

# Community of Practice in Transition: Early Childhood

Recommendations and best practices for successful student transition

Report to Wyoming Department of Education

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Authored by: Members of the 2013 Community of Practice in Transition: Early  
Childhood



## **2013 Community of Practice in Transition: Early Childhood Members**

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## Table of Contents

<b>2013 Community of Practice in Transition: Early Childhood Members</b> .....	2
<b>Introduction</b> .....	4
<b>Purpose</b> .....	4
<b>Background</b> .....	5
<b>Transition</b> .....	6
<b>Why are successful transitions important?</b> .....	6
<b>Family engagement</b> .....	7
<b>Screening and eligibility</b> .....	8
<b>Stakeholder communication</b> .....	8
<b>Transition planning meetings</b> .....	9
<b>Services</b> .....	10
<b>Challenges</b> .....	11
<b>Family engagement</b> .....	11
<b>Early childhood special education systems in Wyoming</b> .....	12
<b>Transition from Part C to Part B/619</b> .....	12
<b>Transition from Part B/619 to kindergarten</b> .....	12
<b>Recommendations</b> .....	13
<b>References</b> .....	16
<b>Glossary of Terms</b> .....	18

## **Introduction**

During 2013, the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND) in collaboration with the Wyoming Department of Education, Special Programs Division developed a community of practice for transition (CoP-T). The goal of this project was to bring together leading professionals and parent advocates from around the state to identify best practices and recommendations for improving transition practices in Wyoming.

Three small communities, consisting of 10-15 members each, convened at the University of Wyoming in Laramie in February/April and again in October for two in-person work sessions. These sessions were designed to address improving the transitions of students in three identified critical areas: a) transition between early intervention (Part C) and early childhood special education (Part B); and early childhood programs into public school districts; b) transition from secondary schools to post-secondary education, employment and community living; and c) transitions of students with social, emotional, and behavioral needs to and from behavioral interventions. Each community, through weekly and monthly E-mail correspondence and teleconference meetings, developed a guidance document. Although final recommendations for improving practices are similar across all documents, key differences exist that are critical to successful transitions for the targeted population or identified transition period.

This guidance document consists of five sections: purpose, background, best practices, challenges, and recommendations. The purpose and background sections describe key areas of focus for the community's specific area of transition. The best practice section was developed through a robust literature search to identify nationally-recognized best practices that could be appropriately implemented in Wyoming. The challenges section presents agency infrastructure, educational and advocacy practices, and service disparities that may present challenges for successful student transitions. The recommendations section provides the ideas and information from the community members that are most likely to result in successful student outcomes.

The following document is the culmination of the hard work and yearlong commitment of the members of all three Community of Practice in Transitions and WIND Facilitators, Sandra A. Hubert and Laurie Westlake; WIND Administrators, Sandy Root-Elledge and Canyon Hardesty; and WIND Information Specialist, Sara DiRienzo. This document represents professional and expert recommendations for improving transition practices throughout Wyoming. This document, although intended for improving practices of the Wyoming Department of Education as well as local school districts, addresses the multiple state, community, and individual stakeholders whose collaborative involvement is key to successful outcomes of students during transition periods

## **Purpose**

The primary goal for the Community of Practice- Transition Early Childhood (CoP-TEC) was to research best practices to support successful transitions for children and families, present recommendations and offer guidance for transition planning. The CoP-TEC's vision is to enhance coordination and collaboration efforts across multiple agencies and systems to support intentional transition planning resulting in successful transitions for children and families. These transitions include early intervention services (Part C to Part B/ 619) and from early childhood special education (Part B /619) services into kindergarten. This guidance document is a result of these efforts.

This document and the recommendations provided by the CoP-TEC does not take the place of laws or regulations but provides families, practitioners, educators and agency stakeholders with evidence based and practical perspectives into these critical transition times for children with disabilities in Wyoming. Wyoming Rules and Regulations in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are the foundation for which guidance in this document for best practices and transition strategies are built. The intended audiences for this Guidance Document are agency stakeholders including the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) special education unit, and the Wyoming Department of Health Early Intervention and Education Program, as well as school district employees (i.e. administrators, elementary school teachers, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, etc.), child development center employees (administrators, preschool teachers, early childhood special educators, therapists, etc.), child care personnel, and parents.

