

Stepping Ahead at age 3



A guide for Alaskan families moving from the Infant Learning Program (ILP) to other services after age 3



State of Alaska • Department of Health & Social Services • Senior and Disabilities Services
Alaska Early Intervention • Infant Learning Program

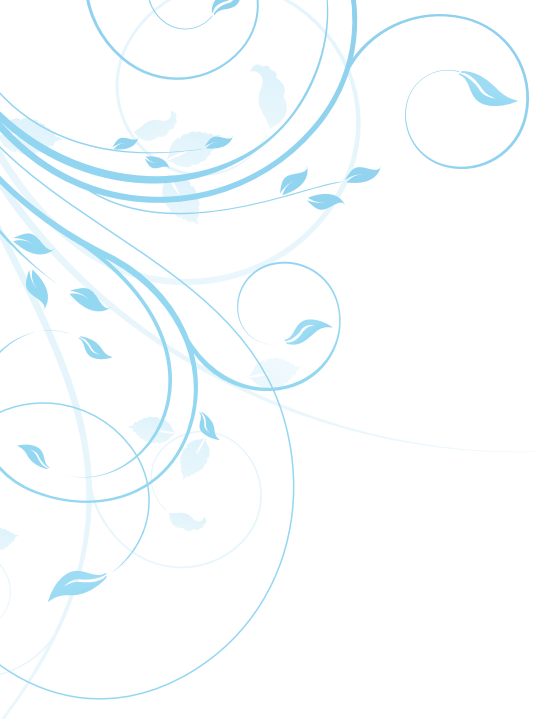


Table of Contents

3	Transition Planning Introduction
4-5	An Overview of the Transition Process
6-8	Steps in the Transition Process
8-10	A Comparison of Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program to Preschool Special Education
11	90-day Transition Meeting Preparation Checklist
12	Transition Plan
13	Special Education Notification OPT OUT
14	Know Your Parental Rights
15	Getting More Information

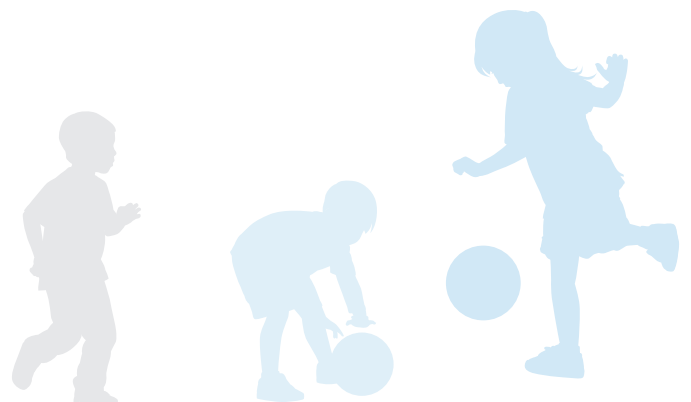


Transition Planning Introduction

Congratulations!

Your child is reaching an age where moving ahead is a normal part of supporting your child's development.

Children with special needs may receive services from an Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program (ILP) until age 3. At age 3, children may become eligible for special education services. Before your child's third birthday, ILP service providers help your family plan the next steps to local school district, Head Start, childcare or other early learning programs. Moving from one program to another is referred to as transition. Transition is different for every family. Your child's ILP Family Service Coordinator will assist with developing a transition plan to meet the unique needs of your child and family. This booklet is designed to help families plan for and make this transition as easy as possible.



Overview of the Transition Process

As early as your child's second birthday...

- Your Family Service Coordinator, you and members of your Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) team will begin to discuss potential transition options.
- If you are interested, you can start thinking about future settings and services. Learning about the process for determining a child's eligibility for preschool special education might be one of the things you discuss. education services may be a part of this step.
- The transition steps and services will be written on the transition plan page of your child's IFSP.

By the time your child is 2 years 3 months...

