

Beyond ECI: Next Steps for Your Child



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

*Early Childhood
Intervention*



This ECI transition book belongs to:

Your Child's Name

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ECI Program Information

Program Name _____

Program Director _____

Telephone _____

ECI Service Coordinator _____

Telephone _____

Website: hhs.texas.gov/eci

Talk to your local ECI program if you need more information or have a concern about your services. If you still have concerns or need more information, call the Office of the Ombudsman at 877-787-8999. For persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, please use the relay option of your choice.

While your child has been in Early Childhood Intervention (ECI), you and your ECI team have developed outcomes and activities to help your child grow and learn, addressed your child's health needs, and addressed the needs of your family. Now that your child is getting older, it is time to start planning for when he or she leaves ECI.

All children must exit ECI by their third birthday. We call the process of exiting out of ECI "transition." Successful transitions require planning ahead with your ECI team and other partners, such as community service providers. Your ECI team will work with you to develop steps and services for transition that are specific to your child and family when your child is between 27 months old and no later than 90 days before your child's third birthday. Your ECI team will assist you in finding resources for your child and family for when your child is no longer enrolled in ECI.



Choices for Your Child After ECI

There are many options for your child after he or she exits from ECI. You and your ECI team can determine what choices will be best. Your service coordinator will help you determine what might be needed for your child to participate in any of the following.

- Child care settings
- Private therapy
- Charter schools
- Head Start
- Parent's Day Out programs
- Community recreation programs
- Neighborhood play groups
- Library story hours
- Classes for children, such as art, music, gymnastics or swimming
- School district Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)



Questions to Help You Decide



What does my child like to do?

How do I want my child to interact with others?

What are my goals for my child in the next year?

Choices for Your Child in Your Community

Your service coordinator will help you explore options and schedule transition meetings with the organizations or programs in your community that you might like your child to attend after he or she exits from ECI. Your service coordinator and other team members can also provide strategies to help your child fully participate in these programs and activities.

Attending a transition meeting does not mean your child has to enroll in the program you are considering. These meetings will give you a chance to learn more about the services offered, find out about next steps and ask questions.

Remember, transition is a time to look at all of your child's options. Your child can enroll in both community programs and activities, and enroll in the school district ECSE. If you are considering several options, you may have more than one meeting. If you are considering a group program for your child, the meeting may include visits to the program sites.

Things you may want to ask about include:

- Eligibility requirements
- Scheduling
- Costs/Insurance
- Transportation
- Documents needed to enroll in the program
- Any special diet needs for your child
- Giving and/or storing your child's medication
- Special accommodations such as wheel chair ramps

Things you may want to share include:

- Important information about your child and family
- Your hopes and dreams for your child
- Your child's favorite toys and activities

Head Start is a federal program that promotes the school readiness of young children through agencies in their local community. Head Start and Early Head Start programs support the comprehensive development of children from birth to age five, in centers, child care partner locations, and in the children's homes. Parent involvement is a large component of the Head Start program. Children are eligible for Head Start based on income requirements. Head Start also has slots specifically reserved for children with disabilities. The Program Locator can help you find the program nearest you: eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/HeadStartOffices

Do I think Head Start would be a good fit for my child?



Choices for Your Child in Your Local School District

Public schools have services called Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) that begin for eligible children on their third birthday. If you want to explore ECSE services, and you give your approval, you will participate in a transition conference with representatives of your school district and ECI.

The transition conference usually occurs three to nine months before your child's third birthday. The meeting will be conducted in your native language using words and terms you can understand. To get the most from this conference, let your service coordinator know if you need translation or interpreter services, including sign language.

At the conference, the school district or ECI staff will:

- Explain eligibility requirements for ECSE services.
- Explain the evaluation procedures for determining eligibility.
- Explain the steps and timelines.
- Explain your parental rights.
- Explain the different types of information that may be needed from you.
- Answer your questions and consider your concerns.
- Discuss extended year services and locations where services may be provided.
- Explain that children may receive ECSE services in pre-kindergarten classes, and community settings such as preschool or Head Start.

