

TATS eUpdate  
Transition**Timelines for Transitions from Early Steps (IDEA Part C) to Pre-K  
Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Programs (IDEA Part B)**  
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There are a variety of ways in which young children with special needs are referred to, and enter, the public school system. Among these are referrals from other service providers in the community (such as Head Start, child care programs, or Early Steps [Florida's Part C program]). Early Steps serves children, ages birth to three, with a developmental delay or condition with a high probability of resulting in disability or developmental delay. Depending upon eligibility, many young children who have been receiving services from Early Steps may be provided the opportunity to transition to school district exceptional student education (ESE) services or other community educational programs, when they reach age three. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004), section 637(9A), requires that all children receiving early intervention services through Early Steps, receive a smooth transition from one program to the other by their third birthday.

**Best Practice**

Transition planning should include all individuals or agency representatives that have information to share about the child. Consideration should be given to the need for services by the family and child, and resources that are available to support a smooth transition. The policies and procedures that define the systematic way in which agencies participate in the transition process should be written in a formal interagency transition agreement document. The timeline for the transition process is as follows:

- Early Steps notifies the school system in advance of children who will transition from Early Steps on a regular, periodic basis.
- Transition Planning - Six months to one year (ages 2 years to 2 years 6 months) prior to the child's third birthday, formal transition planning begins. Informal discussions regarding transitioning out of Early Steps begin at enrollment into Early Steps.
- Transition Conference - Not less than 90 days or more than 9 months (ages 2 years 3 months to 2 years 9 months) prior to the child's third birthday and with consent of the family, a transition conference is held to discuss possible services that the child may receive.
- Referral – Before, during or after the transition conference is held, a formal referral process occurs in which the child and family are referred to the school

- district for prekindergarten eligibility determination or to another community-based service provider to determine eligibility for services.
- Eligibility Staffing Meeting - Prior to the third birthday, an eligibility staffing meeting must take place for a child receiving Part C services who will be exiting Early Steps and who has been evaluated to determine eligibility for the Part B prekindergarten program for children with disabilities. The purpose of this meeting is to review available evaluation data and determine the child's eligibility for specially designed instruction and related services. If the child is eligible, the individual educational plan (IEP) must be developed and implemented by the child's third birthday.

**Reflections:**

1. Does your district have written policies and procedures in place to make sure transitions occur in a timely manner?
2. Are timelines and deadlines met?
3. If there are difficulties with managing timelines, have the sources of the difficulty been identified?
4. Are the appropriate agencies (Early Steps and the school district or other community agencies/programs) aware of and involved in resolving issues?
5. Is a current interagency agreement in place to address timelines and responsibilities from a system-wide perspective?

*“We must use time as a tool, not as a crutch.” – John F. Kennedy*

**References and Resources:****Early Steps (IDEA Part C)**

The Early Steps system implements Part C of the IDEA in Florida and serves infants and toddlers, birth to age 3, with a developmental delay or condition with a high probability of resulting in disability or developmental delay and their families. The following website provides information on all aspects of Early Steps in Florida:

<http://www.cms-kids.com/EarlyStepsHome.htm>

**Florida's Transition Project (FTP)**

Provides technical assistance to local community partner agencies to assist them in outlining transition policies and procedures, and developing interagency agreements that define the system of transition for young children birth to six years and their families. Project resources include: Guidebook to Build Better Community Transition Systems; Interagency Agreement Checklist; Community Transition Self-Assessment, Transition Booklet for Parents of Young Children Moving from Early Steps at Age Three to Other

Community Programs, Transition Tools. Florida's Transition Project is affiliated with the Technical Assistance and Training System (TATS). [www.floridatransitionproject.com](http://www.floridatransitionproject.com)

Florida Rule 6A-6.03026 Florida Administrative Code (FAC) Special Programs for Prekindergarten Children with Disabilities and 6A-6.03027 (FAC) Special Programs for Children Three Through Five Years Old Who are Developmentally Delayed.

<https://www.flrules.org/gateway/readFile.asp?sid=0&tid=1062846&type=1&file=6A-6.03026.doc>

<https://www.flrules.org/gateway/readFile.asp?sid=0&tid=1062943&type=1&file=6A-6.03027.doc>

National Early Childhood Transition Center (NECTC)

The Center's mission is to examine factors that promote successful transitions between infant/toddler programs, preschool programs, and public school programs for young children with disabilities and their families. The primary objective of the National Early Childhood Transition Center (NECTC) is to investigate and validate practices and strategies that enhance the early childhood transition process and support positive school outcomes for children with disabilities. The site contains resources including information and guides for transition, research, and policy and practice resources. A portion of the website is available in Spanish.

<http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/NECTC/default.asp>

*Planning Your Child's Transition to Preschool: A Step-by-Step Guide for Families.*

Chandler, L.K., Fowler, S. A., Hadden, S., & Stahurski, L. FACTS/LRE, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

<http://facts.crc.uiuc.edu/facts4/facts4.html>

Technical Assistance & Training System (TATS)

Statewide project providing technical assistance and training to programs in Florida serving prekindergarten children with disabilities. Website provides information and resources on curriculum and instruction, evaluation and assessment, family involvement, inclusion, program effectiveness/quality, and transition, as well as, linking early childhood partners.

[www.tats.ucf.edu](http://www.tats.ucf.edu)

Terrific Transitions, Supporting Children's Transition to Kindergarten

A collaborative effort of the SERVE Regional Educational Laboratory and the National Head Start Association. Provides a wide variety of transition information and resources for families, professionals, and community partnerships to use as they address children's transitions into kindergarten. Provides activities and links to research and a trainer's guide to facilitate training on the transition to kindergarten.

<http://www.serve.org/TT/>

*Transition from Early Steps to the School District Prekindergarten Program or Other Community Programs for Children with Disabilities. Draft Technical Assistance Paper. (2007)*

[http://www.tats.ucf.edu/GenDocs/TAPs/Transition\\_DraftTAP.pdf](http://www.tats.ucf.edu/GenDocs/TAPs/Transition_DraftTAP.pdf)



TATS eUpdates are a service of the Technical Assistance & Training System Communities of Practice. The TATS eUpdates are intended to provide current information related to best practices or trends in the education of young children with special needs in the areas of Transition, Program Effectiveness, Inclusion, Curriculum & Instruction, Evaluation & Assessment, and Family Involvement. For more information about the TATS Communities of Practices and the TATS eUpdates, please log on to <http://www.tats.ucf.edu/practice.php>.