One of the key elements to successful transition that was identified during this process was the collaboration between preschools, school districts, programs, and families. Transitions are stressful and complicated times for families and educators and in order to ensure the transition process is successful it is critical that all parties understand the process of transition and the services available in their communities for young children with and without disabilities. Additional elements that could be taken into consideration when tailoring transition plans could include cultural, linguistic, and learning needs of individual children and families. The transition team is the central point of communication and can help lay the foundations for early learning supports and services that align to the needs of children.

## **Background**

Critical aspects of brain architecture begin to be shaped by experience and environment before and soon after birth. Fundamental aspects of that architecture are established well before a child enters school (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2007). Providing positive early learning experiences for children with exceptional circumstances and challenges will enhance positive outcomes. Implementing a proactive approach during periods of transition is a crucial part of providing positive early learning experiences. In order to effectively discuss the transitions that occur within early childhood transition, it is important to understand the eligibility criteria that define each program.

Part C is a program responsible for ensuring the requirements of IDEA are carried out. Early intervention supports an infant/toddler's learning and development during the important time from birth to three years of age. Eligibility for Part C services is determined by a team who considers information from medical and other records, assessment results, and professional judgment. This team consists of the family, a family service coordinator, and other professionals such as therapists and early interventionists. This team develops an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) which outlines the services the family and infant/toddler will receive. Services usually take place in the infant/toddler's home but may also take place in a community setting.

Infants and toddlers participating in early intervention programs under Part C of IDEA may be evaluated to determine initial eligibility for special education under Part B of IDEA to ensure that an Individual Education Plan (IEP) can be developed and implemented by the child's third birthday. For students suspected of being eligible for Part B services, the Wyoming Department

of Education recommends an initial comprehensive evaluation is conducted in order to determine eligibility under Part B/619 services (Wyoming Department of Education Special Programs Division Policy and Procedures for Special Education, 2010). In Wyoming, the Child Development Centers (CDC), are key to the early identification and referral of children with suspected delays/disabilities.

In order to be found eligible for special education and related services under Part B of IDEA, a child must meet the criteria for one or more of the thirteen disability categories which include: autism spectrum disorder, cognitive disability, deaf-blindness, developmental delay, emotional disability, hearing impairment, including deafness, multiple disabilities, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment, including blindness. (IDEA, 2004) In addition to meeting the criteria for one of the thirteen categories of disability under IDEA, the disability must adversely impact the child's educational performance such that the child could benefit from special education services. Based on the eligibility criteria, an IEP is developed to address specialized instruction and related services.

### **Transition**

Transition is a process, not one single event, which involves moving between and among programs and agencies. Due to this mobility in the systems, transition within early childhood special education systems can be a time of concern, celebration, and change for children and their families. Early transition experiences set the stage for later transition attitudes and expectations. When children and families experience smooth transitions, they have a more positive attitude toward the new program and these positive school experiences enhance the academic and overall school success.

Careful planning at these times of transition is important in order to best meet the needs of the child and the family and determine the most appropriate educational setting. During transitions, the child's IEP or IFSP team, which includes the parents, will address a variety of topics such as the need for evaluation to determine eligibility, appropriate goals for the child, time lines, and team members' responsibilities. Based on these discussions, a transition plan will be developed in order to prepare the child and family as the child moves through the different systems during each period of transition. Transition plan is required under IDEA for transition from C to B; however, a plan may be suggested for transitioning from B to school. Additionally, IDEA mandates and the literature suggests children who may not qualify for services under Part B/619 but have received services under Part C should find other community early childhood opportunities such as community, faith-based or agency-run preschools, Head Start, or other childcare programs.

### **Why are successful transitions important?**

As a child progresses from one setting to another, the services and supports may change providing opportunities for ongoing engagement and advocacy. Parents and educators play different roles with each system. Parental involvement in these key transition processes has a strong impact on improving children's educational outcomes and emotional wellbeing. In addition to the benefits for the child and families, early screening, eligibility determination and planning allow the educational setting and educators within those settings to better prepare and provide tailored supports for the child.