To help school district staff understand your family, you can:

- Share ideas for goals and objectives that are important to your family.
- Invite friends, relatives, and child care staff who may have useful information to the conference.
- Describe your child's current activities and routines.
- Describe what you want for your child in terms of future activities and routines.

Next steps with the school district

If the ECI team thinks your child may qualify for ECSE, ECI will notify your local school district and the Texas Education Agency (TEA). ECI sends these notices at least three months before the child's third birthday. ECI may also ask for your consent to send other information to the district, such as the current evaluation or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), to help them plan for your child.

If you don't want your child's information sent to the school district and TEA, just let your service coordinator know, in writing, not to send the information about your child at this time. We will let you know at least 10 days before the notice is sent so you will have time to let us know not to send the information.

You have the right to change your mind. If you decide to pursue ECSE as an option for services for your child before your child turns three, let your service coordinator know. Your service coordinator will provide the appropriate notice to your district and TEA at that time. It is best to start the ECSE option as soon as possible so the start of services will not be delayed past your child's third birthday. If you decide to pursue ECSE after your child turns three, you will need to contact your school district to request an evaluation.

Note: The school district program will address your child's educational needs, but unlike ECI, it does not address family needs. Before you transition out of ECI, your service coordinator will help you access services to meet your family's other needs.



School district services

If your child will be evaluated for school district special education services, you will go through the following process:

Step 1: Evaluation

The school district must get your signed consent for the evaluation to proceed. Your child's ECI records, and information you provide will also be considered in the evaluation. The school must give you a copy of your child's full individual evaluation (FIE).

Step 2: Eligibility Determination

The results of the evaluation will be used to determine if your child is eligible to receive special education services. The eligibility requirements for school district services are different from those for ECI. The school must determine that your child has a disability and a need for special education services.



Step 2 continued: The team that determines whether or not your child is eligible for special education services is called the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee. You will be invited to be a member of that team. People on the ARD Committee include an early childhood special education teacher, a general education teacher, a school administrator, and a person who can interpret the results of the evaluation. You may invite people to participate on the ARD Committee, such as your child's therapist and others with knowledge about your child, including your ECI provider.



Step 3: Developing the IEP

The most important job of the ARD Committee is developing your child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Your participation and input is very valuable. Your goals for your child are important for the ARD Committee to know and address.

The ARD Committee decides what services your child will receive, how often those services will be provided, and for how long. All decisions should be written into the IEP. The ARD Committee also decides where your child will receive the services. By law, your child must receive services in the least restrictive environment (LRE). This means the school must try to provide the special education services your child needs in places, such as a child care center in the community or a pre-kindergarten class at the school, where your child can be with children who do not have disabilities.



Once the ARD Committee agrees on the IEP, you will be asked to sign that you agree with the IEP. Be sure to keep a copy of your child's IEP. The IEP must be reviewed at least annually.

Terms You May Hear During Transition

Below are some terms you may hear during the transition process that haven't already been explained somewhere in this booklet.

Accommodations:

Adjustments made in how a student with a disability is taught or tested. Accommodations do not change what is taught or what a student is expected to know. Extension of time to complete work and seating near the teacher are common accommodations. (See Modifications.)

Assistive Technology Device:

An item, piece of equipment, or product, used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a person with a disability. Some children use assistive technology devices to communicate with others and to enable them to participate in activities with other children.

Assistive Technology Service:

A service that helps someone select, acquire, or use an assistive technology device. Services can include training or assisting the child, family or a professional working with the child to use the device.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP):

A written plan, included in a child's IEP, that identifies the supports and services that will be provided to prevent inappropriate behaviors from occurring, and to teach and support desired behaviors.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE):

Federal law gives students who have disabilities the right to a free appropriate public education, including special education and related services. The public school provides these services at no cost to the parents.

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):

A federal law that gives parents access to their child's school records. FERPA also limits who other than the parent can see their child's school records without their permission.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):

This federal law gives every child with a disability the right to a public education at no cost to the family. Part C of the IDEA requires services to begin at birth and extends until the child turns three. ECI programs deliver Part C services. Part B of the IDEA requires services for children from ages three to 21. Most children receiving Part B services are in public schools.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):

The term used to describe a student's right to be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with students his or her age who do not have disabilities.

