

Cruisin' Into Preschool

A Guide to Preschool Special Education Services
In Broomfield County



This brochure was developed by Kids Connections and the
Jefferson County School District

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We're Transitioning!

The transition from early intervention services into preschool services is a time of change for children with developmental delays or disabilities and their families.

This transition occurs when a child turns three years old and the switch is made from using the IDEA Part C Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) to using the Part B Individualized Educational Program (IEP). The way children qualify and the types of services also may change.

It is important for our community to work together to create a successful transition plan for each child and family.

It is important for families and service providers to realize that:

- Transitions are processes
- Transitions should be centered around the child's educational needs
- Families, with their needs and goals, play an important role in transition planning

As parents or guardians of a child with special needs you have the right to the following:

- A transition planning meeting that takes place no later than 3 months before your child turns three
- A written transition plan that is a required part of your child's IFSP
- A representative from your school district will be involved in the transition planning process. Your service coordinator will help you schedule this meeting and will write the transition plan with you.

With Your Child

Talk to your child about the new school and about things that may happen during school.

Visit the school. Play on the playground and walk through the building and the classroom. Make the first visit during a quiet time, such as after school. Try to meet the teacher. Maybe take a picture of your child and the teacher together. Look at the different areas of the classroom such as the art center, the dress-up area and story time corner. Then visit the school while it is in session. Acknowledge how big the building is and how many people there are in it.

Talk about your visits to the school with your child. Most important, listen to your child talk about "going to school." This can be both an exciting and an anxious time for your child.

OFTEN, your child will approach school with the same attitude that you approach school. If you are excited, your child will be excited. Help your child to:

- Be prompt to school
- Be responsible for him/herself
- Dress appropriately
- Get a good night's sleep
- Eat nutritious meals.

School Visits

Once preschool services have been determined on the IEP, contact the school to schedule a time to tour the school and visit the classroom. Tell them your child will be receiving special education services, and they may suggest you meet with a specific person.

In the preschool classroom you should expect to see the following:

- **Atmosphere:** The room is filled with the “hum” of children busily involved with learning materials and with one another.
- **Activity Level:** There are times for quiet “sit down” activities as well as for physical movement within the classroom.
- **Classroom:** The room is well organized and inviting – materials are readily available and within the reach of children (books, puzzles, crayons, paper, games, blocks).
- **Interactions:** There are conversations and discussions going on among the children or between the teacher and the children.
- **Learning:** There is evidence of what children are learning – the “work” of children is displayed in the room (drawings, story charts, photos, graphs, and scribbles/writing).
- **Routines:** Children know what is expected of them – they are able to work on their own or in small groups independently.
- **Structure:** Children have times to make choices as well as to participate in teacher-directed learning activities.
- **Thinking:** Children are encouraged to seek information and solve real-life problems.

Start Early

State and Federal regulations require that transition planning process start 9 – 12 months before your child turns three. Use the following calendar as a guide. The timeline is based on the age of your child.

24 – 30 months

- Begin collecting and reviewing information about the transition that takes place when your child turns three, including your child’s legal rights.
- Talk to other parents who have been through the process.
- Request information on what evaluations are necessary to determine eligibility for continued special education services.
- Review your legal rights under Part B of IDEA.
- Provide a consent to release information to your school district.

30 – 33 months

- Your child will be evaluated to determine eligibility for services through the school district (Part B).
- Write the IEP with the school district Child Find team.
- A transition plan is written with input from your family, school district representative, and service coordinator.
- If your child has any health issues, these should be addressed in the plan.

33 – 36 months

- Finalize steps to assist with the transition
- Begin the new program (on the agreed upon start date).
- A few weeks after starting the new program, meet with the staff to review how your child is doing.

Possible Preschool Services

In order for your child to receive special education services, he or she must meet eligibility requirements. You can obtain information about these requirements from your current provider, service coordinator or school district.

If your child is determined to be eligible, depending on the child's needs, the options for preschool are described below.

Therapy Only

Some children have needs related to communication and/or motor development, only. Services will be provided for your child at specific school sites within the district.

District Early Childhood Programs

These programs are located in various sites in the district. At each site there may be an early childhood special education teacher, a teacher assistant, a motor therapist, a speech-language pathologist and a social worker/psychologist. The programs have an equal number or less of children with identified needs and peers from the community.

Getting Ready for Preschool.....

As parents you know your child best. What would you like the preschool teacher and school personnel to know about him or her?

You may want to consider the following ideas:

- Write a letter to the teacher describing your child's likes and dislikes, what makes him or her special. Include a picture of your family.
- Ask the preschool staff to provide information that will be helpful to make a positive transition into preschool.
- Take advantage of student and parent orientation activities at the school.
- Request a conference with the teacher at the beginning of the school year to share information about your child. Maybe you already have a portfolio about your child you can share with the teacher and staff.
- Offer to talk to school personnel about your child.
- Before your child enters preschool, your child will have to have a physical exam and required vaccinations. The doctor's office has the necessary forms.