

**CENTRAL INDIANA FIRST STEPS
LOCAL PLANNING AND COORDINATING COUNCIL**
Central Indiana First Steps Cluster G
(Serving Hamilton, Hendricks, Johnson, Marion,
Morgan, & Tipton Counties)

**PART B & PART C
BEST PRACTICE TRANSITION GUIDELINES**

This agreement between the agencies listed below and the Central Indiana First Steps Local Planning and Coordinating Council, hereafter referred to as the CILPCC, the LPCC, or the Council, applies to children enrolled in First Steps Early Intervention Services who are referred to their local early childhood special education program or other collaborating agency with parental consent. The special education agencies within Central Indiana are as follows:

- Indiana School for the Blind & Visually Impaired (ISBVI)
- Indiana School for the Deaf (ISD)
- Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS)
- MSD of Lawrence Township
- MSD of Warren Township
- MSD of Washington Township
- Beech Grove School Corporation
- MSD of Decatur Township
- MSD of Franklin Township
- Perry Township Schools
- Danville School Corp
- Monroe – Gregg School Corp
- Mooresville Consolidated School Corp
- Avon School Corp
- Brownsburg School Corp
- Plainfield School Corp
- MSD of Pike Township
- MSD of Wayne Township
- Hamilton-Boone-Madison Special Services (*Frankton Lapel, Hamilton Heights Schools, Options Charter School of Noblesville and Carmel, Sheridan Community Schools, Noblesville Schools, South Madison Community School Corporation*)
- Westfield Washington Schools
- Hamilton Southeastern School Corporation
- Carmel Clay Schools
- Earlywood Educational Center
- Clark-Pleasant School Corporation
- Center Grove School Corporation
- Tipton Community School Corporation
- Tri-Central Community Schools

- Boone Clinton NW Hendricks Joint Services (Northwest Hendricks School Corporation)
- Old National Trail Special Education Co-op (Eminence School Corporation & Mill Creek Schools)
- MSD of Martinsville
- Speedway Schools

Collaborating Agencies

- Family Development Services (includes Head Start and Early Head Start)
- Human Services Inc. (Head Start)
- Community Development Institute (Head Start)
- VIPS
- Early Learning Indiana
- Center For Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education
- TMC (Migrant Head Start)
- Kokomo Center School Corp/Head Start
- St. Joseph Institute for the Deaf

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this agreement is to make transition from the First Steps system to services available to children aged 3-5 years under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) effective and efficient. We recognize that a transition from early intervention to an early childhood program is a major event in a child's life. We believe that family participation is crucial to a successful transition and wish to include families in all aspects of transition planning.

II. VALUE

It is our commitment:

- to keep each other well informed
- to avoid duplication of effort
- to close gaps in service delivery
- to provide services that are appropriate
- to ensure that needs and aspirations of families and children are at the center of each child's transition
- to deliver services in the least restrictive environment

III. ACQUAINTING FAMILIES WITH PROCEDURES, ISSUES, AND RIGHTS

Initially Informing the Family

When early intervention (EI) services begin, the service coordinator will inform the family about the "transition process" that takes place at age three years and will continue to discuss this subject periodically as the timeline for transition services outlined in this document unfolds.

Providing More Formal Information to the Family

The service coordinator will provide printed information describing the transition process, rights and procedures to the family. The Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) will include goals and activities relative to transitions at any point.

Explaining the laws, procedures and legal rights of children and families is viewed as a joint responsibility of the sending and receiving entities. *The Parent Transition Guide* is presented to families and was produced by the State of Indiana and reviewed by the Transition Committee of the Central Indiana First Steps Council, which includes representation from First Steps and the local education agencies (LEA).

Familiarizing Families with Spectrum of Program Options

The sending and receiving entities will provide families with a variety of ways to become familiar with the continuum of services available for children after they turn three years of age. Families will be encouraged to learn about programs that three year olds attend, including those that are open to the general public and those that are restricted based on eligibility criteria. All decisions about the child's programming needs will be made prior to the child's third birth date.

