



# As Your Child Starts Kindergarten

A Transition Manual for Parents  
By Early Childhood CARES



Dear Parents,

Your child will be entering kindergarten in the fall. This is an exciting time in your child's life. However, parents may have some questions and concerns.

This guide is designed to provide information about the kindergarten transition process. We have gathered information from parents who have children with special needs who have made the transition to kindergarten. We have also provided information from educators that we feel may be helpful.

Beginning the transition process now will help you, your child and the school district prepare for fall. You can be assured that your child's Early Childhood CARES service coordinator and school district personnel will be assisting with this transition. We hope that the move to kindergarten will be a fun and exciting time for you and your child.

Sincerely,

The Staff of Early Childhood CARES

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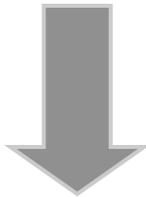
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## The Typical Transition Sequence

As your child moves from a preschool special education setting to a kindergarten level class, your family will interact with people from both your current early childhood special education (ECSE) program and the school district where you live. Although each district varies somewhat in how it will prepare your child for kindergarten, most transitions from ECSE to school follow the general sequence described below.

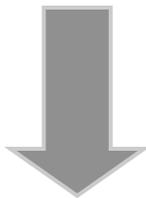
**Transition to kindergarten is planned at the IFSP meeting**

In the year before your child enters school, planning for transition to kindergarten will be added to your child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). A school district representative is invited to attend the IFSP meeting.



**The school district accesses Early Childhood CARES records**

The kindergarten transition team may print any needed documents from the Early Childhood CARES database.



**The school district reviews records and plans the next steps**

A case manager from the school district is assigned and will consult with you and your child's ECSE provider. If any additional observation or testing is needed, you will be contacted for your permission.



**The school district evaluates and/or holds a team meeting for eligibility**

The district special education representatives will meet with you to review any new eligibility testing and to establish your child's eligibility for school-age services.



**The IEP meeting with school district personnel takes place**

At the Individualized Education Plan meeting, your child's needs will be reviewed and any additional testing will be discussed. The IEP will be developed to replace the IFSP when your child actually enters school. Once the IEP is written, the district may discuss placement options with you.



**The IEP team meets to determine placement**

You may have visited some of the placement options prior to this meeting. Your child will be placed in an appropriate school program.

You will be notified and invited to the eligibility, IEP and placement meetings.

## **Differences Between Early Childhood Special Education and Special Education in Public School**

The laws and rules governing Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) programs differ from the laws and rules for school-age children receiving special education in a few significant ways. The main differences are explained below.

### **Eligibility Categories**

In EI/ECSE, the category of developmental delay (DD) is frequently used for children who show delays in physical, communication, cognitive, adaptive and/or social-emotional development. This category does not exist for school-age children. Children who have been considered developmentally delayed must be reclassified when they enter school. State and federal law requires that children be assigned to one of the following categories:

- autism spectrum disorder
- communication disorder
- deaf and blind
- hearing impairment
- intellectual disability
- orthopedic impairment
- other health impairment
- emotional disturbances
- specific learning disability
- traumatic brain injury
- vision impairment

Sometimes it is difficult to have a categorical label placed on a child. The idea of a developmental delay can create the impression or expectation that the child will “catch up” from his or her delay. Categorical labels may sound more permanent.

## **IFSP to IEP**

Your child has been receiving special education services as specified by his/her *Individualized Family Service Plan* (IFSP). In kindergarten, services will be specified on an *Individualized Education Plan* (IEP). Both plans have measurable annual goals and short-term objectives. An IFSP also includes family goals if a family wishes. One form is used throughout the State of Oregon for the IFSP, while each school district has its own IEP form.

An IFSP is intended to be an integrated plan that identifies all relevant services for the child and family – educational, medical and/or social services – and designates which resources are to pay for each identified service. An IEP identifies only the child's educational goals, objectives and services to be addressed in the school setting. IEP meetings are typically held at the child's school.

