

EARLY CHILDHOOD TRANSITION INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT

Introduction

This agreement is developed in response to requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), the federal early intervention/special education legislation and Title 511 Article #7, Indiana's state special education laws. The agencies participating in this agreement are working cooperatively to provide coordinated services to young children and their families and to insure the implementation of federal and state law and regulation.

This Agreement applies to children enrolled in First Steps Early Intervention Services who are referred to their local early childhood special education program with parental consent. The five special education agencies within Lake County that receive referrals are:

- School City of East Chicago, Special Education Department
- Gary Community School Corporation, Special Education Department
- School City of Hammond, Special Education Department
- Northwest Indiana Special Education Cooperative
- West Lake Special Education Cooperative

This agreement serves the period of 1 June 2009 to 31 May 2011 between Northwest Indiana First Steps and the five school systems listed above.

Specific Objectives of the Early Childhood Transition Agreement are:

- 1) To establish a coordinated referral process that will result in uninterrupted services and therapies from the early intervention programs with First Steps to early childhood special education and related services from the five Lake County special education agencies.
- 2) To provide training, education, and assistance to parents in order to prepare them for both the present and future transitions. This includes information concerning the laws regarding special education services and parents' rights.
- 3) To encourage and facilitate parent and family involvement in their child's transition process.
- 4) To provide a method for parents and agencies to evaluate the transition process and offer feedback to improve and enhance the service delivery to children.
- 5) To provide information about referrals to neighborhood pre-schools, child care centers, and local Head Start programs for children who do not require early childhood special education services.

Transition Timelines and Activities

On the third birthday, a child leaves First Steps and moves to Local Education Agency (LEA) or another appropriate program. First Steps services end when the child turns three. The following chart indicates the required timeline for activities that need to occur to make sure that transition is smooth and effective for the child, family, and service providers.

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Who</i>
Entry into First Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The family is introduced to transition. •Family questions about transition, service options and natural environment are answered. •Planning for any upcoming transitions occurs in the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP). 	First Steps and Parent
18 months prior to child's third birthday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The service coordinator discusses transition process with family and reviews procedural safeguards on transmission of basic demographic information to the school of legal settlement. •First Steps will send electronic child find data (child's name and date of birth, parent's contact information and school district) on any child 18months. of age or older in the system to the public school of record twice a year, generally in April and October. •The intake and/or service coordinator will discuss the transmission of the child find data with the parents during procedural safeguards at Intake and before the child reaches 18months of age. 	First Steps and Parent
6 months prior to third birthday (30 months of age)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The service coordinator reviews evaluation/eligibility documentation with the family and the procedural safeguards on transmission of information including evaluation reports and the most recent Quarterly Reports, discusses the need for the transition conference, and plans for exploring options for the child/family after the third birthday. •An outcome related to transition is included in the IFSP. •If the parent gives written consent, the service coordinator forwards copies to the school of legal settlement. •If the parent declines to give consent, the service coordinator explains continuity of services may not occur and documents parent's refusal. Therefore, no 30 month notice will be sent to the school of legal settlement. 	First Steps and Parent
At least 90 days before third birthday and by April 1st if child's birthday is in summer or early fall (33 months of age)	<p>Prior to 33 months of age, or earlier if agreed to by all parties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The service coordinator communicates with the parent, receiving school district and other appropriate individuals as identified by the Early Intervention team as to a convenient time to hold the First Steps transition meeting and chairs the transition •A transition plan should be developed which includes desired outcomes, identified service providers, outline regarding transfer of information, timelines with dates of conclusion of early intervention services, commencement of subsequent activities, and with concurrence of the parent, a statement of the family's priorities, concerns, and resources related to transition experiences. •If the parent does not give consent to inviting the school representative to the transition conference, the service coordinator should make the parent aware that a delay in referring the child to the school system may cause a delay in receiving services if the parent reverses the decision upon the child's third birthday, and document parent's refusal on transition conference paperwork. 	First Steps with Parent, ECSE staff, current service providers, and other potential service providers with parent consent

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Who</i>
Prior to third birthday and within 50 instructional days from the date written parent consent is received by certified personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The initial educational evaluation must be conducted and the Case Conference Committee (CCC) meeting convened within the required timelines. •LEA staff reviews procedural safeguards with parent and obtains written parental consent to evaluate. •After reviewing existing data and with input from the parents, additional data that is needed is identified. •During the personal meeting to discuss the referral for an educational evaluation, LEA staff offer the parent the opportunity to have the results of the evaluation explained prior to the Case Conference Committee (CCC) meeting. •LEA staff notifies the parent and ensures the evaluation reports are available no less than five days prior to the CCC meeting. •The First Steps service coordinator and Head Start, if Head Start may be a placement option, may be invited to the CCC by the parent. •The CCC will review evaluations, determine eligibility, develop the Individualized Education Program (IEP), make program recommendations and document decisions. 	ECSE representatives, parent, other service providers with parent consent
After the CCC meeting (36 months of age)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The LEA staff will ensure the parent is aware of all specifics regarding implementing the IEP. •The sending and receiving teachers and related services personnel may confer to support a smooth transition. The LEA will implement the IEP. •If the child is not eligible for special education, the service coordinator will work with the family to explore other appropriate service options and resources. This must occur prior to the child's third birthday. 	ECSE staff First Steps

Records will be reviewed annually to ensure the percentage of children with a smooth transition by their third birthday steadily increase until reaching and maintaining 100%. The records that will be used for this review will include DOE records as well as First Steps records.

Duration of the Agreement

This Agreement will become effective upon the signatures of the approving special education directors and The Northwest Indiana First Steps Representatives. This Agreement shall remain effective until supplanted by another Agreement. It shall be reviewed annually by the special education directors and First Steps Representatives and may be amended at any time by mutual agreement of the participating parties.

Conflict Resolution

All identified conflicts will be discussed honestly and openly with all interested parties at the local level. Should the identified issues not be resolved the issue may be brought to each involved parties supervisory level position. If a satisfactory result is still not achieved the issue will be directed to state and/or federal organization for direction.

