IDEA Part B](#)

[Practitioner Part C to B Checklist \(ECTA\)](#)

[Transition Conceptual Framework](#)

CDE Guidance to SELPAs regarding IDEA Part C to Part B Interagency Agreements:

[Special Education Local Plan Area: Local Plan](#)

[Interagency Agreements - Single Agencies](#)

[Interagency Agreements - Multiple Agencies](#)

[Template ES Interagency Agreement](#)

[Requirements for Interagency Agreements](#)

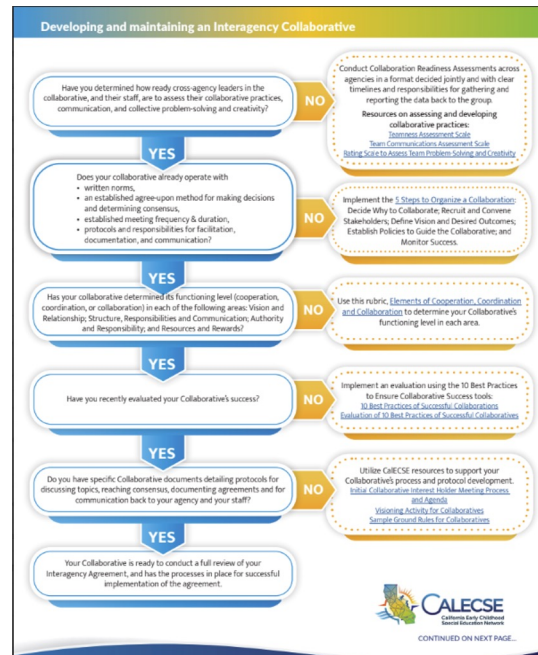
[ECTA Sample Interagency Agreements](#)

[Guidance on Creating an Effective Memorandum of Understanding to Support High-Quality Inclusive Early Childhood Systems \(Oct. 5, 2022\)](#)
[- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#)



Process Flow Chart

Developing and Sustaining Successful Interagency Collaborations and Agreements



SECTION B

Conducting a Regional Assessment of your Interagency Agreement and Relevant Practices for Effective Implementation of the Agreement and any Additional agreed-upon Processes and Protocols.

- ☐ 1 Schedule a series of meetings of the Collaborative, to review the Interagency Agreement (IA) and joint cross-agency practices. Confirm attendees have decision-making authority for their agencies present.
- ☐ 2 Confirm all members have access to the most recent signed version of your IA and any/all written protocols and processes which have been jointly developed, approved and are being implemented. It is best to share all written protocols across agencies, when protocols for implementing the IA were not jointly developed or are implemented by a single agency.
- ☐ 3 Conduct a formal review of your IA or IA(s)* implementation processes and documents. Encourage collaborative partners to consider limitations and to challenge status quo within discussions while remaining family-centric and implementing the group's consensus protocols prior to documenting agreements on each section. Reference [CALECSE Additional Resources on Interagency Collaborations and Agreements](#) and review detailed information from [OSEP Letters and FAQs](#) regarding transition requirements and other useful tools to assist your team.

TEAMS CAN DECIDE TO COMPLETE THE TOOLS BELOW IN ANY ORDER.

IT IS RECOMMENDED TO COMPLETE THESE TOOLS BEFORE MOVING ON TO STEP 4.

- Joint interagency review of [Designing and Implementing Effective Early Childhood Processes](#).
- Joint completion of the [Self-Assessment for Early Childhood Transition](#).
- Joint interagency completion of the [Early Childhood Transition Worksheet](#).

AS THE INTERAGENCY COLLABORATIVE TEAM MEETS TO COMPLETE THESE DOCUMENTS...

- ☐ 4 You may designate a small group or engage the entire Collaborative in conducting a self-audit of your IA using the [Checklist for Reviewing IDEA Part C and Transition to Part B Documents](#). If needed, a review of data sharing processes can be done as well, using the [Early Data Sharing Agreement Checklist](#).
- ☐ 5 Consolidate and prioritize findings from reviews. Assign roles and responsibilities to address the identified items. Be sure to agree on timelines for this follow up to occur.
- ☐ 6 Jointly identify the agreed upon items to be included in the revised IA. If there are items that are agreed upon, but not required in the IA, a Policy/Procedural manual could include those items. The Policy/Procedural manual is monitored by the Collaborative and can be modified based on need, without requiring the official signatures.
- ☐ 7 Dispute Resolution must be addressed within the IA. In addition, it is recommended the Collaborative have a written process for resolving issues that may arise for staff at all levels of the interagency collaboration and that periodic interagency staff training on the IA and implementation procedures includes the informal process to address conflicts as they arise and what formal process can be accessed as needed (in alignment to the IA).

- ☐ 8 Review a [sample template and existing interagency agreements from other regions](#), and other interagency agreements that may exist in your region, comparing them to the format your region currently uses for this agreement to identify overlap and alignment. Determine which format will be used for staff training purposes at a frequency and form defined by the Collaborative. If several LEAs work with a single Regional Center, discuss the feasibility of having a single agreement, maintaining stability for families who may move within the region but across LEA residency boundaries.
- ☐ 9 The Collaborative monitors and evaluates the IA being sure to establish: the template and agencies to be included in the revised agreement; assign responsibilities (who will do the drafting/typing) and timelines for drafting the revised agreement that includes agreements documented throughout the process, and timelines for reviews, feedback, and for final approval by your collaborative.
- ☐ 10 Repeat this process for any agreements which will necessitate the development of Collaborative Protocols either within or across agencies.
- ☐ 11 Conduct a joint review of the final IA and Collaborative Protocols to confirm elements of [Successful Interagency Communications](#) were clearly addressed.
- ☐ 12 Once the IA is finalized by the Collaborative:
 - Specify the period of time covered by the agreement
 - Identify the official signatories and their titles for each agency
 - Determine the signature process and timeline
 - Define communication and dissemination processes to interagency staff and other partner organizations (e.g., Head Start, Family Empowerment/Resource Centers, early childhood inclusion collaboratives)
- ☐ 13 Determine Collaborative's commitment to staff training on the IA and implementation protocols (no less than annually, is recommended). Specify if training materials will be jointly created by interagency partners (who/when), how training will be provided (in person or if virtually: asynchronous or synchronous).
- ☐ 14 Monitoring and Ongoing evaluations of the Collaborative and the Interagency Agreement. Confirm the IA or the Collaborative's protocols include:
 - How often partners will meet, who convenes, facilitates and documents meetings, and who will report out/communicate to staff and partner agencies
 - How any agreements on necessary changes to protocols or to IA language at the annual revision, will be documented and possibly "piloted" until documents are updated and new annual signatures are obtained (as applicable since protocols do not require formal agency signatures)
- ☐ 15 Once the Collaborative begins their regular meetings, refer to the [Transition Conceptual Framework](#) to add agenda items that focus on continuous improvement of your collaborative practices.

Successes

The Interagency Agreement is a culmination of a collaborative process that assists all agencies to achieve successful outcomes for children and families.





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Contact Us!



CALECSE

California Early Childhood
Special Education Network

MARION SPRINGETT

Project Coordinator

(626) 966-1679 (P)

(626) 339-0027 (F)

mspringett@calecse.org

1400 Ranger Dr.

Covina, CA 91722

calecse.org