

Turning Age Three: For Children Going From Early Intervention to Special Education

presented by
Framingham Special Education Parent Advisory Council
www.F-SEPAC.org

Considerations in Identifying Services and Selecting a New Program

- What type of special services does my child need in the new program?
- What type of special services are available in the new program and how often can they be provided?
- Are there additional special services that would need to be added to the new program in order to meet the needs of my child?
- Does the program include both children with special needs and those without identified special needs?
- Does the program provide full or part-day classes?
- What are the other children in the program like?
- Does the program provide child care for after school hours or transportation to child care services? Will I need to provide transportation for my child?
- Where is the program located? Will my child need to take the bus? How long will he or she be on the bus? Is this where my other children go to school?
- Is there a cost for this program that the family must pay?
- Does my child need access to medical staff?
- If so, are medical staff available in this program?
- Does my child require medication during the school day and if so, who will dispense it?
- Does the teaching staff need training in how to handle my child's medical needs, such as seizures?
- Are there skills and behaviors my child should have before entering this program?
- What behavior management or discipline strategies are used? What are the classroom rules?
- What is the daily routine?
- How many children and adults are in the classroom?
- Are there enough adults to provide proper supervision and individual attention?
- What are the new teachers like? Do the teachers have training and experience with children with special needs? Are the teachers willing and able to make accommodations for children with varying needs?
- What are the options and/or requirements for family involvement?
- Does the program provide home visits?
- Are classrooms, playground, bathrooms, stairs, and other facilities clean, safe and accessible and adapted for special needs?
- Are there opportunities for your child to interact with peers without special needs? What kind of opportunities? How many? For how long?
- Does the teacher seem responsive, comfortable, and warm with the children? Is he or she flexible and able to adapt the curriculum and schedule to meet individual needs?
- Are children encouraged to communicate their needs?
- Do the children receive individualized instruction for their unique needs?
- Are the children's different learning styles recognized (visual, tactile, auditory)?
- Have activities been planned to teach specific skills?
- Are parents welcome to participate or observe in the classroom?
- How does the teacher keep in touch with the parents (notebooks, phone calls, parent/teacher conferences, home visits)?

Sample Transition Timeline

This sample transition timeline identifies what steps will be followed in transition, who is responsible for each step in the transition process, and when each step will be accomplished. This includes steps that are required by law as part of the IFSP and steps that are options to consider when developing a transition plan.

* Steps that are required as part of the IFSP appear with an asterisk.

Date	Responsibility	
		Hold first planning meeting to begin the transition process.
		Develop a transition plan and provide information concerning child and parent rights.*
		Identify goals and methods to prepare the child and family for transition.*
		The family provides consent for release of information to public school and other programs or services.*
		Identify necessary evaluations to determine eligibility for continued special education services and conduct evaluations.*
		The transition team discusses eligibility for continued special education services and other issues related to transition, and identifies future program options (MDC meeting).*
		Members of the transition team visit program options.
		If the child is eligible to receive special education services, the transition team writes the IEP and identifies new program(s) and services.
		The family and child visit the new program, meet with the teacher and related services staff.
		The early intervention staff transfers records and contacts the new program staff to exchange information.*
		The child starts the new program on the eligible or agreed upon date.*
		The family meets with the new program staff to assess child adjustment.
		Early intervention and the new program staff evaluate the transition process, including child adjustment and family satisfaction.

Preparing for Preschool Transition: A Parent's Checklist

- Request copies of all reports of evaluations, teacher summaries, and medical reports on your child.
- Compile a notebook of all your child's records including doctors' reports, teachers' reports, diagnostic evaluations, immunization records (must be current to enroll in public school), and previous IFSPs.
- Ask questions about any reports you do not understand or agree with.
- Visit school programs available for your child.
- Provide the school with required records including physical examinations, immunizations, certification of specific disability from appropriate medical specialists, records of diagnostic evaluations.
- Inform school of all previous services your child has received.
- Attend an IEP training and learn about the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Contact <http://fcsn.org/pti/workshops/home.php> for workshops including Turning Three, Basic Rights and An IEP for My Child all of which are beneficial to knowing your rights and guiding you through the transition process to the public schools at age three.
- Learn how to work with the school to seek changes in your child's educational program when needed.
- Participate in meetings and be confident in your knowledge of your child.
- Make choices for your child's education based on information from evaluations, infant program performance, knowledge of your child, and professional advice.
- Get to know your child's new teacher as soon as possible.

