



Idaho Infant Toddler Program Family Guide for Transition

What Happens When My Child Turns Three?



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Introduction

The Idaho Infant Toddler Program (ITP) serves eligible children from birth to three years of age. Eventually, all families will end their partnership with ITP and may move on to other community programs. Moving from one program to another is often referred to as a transition. By law, your involvement with ITP ends no later than your child's third birthday.

New people will enter your life as you plan to move beyond the Infant Toddler Program. Before your child reaches the age of three, you and your service coordinator need to plan for the move from ITP to other program(s) your family may choose to participate in.

Transition is different for every family. There are several ways your child may make the transition from ITP to the next step in his or her growth and learning:

- Your child may leave ITP before age three.
- Your child may be eligible for special education services through your local school district at age three.
- Your child may transition to other available supports in your community at age three.

Your child's service coordinator will assist you and your child as you move on to new programs and settings.

This family guide has been created to help prepare you for your child's transition from ITP, in order to:

- Introduce you to the transition process;
- Describe the school district notification process;
- Describe the transition conference;
- Describe the school district eligibility process (if applicable);
- Prepare your child and family for a smooth transition; and
- Help provide ideas and resources that can help you during the transition process.

You know your child's and family's needs better than anyone. Therefore, you and your family are the most important part of each step in the transition process.

Overview of the Transition Process

At the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting closest to your child's second birthday...

- ✎ Your service coordinator will begin to discuss potential transition options.

Between the ages of 2 years 3 months and 2 years 9 months of age...

- ✎ If your child is potentially eligible for special education services through your local school district, his or her basic information will be shared with the school district.
- ✎ A Transition Plan will be developed in your child's IFSP to outline steps and services to ensure a smooth transition out of ITP.
- ✎ With your approval, a Transition Conference will be held.
- ✎ With your consent, your child's current IFSP and other relevant information will be provided to the school district.

Before your child's third birthday...

- ✎ If your child is potentially eligible, your school district will evaluate your child to determine whether he or she is eligible for special education services.
- ✎ If your child is eligible for special education services, you will work with your school district to develop a plan to meet your child's needs.
- ✎ If your child is not eligible for special education services, you and your service coordinator will discuss other community resources that may potentially meet the ongoing needs of your child.

By your child's third birthday...

- ✎ Your child will transition out of the Infant Toddler Program.

Planning Ahead: The Transition Process

Transitions are natural events for all of us, and you will continue to support your child through many types of life transitions. Remember your first day of school? What about the day you brought your new baby home? Successful transitions require planning ahead and working with others who can help. When a toddler enrolled in the Infant Toddler Program approaches three years of age, several steps will occur that will help create a smooth transition into other supportive opportunities. These steps are what we mean when we refer to the transition process.

Your service coordinator and other service providers will help you learn about options that will be available when your child turns three. Some of these options might include:

- Special education services in your local school district;
- Community preschools, or other toddler programs;
- Faith-based preschools;
- Child care centers;
- Library story hour;
- Family support groups/parent workshops;
- Community recreation groups (including play groups);
- Private therapy such as occupational, physical, or speech therapy;
- Head Start; or
- Children's Medicaid Developmental Disability Services.



Transition Planning

Beginning Your Child's Transition Plan

At or around your child's second birthday, your service coordinator will begin to discuss the transition process with you. Between the time your child turns two years three months and two years nine months of age, a transition conference meeting will be held during which you and other members of your IFSP team will develop the Transition Plan as part of your child's IFSP. Be sure that everyone you wish to be invited, such as your child care provider(s), service provider(s), relative(s), or friend(s), are included. The Transition Plan will document steps and services to support a smooth transition when your child turns three years of age.

The Transition Plan is a part of your child's IFSP and is developed with your input. It identifies how you, your service coordinator, and the rest of your child's team will help and plan for your child and family to move beyond the Infant Toddler Program at age three. This plan includes a description of the transition steps and services the IFSP team, including you, determines necessary to support a smooth transition for your child. This plan can be updated at any time. The steps of this plan include, but are not limited to:

- How your child and family will exit the Infant Toddler Program;
- How you will be informed of, and included in, the transition process, including a review of your child's program options;
- Procedures to prepare your child for changes in service delivery and strategies to help your child adjust to, and function in, a new setting; and
- Any transition services and other activities that the IFSP team identifies as needed by your child or family to support the transition.

It helps if you begin transition planning early so that you have enough time to explore options for your child and family, determine the best placement for your child, and put in place other supports and services that will make the transition easier.

During the year before your child turns three, it will be helpful for you to:

- Think of goals you might have for your child in the next year.
- Discuss your questions and concerns about your child's transition with your service coordinator and early intervention provider.
- Reflect on ways you would like to update your child's IFSP.
- Consider visiting various program options in your community as part of making your decisions.
- If you're considering special education services through your local school district, take time to learn about this program including planning a visit to the school.

Notifying the Local School District and Lead Educational Agency

If your child is potentially eligible for special education services, your service coordinator will talk to you about sending basic information about your child to the school district. Sharing this information will begin the transition process from the Infant Toddler Program to your local school district for potential special education services.

Your child's basic information is shared no fewer than 90 days before your child's third birthday with the local school district and lead educational agency, and includes the following:

- Child's name;
- Child's date of birth; and
- Parent contact information (including parents' names, addresses, and telephone numbers).

It is important for the Infant Toddler Program to share this information with the local school district to notify them of any potential children that may be eligible to receive special education services. The Infant Toddler Program is able to share your child's basic information without parental consent due to provisions in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Even though your child's information is shared, your child does not have to participate in a school district program. It is your choice to identify which, if any, programs you want your child to participate in when they turn three years of age.