While measuring success of a transition may be difficult, Rous, et. al. (2007) support the following key indicators of a successful transition:

- Families show positive attitudes toward school and learning.
- Teachers recognize and value difference and provide developmentally appropriate practice.
- Linkage of all stakeholders in positive and mutually supported focused efforts.

### **Best Practices**

Five key categories emerged during the CoP-TEC's research on early childhood transitions. These categories were family engagement, screening and eligibility, stakeholder communication, transition planning meetings, and services. Family engagement assists in the identification of family characteristics and child strengths that will help identify opportunities to support a successful transition. Screening and eligibility assists in the early identification of the educational and functional needs of the child with a delay or disability. Stakeholder communication ensures that agencies and programs keep the child and family at the forefront. Transition planning meetings, as defined by IDEA regulations, encourage positive family engagement, increase stakeholder communication and provide a platform for the determination of appropriate services. Services as determined by the child's IFSP/IEP team outline needed supports and determine appropriate delivery methods.

#### **Family engagement**

Best practices indicate providing support and engaging families in the transition process will help ensure a successful transition. Communication with the family is an important factor in developing a positive relationship. Developing this relationship and providing supports make the transition a positive and even exciting experience for families. When engaging families, it is important to respect that each family has unique strengths, preferences, needs, expectations, interaction styles, and levels of comfort. Family engagement can be promoted by discussing transition activities and arranging for a pre-entry visit to familiarize families with new people and environments. Sharing the expectations of what every child should know before entering [the next setting] kindergarten is a proposed way to ease a child's transition into this setting (McIneyre et al, 2006; Zill and West, 2001). Rous, et. al describes additional challenges that some families may face during this time:

During any transition period, families have increased needs related to preparing themselves and their children for a change in services, specifically, understanding their rights, their role in the transition process, and how services might change. Families are expected to participate in evaluations and other meetings while continuing to take care of the needs of their children outside of special education services, such as medical, therapy, and other appointments. These multiple expectations often are layered upon day-to-day work and family responsibilities. Yet there are few resources and supports available to support the day to day activities. (2008, 16).

### **Screening and eligibility**

Best practice also indicates a screening process is the first step in identifying a child with a suspected delay/disability. Although this is best practice, IDEA stipulates screening is not a requirement and may not delay or interfere with the parent's right to go straight to evaluation. The goal of screening is to identify the educational and functional needs of the child with suspected delay/disability early so that the most appropriate interventions can be implemented and the team can work to help identify additional supports that may be available within the community. Parents, medical staff, and educational professionals should be given information on the early signs of delays/disabilities in order to promote early identification and implementation of services as needed, as soon as possible. (Horowitz, 2007).

Early intervention services are designed to meet the developmental needs of each infant/toddler eligible under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the needs of the family related to enhancing the child's development in any one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development or adaptive development. To the maximum extent appropriate based on the needs of the infant/toddler, early intervention services are provided in natural environments where infants and toddlers without disabilities also participate. This includes educational, home and community settings. (Wyoming Part C Rules, Regulation and Policies, 2014).

When a child ages out of Part C services at age three, and is not eligible to receive special education services under Part B, there needs to be supports in place to assist families to meet the on-going needs of their child. Families should leave the Part C program with knowledge of support services within their local communities.

Special Education and related services are provided to children ages three through five identified as having a disability under Part B/619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IEA). These services are determined by the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) team, which includes the child's family and other professionals. The purpose of providing the child with a specialized instruction plan and related services is to ensure the child receives a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), and has access to and has the opportunity to demonstrate progress in the general education environment/curriculum. These services are provided in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

In the Part B preschool age group, the literature search identified specialized programs, such as the Recognition and Response system (Coleman et al, 2006), which helps preschool-aged children who have possible (rather than known) learning disabilities. The Recognition and Response model "provides educators with information and resources to help the early educator address the needs of young children (three to five years) who show signs that they may not be learning in an expected manner even before they begin kindergarten" (Coleman et al, 2006).