Transmission of Information and Early Childhood Notification

First Steps will notify the LEA (where the toddler receiving Part C services resides) that a toddler who is receiving Part C services and who is potentially eligible for Part B services will shortly turn three years of age and exit the Part C program. Federal law requires notification must occur not fewer than 90 days prior to the child's third birthday; state law (IDOE) requires the notification to occur at least 6 months prior to a child's third birthday.

Each month, state First Steps staff will produce a list of all children who are or will be turning 30 months of age during the reporting period. The monthly list of children is sent electronically to the local First Steps System Points of Entry (SPOEs). In addition to the children turning 30 months of age, late referrals are also identified (children who were referred and an IFSP written after 30 months of age) and are included in the list sent to the local First Steps SPOEs.

- Within Ten working days, the SPOE will forward the list to the local LEA for eligible children residing within the LEA's service area. Members of the Transition Committee agreed to extend the requirement to ten days for more accurate information.
- The list provided to LEA and the First Steps SPOEs contains the child's name, date of birth, ethnicity, and parent name(s) and, at a minimum, directory information (address and phone number).
- First Steps does not have an opt-out policy, thus parental consent is not required to send directory information to the local LEA.

Forwarding Detailed Information

At 30 months of age or as soon as identified thereafter up to 36 months, the service coordinator will complete and forward the *First Steps 30 Month Notice to Local Educational Agency¹* to the LEA.

Additionally, the service coordinator will include the following documentation:

- Most Recent IFSP
- Social History
- Eligibility Form

- Reciprocal Release
- Recent Assessments and Progress Summaries
- Physician's Health Summary

If a child is receiving First Steps services and the parent refuses consent to refer to Part B, or refuses consent for initial evaluation at the time of the transition conference (6 months prior to 3rd birthday), and later wants to initiate a referral to Part B, First Steps should advise the parent to make a referral to the LEA, or assist the parent to do so.

When a child begins First Steps services and will be 29 months of age or older at the IFSP due date (which is 45 calendar days* from the date of referral) the service coordinator will be responsible to facilitate the transition process. These responsibilities will include, but are not limited to the following:

- Inform the family about First Steps and the transition process at the initial Intake appointment
- If the family agrees to involve the LEA, the service coordinator will obtain the appropriate written consent
- Notify the LEA contact person of pending referral
- Communicate the eligibility status of the child to the LEA as soon as it can be determined
- Coordinate and conduct a transition meeting in conjunction with the initial IFSP which should include the family, LEA contact, and service coordinator *
- Record the meeting minutes and discussion using state forms
- Forward all appropriate documentation generated by First Steps to the LEA

If First Steps determines that a child is eligible for early intervention services more than 45 days but less than 90 days before the child's third birthday, First Steps will provide the transition notification as soon as possible after determining the child's eligibility and notify the LEA (where the child receiving Part C services resides) that a child who is receiving Part C services is potentially eligible for services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

If a child is referred to the First Steps fewer than 45 days before the toddler's third birthday, First Steps is not required to conduct an evaluation, assessment, or initial Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting. If that child may be eligible for preschool services under Part B of the IDEA, First Steps, with parental consent (if applicable and required under §303.414), must refer the toddler, as soon as possible, to the LEA where the toddler resides. When a late referral (less than 45 days before the toddler's third birthday) occurs and First Steps has not completed an evaluation, assessment, or initial IFSP meeting, the LEA must make reasonable efforts to conduct the education evaluation and convene the case conference committee (CCC) as soon as possible, but in no case later than 50 instructional days of receiving written parental consent for the evaluation. (511 IAC 7-32 through 49).

*First Steps is required by federal law to have an IFSP completed for all eligible children within forty-five (45) calendar days from the date of referral. In order to accommodate that timeline, meetings must be scheduled with priority given to the family and service coordinator schedules. LEA contacts will be invited to attend transition meetings convened by service coordinators and every attempt will be made to schedule meetings at times mutually convenient to all parties involved, however, this may not always be possible.

