



STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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D.D. Council Quarterly Report
March 2011
Louisiana Department of Education

1. IDEA State Plan

The IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) State Plan for 2011-2012 is available for review on the Louisiana Department of Education's website [HERE](#). The Plan provides assurances that the State is in compliance with IDEA and includes plans on how the LDOE will expend state-level IDEA funds. It is published for review until April 23, 2011. A comment form is available.

2. Guidelines for the Use of Seclusion Rooms and Restraint of Students with Exceptionalities

Act No. 698 of the Regular Session of the 2010 Louisiana Legislature requires the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to establish guidelines for the use of seclusion rooms and restraint of students with exceptionalities. The draft guidelines were developed by LDE staff with input from parents, advocacy groups, and local education agency personnel. The Special Education Advisory Council reviewed the guidelines at its most recent meeting and the draft guidelines reflect comments from that meeting. The draft guidelines will be emailed to IDEA directors and special education stakeholders for public comment. The State Plan is due to the U.S. Department of Education on May 10, 2011. For further information or to submit comments, contact Bernell Cook of the LDE at bernell.cook@la.gov

3. Evaluation Issues

Students with medical diagnoses: The LDE has received many inquiries from parents whose children have medical diagnoses and whose school districts refuse to evaluate until the students have progressed through all tiers of interventions. Quoting Bulletin 1706, the *Regulations for Implementation of Students with Disabilities Act* at Subsection 111.C: "Child Find shall also include students who are suspected of being students with a disability and in need of special education, even though they are progressing from grade to grade." Bulletin 1508, the *Pupil Appraisal Handbook*, states in subsection 307.B. that an immediate referral for an individual evaluation may be made when students are suspected of having a low incidence disability.

Students with visual impairments: Visual impairments are covered under this provision and a student with a visual impairment does not have to have failing grades to receive special education services. Many of these students are required to use magnifiers, instead of being given large print textbooks, large computer monitors, or taught to Braille. They spend hours doing their assignments, while

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they struggle to read the small print, but are never labeled as IDEA students because their grades are average.

Students with Asperger's Syndrome: This is another group of students who are not receiving special education and related services because they are making passing grades, but may get suspended or bullied because of their difficulty with communication and social situations. Students on 504/IA Plans are already identified as students with disabilities. If the student is not having success with the accommodations received under that plan, the SBLC has data to determine if this student needs to be referred to pupil appraisal for an individual evaluation.

Response to Intervention (Rtl): The Response to Intervention process has had tremendous success across our state and the nation. We have seen the implementation of good core instruction and tiers of intervention for struggling students. The use of data and progress monitoring to make changes in instruction has improved test scores and student performance. The Rtl process was never meant to create barriers that prevent students who have documented disabilities from getting services in a timely manner. Schools and school districts must engage parents from the start in the Rtl process, and intensify that engagement (just as they intensify interventions) as some students show limited response and progress through the process.

For additional guidance on evaluation issues, you may contact Nancy Hicks at 225.342.3340 or at nancy.hicks@la.gov.

4. Customized Employment

With the roll out of Connections - a process to address teenage students who are at risk of not completing school through intense academic remediation and job exploration and skill development which would lead to a high school diploma, GED, or State approved Skill Certificate - there appeared to be a gap in the process to address students with significant barriers to employment. For example, the needs of students with very significant disabilities were not addressed in this process. To address that gap the LDE is offering training to school districts in a strategy called Customized Employment. This approach to employment offers the promise of welcoming all persons with significant disabilities who wish to work into the generic employment system and into a job that fits their needs. For further information, contact Nancy Hicks at nancy.hicks@la.gov

5. Preschool

The LDE's Early Childhood Section has updated the Part C to Part B transition booklet (Early Childhood Transition Process) for parents and LEAs. The booklet is provided as an attachment to this report. A Spanish version of the parent booklet is in the revision process. For further information, contact Cynthia Ramagos of the LDE at cynthia.ramagos@la.gov

6. Rtl (Response to Intervention) Institute

The LDE will host an Rtl institute on June 14-15, 2011, in Baton Rouge. Included in the institute will be a strand designed specifically for parents. For registration information, contact Dr. Diana Jones at diana.jones@la.gov. For information about the content of the parent strand, contact Ellyn McKinney at ellyn.mckinney@la.gov

7. Literacy Dialogue Sessions

During the 2010-2011 school year, the LDE's Literacy Goal Office conducted "literacy dialogues" sessions with special education supervisors/administrators in all 8 regions of the state. The focus of these sessions was on factors which supported or created barriers to improvement in literacy outcomes for students with disabilities. The topics included an examination of special education placement decisions (e.g., regular class, separate special education class) and the effect this has on both access to quality instruction and student performance. Information gathered from these sessions will be used to provide future technical assistance and support to LEAs.