## **Family Focus to Child Focus**

In early intervention/early childhood special education, families are involved as partners in all levels of the process. Family outcomes and other types of services are included in an IFSP. Parents are partners with the school district and are valuable members of the IEP team. However, as children enter public school, the focus shifts away from the family to the child's educational needs at school. This shift is reflected in the IEP

## **Service Delivery Options**

The EI/ECSE system has many different service options and settings including home visits, because there are no free public school programs for all children from birth to five years of age. Usually, parents are given two or more choices about where services can be provided for their child.

All school-age children are provided with a free public school program through a variety of settings – individualized special education services are provided at school. The IEP team will examine a variety of placement options and determine which is appropriate to meet your child's needs.

## The Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is a written description of the special education services your child will receive in public school. At least once a year, an IEP team including parents, teachers and school district staff, will review and revise the plan as needed. The IEP must include:

- Statement of the present levels of performance, including how the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general curriculum
- Statement of measurable annual goals, including benchmarks or short-term objectives, related to meeting both the needs that result from the child's disability (to enable the child to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum) and the child's other educational needs.
- Statement of special education and related services, as well as supplementary aids and services, and any program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided to help the child advance appropriately toward the annual goals, to be involved and progress in the general curriculum, to participate in extracurricular and non-academic activities, and to be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and non-disabled children.
- An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with non-disabled children in the regular class and activities.
- The projected date for beginning of services and modifications and anticipated frequency, location and duration of services.
- Statement of how the child's progress toward annual goals will be measured and how the parents will be informed – on a regular basis and at least as often as a parent of non-disabled children – of progress toward both annual goals and the extent to which that progress is sufficient to meeting annual goals.
- Statement of any individual modifications in the administration of the state or district-wide assessments of student achievement that are needed in order for the child to participate. If the IEP team determines that a child will not participate in all or part of a particular state or district-wide assessment of student achievement, a statement of why it is not appropriate for the child and how the child will be assessed.

The IEP is important in determining your child's placement. By law, the placement must be one in which all the IEP goals and objectives can be met. The IEP is important because it sets down in writing what the school district will provide to your child. The IEP meeting held in the spring before your child enters kindergarten gives you, your child's ECSE provider and others who may have worked with your child and opportunity to tell the school district about him or her. You can work together to write IEP goals.

Some terms used in writing an IEP are explained on the next page.

## What Does It All Mean?

**Annual Goals** describe what the child can be expected to learn in a year. A goal is broad but should be measurable. Example: Susan will read a 12-page reader at the first grade level, with fewer than six decoding errors, by the end of the school year.

**Short-Term Objectives or Benchmarks** are smaller tasks necessary to complete the annual goals. Objectives would be specific and measurable. Example: Susan will read ten words with a consonant-vowel-consonant form (such as bat, ram, ten) within two months.

**Special Education** is specialized instruction designed to meet the unique needs of a child with disabilities. Some examples are adaptive physical education, behavior management, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, life skills, study skills and special programs in reading and math.

**Related Services** are those services that are necessary for the child to benefit from special education. Some examples are assistive technology, orientation and mobility training, speech and language therapy, physical and occupational therapy, behavior services and transportation to and from school.

**Supplementary Aids and Services** are aids, services, and other supports that are provided in the classroom to help your child participate in school activities and curriculum. There are many possibilities. Some examples are a picture exchange schedule, an augmentative communication system, a walker or large-print books.

**Special considerations** are factors that must be discussed at an IEP meeting to ensure that they are addressed in the IEP if needed by the child. These include behavior needs, language needs for children with limited English proficiency, instruction in Braille or assistive technology.

## Steps to a Successful IEP Meeting

**Review the Current IEP and IFSP.** Have the plans worked well? What goals and objectives have been met? What goals and objectives still need more work? What are the pros and cons of the child's current services and placement?

**Write a strength and needs list for your child.** What can your child do? What does he or she like to do? What does he or she need to be able to do?

**Make a list of questions that will help you to contribute to the IEP.** What programs have or have not been successful and why? Has your child had major changes such as surgery, changes in the family, or new medications or treatments since the last IEP? What academic goals are realistic for your child? Does your child need some self-help, social or behavioral goals? Which related services (speech therapy, physical therapy, etc.) do you feel are necessary for your child to benefit from the IEP? How much time does your child spend at school with children without disabilities?