- The Alaska Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program will notify the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development Special Education Child Find Office (Child Find) that your child is approaching 3 years of age and may be eligible for preschool special education services.
- Parents can opt out of notification at any time prior to the child's 27th month by notifying their Family Service Coordinator (FSC). The FSC will provide an opt out form for signature. In the case of a child who enrolls after the age of 27 months, directory information will be sent the calendar month after enrollment. Parents of children who enroll in Part C services after their 27th month have the opportunity to opt out of notification at enrollment by notifying the Family Service Coordinator.

By the time your child is 2 years 9 months...

- You will have a transition conference meeting with your early intervention service provider(s), a representative from a future program and anyone else who knows your child that you would like to invite.
- If you did not opt out of notification to preschool special education services, then the local school district must be invited to the conference. This gives you a chance to learn more about preschool special education services.



By your child's third birthday...

- If your child is eligible for preschool special education services, you will work with your local school district to develop a plan to meet your child's needs.
- This plan is called an Individual Education Program (IEP)

At least 3 months prior to your child's third birthday...

Your service coordinator will follow-up with activities included in your child's transition plan.

If you are considering special education services:

- Your Family Service Coordinator will work with the special education Child Find coordinator to make sure that people you would like to attend the meeting are included.
- With your consent, your child's current IFSP and evaluation information will be sent to the special education coordinator at your local school.
- With your consent, the special education staff will evaluate your child to determine whether your child is eligible for preschool special education services
- If your child is not eligible for preschool special education services, your Family Service Coordinator will help you find other resources and opportunities for young children in your community such as Head Start, child care or other relevant options.



Step 1: Planning Transitions with the Family

Your ILP provider will begin to have conversations with you around your child's second birthday to explain transition steps and services. Transition steps are meant to support your child's move to another program when your child turns 3. The ILP provider will start documenting the steps on a written transition plan.

An example of a transition plan is included in this booklet.

Many families find it helpful to think about the following to help prepare for the transition:

- What is important for my child in the coming year?
- What about transition and what's next for my child?
- Who should be involved in transition planning (additional family members, child care provider, therapist, etc)?
- What services can my child receive in a new setting?
- When can I visit the new program that my child might attend?

School District Notification:

Alaska EI/ILP provides family contact information,

including child name and birth date to school districts of children 27 months of age or older who may be eligible for preschool special education services at age 3. You may opt out of this notification to your school district if you do not want your local school district notified. Your family may receive a phone call or letter from your district explaining their preschool services. You may decline at this point. A full policy statement and a Special Education Notification Opt Out form are provided in the back of this booklet.

School District Referral:

A formal referral is made to the school district under the direction from the family by the ILP provider once you have signed the consent form to exchange information. Standard information included with the formal referral may include recent screening and evaluation information, and current services your child is receiving. A copy of your child's current IFSP may also be included.

You should expect to receive a copy of your parental rights and procedural safeguards from the school district after they receive the referral.



Step 2: Transition Meeting/Conference

With your permission, the ILP provider will send written invitations to the list of persons and agencies that you and your IFSP team have identified to participate in the transition conference. You can invite family members, friends, a child-care worker, and providers from agencies you are interested in your child attending. If your child is potentially eligible for special education services it is important to invite a preschool teacher or administrator from your local school district. This planning meeting is required to take place at least three months (90 days), and up to nine months prior to your child's third birthday. Your ILP provider will facilitate the meeting to help you discuss and plan for your child's new services.

During the transition conference, you and the participants will discuss:

- What is important for you and your child in a new setting,
- Specific outcomes and goals related to preparing your child for the transition,
- Additional information needed to help determine eligibility including specific assessment tools and who will gather the information. This may include observations in various settings.

Timelines for completing next steps are also determined at this meeting.

Representatives from the school district or other programs will describe the services they provide and how the referral and eligibility process works. The ILP Provider will summarize the information for you and the participants on a transition conference summary sheet, add specific action steps to the transition plan, and provide you a copy.



Step 3: Starting the Transition Plan

Your ILP provider will work with you and your child to support activities on your child's IFSP Transition Plan. If you chose a referral to special education for your child, the local education agency (LEA) will act on the referral by reviewing the referral information, determining if there is adequate information available to determine eligibility or if more evaluation information is needed, and obtain consent from you for further evaluation. The LEA has 45 school days from obtaining consent to complete evaluations to determine eligibility and develop an IEP as needed.