### **Stakeholder communication**

Stakeholders should focus on key components of a successful transition and keep in mind the importance of open communication with other stakeholders about services for a particular child. Infrastructure supports are key so that special and general educators, and the sending and receiving preschools or school districts can easily exchange relevant information on a particular child (Horowitz et al, 2007). This information must be shared among both the sending and



receiving agencies and “is necessary, [but] the receiving agency must do its part to help children and families prepare for, and adjust to, their new program as well” (Harbin et al, 2008). Such infrastructures support could be a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between school districts and preschools that have certain defining characteristics. The National Early Childhood Transition Center (NECTC) suggests that personnel development between agencies might include shared professional trainings or workshops, coordinated curricula, visits to classrooms or classroom swapping, or sitting in on meetings (2009). It is interesting to note that those districts in which the stakeholders are at the same place (for example, a district in which the preschool and kindergarten are in the same building) are more likely to use more transition strategies such as receiving children’s records and other information, encouraging families to meet new staff (including school and classroom visits), and participate in IEP development. (Carlson et al, 2009).

Districts and preschools should give their staff the appropriate tools to facilitate the transition process; parents' and teachers' transition experiences are directly related to the support the schools offer during that time (Carlson et al, 2009). As it relates to teachers, this support might come in the form of release time or extra planning period to support transition planning, promoting visitation times within both sending and receiving classrooms to promote understanding, allowing kindergarten teachers to swap teaching duties with a pre-K counterpart (and vice versa), and allowing children and their families time to visit schools and classrooms (NECTC, 2009). Interestingly, two strategies Carlson et al. (2009) reported as important to teachers were receiving the child's records, and any other information from his or her previous program. The more transition strategies teachers’ use, the better the transition outcome will be for the child (Carlson et al, 2009).

Teachers can continue to promote the transition process by modifying the curriculum to meet the student’s current level of performance before the school year starts and asking for feedback from the family (NECTC, 2009). Rosenkoetter et al. (2009) found “a close positive teacher-child relationship during and after transition is associated with better cognitive outcomes for children.” Ideally, staff should be “comfortable and knowledgeable” about programs outside the schools and within the communities, and be able to relate that information to families (NECTC, 2009). Research strongly recommends appointing a transition coordinator whose responsibilities include taking overall responsibility for the transition, providing a strategic overview of the process to families, and providing families with informational, emotional, and educational support.

### **Transition planning meetings**

Meetings with the family provide an opportunity for new relationships to be made, trust to be built, and information to be shared about the child transitioning. This section outlines strategies that can be implemented by families and teams, before, during, and after transition meetings in order to ensure successful transition. The purpose of the transition planning meeting is to provide information, build trust and collaboration with stakeholders (in order to provide the child with a positive transition experience), lessen family anxieties about the transition, and provide a platform for services provision.

Best practices suggest several essential strategies that can be implemented before a transition planning meeting. One strategy includes honoring the parents' knowledge of the child. To facilitate this, families should be educated about what will happen during the transition period

and how these changes will take place (Patton and Wang, 2012). Another strategy is making sure all the necessary records are available for review prior to a transition planning meeting. The sending agencies need to ensure paperwork is completed and promptly sent to the new setting. Providing substitutes for staff so they can prepare for the meeting is also a suggested best practice strategy as well as, organizing workshops and trainings on the characteristics of successful transition meetings (NECTC, 2009). It is recommended that an informal gathering with the family occurs prior to the planning meeting so that the staff and support members have a better understanding of a family's culture and the unique needs of the child (i.e. details about dietary and transportation needs). This is possibly a role that a transition coordinator could play within a school district.

### **Transition from Part C to Part B/619**

For the transition from Part C to Part B and from preschool into kindergarten, the transition team (sending agency, receiving agency, and family) together will work to identify the needs of the child in an effort to ensure success in the new setting.

### **Transition from Part B/619 to kindergarten**

A transition coordinator or other designated staff should attend a meeting with kindergarten teachers to discuss placement of children in kindergarten (NECTC, 2009) and identify modifications that may be needed and discuss a plan to have them in place prior to the first day of school. Also, any professional development which may be necessary for the staff so that the child is successful in the new setting can be addressed during the transition meeting. Patton and Wang, 2009 suggest the transition team should include staff from both the sending and receiving agencies and may include community providers (such as medical staff, preschool teachers, and other professionals involved with the child) (NECTC, 2009). Community- and program-wide transition activities and timelines need to be identified and a specific transition plan needs to be developed that includes individual activities for the child and the family. Establishing a plan for all team members and defining clear roles will aid in ensuring activities listed are completed. These expectations should be stated clearly to the family and documented for review.