Local Education Agency (LEA):

The public schools (including charter schools) operating in accordance with state statutes, regulations, and policies of the Texas Education Agency.

Modifications:

Unlike accommodations, modifications do change the level of instruction provided or taught. Modifications create a different standard for the student with a disability. Making changes in the curriculum being taught for a student with an intellectual disability is a common modification. Needed modifications should be in the child's IEP. (See Accommodations.)

Notification Process:

Information sent to the school district about a child and family for transition purposes. Information sent includes child and parent(s) names, address, child's date of birth, and phone number.

Opt Out:

A request made to the ECI program to withdraw the child's name from the notification process to the school district and TEA.

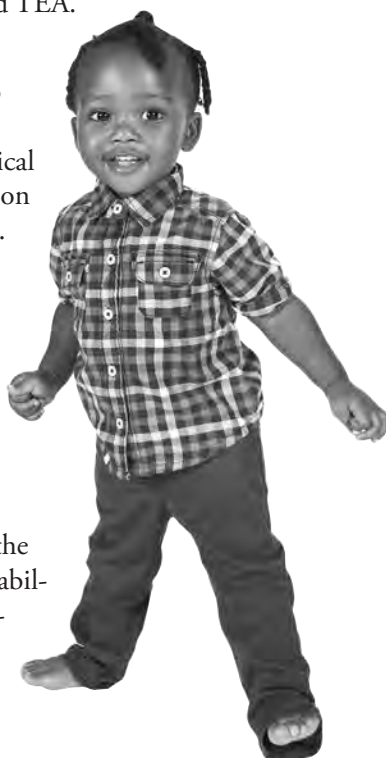
Related Services:

Support services needed by a student in order to benefit from special education services. Related services may include occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, music therapy, orientation and mobility training, transportation, and more. A student must be eligible for special education in order to receive related services.

Because a child received therapy services in ECI does not mean he or she will receive them from the public school if there is no educational need for those services.

Supplementary Aids and Services:

Services provided to a child with a disability so the child can be educated with students without disabilities. Examples for young children include: assistance provided by a paraprofessional, arranging a classroom to accommodate a wheelchair, or providing modified seating.



Ways Your Service Coordinator Can Help

Names of community programs in your area.

Names of child care centers in your area.



Further Information

Resources to help with transition: hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/early-childhood-intervention-services/eci-resource-guidecentral-directory

ADA, IDEA, and Section 504

The three laws that protect people with disabilities are the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Please visit <https://dredf.org/legal-advocacy/laws/a-comparison-of-ada-idea-and-section-504/> for a brief description of each law and a comparison of the three.

Checklists

Checklist of the steps in the transition process

- My child’s service coordinator talks with me about the transition process when we develop our Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).
- We develop a transition plan when my child is between 27 months old and no later than 90 days before my child’s third birthday.
- We discuss my child’s service options, resources, timelines and the person responsible for each activity.
- My ECI program notifies my school district and TEA that my child may be eligible for ECSE, unless I ask them not to.
- My ECI team helps me explore places in my community for my child to continue to grow and learn.
- We hold a transition meeting or conference before my child’s third birthday.
- My service coordinator makes a referral for my child to the placement option(s) of my choice. My child’s records are provided with the referral if I give consent.
- My service coordinator helps me plan ways to help my child adjust to the new program.



Additional checklist steps if going to the school district for services

- I sign the Local Education Agency (LEA) consent form and my child is evaluated to determine eligibility for services through my local school district.
- Before my child turns three, we hold a meeting to develop an IEP for my child.



The state agency responsible for coordinating the statewide, interagency service delivery system for ECI is the Health and Human Services Commission. HHSC contracts with local agencies to provide services in every Texas county.

To find the number of the ECI program in your area, call the HHS Office of the Ombudsman at 877-787-8999.

If you are a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, use the relay option of your choice.

To search online, visit the HHS website at hhs.texas.gov/eci



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