During the evaluation process it is important that you participate and share information about your child's typical skills and performance at home and other settings, express any concerns you may have, and ask questions about the evaluation. Try to schedule the evaluation at your child's best time and share strategies for how to help your child feel most comfortable in a testing situation.



Step 4: Reviewing the Results — Eligibility Determination

Once the evaluations are completed, the local school district (LEA) arranges for an Evaluation Summary and Eligibility Review (ESER) meeting with the team; including you, local school district personnel, the ILP/EI provider, and any other family member or service providers you want to invite. The result of the evaluation(s) will be used to determine if your child is eligible for services through Part B of IDEA. If eligible for services, the LEA will develop needs and recommendations for your child.

It is important to understand the evaluation results and ask questions. Some questions to consider:

- Did the evaluation accurately reflect my child's typical performance at home and other settings?
- How does my child's performance compare with peers of the same age?
- How will this information be used in planning for services?



Step 5: The IEP Meeting — Placement Decision

The Individual Education Program (IEP) meeting is a significant event for your child and family. You are a key member on the team in developing an IEP for your child. The IEP may be written in the same meeting where the team reviews the evaluation and decides that the child is eligible for services through Part B or it may occur at a separate meeting time. An IEP must be completed by your child's third birthday.

child will receive services in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) as outlined in IDEA. 20.U.S.C. 1412(a)(5)(B). The IEP meeting is the time to identify the supports needed to help your child learn in the place selected. These supports might include adult assistance, training for staff, modifications in the environment or specialized equipment and/or materials for your child to be a successful learner.

At the initial IEP meeting, the IEP team must consider the child and family's IFSP, including the type of services received in ILP, strategies that were successful in achieving the child and family goals and the setting in which the IFSP services took place.

To prepare for this meeting, think about your hopes and dreams for your child and be ready to communicate them to the team along with your child's strengths, interests, goals that are important to develop over the next year, and special needs for the team to consider. Your ILP provider may attend the meeting and you are encouraged to invite a friend or advocate who is knowledgeable about your child to attend the meeting with you. You will be asked to sign indicating that you attended the IEP meeting.

As part of the IEP, the team will decide where the services will be provided that best meets your child's needs. This is called placement. The



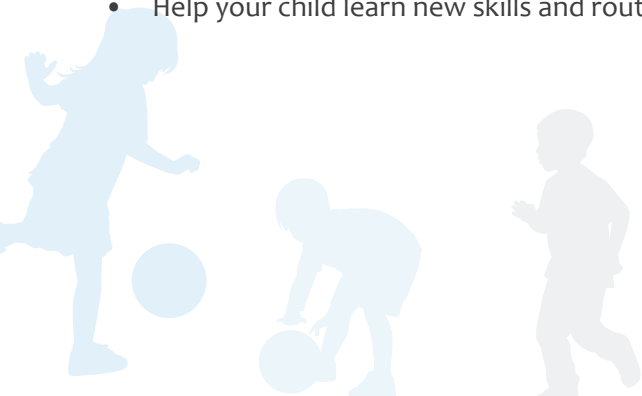
Step 6: Putting the Plan into Action — Implementing the IEP

Writing an IEP that meets your child's needs is an important accomplishment. You will receive a completed copy to review once all the goals are written. Your child's plan must be reviewed at least once a year, or more often as needed, or at your request.

You may have mixed feelings about your child's transition to a new program and feel both anxious and hopeful in moving from home-based, family-centered services to child-centered services. Take time to say goodbye to the ILP provider and to celebrate the next step in your child's journey! The key to success is developing good communication with the new providers and setting up a system for sharing information that best works for you.

To help prepare your child for transition:

- Visit the new program with your child to help him or her feel more comfortable.
- Talk about the change in a positive way.
- Help your child learn new skills and routines that will be useful in the new program.



Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program Compared to Preschool Special Education

Alaska	Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program	Preschool Special Education
Governing Federal Laws	Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA)	Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA)
Ages Served	Birth through 2 years old	3–5 years old
Goal of the Program	Supporting the family to meet the developmental needs of their child with a delay or disability.	Focuses on the child's special educational needs.
Evaluation	Two or more professionals from different disciplines complete a developmental evaluation of five areas of development (adaptive or self-help skills, cognitive skills, communication skills, physical development, and social-emotional development).	A child must be evaluated in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, adaptive or self-help, cognitive, communication skills, physical development and social-emotional development. In addition, the evaluation must include more than one discipline and be sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the child's special education and related services needs, whether or not they are commonly linked to the disability category in which the child is classified.
Eligibility	A child must have a diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in a significant delay in development; or the child demonstrates a 50 percent developmental delay in one or more areas of development in the following areas: adaptive or self-help, cognitive, communication, physical, and/or social-emotional development.	A child is found eligible based on the determination of a disability or condition, that prevents the child from receiving reasonable benefit from general education without additional supports; or the child demonstrates functioning at least two standard deviations below the national norm or 25 percent delayed in at least one of the following areas: cognitive, physical, speech or language, social or emotion and/or adaptive development or 20 percent delayed in age equivalency in two or more of the five areas. The IEP must be developed within 30 days after the IEP Team makes a determination of eligibility. However, the total time between parental consent to evaluate and implementation of the IEP must not exceed 45 school days.
Family Involvement	Parent(s) must be involved in the development of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).	Parent(s) must be members of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team that makes decisions about the education of their child.
Service Coordination	Each eligible infant or toddler and their family is provided a Family Service Coordinator who assists the family throughout their involvement in the Early Intervention system and coordinates needed services.	Although service coordination is not required under this section of the special education law, the District in which the child resides is responsible for developing the IEP and scheduling the IEP meetings. This includes a child placed by the District or a state agency in out-of-state programs.

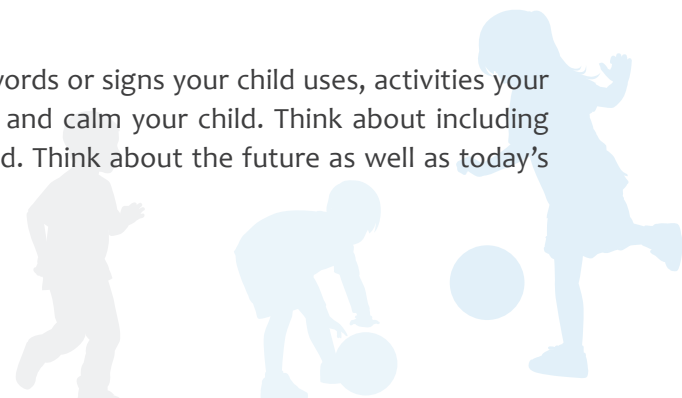
Type of Plan	An IFSP documents the family’s desired outcomes for their child, as well as the supports and services to be provided. IFSPs are reviewed at least every six months with the service coordinator and early intervention provider(s) and rewritten annually.	An IEP documents the child’s educational goals, services and placement. The IEP also describes how progress will be measured. IEPs are revised periodically, but not less than annually.
Services	Early Intervention/Infant Learning offers services to support the family’s ability to help their child learn and develop (for example: OT, PT, Family Service Coordination, Early Educational Services); all IFSP services are coordinated through the local Infant Learning Program.	Special education offers educational services. Related services (for example: OT, PT, transportation) are provided when they are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from the special education. All services listed in an IEP are the responsibility of the local Special Education School District.
Delivery of Services	Natural Environments, Early Intervention services are provided in places (such as the child’s home, child care setting or in other areas in the community) where infants and toddlers without disabilities participate. The family and child’s normal routines of the day are used as natural opportunities for learning.	Least Restrictive Environments (LRE)-Children with disabilities and/or special learning needs are educated with children who are not disabled. Special classes, schooling, or other removal of the child from the regular education environment occurs only when that placement is not able to adequately support the individual needs of the child.
Costs of Services	No family will be denied services due to an inability to pay. Medicaid, Denali KidCare, private insurance and family co-pay are accepted. (FAPE does not apply to Part C).	Special education and related services are provided at no cost to the child and family; these services are within “Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).”
Recipient of Services	Early Intervention/Infant Learning services are provided to the infant/toddler and/or the child’s family and/or legal guardian.	Special education and related services are provided to the child or on behalf of the child.
Procedural Safeguards and Dispute Resolution	A full description of parent procedural safeguards is found in Alaska’s Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program “Child and Family Rights Booklet.” A copy of the document is available from your service coordinator.	A full description of special education Procedural Safeguards & Parent Rights is found in the Alaska Special Education Handbook. A copy of this document will be provided to families by the local school district staff or can be obtained by going to http://dhss.alaska.gov/gcdse/documents/committees/ec/pdf/ak_sped_handbook.pdf
Transition	A transition conference is held for each child at least 90 days before the child’s third birthday, and as early as nine months before the child’s third birthday. The transition conference will include representatives of the child’s family, local Early Intervention providers and/or providers of other appropriate services or programs.	Prior to the child’s third birthday an evaluation will be completed to determine if the child is eligible for preschool special education services. If the child is determined eligible for preschool special education services an IEP will be developed by the child’s third birthday.