Transition Conference

Families of all children leaving the Infant Toddler Program will take part in a transition conference to discuss possible future support and services. This meeting will help to identify all possible transition options for your child and prepare you for his or her transition from the Infant Toddler Program. With your consent, a transition conference will be arranged by your service coordinator. This meeting must occur between the time your child is two years three months and two years nine months of age.

A transition conference meeting can never be held without a parent or legal guardian in attendance. Other people who will be included in your transition conference meeting are:

- Your service coordinator;
- Infant Toddler Program providers (when applicable);
- A representative from your school district, **if** your child may be eligible for special education services; and
- Family members, friends, and/or other advocates of your choice.

If your child may be eligible for special education services and the representative from the school district is unable to attend, your service coordinator will still conduct the transition conference as scheduled, unless you opt to reschedule the meeting.

Your transition conference may be scheduled to occur at the same time as the IFSP meeting in which the Transition Plan will be developed. If this is the case, in addition to a representative from the school district, all of the required participants for the IFSP meeting must attend.

If someone is unable to attend that you feel is vital to a successful transition conference for your child, you can ask your service coordinator to reschedule the meeting to a time that works better for all parties.

During the transition conference, you will continue to develop a plan to prepare your child for new experiences, and focus on ways to help your child experience success. Ask as many questions as you have, or can think of, and feel free to write some down before the meeting.

Some Questions to Ask at the Transition Conference

- How will the school district decide if my child is eligible for special education?
- What kind of testing will be needed?
- Who can we call if we have questions?
- What are some of the similarities and differences between the Infant Toddler Program and school district special education services?
- What other community resources exist that we would like to learn more about?

School District Eligibility Determination

The local school district is responsible for determining eligibility for special education services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The determination will be made by a team of qualified professionals from the school district.

For your child to be eligible for special education services through your local school district, all three of the following criteria must be met:

1. The eligibility requirements established by the state for a specific disability are met;
2. The disability must have an adverse impact on the student's education; **and**
3. The child must need special education in order to benefit from his or her education.

If your child is deemed eligible for special education services, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is created. The IEP is a document that describes how your school district will meet your child's educational needs during the school year.

An IEP includes the following information:

- Your child's present levels of performance and development.
- Goals that describe what you and the rest of your child's IEP team would like to see your child achieve over the next school year.
- Activities and strategies for meeting your child's goals.
- Amount and type of special education and related services your child will receive.
- Starting date and length of time that services will be provided.
- Methods for measuring progress toward your child's goals.
- Staff who will be providing services.
- Locations of services. The standard for schools is called Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), which means that children with disabilities must be educated with children who do not have disabilities.



Preparing Your Child and Family for a Smooth Transition

Preparing Your Child

The following information includes some ways you can help your child during the transition process:

- Learn about what will be the same and what will be different about your child's daily experiences.
- Identify what strengths your child has that you think will be important to consider when your child transitions to another setting and share those with the people who will be involved.
- Identify areas where your child may need additional support and share your ideas for what might help your child succeed with their team.

The following include skills important to transition that have a lot to do with your child's unique personality:

- How easily your child warms up to new people, places, and things.
- How easily your child adapts to change, including shifting from one activity or setting to another.
- How sensitive your child is to sights, sounds, and other sensory input.
- Your child's general mood (happy, sad).
- Whether your child is easygoing or gets frustrated easily.
- Your child's activity level (very busy, or not).
- How persistent your child is at getting what he or she wants, or avoiding tasks and activities he/she does not like.
- How your child attends to different activities, people, and places.

In addition, your child's transition will be influenced by his or her developmental abilities or skills. Think about these areas and share what you see as your child's strengths and areas of need with your child's team as part of the transition planning process:

- **Communication skills:** How does your child understand and use words, signs, and/or pictures, or other means to communicate?
- **Social skills:** How does your child interact and get along with others; how comfortable is your child in larger groups of children?
- **Self-Care skills:** How does your child take care of his or her own daily living needs, such as eating, toileting, washing, and dressing?
- **Motor skills:** How can your child get around the classroom, playground, etc.; how well can your child use his or her hands to do things?
- **Learning skills:** How easily does your child learn; does your child learn by watching others, trying things on his or her own, listening to directions, etc.?

Considering some of your child's characteristics outlined on the previous page can help you identify areas where additional support may be needed. These may include but are not limited to:

- Being in a group social setting with children of different ages;
- Using a new form of transportation such as a van or bus;
- Getting used to new friends, new teachers, or a new building;
- Taking a nap in a new place;
- Being away from home for a longer period of time or for more days each week;
- Doing more things independently; and
- Being separated from you.

Any ideas you have about these areas of change can be included in your Transition Plan so that the process is as smooth as possible.

Preparing Your Family

When your child moves from the Infant Toddler Program, there will also be some changes for you and your family. The transition period is a perfect opportunity to ask questions and get information about how the new program or setting will be different from what you and your child have experienced up until now. Remember, you are leaving the Infant Toddler Program because your child has achieved a milestone.

You may have mixed feelings about your child's transition and feel both anxious and uncertain. You may have questions such as: "Will my child fit in?", or "Will my child be able to do what everyone else is doing?" These are questions that you should talk about with your service coordinator, early intervention providers, school district (if applicable) and others that are helping you and your child during the transition process. While it is not uncommon for change to be a challenge, it is helpful to remember that this is a normal and exciting part of childhood. Take time to celebrate this next step in your child's journey!



Names, Dates, and Information to Remember

My Infant Toddler Program Service Coordinator:

NAME:

PHONE:

My School District Contact Person:

NAME/TITLE:

SCHOOL DISTRICT:

PHONE:

ITP Transition Conference Scheduled For:

DATE:

TIME:

LOCATION:

IEP Meeting with School District Scheduled For:

DATE:

TIME:

LOCATION:

Other:

Community Programs:

Notes: