

## **8. Toddler to Preschool Transition Process**

### **CAPITAL AREA INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT**

#### **ON**

#### **TRANSITION**

##### **Purpose Statement**

Each year many young children transition from Infant/Toddler Programs to Preschool EI programs. At one time, the service options for these children were limited, with the majority of children receiving services through a special education preschool program. However, there is growing recognition that the individual needs of children and families may be met in a variety of settings. While children under the age of three are the regulatory and fiscal responsibility of the county MH/IDD programs, starting at age three, eligible children are the regulatory and fiscal responsibility of the EI Preschool agency (CAIU). In order to ensure that children and their families experience a smooth transition, this interagency agreement is intended to promote procedures that are a collaborative effort between families, the Cumberland/Perry, Dauphin, and York/Adams Counties MH/IDD Programs, the Capital Area Intermediate Unit, Capital Area and Shippensburg Head Start and service providers. These procedures will ensure that each

eligible child will have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in place by the child's third birthday.

Children referred to the Infant/Toddler program within 45 days of their third birthday will immediately be referred to the CAIU for screening and/or Initial Evaluation. The IU's eligibility determination process will be initiated upon receipt of the referral. Children who are referred between 46 and 90 days of their third birthday are the regulatory and fiscal responsibility of the county MH/IDD programs. The county programs and the Intermediate Unit will immediately collaborate to complete the evaluation of the child and simultaneously develop Evaluation Reports and Service Plans to avoid duplicative assessments and ensure continuous services for the child and family which meet compliance requirements for Part C and Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

For children enrolled in the County 0-3 programs prior to the 90 day transition period before the 3rd birthday, formal transition planning begins when the child turns 2 years, 3 months old with the development of the Transition Plan that defines a transition outcome sought by the family and the steps required to get there. The Transition Plan, found within the child's IFSP, shall be developed not fewer than 90 days and, at the discretion of all parties, not more than 9 months before the toddler's third birthday. Transition Plans are updated during periodic IFSP reviews to document the team's progress toward the implementation of transition activities. Transition planning meetings are held with each family 5 to 6 months prior to the third birthday so that families, 0-3 Teams and IU staff can collaborate on the completion of Evaluations, IFSP changes involving the addition of a new service or the increase in frequency/duration of an existing service, and referrals to other ECE partners such as Head Start and Pre K Counts programs. Transition Plans are revised to document new activities identified during the planning meeting. This process helps to ensure the appropriate development of the IEP prior to the child's third birthday and promotes a seamless transition for the child and family.

##### **Transmitting Information**

##### **Obtaining Informed Consent**

We believe it is essential to ensure informed consent for the purpose of providing for the confidentiality of children and their families. Parents must sign a consent form for detailed, personal information such as Evaluations, IFSPs, progress reports, etc. to be shared with the CAIU. However, basic demographic information including the child and parents names and contact information is provided without parent consent to the Preschool program by the Bureau of Early Intervention Services (BEIS) as required by IDEA regulations to ensure the Infant/Toddler EI program has identified all children potentially eligible for Preschool EI services. Prior to April 2 of each year, and on a quarterly basis thereafter, BEIS will

identify and provide to the Preschool EI program the aggregate number of children who will turn 3 during the upcoming fiscal year and may be eligible for the Preschool EI program.

### **Forwarding Detailed Information**

Collaboration between families, counties, the IU, Head Start and service providers will occur six (6) times a year in the form of transition planning meetings. It is the responsibility of the Infant/Toddler Early Intervention Service Coordinator Supervisor to coordinate these transition-planning meetings with a CAIU Early Intervention representative. The meetings will be scheduled as follows:

**January for June/July birthdays**

**March for August/September birthdays**

**May for October/November birthdays**

**July for December/January birthdays**

**September for February/March birthdays**

**November for April/May birthdays**

The Service Coordinator or SC Supervisor ensures the transmission of the child's Evaluation Report and Individual Family Service Plan (including Transition Plan) to the CAIU through the PELICAN- EI shared data system prior to the transition planning meeting. The Service Coordinators will confirm that the family's demographic information is current before the child's record is transferred to the CAIU, and the CAIU transition planning meeting coordinator will confirm the family's contact information at the meeting as well. Both programs are responsible for ensuring that federally mandated child outcome data is entered in PELICAN-EI at the time of a child's transition to the preschool program as appropriate. Data should be based on information from the OUNCE tool developmental profiles and the ECO process Decision Tree and is entered for all children who have had 6 consecutive months of early intervention services. The CAIU will enter the Infant/Toddler program's exit data as their own entry data.

At least 30 days prior to the required Transition meeting, the Infant/Toddler Early Intervention Service Coordinators will schedule with and notify by letter ("Invitation to Participate in a Transition Meeting") each family whose child will be included in the transition planning. Meeting dates, times and locations are scheduled in regard to family needs, including an option for a phone conference. A tip sheet is included with the Invitation Letter. This form offers helpful questions for families to consider and should be referenced during the meeting in order to promote a meaningful discussion of the child's transition to Preschool EI. The CAIU, EI service providers and other appropriate community agencies will also receive the written meeting notice.

The Infant/Toddler Early Intervention Service Coordinator Supervisor will assist, as needed, in the notification of all early intervention providers and Head Start of the date(s) of the planning meetings. The providers will be advised to contact the Supervisor for a final meeting schedule if they would like to attend a particular child's planning meeting. Each of the child's service providers will send the most recent Quarterly Progress Monitoring Report to the child's CAIU transition meeting coordinator in time for review at the scheduled transition planning meeting.