8. Data Summits

In summer/early fall 2011, the LDE will conduct multiple data summits wherein teams from each LEA will be provided extensive data related to students with disabilities in their specific district (e.g., LEAP performance, placement patterns, graduation rates, literacy assessments). The purpose of these sessions will be to support LEAs in identifying their areas of need so that resources can be effectively targeted to promote improved student outcomes. For further information about these summits, contact Debra Dixon of the LDE at debra.dixon@la.gov

9. State Performance Plan/Annual Progress Report

Attached to this report is a 3-year summary of Louisiana's performance on the indicators found in the State Performance Plan/Annual Progress Report. For further information on this report, contact Bonnie Bolton of the LDE at bonnie.bolton@la.gov

10. Accessible Instructional Materials

The IDEA 2004 requires that all students with print disabilities be provided their core instructional materials in an accessible format in a timely manner. Having core instructional materials ready the first week of school is critical to eliminating student achievement gaps. Schools must therefore be proactive in determining students' needs for accessible instructional materials so that state-approved text books can be ordered in the appropriate format, and to allow time for printed matter to be converted into alternate formats such as Braille, audio, large print, or digital for use by students with print disabilities. For further information about students' rights related to accessible instructional materials, go to <http://www.atanswers.com/aim/> or contact Donna Broussard of the LDE at donna.broussard@la.gov

11. Access Guide

The LDE's Access Guide has been updated, both the section related to students with significant disabilities (<http://sda.doe.louisiana.gov>) and the section geared towards struggling learners (<http://accessguide.doe.louisiana.gov>). Each section contains information relevant to both educators and families of students with disabilities.

12. Monitoring

On-site monitoring has a new focus - performance! The newly developed and implemented performance-based monitoring (PBM) process will analyze data to find root cause for low performance among all students. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) programs began performance-based monitoring in Fall 2010 with pilot districts. Beginning in fall 2011, IDEA programs will be included in the performance-based monitoring as well.