Communication Schedule

This worksheet is designed to help your family and program staff develop a communication schedule so that everyone understands the best times and ways to share information. This sheet can be completed by your family and program staff after discussing how and when you will communicate.

How Will We Communicate	How Often Will We Communicate				Best Times to Communicate
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Other	
Telephone Calls					
Notes					
Parent/Teacher Conferences					
Home/School Notebook					
Pick Up or Drop Off Talks					
Other					

Worksheet for Sharing Information about Your Child

One important part of transition is sharing information about your child's needs, strengths, and abilities. The following information will help the staff in the new program learn about and plan for your child.

1. What types of things does your child enjoy learning?
2. What things are the most difficult for your child to learn?
3. What are your child's favorite toys and activities?
4. How does your child get along with other children?
5. What types of rewards work best with your child (for example, hugs, praise, stickers)?
6. What types of discipline work best with your child?
7. What kind of support or help, if any, does your child need during routines such as eating, dressing, toileting, napping, etc.?
8. What was your child working on in the last program that you would like to see continued in the new program?
9. What other goals would you like to see for your child in the new program?
10. What other information would you like to share about your child?

Resources:

* **FCSN page on Early Childhood (0-5 yrs)** with lots of helpful information - <http://fcsn.org/pti/topics/earlychildhood/>

* **Early Intervention Leadership Project** (for Massachusetts)- <http://www.ei1p.org/transition.html> tel. (877)35EI-PLP - excellent resource for transitioning to preschool

Parents Guide - www.fcsn.org/parentguide/pgintro.html

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities - Developing Your Child's IEP - <http://nichcy.org/wp-content/uploads/docs/pa12.pdf>

Your school district's Special Education Parent Advisory Council - <http://www.concordspedpac.org/Pacs-in-Mass.html>

FACTS/LRE (Family and Child Transitions into Least Restrictive Environments) - <http://facts.crc.uiuc.edu/> Has a great list of information when transitioning children into preschool like Entering a New Preschool and Planning Your Child's Transition to Preschool

Framingham's Early Childhood Alliance Program - http://www.framingham.k12.ma.us/ecaf_aboutus.cfm

Federation for Children with Special Needs - www.fcsn.org - tel. (800) 331-0688

Disability Law Center - www.dlc-ma.org

Massachusetts Arc - www.arcmass.org**Massachusetts Advocates for Children** - www.massadvocates.org

The Laws Regarding Special Education:

Federal Law - Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) - the Federal Special Education law - <http://idea.ed.gov/download/finalregulations.pdf>

Massachusetts Special Education Regulations - <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/regs.html>

Additional Federal Laws:

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/OCR/index.html?scr=mr 617-223-9662

American with Disabilities Act (ADA) www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm

The Preschool Curriculum:

Early Childhood Standards for Three and Four Year Olds - http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/research_planning/ta_earlychildprogstan.pdf

Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks - <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html>

Local School District Frameworks - Check school district website for details.

Additional Information - Massachusetts Curriculum Guidelines and Assessments - <http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=edusubtopic&L=4&LO=Home&L1=Pre+K+-+Grade+12&L2=Early+Education+and+Care&L3=Curriculum+Guidelines+and+Assessment&sid=EOedu>

Additional Workshops:

Workshops of interest for children who will be turning three and will continue to need special needs services including Turning Three, Basic Rights and An IEP for My Child all of which are beneficial to knowing your rights and guiding you through the transition process to the public schools at age three. <http://fcsn.org/pti/workshops/home.php>