The Infant/Toddler Early Intervention Service Coordinator will notify the designated CAIU Service Coordinator of any additional evaluations or addendums to the IFSP which are generated or are due between the time of the planning meeting and the child's preschool evaluation and/or IEP meeting. Infant/Toddler programs will share Annual eligibility evaluation due dates at the Transition meeting so that, if possible, evaluations completed by IU staff can meet those timelines. In the event that the IU is unable to meet the Infant/Toddler program's Annual Evaluation timelines, the county

program will be responsible for entering the continued eligibility information into the data system as required. In the event that the CAIU is completing the Evaluation, the service provider will forward to the CAIU all updated progress reports or assessment information.

The CAIU will initiate and coordinate the preschool EI evaluation and IEP planning process. The child's Infant/Toddler Service Coordinator and service provider(s) will support the process. If the CAIU is unsuccessful in reaching a family to schedule the preschool EI evaluation and/or IEP planning, the CAIU will contact the Infant/Toddler Service Coordinator to assist in making contact.

### **Discussing Transition with Families**

Transition is discussed with families throughout their early intervention experience beginning at first contact, and transition is discussed at every IFSP meeting. Transition is a positive experience and is communicated in such a way that promotes a family's well-being and active participation in this collaborative effort. Professionals have access to the "EI Infant/Toddler and Family Guidelines to Support the EI process: Transition", a statewide resource developed in June 2012 that is available on the EITA portal and/or PaTTAN site.

Transitioning to the preschool program is only one of the opportunities a family has when their child turns three, and some children may not meet preschool EI eligibility requirements. The local Infant/Toddler EI programs can help families plan for what will happen after the third birthday, and determine what supports are needed to prepare the child, family or other community partners for success in the next learning environment. Transition planning meetings are held with the team, including the family, for all children prior to expected exits from early intervention services, or within 15 calendar days following a determination that the child is no longer eligible for Infant/Toddler EI. Families are informed of all their choices as they relate to transition. Children continuing to receive EI services should participate in community early childhood education programs with their typically developing peers as much as possible. The Service Coordinator or team may discuss enrollment in Head Start or use of other community services available for young children. The local Infant/Toddler EI Program staff will provide anticipatory guidance to families as they make community preschool decisions for their child including the timelines for registering and the age cut off of such programs. Infant/Toddler staff will not, however, make service or placement recommendations to families about what the preschool EI program should provide after the child turns three.

### **Conflict Resolution Procedures**

In cases where a plan of appropriate services, duration, frequency, placement, etc., cannot be agreed upon for the transition year, any party, including the parents, may request resolution of the dispute. A course of action for dispute resolution as described in the OCDEL Announcement: EI-13#1 Transition of Toddlers to Preschool or Other Community Services, issued January 30, 2013 will be followed

## **9. Preschool to School Age Transition Process**

### **CAPITAL AREA INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT**

#### **ON TRANSITION TO SCHOOL AGE PROGRAMMING**

##### **I. Purpose Statement**

The process for children and families in making a transition from Early Intervention Services to School Age Programming is a significant change in educational programming and in the lives of families. This interagency agreement for school age transition is intended to promote a collaborative effort between families, school districts, and the CAIU Early Intervention program and service providers.

##### **2. Transmitting Information**

### **a. Sharing Information with School Districts**

The Early Intervention Program may forward EI records to the receiving school district, without parental permission, where: (1) the child continues to have a disability and does not meet exit criteria (2) the IEP demonstrates that the child will benefit from special education, and (3) there is intent to enroll the child in the receiving school district. The last condition can be verified by the parent's signature on an "Intent to Register" form provided as part of the transition to school age process. Section III. "Special Considerations", in the IEP identifies that the child as a preschooler within 1 year of transition to a program for Kindergarten age children. Section X. "Transition Plan" outlines the goals, activities, and services designed to ensure a smooth transition to school age programming.

### **b. Releasing Information**

Names, addresses, phone numbers, ERs and IEPs are released to school districts starting in September of the year before transition. The CAIU works with service providers to obtain updated demographic and document information.

### **c. Transition Timeline**

During November and December of the year before transition, general Parent Orientation meetings are held for families with their school district and the CAIU Transition Coordinator to explain the Transition Timeline and the types of services offered by school districts. Transition to School - A Planning Guide for Parents, a booklet detailing information about the transition process, is distributed to families with the help of service providers.

In January and February, individual transition meetings are held for each family with school districts, CAIU staff, and service providers to plan the process of how the children will receive uninterrupted services from early intervention to school age programming. It is the responsibility of the CAIU to schedule these meetings and send out invitations to these meetings to parents, school districts, and case managers of service providers.

In May, individual transition meetings are held for children who are newly evaluated between February and April.

It is the responsibility of school districts to complete the transition process so that children receive school age services as they enter Kindergarten or first grade. CAIU preschool staff and service providers support the school districts by attending school age ER and IEP meetings if requested.

## **3. Planning for Transition with Families**

Within one year of transition, the CAIU Early Intervention Program begins a process for children receiving Early Intervention Services to transition to school age programming. Parents, teachers, therapists, case managers, service providers, and school district representatives work as collaborative teams for each child who is eligible to transition to school age programming to ensure a smooth process. A Transition Plan is added to each child's IEP and discussed with families to outline the process and to help the parents feel comfortable with the process.

A course of action for dispute resolution as described in the Early Intervention Transition Announcement: EI-09 #19 (October 20, 2009). "If parents disagree with the IEPs offered by their school districts or charter schools and initiate a due process hearing or both parties agree to mediation, the children who will transition to Kindergarten or school age programs must continue to receive the services described in their preschool IEPs (ensuring "status quo") pending completion of dispute resolution options of mediation or due process hearings."