After the meeting(s) have occurred, follow up by both the sending and receiving team with the family is essential. Acquiring feedback from families about how the transition process went and opportunities for improvement will inform best practice. One mechanism to accomplish this could be done through a feedback survey (Patton and Wang, 2012). Continuous open communication between the families and new agency will assist the family and the child to adjust to the new setting and services.

### **Services**

Relationships serving as a bridge between the family and school and provide continuity of care are fundamental to a smooth transition. Along those lines, any discussion regarding a change in services should be provided in a manner that is "consistent with the home culture of the families" and "in the home language" (Brown et al, 2002, see also Rous et al, 2008 and Carlson et al, 2009). Families should be informed of the broad array of service systems available for their child (those offered through the district or preschool and through other avenues, such as through the community or online) and be involved in choosing which services and service delivery methods their child receives (National Early Childhood Transition Center, 2009). Integrating the services

of education, social welfare, and health to meet the needs of the whole child, including the family, is key to a successful transition. Placement should be based on the child's needs, looking at the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and taking into account the whole child and the family situation. Generally, in Part B, preschool services can occur within a community setting where children without disabilities would be and in Part C, services generally occur in the child's home or community setting. Addressing flexibility in service options is vital to ensure all settings result in long-term benefits for the child.

### **Challenges**

Transition in early childhood settings are a mixture of educational practice, a subject of research, and a question of educational policy. Transition needs vary between families, schools, and communities within the state of Wyoming. In Wyoming, 10.5 percent of children birth to five years of age have been identified with a disability (CDS of Wyoming, 2013). Each of these children represents a unique family working with an educational agency that is charged with making sound decisions based on special education laws and best practices.

While all children experience transitions in their early years, children with disabilities may experience more frequent transitions. Challenges may differ depending on whether a child is moving into early intervention for the first time or transitioning from Part C to Part B or from preschool to kindergarten. Anticipating the cause of stress and normalizing these experiences for children and families can be the first step in minimizing the impacts of transitions.

### **Family engagement**

It is crucial that families are fully informed and understand their rights under IDEA in order to actively participate in their child's transition. Transitions present time for decision making. Decisions are made about services, placement, and scheduling. Making decisions as a team, based on the child's needs can reduce stress and increase the likelihood of a successful transition for children, families, and services providers.

Family involvement may include evaluations, participation in the development of the IFSP/IEP and attendance at planning meetings. Within the transition process, types of service, frequency, and intensity may change. Families navigate these changes while continuing to take care of the needs of their children outside of special education services, such as medical, therapy, and other appointments.

Factors which may impede a successful transition and need to be taken into consideration when planning for a successful transition may include:

- socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity
- language barriers and cultural background (a lack of comfort in sharing needs, wants, concerns)
- parents' values and beliefs
- parents' experience with an educational system
- nature and severity of exceptionality (higher involvement = increase in stress)

- family members' health (both physical and mental)
- lack of time to build strong relationships with families
- reluctance of families who have been involved with other state programs to further expose themselves to systems that monitor their child's development. (Robinson and Rosenberg, 2004) reluctance of immigrant families who may not understand or trust the process.

### **Early childhood special education systems in Wyoming**

As described in the previous background section, federal law requires a formal and planned transition process for toddlers with disabilities. The transition from Early Intervention (Part C) to Preschool (Part B) involves change in the type, location and focus of the services the child receives. As children transition from Part C to Part B the eligibility criteria changes from an overall developmental delay with home and family based services to determining whether the child is a child with a specific identifiable disability.

### **Transition from Part C to Part B/619**

Services at the preschool level become more child focused and preschool centered. Parents may express frustration with the need to re-evaluate, the possible duplication of assessments, planning meetings, and the potential change in services and providers.