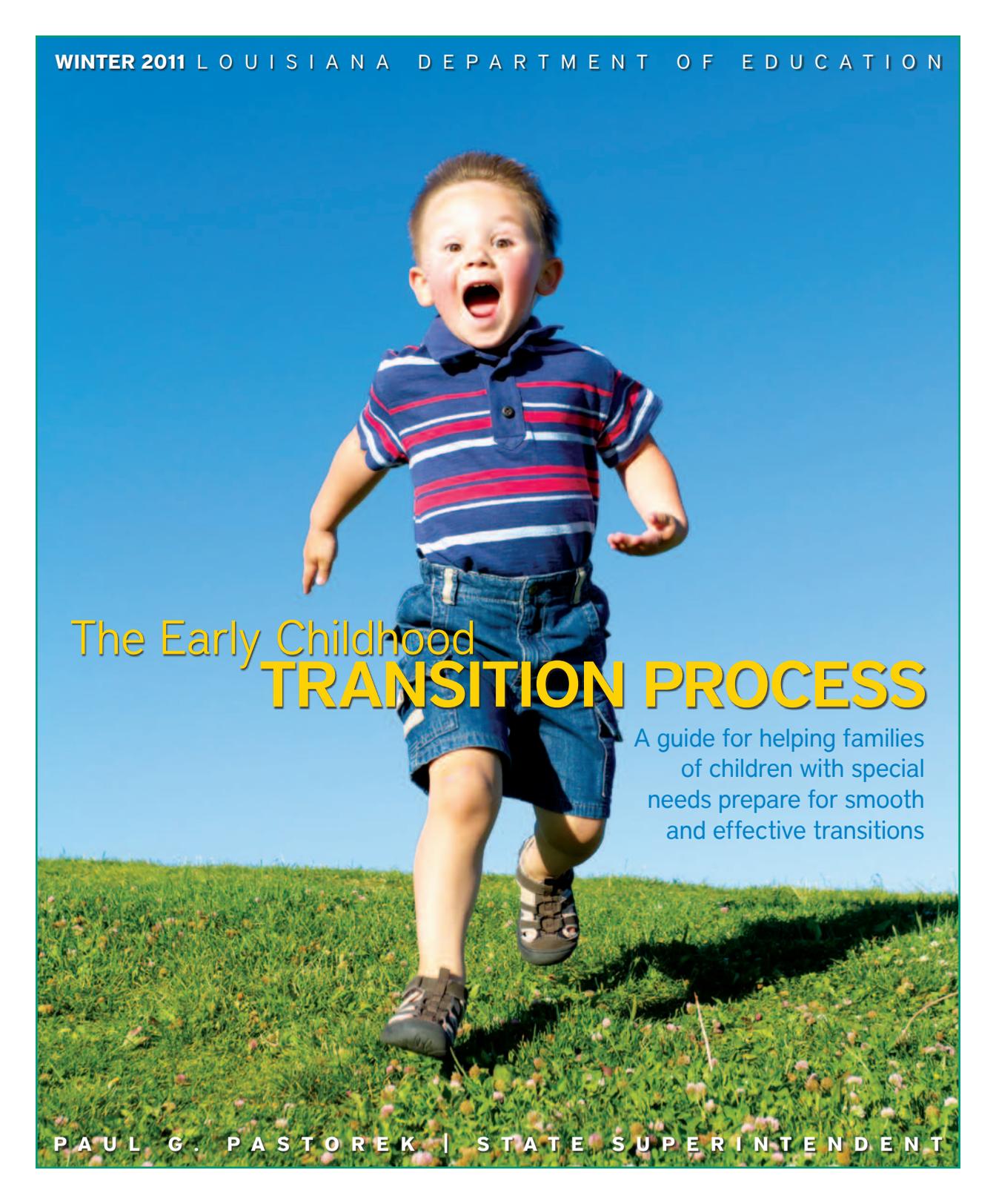
13. LDE Families Helping Families funded activities

Via funding from the LDE, Families Helping Families has provided Parent Surrogate trainings at multiple sites across the state. It is the responsibility of school districts to ensure that all children with disabilities are represented by appropriate advocates in the special education process. In most instances, parents function as the advocates for their own children, but when parents are not able to do so, school districts must ensure that there are surrogate parents available who are properly trained to advocate for children. These trainings were provided to assist school districts in meeting their need for surrogate parents.

Workshop participants received a draft copy of the *Louisiana Surrogate Parent Guide - 2010* and a corresponding training module for use with potential and existing surrogate parents in their own districts. The guide and training materials have been developed by Families Helping Families of Jefferson with funding provided by the Louisiana Department of Education. In addition to the Surrogate Trainings, Charlene Comstock-Galagan will continue to be available as a resource for school districts needing to locate and train Surrogate Parents. Contact Charlene as well to secure a copy of the draft Guide. She can be reached at the FHF Jefferson location at 504-888-9111 or through her email ccgalagan@fhfjefferson.org

Robin Clark from Louisiana Promise has been making the rounds at several of the FHF Centers presenting on "Bullying." It has been a well-received topic. If anyone is interested, she can be contacted at 225-926-1815. Robin is located in Baton Rouge, but she travels statewide.

FHF Southeast LA in New Orleans is planning its Regional Parent Conference with a keynote topic of "Conflict Resolution." People outside the New Orleans area are welcome if there is space, and there should be. Contact Carol Calix at 504-943-0343 for more information.

A young boy with a joyful expression is running across a lush green field under a clear blue sky. He is wearing a blue polo shirt with red and white horizontal stripes and denim shorts. His mouth is wide open in a happy shout, and his arms are outstretched. The background is a vast, open landscape with a horizon line in the distance.

The Early Childhood **TRANSITION PROCESS**

A guide for helping families
of children with special
needs prepare for smooth
and effective transitions

The Early Childhood **TRANSITION PROCESS**



Transition

A carefully planned process of passage of a child and family from one set of services and programs into other services and programs, or, in some cases, a transition out of service completely.

