DAUPHIN COUNTY MH/ID PROGRAM
POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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Policy No.  12-07
Effective Date  1-16-12
Revision Date  10-4-13

Approved

Title: Transition at Age Three

Policy: The Dauphin County Early Intervention Program will assure that children served in the birth to age three program are appropriately transitioned to the preschool early intervention program, and appropriately transitioned at all other times as needed.

Background: The Dauphin County MH/ID Program is fiscally responsible for the child’s program up until his/her third birthday. The Capital Area Intermediate Unit/Schuylkill IU programs become fiscally responsible on the child’s third birthday, if the child continues to be eligible. This policy establishes the transition process for Dauphin County infants and toddlers enrolled in the early intervention system and transitioning to the preschool early intervention system administered by the Capital Area Intermediate Unit at the age of three. The Dauphin County MH/ID Program has been designated by the Department of Public Welfare to be the local lead agency for providing services to infants and toddlers with disabilities from birth through two years of age, inclusive. The Capital Area Intermediate Unit has been designated as the local lead agency for providing services and programs to most eligible young children in Dauphin County from their third birthday onward. This transition process, developed in collaboration with the Capital Area Intermediate Unit, strives to establish uninterrupted services for the child and family. A few children living in the Williams Valley School District area transfer each year to the preschool early intervention program at the Schuylkill Intermediate Unit, and the process for transfer to that program is the same.

Procedure:

1. Transition planning for ALL children is a requirement of the early intervention program. The process begins early (at first contact) and prepares children and families for changes
that occur throughout their early intervention experience. Transition is discussed at each IFSP meeting, and at other relevant times as the children continue in the program. Transition at the age of 3 means that qualified professionals at the intermediate unit will be involved with providing services and supports to a child and family. Providers assure families that while relationships they developed in the infant/toddler system will end, new ones will be developed that are just as helpful and positive.

2. Transition is a collaborative, extensive, and dynamic series of conversations and activities that should begin at the first meeting with the family. A discussion occurs that informs the family that early intervention is a birth to school-age program and that at age 3, the state funding changes and the child’s program may change based on his/her needs. Because transition is a process and not an event, it would be expected that documentation reflect a progression of activities and conversations, rather than one isolated event. The Dauphin County program uses the Transition Plan page of the IFSP form provided by the Office of Child Development and Early Learning to document the conversations and planning in preparation for the changes that will occur when the child turns 3.

3. Each early intervention provider, therapist, or teacher can best support this process by communicating positively about the transition process. Providers can help families recognize the importance of children interacting with others and stress that learning through play is a key part of a young child’s world. Transition is a positive experience and should be communicated in such a way as to assure families that their children will receive an appropriate program with the Capital Area Intermediate Unit/Schuylkill program. It is necessary to remember that the needs of one child are different from the needs of another. It is the role of the IU service coordinator to share specific service information with families.

4. The county service coordinator facilitates the transition process for children transitioning to the CAIU or Schuylkill IU Preschool Programs. Specific questions about the process should be addressed to the child’s county service coordinator. The service coordinator is responsible to work with the Capital Area Intermediate Unit or the Schuylkill Intermediate Unit preschool programs to ensure a smooth transition for the child. Two meetings occur to plan for children transitioning to an IU preschool program.

A. IFSP Transition Planning Meeting: Formal planning for transition into IU preschool services 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 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. The Transition Plan lists the steps to be taken to support the transition of the child to preschool and/or community services, as appropriate including:

i. Discussions with, and training of, parents regarding future placements and other matters related to the child’s transition;
ii. Procedures to prepare the child for changes in service delivery, including steps to help the child adjust to, and function in, a new setting, and;

iii. With parental consent, the transmission of information about the child to the Capital Area or Schuylkill Intermediate Units, to ensure continuity of services.