At this time service plans change from Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) to an Individualized Education Program (IEP). With this change from family to education or student focus, the level of parent support often changes. Parents often express mixed feelings about their role in their child's education and services experience.

As the child transitions, the parents frequently need to develop a new set of relationships with service providers. This can take time. The transition from home-based services to preschool means adapting physically and emotionally for the child. This transition to preschool-based services is often their first experience with prolonged separation from parents and other caregivers. Toddlers must learn to share activities, supplies, and adult attention as well as to learn how to relate to new children. The transition to preschool can be a challenge for all children; but, for children with disabilities it is often more difficult. Wyoming's rural communities may face additional challenges due to limited options for inclusive services and limited community supports.

In response, the challenges identified by the authoring members of the Early Childhood CoP-TEC, a family transition workbook has been developed. The purpose of the family transition workbook is to be a resource and a planner for families, early intervention personnel and Part B/619 as the infant/toddler moves from Part C to Part B/619.

### **Transition from Part B/619 to kindergarten**

Transition to kindergarten is a natural time of change for children and families. For families of children with disabilities, this time can lead to many uncertainties and emotions as parents/guardians watch their children grow. The IDEA does not define how this transition should occur and in Wyoming, many different practices are in place for entering kindergarten

and the public school system. For children with disabilities, the transition to kindergarten requires careful planning and communication between the child development center, the school district and the family.

Children and their families transitioning from preschool to kindergarten experience new sets of expectations. The change from a play and activity-based setting to a more academic setting can present new challenges as well as exciting opportunities. Children are expected to form bonds and relationships with a new set of teachers and therapists as well as navigate a much larger school building, longer school day, and a new peer group.

### **Recommendations**

The following resources are recommended by the CoP-TEC to address successful strategies and the best practices identified during the literature search. These recommendations are provided to improve the transition process and increase successful outcomes for Wyoming children and families.

1. Honor a family-centered approach to transition by demonstrating sensitivity to culture, education levels, religion, home language, etc.
  - a. Create high-quality learning environments for children ages birth through five years of age, including hiring and retaining highly qualified teachers and staff.
  - b. Invest in trainings and workshops, and create classrooms designed to be a place for learning for all children. Rosenkoetter et al. (2009) found "high quality child care and developmentally appropriate classrooms for young children are associated with better academic outcomes, work habits, and social adjustment after the transition to the next setting." These environments successfully transition children both into and out of their care; moreover, these practices are good for all children, not just ones receiving services.
  - c. In order to create high-quality learning environments, "public policies need to include necessary funding for research to identify effective screening, assessment, and early education practices for young children with learning difficulties and disabilities" (Horowitz et al, 2007). This investment is crucial to the success of children with special needs and "is the most important factor in predicting outcomes." (Horowitz et al, 2007).
  - d. Involve primary caregivers in discussions and decisions regarding strategies for successful transition.
  - e. Maintain communication with community agencies (e.g. schools, doctors' offices, therapist offices) as a way to provide additional supports during transition.
2. Increase collaboration and alignment of transition processes between preschools and school districts.

- a. Stakeholders have a shared understanding of the child's or IEP including timelines for achieving goals and outcomes. School districts and preschools should maintain an accurate, thorough, and up-to-date record on the child's progress.
  - b. Conduct shared training between district, preschools, parents, and administrators.
  - c. Provide substitute teachers and parent supports to increase participation in joint trainings.
  - d. Ensure that the child's records promptly follow him or her to new programs and information in the records is discussed between the school districts and preschools.
  - e. Ensure receiving district and preschool staff has access to specific information on a child's special needs so that what worked well in one setting may be carried over into the new setting.
  - f. Provide resources for community supports to families.
3. Information, training and process improvements for stakeholders.
- a. Ensure primary caregivers have access to information and resources that identifies potential delays. This could include having healthcare providers disseminate information well-baby checkups (Horowitz et al, 2007) or supporting trainings or forum for questions (online or otherwise) to caregivers, healthcare and related service providers.
  - b. Preschools and school districts should be trained to administer the same screening tools in the same way across the state.
  - c. Teachers and service providers should regularly monitor the child's progress to determine the effectiveness of interventions. This could be done through:
    - regularly scheduled meetings with members of the child's IEP or IFSP team
    - quarterly progress monitoring shared with families
    - development of a child portfolio, including standard paper-and-pencil work, videos of the child completing certain tasks, observations or interviews with parents, doctors' notes, therapists' notes, etc.
  - d. The Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology (QIAT, 2012) is a guidance document that outlines the roles and training necessary for the child and team members. It also contains subsequent steps for assistive technology use and support after the transition has taken place.
4. Districts should be encouraged to hire a transition coordinator. This person would oversee the transition process and works as a liaison between the family and the receiving and sending preschools and school districts.
- a. The transition coordinator arranges training for staff members and families on transition strategies.