Terms You Need to Know	2
Timeline	3
Family Rights.....	4
Family Responsibilities.....	5
Eligibility for IDEA, Part B	6
Evaluation.....	7
IEP - Individualized Education Plan	8
Settings for Preschool Children with Disabilities.....	9
School Registration Requirements.....	11
Program Options for 4-year-olds	12
Areas of Development.....	13
Phone Numbers & Dates.....	13

Make sure you do everything you can to improve the quality of your child's education and his or her life!

Terms You Need to Know

ADL Activities of Daily Life (feeding, dressing, toileting, etc.)

APE Adapted Physical Education (individualized to meet child's needs)

Benchmark A general statement relating to a specific subject area

C.A. Chronological Age (example: 2 years old = C.A. 24 months)

CRT Criterion-referenced testing

DD Developmentally Delayed

ECE Early Childhood Education

ESYS Extended School Year Services - refers to education services provided over the summer months; designed to maintain school year services; eligibility requirements must be met

FSC Family Service Coordinator (case manager for families in the Part C system)

IDEA Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IEP Individualized Education Program - a document written annually to determine special

education services and placement; developed jointly by family and school personnel

IFSP Individualized Family Service Plan - a document written annually and updated every six months by families and personnel serving infants and toddlers in the Early Intervention system

LA 4 One of Louisiana's 4-year-old PreK Programs; other programs include Title I, Even Start, and 8(g)

LDOE Louisiana Department of Education

LEA Local Education Agency

LRE Least Restrictive Environment

MDE Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation - used by Pupil Appraisal to determine eligibility for services

NRT Norm-Referenced Testing

ODR Officially Designated Representative - the school board employee with the authority to sign an IEP; generally includes the school principal and designee(s)

OT Occupational Therapy - a service for students whose fine motor, perceptual, and/or sensory integration impairments significantly interfere with learning

PAS Pupil Appraisal Services - school district assessment personnel

PT Physical Therapy - a service for students whose gross motor limitations interfere significantly with academic development

SBLC School Building Level Committee - a committee of faculty members and other school personnel who review referrals for school-based and special education services for school-aged children

Self-Contained Special education placement option

SP Speech Therapy - speech therapy is provided to students who have been evaluated and determined to have mis-articulated speech sounds; inappropriate voice and fluency disorders and/or impaired understanding or expression of their thoughts

