

Resources:

Your Local School District

Oregon Parent Training and Information Center

2288 Liberty St NE, Salem Or 97301
888-505-2673; Helpline 888-891-6784
email: info@oregonrisecenter.org
web: <http://www.oregonrisecenter.org>

State Department of Education: Special Education

Office of Student Learning and Partnerships
255 Capitol Street N.E., Salem, OR 97310-0203
(503) 947-5600; web: www.ode.state.or.us

Swindells Center

830 NE 47th Ave., Portland, OR 97213
503-215-2429
swindells@providence.org
web: [http://www.providence.org/Oregon/
Programs_and_Services/ChildCenter/e15swindells.htm](http://www.providence.org/Oregon/Programs_and_Services/ChildCenter/e15swindells.htm)

Arc of Oregon

1745 State Street, Salem OR 97301
503-581-2726; 877-581-2726
web: www.arcoregon.org

NICHCY

P.O. Box 1492, Washington, DC 20013
(800) 695-0285; (202) 884-8441
email: nichcy@aed.org web: www.nichcy.org



TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN: A PARENT'S GUIDE

The Oregon Parent Training and Information Center

2288 Liberty Street NE

Salem, Oregon 97301

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What Is Transition?

One definition of Transition is “*a passing of one stage, activity, place, etc. to another*” (Webster’s 3rd. Edition)

So what do we really mean by ‘transition’ for children who are getting ready to enter Kindergarten? Our children grow and develop as individuals as they go through childhood. Transitioning from one learning environment to another is part of the childhood experience.

When we look at ‘*transition*’ in the Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education system (EI/ECSE) transition is by age, not necessarily by developmental readiness. When a child reaches the age of eligibility for kindergarten, that child will be placed in a school age program or kindergarten. Children receiving special education services may have to be re-assessed for eligibility for continuation of school age, special education services according to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its guidelines. For children with disabilities, kindergarten transition is much more than just changing settings. New teachers, rules, peer groups and less adult support are just the beginning.

Transition is a process of adapting to change. Change can create stress; however, studies show that there are ways to lessen the stress of transition. Teaching coping skills and continued support as well as effective transition practices are linked, in part, to successful transition.

It is our hope that this guide will help parents and children understand the all important milestone of Kindergarten transition.

Other Parental Rights You Should Know

Prior Written Notice (PWN)

Prior written notice is part of the IDEA and requires a school district to put in writing its reasons for what they have decided to do and for not doing what a parent has requested. This applies when considering a change in placement or in a change in IEP services. This documentation can really help us communicate better, and think through the process. It is also good documentation if you decide to pursue the matter further.

FERPA

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act

You have the right to inspect and review all of your child records.

- Without undue delay
- Before an IEP meeting
- Before a Due Process Hearing
- Within 45 calendar days of your request
- Add, remove or change misleading records

Parental Rights and Safeguards

You Have The Right To:

- Be notified before an IFSP/ IEP meeting
- Have an IEP/IFSP meeting set at a mutually convenient place and time
- Participate in the meeting
- Invite a friend, professional and/or advocate
- Have your child attend the meeting, if appropriate
- Participate in the development of your child's IEP
- Receive a copy of the IEP
- Request an IEP at any time
- Have a copy of your Procedural Safeguards
- If you disagree with the IEP you may document your disagreement on the IEP
- Put requests in writing and receive responses in writing



Continuity of Service

Kindergarten transition is filled with emotion for both child and parent. Some emotions you may feel are: anxious, excited, confused and hopeful.

How well a child and parent deal with transition can hinge on building a secure foundation of planning and cooperation that includes information sharing, creative thought and continuity of services from sending program to receiving program.

Continuity occurs when there is strong connection between the services and programs and when children and their families receive the information and support they need.

The goal is to make transition go smoothly so children experience change less abruptly and easily see and understand links between one setting and another.

Transition success is more likely if both programs build on and maintain similar routines and activities.



**Continuity is not only good for children and families,
it's required.**

Federal law (IDEA) requires that the IFSP's for children turning five must include a way to involve families in their child's transition planning and IEP development. IFSP and IEP development must include the concerns of the parents. This does not mean that parents determine what special education services their child receives, but that their concerns must be considered.

Additionally, a school district representative must be invited to an IFSP meeting during the year before the child transitions to school. At this meeting, the school district representative and the ECSE program determine steps to support the child's transition to kindergarten. A school age Individualized Education Program will developed prior to the child entering school.



Related Services

Related Services are services the child needs in order to benefit from their education. They can be direct or consultative services. Some examples are:

- Psychological Services
- Physical and Occupational Therapy
- Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology
- Early Identification and Assessment
- Counseling
- Transportation
- Orientation and Mobility
- Medical Services for Diagnostic or Evaluation Purposes
- School Health/Nursing Services
- Social Work Services
- Parent Counseling and Training



IEP Content Requirements

- Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance
- Annual goals and short-term objectives
- Consideration of Special Factors, such as: a child with limited English proficiency, communication or Assistive Technology needs.
- Participation in state-wide assessment
- Participation in district-wide assessment
- Nonparticipation justification
- Consideration for Extended School Year
- Progress reporting information
- Service Summary
- Placement



Terms To Be Familiar With:

FAPE – Free Appropriate Public Education. – Special education provided by the public school to meet the needs of a child with a disability, at no expense to the parents.

IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. (Reauthorized 2004) A federal law regarding educating children with disabilities.

IFSP – Individualized Family Service Plan. – A written document that describes the child’s abilities, needs and impact of the disability; and describes the services for early intervention or early childhood special education provided to an infant, toddler or preschooler with a disability and his or her family.

IEP – Individualized Education Program. A written document that describes the child’s abilities, needs and impact of the disability; and describes the services designed to meet those unique needs in the school environment

LEA – Local education agency, for example, a local public school district.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) – To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are not disabled.

Present level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance – A statement of what the child can currently do.

SEA – State Education Agency: The Oregon Department of Education.

Special Education – Educational services the child is receiving to help him or her because he has a disability. The education that he or she is getting that is different from what other kids get.

Differences between the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and the Individualized Education Program (IEP)

IFSP - Individualized Family Service Plan

- Family-focused
- Includes both family and child's strengths, needs, resources and priority concerns
- Requires outcome statements for the child and family
- Eligibility for services includes children who experience a “developmental delay”

IEP - Individualized Education Program

- Child-focused
- Child must meet eligibility requirements in one of the identified categories outlined in IDEA

Similarities of IFSP's and IEP's

- Services can be offered in a variety of academic and typical settings
- Uses annual goals to describe the child's intended progress
- Team effort that includes special education, regular education , parents and others
- Placement is in the “least restrictive environment” which is determined by the IEP team

For an IEP to be developed and implemented the following people may be in attendance.

The Transition Team:

- Sending program – service coordinator, therapists, specialist, support staff that have information to share
- Receiving program: kindergarten teacher, support staff, (autism) specialist, counselor, special education teacher, administrator
- Parent and invited people who have knowledge of the child
- Private therapists
- DHS Case managers

IEP TEAM – the basics

- Once an IEP has been written and implemented, changes cannot be made without consultation to the parent. IEP meetings must include Parent, regular education teacher, special education teacher and a representative of the district. The representative of the district must be qualified to provide or supervise special education, be knowledgeable about the general curriculum and have the authority to commit district resources.
- People may be excused when the parent and the district agree in writing.
- Changes may be made without holding an IEP meeting, when the parent and district agree in writing.

More Transition Tips

- Be prepared to share methods that are successful for you in working with your child at home as well as key words or phrases that your child responds to.
- Get a copy of your procedural rights and responsibilities.
- Sign medical releases so all parties have the same information (these can be limited to information you want to share).
- Visit kindergarten programs in your school district. Attend orientations and open houses. Check to see that buildings are accessible. Look at room arrangement, restroom adaptations, etc.
- Ask questions. Put everything in writing. Written documentation is easier to understand and keeps you from repeating steps .
- Take pictures of the school to familiarize your child with the new setting over the summer.
- Visit the school playground over the summer.
- Schedule a visit prior to school starting so that your child can meet the teacher and see the classroom.
- Contact Oregon Parent Training and Information Center for answers to questions. You can also help to coordinate a training for your area.

Eligibility

A child in the state of Oregon who is eligible for services in the EI/ECSE program as a child with a developmental delay will need to be re-evaluated for services to continue at the school age (kindergarten) level. The child will have to meet the eligibility in one of the categories below to receive services. Eligibility criteria are defined in Federal, State and School District Policy.

IDEA Eligibility Categories for School Age

Autism Spectrum Disorder
Communication Disorder
Deaf/Blindness
Emotional Disturbance
Hearing Impairment
Mental Retardation
Orthopedic Impairment
Other Health Impairment
Specific Learning Disability
Traumatic Brain Injury
Vision Impairment



Kindergarten Transition – What is the Process?

1. Consent: Parental consent is required

Before the initial evaluation

Re-evaluation—if child is eligible under the category “*developmental delay*” or it is time for a three year re-evaluation for the continuation of special education services, or at the discretion of the school district.

2. Evaluation with current “academic achievement and functional performance” report.

3. Transition Plan

4. Developing an IEP

4. Placement

5. Register with the school



Transition Suggestions:

- Gather information about school age services.
- Explore resources in the community, such as attending informational workshops offered by Oregon Parent Training and Information Center.
- Families and staff can use the IFSP to develop strategies for transitioning to address skills needed while the child is still in preschool.
- If time does not permit observation, share video tape of your child either at home or in the current program with the new teachers.
- Gather and update all pertinent information regarding your child’s development, medical history, private therapies, evaluations, interviews etc.
- Create a *current* profile of your child. Use a binder with dividers. The Swindells Center for Children and Families has a “*Life Care Notebook*” that is available to you by request. This is a comprehensive record keeping tool that was especially developed for parents of children with disabilities and is at no cost to parents. The contact information for the Swindells Center is listed on the last page of this booklet.
- Network with other parents and families.
- Ask sending and receiving programs for activities to do at home. This promotes family involvement and understanding to equally participate in the process of transition and development of your child’s IEP.