Preparing for the Transition Meeting

The service coordinator will discuss with the family the importance of providing a complete assessment picture. The service coordinator can facilitate the organization of this information. The service coordinator will assist the family in gathering other information that is required by the school system. This includes proof of residency, immunization records and birth certificate, which will allow for the initiation of preschool special education services. The family will be encouraged to share additional medical, educational, or therapeutic information that may be helpful to the receiving agency.

Transition Meeting to Part B (90-270 days prior to child's third birthday)

The IFSP must include the steps taken to support the transition of the child and family from the First Steps system. For the purposes of this agreement, we will focus on activities to ensure a smooth transition of a child and family to services provided by the local public school system under part B of (IDEA)².

A transition conference for a toddler with a disability who may be eligible for Part B services must include discussion of any services the toddler may receive under Part B. If a toddler with a disability is not potentially eligible for preschool services under Part B then reasonable efforts should be made to hold a conference to discuss other appropriate services that the toddler may receive.

Service coordinators will have the following responsibilities:

- Prior to the transition meeting, provide the parents with the transition resource materials available to the cluster (e.g. transition video, parent handbook, etc.)
- Schedule transition meeting with the parents and the LEA representative, on a mutually agreed upon time and day. The meeting must be held no later than 90 days before the toddler's third birthday, but, at the discretion of all parties, may occur up to nine months before the toddler's third birthday
- Consult in this order to schedule: parent, LEA, additional agencies (i.e. Head Start agencies, ISD, ISBVI, VIPS, Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education, etc.), service providers
- Secure interpreters (i.e. Spanish, ASL, etc.) as appropriate
- Complete other responsibilities as outlined in the Indiana Administrative Code 470-3.1-11-4 on service coordinator Responsibilities³
- Make every effort to complete the transition meeting for children with birthdays occurring within the months of June, July or August by March 1st

LEA representatives will have the following responsibilities:

- Review all records received and determine the need for any additional evaluation
- Review procedural safeguards with parents and provide a written copy as outlined in Article 7, 511 IAC 7-32 through 49 on Procedural Safeguards⁴
- Review the continuum of services available
- Complete other responsibilities as outlined in Article 7 of Indiana Administrative Code 511

Head Start representatives will have the follow responsibilities:

- Receive referrals from the First Steps service coordinators on First Steps children, with parental permission
- Attend the 90-270 day Transition meeting and the initial IEP/Case Conference when appropriate
- Accept First Steps children that are ineligible for the special education preschool and who are age and income eligible or are determined as in need of Head Start services when slots are available
- Dually enroll children who qualify for both the special education preschool and who are age and income eligible or are in need of Head Start services
- Help facilitate the transition process as appropriate

Evaluation of Child

LEA representatives will follow the guidelines mandated in Article 7, 511 IAC 7-32 through 49 on the Initial Education Evaluation and State MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING Contract #00000000000000000021429 issued on August 3, 2017 which outlines First Steps and LEA roles and responsibilities at the Transition Meeting as agreed upon by the FSSA, Bureau of Child Development's First Steps division and the Indiana Department of Education. Each case conference will include the following representatives as appropriate: parent, LEA, additional agencies (i.e. Head Start agencies, ISD, ISBVI, VIPS, Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education, etc.), service providers.

Case Conference Committee Meetings

The LEA will schedule a case conference meeting with family to identify the needs of the child and determine eligibility for services. If the child is eligible for services, the committee will then identify placement options in the least restrictive environment.

- Each case conference will include the following representatives as appropriate: parent, LEA, additional agencies (i.e. Head Start agencies, ISD, ISBVI, VIPS, Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education, etc.), service providers and/or individuals with specific knowledge about the child.
- The Case Conference Committee will convene to determine eligibility and an IEP will be developed for eligible children by the child's third birthday, ensuring Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).
- If a child turns three during the summer and the case conference committee has recommended extended school year services in the IEP, the LEA must provide them. Otherwise, the services may be initiated at the beginning of the upcoming year.

