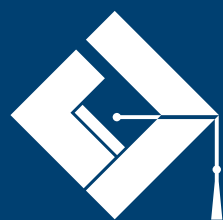




Transition at Age Three *Steps for Success*

SPECIAL EDUCATION



OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
— CHAMPION EXCELLENCE —



SoonerStart

As parents of a young child receiving early intervention services, you are partners with your SoonerStart staff. When your child turns three and graduates from SoonerStart, a new adventure begins. As you explore your options beyond SoonerStart, you may consider a Head Start program, a day care center, or your local school district (to name a few). We call this process transition.

Transition may begin when your child is 27 months, but no later than 33 months. At this time, you will work with your Resource Coordinator to develop a transition plan that will be part of the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP). Your child's Resource Coordinator will also notify the local school district of your child's upcoming third birthday in the event that your child may be eligible for services. SoonerStart does not determine eligibility for school districts. The school district may do testing to determine your child's eligibility for services in the school.

Planning the Move

Transitions are natural events for all of us. Remember your first day of school? What about the day you brought your new baby home? Successful transitions require planning ahead and working with others who can help.

Your family's culture will also bring a unique set of values, beliefs, customs, and behaviors that may affect how you plan and the choices you make.

Through the IFSP process, your family set goals based on your priorities and concerns, and identified services and support that you needed to reach the goals. During transition, you will identify people and agencies that can help you to continue to access services you are currently receiving. Some services may not be available after SoonerStart. In that case, SoonerStart will help you find ways for you and your child to integrate activities into your family's daily life with family members or friends.

As you plan, ask yourself:

- What do I hope and dream for my child?
- What does my child need now to grow and develop?
- Where do I want my child to play and learn?



Choices After SoonerStart

If your child moves to the school district's program for children with disabilities, you will find this program addresses your child's educational needs; but not needs outside of school. The school has the responsibility to provide your child with an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment (LRE). To meet your other needs, you may have to choose other resources.

These may include:

- Friends with young children
- Local parent support organizations
- Cooperative play groups
- Family child care
- Head Start
- Mother's Day Out programs
- Library story hours
- Community recreation programs
- Child care centers
- Community non-profit organizations that focus on parenting



Transition from SoonerStart										
Child's Age in Months	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	3rd Birthday 
IFSP Initial Transition Planning Meeting *(27-33 months)										
Notification to the LEA										
Transition Planning Conference *(27-33 months)										
Evaluation by LEA										
Eligibility Meeting **(by 3rd birthday)										
IEP Meeting **(by 3rd birthday)										
IEP in Effect **(by 3rd birthday)										

*Oklahoma SoonerStart Early Intervention Program Manual: Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines. Items in green are the responsibility of SoonerStart.

**Oklahoma Special Education Handbook. Items in blue are the responsibility of the local school district.

Transition Planning Conference

At the transition planning conference (TPC), you, SoonerStart personnel, and other people you invite will meet with people from programs you are considering for your child. These programs might include your local school district, Head Start, child care, a Mother's Day Out program, or other programs in your community. If you have several options, you may have more than one TPC. If you are considering a group program for your child, the meeting(s) may include visits to the actual classrooms or program sites. With your consent, your child's evaluation and/or assessment information and IFSP will be sent to the program(s) of your choice prior to the TPC so that those staff will be familiar with your family. In accordance with federal law and State policy, the transition (TPC) meeting(s) occurs at least 90 days before your child's third birthday.

School District Services

Evaluation, Eligibility Determination, and Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Eligibility requirements for school district services are different from those for SoonerStart. The school must determine that your child meets criteria as a child with a disability and is in need of specialized services. A comprehensive evaluation must be conducted to determine if your child is eligible.

The evaluation will provide information about your child's unique talents and needs to help you and the staff decide on services. Other sources of information, such as your child's SoonerStart or doctors' records, will also be considered.



Meeting with the School District Staff

If school district services for children with disabilities are an option for your child, the transition meeting is a chance for you, SoonerStart providers, and school district staff to plan the transition process.

School district staff can explain eligibility criteria, service options, and how an educational plan will be developed for your child. You and others you invite can give the school district personnel information about your child. At the meeting, the school district staff will:

- Explain the program(s) in your native language.
- Discuss eligibility requirements and evaluation procedures.
- Explain the next step in the process.
- Explain your parental rights and answer your questions.
- Discuss options for where services may be provided.
- Consider your family's concerns about the change in services and the transition process.



As a parent you have information about your child that no one else has. During the meeting, you can share what you know. To help school district staff understand your family, you can:

- Share information you feel is important about your child and family.
- Ask questions.
- Share ideas and dreams for goals and objectives.
- Invite friends, relatives, or child care staff who may have useful information.
- Describe your child's activities and routines.

The IEP Team

If your child is eligible for services, a team will meet to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for your child. The people on the team will include you as parents, the evaluator who is able to explain test results to you, an administrative representative (principal or designee), a general education teacher, a special education teacher, and other service providers if applicable (speech therapist, occupational or physical therapist). You may invite people to participate, as well.

Developing the IEP

As you develop the IEP, the IEP team will consider your child's strengths and needs, your concerns and goals, evaluation results, and factors that will help your child progress. These factors may include behavioral considerations, language needs (for English Language Learners), or Assistive Technology, if needed.

As part of your child's IEP team, you will help develop annual goals for your child. The goals will address your child's identified needs. They will enable your child to be involved and progress in age-appropriate activities. Goals are written so that your child's progress can be measured.

Making Service Decisions

The IEP team then decides on the services your child will receive. The team chooses how often, how long, and where your child will receive services. By law, your child must receive services in the least restrictive environment (LRE). If your child turns three during the summer months, extended school year (ESY) services must be considered, though is not needed for all children. Once the team agrees on the plan, it is finalized and you are asked to sign the IEP and consent for services.

Other issues you may discuss at the meeting include planning to make your child's first days in the new program happy and successful. You may wish to schedule visits to the new classroom, or to meet others who will be involved with making your child as successful as possible.

Speaking Up

If you do not understand something, ask questions. No question is too small. The key to a good beginning is communication among all who know and care for your child. As you talk, you will think of many creative ideas to help your child enjoy the step ahead. If problems arise, they can be discussed with openness and respect.

Other Options

If your child is determined to be ineligible for school district services, your resource coordinator will assist you in exploring and planning for other options. Those options may include some of the community services explored earlier as you began looking into possibilities for transition.

Items Needed for Enrolling Your Child in School

- Birth certificate
- Social security card
- Bureau of Indian Affairs card
- Current immunization record
- Sooner Care/Medicaid Card
- Available medical records
- Proof of residency
- List of emergency contacts and their phone numbers
- Health information about your child

If you have any questions at any time during this process, please visit with your Resource Coordinator for additional help.



Differences Between the IFSP and the IEP

Some significant differences exist among the types of services provided for children under age three and their families and the services provided for children with disabilities aged three through five years. Your family may want to know some of these differences before discussing services with the school to prevent misunderstandings.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)	Individualized Education Program (IEP)
<p>Includes information about the child's present levels of development.</p> <p>With the family's approval, it may also include the family's resources, priorities, and concerns related to helping the development of their child.</p>	<p>Includes information about the child's present levels of performance and participation in developmentally appropriate activities.</p> <p>Includes information about the parent's concerns for enhancing the child's education.</p>
<p>The family determines the outcomes.</p>	<p>The IEP team (parents or guardians, teachers, administrative representative, and related service providers who may work with the child), determine the goals.</p>
<p>Includes the major outcomes desired for the child and family, and the criteria, procedures, and timeline used to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The degree to which progress toward achieving outcomes is being made; and • Whether modifications or revisions of the outcomes are necessary. 	<p>Includes measureable annual goals, academic and functional, designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general curriculum; • Explain frequency of progress reports and how they will be provided.
<p>Includes the natural environment where services will be provided.</p>	<p>Includes an explanation of the extent, if any, that the child will not participate with nondisabled children in regular activities or classes (least restrictive environment).</p>
<p>Includes the specific early intervention services necessary to meet the unique needs of the child and the family to achieve identified outcomes, stating type(s) of services, how often, and for how long they will be delivered.</p>	<p>Includes the special education, related services, supplemental aids and services, modifications, and supports to be provided to help the child and participate in developmentally appropriate activities.</p>