- b. The transition coordinator facilitates the development of a plan to address the unique needs of the child. This plan should include how the child will transition with assistive technology strategies and services
  - c. The transition coordinator informs and educates families on all possible placement options, procedures, and expectations of the programs.
  - d. The transition coordinator provides opportunities for families to meet with all receiving school staff prior to transitioning to the new setting.
  - e. The transition coordinator attends a transition meeting with the receiving staff to discuss the possible modifications, accommodations, and service options for incoming students.
  - f. The transition coordinator arranges reciprocal visits between preschool and kindergarten staff.
5. Districts should administer a survey (or have another follow up process) to the family/primary care givers in order to evaluate the success of the transition after the transition occurs. The survey should ask questions regarding how the transition went, what the agencies did well (both sending and receiving), and what could be done differently to improve the transition process.
6. Districts provide a transition checklist and timeline for staff and parents.
- a. The child's transition at each level includes a cycle of assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation which continues throughout his/her school career as necessary to ease the transition process. Systematically gathered information over multiple transition points can assist in identifying patterns of successful adjustments and factors that contribute to or detract from such changes.

The CoP-TEC group has adapted the *When I'm 3 where will I be* family transition workbook from the Illinois State Board of Education. This workbook serves as a model transition checklist and timeline for staff and parents to identify key steps to ensure a successful transition.

This CoP-TEC has also identified additional resources that are available on the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities' website at <http://www.uwyo.edu/wind/cop/> and the WDE Wyoming Instructional Network at <http://wyominginstructionalnetwork.com/> .

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Wyoming Department of Education Special Programs Division Policy and Procedures for Special Education

Wyoming Part C Rules, Regulation and Policies

## Glossary of Terms

**Early Childhood Transition:** Transition from Part C to Part B begins between the ages of two years, three months and two years, nine months and must conclude by the child's third birthday. Children participating in early intervention programs under Part C are evaluated to determine initial eligibility for special education under Part B.

**Early Intervention:** This section of IDEIA entitles children with developmental delays or children that have conditions which may lead to developmental delays to receive services under Part C.

**Eligibility:** Having a disability does not automatically qualify a student for special education services under IDEIA. The disability must result in the student needing additional or different services to participate in school.

**IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004):** A United States federal law that governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to children with disabilities.

**IEP (Individualized Education Program):** The IEP specifies the services to be provided, how often, present levels of performance, how the student's disability affects academic performance and specifies accommodations and modifications to be provided for the student.

**IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan):** The IFSP is a strengths-based plan of the care for the infant/toddler with a developmental delay or disability. The plan is based on a child and family assessment of strengths and needs as well as the results of multidisciplinary evaluations administered by qualified professionals who meet their state's certification guidelines.

**LRE (Least Restrictive Environment):** Based on IDEIA, to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with students who are nondisabled; special classes, separate schooling, or removal of students with disabilities from the regular environment occurs only if the nature and severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

**Memorandum of Understanding:** A bilateral or multi-lateral agreement between two or more parties. It expresses an intended common line of action and does not imply a legal commitment. It is a more formal alternative to a "gentleman's agreement."

**Part B:** Statute within IDEIA which provides educational services for children ages three-21 who have been determined to have a categorical disability.

**Part C:** Statute within IDEIA which provides early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities.

**Transition Team:** A group of individuals who are knowledgeable about the child's strengths and needs who assist the child when moving from one service provider, such as Part C to Part B at age three and when transitioning from preschool to kindergarten.