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

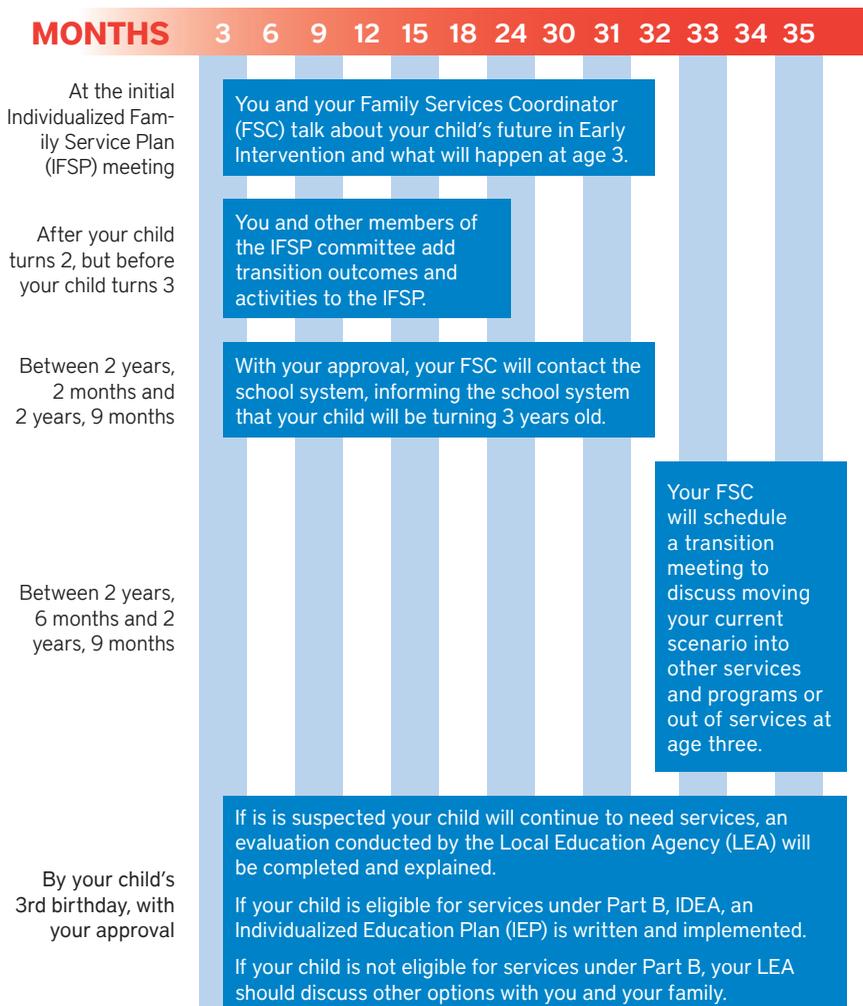
IDEA | Part C

Early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities from birth to age 3, and for their families.

IDEA | Part B

Special education and related services for children ages 3 through 21.

Timeline



Family Rights

To ensure what is best for your child, these rights are given to the family.

The right to confidentiality.

You can take comfort in knowing that information about your child and your family is private and will not be discussed with anyone unless you give permission.

The right to consent.

This means that before your child is evaluated, a placement decision is made, or before your child receives services, you must give your permission.

The right to receive services in a timely manner.

You will always receive written notice before any event happens (10 calendar days in advance). It is also your right to have the evaluation completed in a reasonable amount of time and to have an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) developed and implemented for your child by his or her 3rd birthday.

The right to discuss your child's strengths and needs.

You have the right to participate in your child's evaluation, to express your concerns and to discuss your child's progress and placement options. You are encouraged to help in developing the educational plan, as well.

The right to contact someone knowledgeable about your child and the law.

During the transition process, you may speak to any professional who has worked with your child.

You may also contact a child advocate or speak with support groups for families of children with disabilities. Ask your FSC to recommend resources.



Rights

Both federal and state laws protect the rights of children with disabilities and their families.

Even the smallest steps
will move you forward.

Family Responsibilities

To ensure what is best for your child, these family responsibilities are important.

- › Give permission for your child to be tested and to receive services.
- › Give information about your child, such as the child's medical problems, likes, dislikes, etc.
- › Participate in meetings by talking about what you want for your child. Discuss any problems and always share information about how your child is doing. Remember, you know your child best; it is very important for you to attend meetings.
- › Keep scheduled appointments. If an emergency arises, call or send a message and reschedule as soon as possible. Make it your business to get the needed information to your team. Delays are not good.
- › Recognize that you are important to your child! Speak with your child about what you are doing and how you feel, and keep in touch with your child's feelings.

IFSP Individualized Family Service Plan / IDEA / Part C

- › For children and their families from birth through age 2.
- › Focus is on providing early intervention to meet the unique needs of the child and family.
- › Eligibility for children birth through age 2 is based on an evaluation (IDEA, Part C).
- › IFSP is developed by the IFSP team and is based on the evaluation and needs of the child and family. An IFSP is developed annually and reviewed every six months.
- › Statement of performance contains information about the child's present levels of motor, cognitive, communication, social/emotional and adaptive development (self-help skills).
- › Services are provided in the natural environment. This refers to providing services in a setting where the child would be if he or she did not have a disability.
- › Outcomes and activities are developed to address the needs of the child and family.
- › Outcomes are written to answer the following questions - What, Who, Where, How and When?

Be sure to begin the transition process well in advance of your child's 3rd birthday.

Check with your child's IEP Teacher or Chairperson for the ESYS screening decision.

Eligibility for IDEA, Part B

When is your child eligible for IDEA, Part B services?



If your child is receiving early intervention services and it is suspected your child will continue to need services beyond age 3, he or she will be evaluated. If eligible for IDEA, Part B services, his/her services will begin at age 3.

If your child turns 3 during the spring or summer, he or she will be screened by the teacher for Extended School Year Services (ESYS).

If your child turns 3 before the school year ends, the IEP Team will review the last Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and determine if your child is eligible for services during the summer. If eligible, you may choose to have your child receive ESY services during the summer. If the IEP Team determines that your child is not eligible for services during the summer, services will resume when the next school year begins.

If your child turns 3 during the summer months, the IEP Team will review the IFSP and determine when services will begin. If it is determined that your child needs ESY services to begin immediately, your child can receive services during the remainder of the summer. If the IEP Team determines that your child does not need services immediately, then services will start when the next school year begins.