IV. Monitoring the Part B & Part C Collaboration Guidelines

A transition committee consisting of at least one parent and representatives of First Steps and each participating LEA will be formed as a standing committee of the Central Indiana First Steps Council to discuss and monitor these guidelines. Representatives from other sending and receiving programs will also be invited to participate on the committee.

The committee will meet a minimum of three (3) times a year. Members of the committee will collect data from participating programs and from families who have undergone the transition process. This will include feedback regarding satisfaction with the process as well as identification of gaps and overlaps in services. Parties to these guidelines may bring to the

attention of committee members, at any time, information as to whether the letter and spirit of these guidelines are being respected and implemented.

This agreement shall remain in effect unless and until modifications are made in state or federal legislation regarding IDEA Part B & Part C. The Part B & Part C Collaboration Guidelines are accepted and supported by the undersigned. After this agreement is signed, it will be disseminated by all appropriate methods and distributed to:

- Service coordinators (via SPOE management staff)
- Each LEA

V. Conflict Resolution

When a concern arises regarding the activities outlined in this agreement all parties involved should discuss the situation in an effort to bring about a resolution. If the concern is not or can not be resolved in a satisfactory manner, in a mutually agreed upon period of time, proceed by contacting a Central Indiana Cluster G LPCC Coordinator. At which point the concern will be brought before the Transition Committee for review and for a decision to be made on future action (e.g. scheduling a meeting between parties, establishing new procedures, complying with current procedures, escalating to an authoritative body, etc.). Following the review, a representative of the Transition Committee will inform the complainant of the Transition Committee's response to their concern. All concerns will be addressed through the appropriate chain of command. If the parties to a dispute cannot resolve the dispute within ten (10) working days following notification in writing by either party of the existence of a dispute, then the following procedure shall apply: The parties agree to resolve such matters through submission of their dispute to both the Director of First Steps and the Director of Special Education. The Director of First Steps and the Director of Special Education shall confer and produce a decision in writing and furnish a copy thereof to the parties in dispute. Any dispute arising hereunder that cannot be resolved by the Director of First Steps and the Director of Special Education, or their designees, shall be promptly submitted to the Secretary of FSSA and the Superintendent of Public Instruction for resolution. If still unresolved, the dispute shall be submitted to the Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Administration (IDOA).

An CILPCC Coordinator can be contacted at the following:

Central Indiana Council Coordinator
1776 N. Meridian Street, Suite 300
Indianapolis, IN 46202
317-257-2229
council@cibaby.org

This document, which is not a legally binding contract, but rather a best practice guideline for transition from Part C to Part B, has been reviewed and signed by the following Transition Committee members:

Central Indiana First Steps Council Representative

Date

Transition Committee Member, Other Collaborating Agency

Date

Transition Committee Member, Other Collaborating Agency

Date

Transition Committee Member, Parent

Date

Transition Committee Member

Date

Transition Committee Member, Local Education Agency

Date

Transition Committee Member, Local Education Agency

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¹ The *First Steps 30 Month Notice to Local Educational Agency (LEA)* is State Form 51673. You may access this form at <http://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/2817.htm>.

² Refer to *First Steps Issue Clarification #503-11-044 on First Steps 90 Day Transition Meetings and Local Education Agency (LEA or Public School System) Case Conference Committee Meetings* which is located at <http://www.in.gov/fssa/files/issue044.pdf>.

³ The Indiana Administrative Code (IAC) on Service Coordinator Responsibilities (470 IAC 3.1-10-2) can be accessed via the state's site at <http://www.in.gov/legislative/iac/T04700/A00031.PDF>.

⁴ Indiana's Administrative Code 511 of Article 7 can be accessed via the State's site at <http://www.in.gov/legislative/iac/title511.html>.