

# PARENTS SPEAK OUT

## *Family Perspectives and Suggested Resources for Transition Planning*

### ***Preparing before the transition planning meeting***

*“My experience has been primarily with Part B programs. However, as a special ed director we worked with the ECI/Part C agency for the transition of a student. I am not clear what the Part C regulations are and what are Texas regulations. In Texas, the ECI Agency must tell the school about students 90 or 120 days before they turn 3 (with parent consent). Then 60 or 90 days before the child's birthday, the ECI Agency and the school must offer the parents a meeting to discuss options for the child when they turn 3. Unfortunately, in some cases these timelines were not met. The ECI agency generally said that the parents would not give consent or were slow in agreeing to the meeting.*

*“Over the years, I met with many parents before their child turned 3 and explained their options and took them to observe programs. While this did not remove all of the parents' stress and concerns, it was a start. It also started the process of building a positive relationship with the families. The IEP meeting had to be held on or before the child's 3rd birthday. Even if the regulations are different in your state, the parents should be requesting a meeting with the school through the special education department to discuss options.”*

#### **Action Steps**

- *Request a meeting with the school through the special education department to discuss options.*
- *Make an unplanned visit to the preschool classroom.*
- *Talk with other parents who have been through the transition process.*

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*“...go and observe different classrooms, if possible, unplanned, from the classrooms perspective, then you get to see what is really happening in the classroom and not what is happening when they know a visitor is coming. I am a preschool teacher and the transition is SO important that I think observing and even talking to the teachers to find out what you think is the best fit is very helpful. Once (her) family has found the fit, they can communicate with that teacher ahead of time to ensure that everything (she) may need is ready for her.”*

*“I would like to offer another suggestion. I think a valuable resource is another parent who has been through and survived the transition. Perhaps the ECI agency would know of some other parents that transitioned in the past that would be willing to "mentor" an incoming parent. Also, many states have parent to parent groups that could match an experienced parent with the new one. Observing the different possibilities is especially helpful, and when you can add an experienced parent to the mix, it really helps.”*

## ***Participating during the meeting***

*“It's important for parents to share their concerns when most of the team is present so everyone is hearing the same thing at the same time. That creates an environment of cooperation and accountability.”*

*“Megan's mom needs to 'transition' her advocacy from thinking about how she will do things at home and how any difficulties will impact Megan at home or with her family to how might these difficulties affect Megan's ability to learn or participate in a school environment. For example: Megan's difficulty with a fork is really a fine motor activity. The corresponding school-related preschool fine motor activities are using a crayon, pencil, scissors. Megan's mother should discuss these difficulties with the team.*

*“Megan's mom's focus should not be on the service per say, but on the functional outcome. She wants Megan to use the playground equipment with her peers. Currently Megan has difficulty do x, y or z. Playing on playground equipment with her peers will help Megan to foster good peer relationships... etc. From the outcomes, then one should determine the services...”*

*“I remember being unsure about the big decision of transition. It seemed like she was just too little to have to decide something so important. I researched all my options for our daughter. It was hard to make a decision as everyone had their opinion on what would be best for her. In the end, I decided to follow my heart and what I knew my daughter needed. After many nights trying to decide which transition road to take, we finally made a decision. Once we made our decision, the transition process went very well, and I felt confident in the choices we made for our daughter, even if everyone didn't always agree with them. In looking back at transition, I realized that it was during this process that I learned that as a parent, I know my daughter best and need to follow my heart and mind when making decisions for her.”*

### **Action Steps**

- *Share your concerns when the whole planning team is present.*
- *Focus on the desired functional outcome and let that guide services.*
- *You know your child best so follow your heart and mind in making transition decisions.*

## ***Best State Resources***

*“While IDEA provides basic guidelines for what each state must include in its program to help transition children from Part C (early intervention) to Part B (preschool) programs, there is also a lot of flexibility. Therefore, state specific guides to early childhood transition can sometimes be very helpful to families as they try to plan for their child's services beyond early intervention. I found a state specific guide on transition for a few states:*

*<http://earlychildhoodcop.blogspot.com/2008/02/early-childhood-transition-state.html>”*

*“The Texas Education Agency has a document that can be accessed at:  
<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/guidance/keet.html>”*

*“The Oklahoma State Department of Education has a transition guide for families who are preparing to transition out of Soonerstart. The ‘Transition at Age 3’ guide can be downloaded from this website:  
<http://sde.state.ok.us/home/defaultie.html>”*

*“I just found this document on transition from Georgia. There is a lengthy section about placement options and services that might be helpful to families in thinking about what they want for their child after early intervention services have ended. In addition, it has a section called ‘Parent Rights.’ Here is the link:  
<http://health.state.ga.us/pdfs/familyhealth/bcw/stepsforsuccess.05.pdf>”*

*“Here is a great resource for families in Rhode Island that can be found on the Paul V. Sherlock Center website.  
<http://www.ric.edu/uap/publications/EITran.pdf>  
It also is available in Spanish.”*

*“Here is a document from North Dakota. It has several side-by-side comparisons (e.g., family and professional roles, comparisons of IEP and IFSP). In addition, sprinkled throughout this document are parent and practitioner perspectives on the topic of transition. Here is the link:  
<http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/speced/early/guide.pdf>”*

#### **Action Steps**

- *Visit these websites to gather information.*
- *Look for similar information in your state.*

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This research was conducted in collaboration with the Beach Center on Disability. It was funded by the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Families of Children with Disabilities of the National Institute on Disability Rehabilitation and Research (H133B30070) and private endowments. Permission granted to reproduce and distribute this research brief.

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