If your child turns 3 during the spring or summer months and the evaluation by the school system at age 3 determines that your child is not eligible for services under Part B, your FSC and school system will discuss options for your child and provide information on available programs.

Evaluation

The local school system is responsible for determining eligibility for the IDEA, Part B services. If it is suspected that your child will continue to need services beyond age 2, this process, called a multi-disciplinary education (MDE), will be completed to determine if your child will be eligible for services under IDEA, Part B at age 3. A team of qualified professionals, along with your family, will make this determination.

An evaluation will include the following:

- › Hearing and vision screening
- › Health and medical history
- › Developmental history
- › Cognitive development
- › Adaptive development
- › Social and emotional development
- › Communication development
- › Present levels of functioning
- › Physical development



Evaluation

Procedures used by appropriate, qualified personnel to determine a child's initial and continuing eligibility under IDEA, Part B.

IEP - Individualized Education Plan

Individualized Education Program IDEA, Part B, Section 619 for children age 3 through 5

Focus is on providing the services and supports to meet the child's needs in the educational setting.

Eligibility for children ages 3 through 5 is based on an evaluation (IDEA, Part B, Section 619).

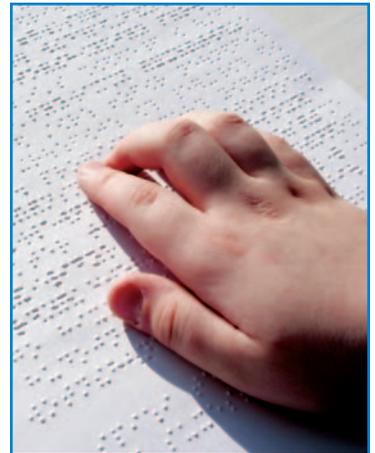
IEP is developed by the IEP team and addresses how the child's disability affects his or her progress in the educational setting. An IEP is developed annually and reviewed as needed.

Statement of performance contains information about the child's present levels, which includes how the disability affects the child's participation in appropriate activities in the educational setting.

Services are provided in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). This refers to the extent the child will participate with non-disabled children in regular activities or classes.

Measurable annual goals and objectives are developed to address the child's specific needs in reaching educational standards and benchmarks.

Description indicating special education, related services, supplemental aids and services, modifications and supports.



Commitment

To provide the best placement for children and their families so they can reach their full potential.

Our goal is that all children learn in the same setting with the necessary services and supports so that they can be successful.

Settings for Preschool Children with Disabilities



There are several programs available to preschool children ages 3 through 5 for continuing their process through the state education programs. The following outlines the programs available and gives a brief description of each.

Regular Early Childhood Program

A regular Early Childhood Program is a program that includes a majority (more than 50 percent) of nondisabled children (i.e., children not on IEPs). This category may include, but is not limited to:

- › Head Start
- › Kindergartens
- › Preschool Classes offered to an eligible prekindergarten population by the public school system
- › Private kindergartens or preschools
- › Group child development center or child care centers

Early Childhood Special Education Setting

This may include, but is not limited to:

- › Special education classrooms in regular school buildings
- › Special education classrooms in portable buildings outside regular school buildings
- › Special education classrooms in child care facilities, hospital facilities on an outpatient basis, or other community-based settings

Home

Children receive all of their special education and related services in the principal residence of the child's family or caregiver.

Options

It is so important to make sure you provide accurate information about your child, so that he or she receives the appropriate services.

Settings for Preschool Children with Disabilities [continued]

Residential Facility

This may include, but is not limited to:

- › Hospitals
- › Nursing homes
- › Public or private residential facilities

Itinerant Service Outside the Home

This option describes services for children who receive all of their special education and related services at a school, hospital facility on an outpatient basis, or other location for no more than 3 hours per week.

This option does not include services delivered at home for 3 hours or less per week. These itinerant services may be provided individually or to a small group of children in a school, hospital, or other community based setting.