B. Administrative Meeting Schedule: The Administrative Planning Meeting is an opportunity for each family, 0-3 team and IU contact person(s) to collaborate on the completion of Evaluations, anticipated IFSP service changes and referrals to other ECE partners in order to ensure the appropriate development of the IEP prior to the child’s third birthday. In order to meet the requirement of having the Administrative Transition Planning Meetings at least 90 days prior to children’s 3 birthdays, the following schedule was developed:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>During:</th>
<th>Discuss children turning 3 between:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>May – June</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>July – August</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>September – October</td>
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<td>July</td>
<td>November – December</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>January – February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>March – April</td>
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5. IFSP Changes During Transition Period: No IFSP changes will occur within 90 days of the child’s transition to an intermediate unit program, unless the IU is notified and in agreement with the change.

6. Responsibility of Evaluations During the Transition Year: It is the responsibility of each therapist/provider working with a child/family to provide ongoing assessment and evaluation information to the IFSP team for planning purposes. Progress is reviewed by team members at the annual IFSP and 6-month reviews. Progress information is shared with families at each treatment contact. Providers should be prepared to share detailed evaluation information about children at the annual IFSP and 6-month review meetings. When it is necessary to conduct an evaluation to determine the child’s progress, the evaluation should occur during the treatment session unless there are circumstances that make this unworkable.

7. The IU service coordinator is invited to the annual MDE/IFSP for a child when the evaluation is conducted between 45 and 90 days of the child’s 3rd birthday. No IFSP meeting is scheduled and the team plans for an IEP meeting. Infant/Toddler team evaluations that occur within 6 months of the child’s 3rd birthday can also be used by the IU program (if appropriate as determined at the Administrative Planning Meeting) from which to develop the IEP prior to the 3rd birthday.
8. If the child’s annual evaluation is due within 45 days of the child’s 3\textsuperscript{rd} birthday, the intermediate unit conducts the evaluation and plans for an IEP meeting.

9. Not all children in the birth to three program continue to be eligible for preschool early intervention services with the Capital Area or Schuylkill Intermediate Units. When it is determined that a child does not meet eligibility criteria for preschool early intervention services, and with the approval of the family, the service coordinator will make reasonable efforts to convene a conference with the family, service coordinator, and a provider(s) of other services to discuss the appropriate services that the child may receive.

10. 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. Payment for services is the responsibility of the Capital Area Intermediate Unit/Schuylkill Intermediate Unit on the child’s 3\textsuperscript{rd} birthday.

11. Services for a child who has turned three (3) years old is the responsibility of the Capital Area or Schuylkill Intermediate Unit. 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.

12. Children who are referred between 46 and 90 days of their third birthday are the regulatory and fiscal responsibility of the county MH/ID program. The county program and the Intermediate Unit will 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. It is understood that in the case of referrals received within this transition period only, some evaluations will not follow the typical Infant/Toddler independent evaluation process. Children may be evaluated and served by the CAIU prior to the third birthday and still be funded by their respective county MH/ID programs.

13. Infant, Toddler and Family Transitions are not limited to transitions at age three. Transitions in early intervention can mean many different things. Typically, we think of children transitioning at the age of 3 to the preschool early intervention program. However, transitions also occur when a child moves to another county or state, or when a child is determined no longer eligible for early intervention services.

14. The IFSP and/or Provider/SC service documentation must include the steps to be taken to support the transition of the child and is the responsibility of all team members. This planning discussion should occur during IFSP team meetings, as services are delivered and at other points of contact with the family as appropriate. The documentation includes the specific activities designed to ensure a smooth transition into an early childhood
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setting or community service or any exit from the local early intervention program. Transition activities may include:

A. Discussions with families about their plan for their child’s future
B. Plans and/or referrals to explore program options for the child
C. Exploring community services
D. Conversations with other parents
E. Teaching the child self care and independence skills
F. Procedures to prepare the child, family and provider (i.e. child care teacher) for the change
G. Use of community resource when child is no longer eligible for early intervention services

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning’s publication on the guidelines for Transitions within Pennsylvania’s Early Intervention program is an excellent resource on this topic. A copy of the guidelines should be available with this policy, can be accessed from the PaTTAN website, and will be distributed to providers as revisions occur.

References:
Transition Guidelines
Toddler to Preschool Transition Process – LICC Agreement 2013-14
Chapter 4226: Early Intervention Services

Also see EI Manual, July 2006; Updated September 2008, and November 2011, September 2013