Transition Meeting Preparation Checklist

The documents and information listed below are intended to help prepare you for your child's transition. It is a good idea to create a folder and bring the folder with you to your Transition Meeting.

- ❑ A copy of your child's most recent IFSP
- ❑ Developmental evaluations
- ❑ Name and contact information of your child's primary care physician as well as any other doctor/therapists your child currently sees
- ❑ Immunization records
- ❑ If your child has any allergies, copies of a notice to give to service providers
- ❑ List of medications, dosage and frequency for your child
- ❑ A copy of identification such as social security card, passport or birth certificate
- ❑ Information about programs and resources in your community
- ❑ Recent photograph of your child and/or family
- ❑ A summary of information about your child, such as words or signs your child uses, activities your child enjoys, likes and dislikes and/or ways to soothe and calm your child. Think about including information about your hopes and vision for your child. Think about the future as well as today's needs



Section 8.1 – Transition Plan

Date of Child's 3rd Birthday: ____/____/____

Date of this Transition Plan ____/____/____ Transition Conference Due Date: ____/____/____

Age	Transition Planning Activity (Recommended priorities and goals for child's transition) Indicate "NA" for activities not applicable for individual child/family transition	Person(s)Responsible	Due Date	Date Completed
By 27 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide notification information to parent/guardian. • Obtain opt out form if parent/guardian opts out of notification to local school district. 			
24-30 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce Steps Ahead booklet. • Discuss Potential service setting. • Explain parent/guardian rights and procedural safeguards. • Obtain parental consent to invite staff/people as appropriate (preschool special education, child care, Head Start, etc.) to Transition Conference meeting. • Complete referral/applications as appropriate (preschool special education, child care, Head Start, etc.). 			
30-33 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule and hold Transition Conferences. • Schedule or complete necessary evaluations. • Schedule family visits to new setting (preschool special education, child care, Head Start, etc.) if possible. • Provide current IFSP, evaluation reports and progress notes to transition planning team, with signed parent consent/release of information. 			
33-36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend eligibility meeting upon invitation, assist in determining eligibility as necessary. • Decide placement/program and start date for child. • Attend IEP meeting upon invitation if going on to special education setting. • Complete activities/visits to prepare child for transition. • Complete Exit Summary. 			

Notes:



Special Education Notification OPT OUT

Child Find Notification – Early Intervention / Infant Learning Programs (EI/ILP) are required by law to ensure smooth transition to preschool or other appropriate services. This includes informing the special education program in your school district that your child will shortly reach the age of eligibility for preschool services.

Part B . 20 U.S .C . §1437(a)(8)(A) ; 34 CFR §303 .148.

Alaska EI/ILP provides family contact information (child and primary contact name, address, phone number, gender and date of birth) to school districts of all enrolled children 27 months of age or older who may be eligible for preschool special education services at age 3. If your child is over 27 months your notification data will be sent the calendar month after enrollment unless you opt out of notification at the time of enrollment. Your family may receive a phone call or letter from your district explaining their preschool services. You may opt out of this notification to your school district by completing the following information:

NAME OF CHILD –

CHILD’S DATE OF BIRTH –

REASON FOR OPTING OUT OF NOTIFICATION TO SCHOOL DISTRICT, AS STATED BY PARENT /GUARDIAN (OPTIONAL) –

ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR TRANSITION PREPARATION –

SERVICE COORDINATOR SIGNATURE: _____

PARENT SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____





Know your parental rights

One of the main features of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is parental involvement. It is important that you are aware of your rights. You will receive a copy of your rights and procedural safeguards whenever important decisions regarding your child are made.

In brief, your parental rights under IDEA include:

1. **Informed Consent:** You are fully informed of all information about the activity(ies) for which consent is sought. This information is provided in your native language. You must agree in writing before the evaluation and services begin.
2. **Confidentiality:** Information regarding your child must be kept confidential. Parental consent must be obtained before personally identifiable information is disclosed, unless authorized under the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA).
3. **Participate in the Evaluation of Your Child:** Obtaining your consent for evaluation is necessary and you have the right to participate in the evaluation. You have the right to request an independent evaluation if you disagree with the results.
4. **Decline Services:** You have the right to decline services and you may be asked to put your request in writing.
5. **Review all Program Records:** You have the right to review any of your child's records.
6. **Speedy Conflict Resolution:** If you, your EL/ILP provider and the school district cannot agree on the evaluation, the identification, the placement or the provision of services for your child then both you and the school have the right to request mediation, complaint investigation, or an impartial hearing to resolve this disagreement.

For more information

Your ILP provider is the best resource for transition planning. For more details about transition and notification contact:

Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program

550 West 8th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501
1 (800) 478-9996
From Anchorage: 269-8442
<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dsds/Pages/infantlearning>

Preschool Special Education Program

Department of Education & Early Development
Office of Special Education Programs
801 W. 10th Street, Suite 200
PO Box 110500
Juneau, AK 99811-0500
(907) 465-2972
TTY/TTD (907) 465-2815
<http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/sped>

For Additional Information on Transition and Parent Rights:

Stone Soup Group

307 E. Northern Lights Blvd. #100
Anchorage, AK 99503
(907) 561-3701
www.stonesoupgroup.org

Governor's Council on Disabilities & Special Education

3601 "C" Street, Suite 740
P.O. Box 240249
Anchorage, Alaska 99524-0249
Toll Free: 1 (888) 269-8990
From Anchorage: (907) 269-8990

Disability Law Center

3330 Arctic Blvd. #103
Anchorage, AK 99503-4580
(907) 565-1002
www.dlcak.org

National Resources:

National Early Childhood Transition Center

<http://www.hdi.uky.edu/nectc/NECTC/Home.aspx>

The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

<http://ectacenter.org/partc/partc.asp>

Federal Requirements for Transition

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2011-09-28/pdf/2011-22783.pdf>



Stepping Ahead at Age Three was originally produced as STEPS AHEAD AT AGE 3 (1995) and was re-created in 2010 by an Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program stakeholder group. A special thank you to the Alaska Transition and Training Initiative Planning Team under the direction of Bev Ingram, and the EI/ILP Public Awareness Committee including — Cameron Young, Mary Deitz, Brynn Bolling, Linda Borghols, Lisa Balivet, Erin Kinavey and Margaret Lanier Kossler. Additional recognition goes to Early Intervention Colorado for information adopted from their Family Guidebook — Guide III: Transition Planning. Revisions to resources and contact information were made in 2017. Additional copies of Stepping Ahead at Age Three may be obtained at cost from Alaska’s Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program 1 (800) 478-9996; from Anchorage: 269-8442 and on our website: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dsds/Pages/infantlearning>



Senior and Disabilities Services
Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program
550 West 8th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501
Revised 2017