This may include, but is not limited to:

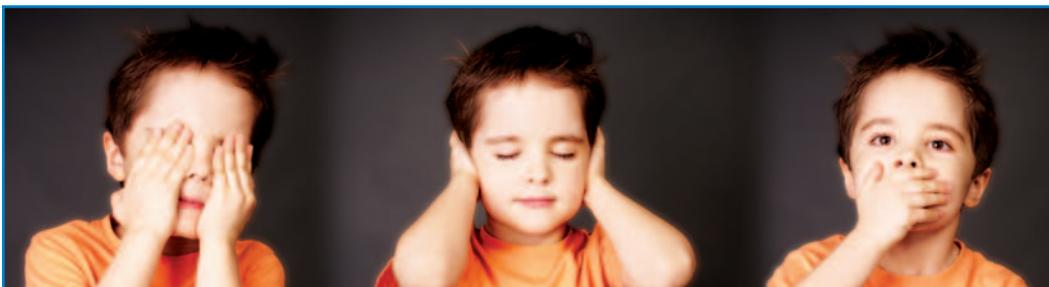
- › Special Instruction
- › Speech Therapy
- › Adaptive Physical Education (APE)
- › Physical Therapy (PT)
- › Occupational Therapy (OT)
- › Assistive Technology

Any combination of service may not exceed 3 hours per week.

Separate School

This refers to children who receive all of their special education and related services outside the home, such as:

- › Public or private day schools designed for children with disabilities



Get Involved

Learn about the options available for your child within the public school system and in your community.

School Registration Requirements

What will I need for my child to enter school?

Louisiana Public Schools Registration Information:

Proof of Residency

You must provide proof of your address. The proof can be a copy of a recent utility bill with your name on it or a copy of a lease or rental agreement in your name. Checks and driver's license are generally not acceptable as proof of residency.

Birth Certificate

The birth certificate must be the official record of birth issued by the state, not a hospital record of birth. If you do not have a copy, your local school board office can provide you with information on ordering a copy from the state.

Social Security Card

Your child's card is required for registration. If the card has been lost, contact your local Social Security Office for a verification form to prove that your child has a number and apply for a replacement card.

Immunization Record (White Health Card or "Shot Card")

This card is available from your pediatrician or your local Health Unit. If your child has been unable to receive all appropriate immunizations because of medical reasons, have your doctor write a letter of explanation.

Custody Papers

If you have court papers documenting custody arrangements for your child, present these papers to your child's school during registration, so that school personnel can be aware of any mandated restrictions.



Registration

Proof of Residency

Birth Certificate

Social Security Card

Immunization Record

Custody Papers



PreK programs are important in helping your child develop skills needed for school.

Program Options for 4-Year-Olds

Head Start Programs

Head Start programs are federally-funded, child-focused programs which have the overall goal of increasing the social competence of young children in low-income families. In simple terms, this means that the focus of the program is to increase your child's everyday effectiveness in dealing with both his or her present environment and later responsibilities in school and life. Head Start addresses development in the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development areas.

Head Start services are also family-centered, because children develop within their families, and parents are respected as their primary educators and caregivers. Some Head Start programs serve 3-year-olds, as well. Your Family Service Coordinator or local public school system can provide contact information for your local Head Start centers.

Other PreK Programs

The year before your child enters kindergarten, he or she may be eligible to attend a local public school PreK program, such as LA 4, Title I, Even Start or 8(g). Contact your local school system at the beginning of the calendar year (January/February) prior to the school year for additional information and eligibility requirements.

Areas of Development

Play Plays with toys, shares, takes turns, plays by self, plays with others

Language Expresses wants and needs, follows directions, uses phrases, understands things said

Meals Uses spoon to eat, drinks from a cup, eats finger foods (Please tell about any food allergies or concerns)

Self-Care Dressing, toileting and other self-help needs

Thinking Understands cause and effect, matches colors, solves problems, understands “few” and “many”

Moving Walks, runs, climbs, catches rolled ball, builds block tower, makes scribble marks

Favorite Activity What does your child enjoy doing?

Medical Concerns Health issues, allergies, feeding issues

Know Your Child

Every child is individual and special.

Phone Numbers & Dates

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Family Service Coordinator

Family Doctor

School System Contact

Medicaid Office

WIC

Social Security

Insurance Contact

Families Helping Families

Teacher

School

Child Care

Head Start

Library

Hospital

Baby Sitter

Other

IMPORTANT DATES

Keep this booklet handy with all vital information and contacts you will need throughout the transition process. It is designed to be a tool to help you stay organized and informed.

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