**Decide if you need more information.** Do you know your child's present level of performance? Have you received progress reports? Are you aware of testing that might need to be done?

**Get answers to your questions.** If needed, observe your child in the present program and schedule visits to some of the classrooms that will be available next year. Meet with teachers and other staff to find out what they think about your child's needs, as well as types of programs they think would be appropriate. Do not limit your options to programs currently available. Read your child's records.

**Write down the goals and objectives you want your child to achieve.** Ask yourself the following questions:

- What skills would I like my child to learn?
- What can my child be taught at school that would help at home?
- What behaviors can be improved with help from the school?
- What are my main concerns about my child now?
- What are my hopes for my child as an adult?

**Make a priority list.** Organize your goals in order of importance to you. Decide which goals you feel are necessary for your child to receive an appropriate education. Organize other issues, such as related services and least restrictive environment, on order of importance to you.

**Find out who will attend the IEP meeting.** When you are notified of the IEP meeting, everyone invited by the school district will be listed on the notice. You may ask other people to come to the meeting to contribute information or to support you. Let the school district know about anyone you want to invite.

**Make sure enough time has been scheduled for the meeting.** Ask how much time has been planned for the IEP meeting. If you feel this won't be long enough, ask to meet at another time. Make sure you have enough time to ask questions and to share your opinions.

**Be ready to support your ideas and requests.** Find information in the records, progress reports and evaluation results to support your ideas and requests. Be clear about what is important to you and why it is important so you can help others understand your point of view at the meeting.

### **Plan for the meeting.**

- ❖ ORGANIZE your materials (reports, letters, lists, etc.)
- ❖ WRITE DOWN your questions
- ❖ KNOW what you want to say
- ❖ REVIEW good communication skills
- ❖ PRACTICE communicating clearly and effectively

**Be positive.** Assume that you and school personnel can work together effectively to develop an appropriate program for your child.

### **Parent Observations to Share at IEP Meetings**

Parents may wish to bring observations about their child to the IEP meeting in written form to share with school staff. Some ideas for notes include:

- Positive and negative behaviors your child has
- Changes in your child's behavior
- Changes in your family or home that might have an effect on your child's learning
- How your child learns best – auditory (listening), visually (seeing), tacitly (hands-on), one-to-one, in a small group, etc.
- Activities your child likes
- Positive behavioral strategies that work
- How your child interacts with peers
- The level of your child's self-help skills

### **Areas to Consider for IEP Goals**

#### **Academic**

- Reading: read traffic signs, read sight words, sound out words
- Writing: print name and address, write legibly, use computer to write
- Math: count to 20, recognize numbers, count objects

#### **Communication**

- signing
- greet peers
- initiate communication
- verbal problem solving
- listen to story
- print letters

**Technology**

- operate electric wheelchair
- use computer
- operate Unicorn board
- use calculator
- use TDD

**Motor Skills**

- cut with scissors
- play on playground at recess
- hold pencil correctly
- use cane to walk around school

**Self-help**

- bring belongings home from school
- use telephone
- cross street safely
- tie own shoes
- open lunch containers

**Social-Emotional**

- use “please” and “thank you”
- participate in group activities
- play with peers
- problem solve in social situations
- play cooperatively on playground
- share materials with classmates

# Placement

## Definitions and Options

“Placement” means something different to educators than it does to most parents of special needs children. Educators think in terms of the level of instruction a child will need – in addition to instruction in a regular classroom or a self-contained special education classroom – in order to achieve his or her IEP goals. This might include a regular classroom with supplemental services, or special education in a learning center or resource room. Parents are, instead, likely to think about finding a teacher, classroom and school to suit their child best

One consequence is that parents may often imagine a greater number of possible placements for their children than educators. Oregon law gives children the right to attend school as close to home as possible. Placement teams therefore try to place children in their neighborhood schools first. If a child needs more services than the neighborhood school can provide, the placement team considers other options.

For extensive services, the team may recommend placement in an Education Services District (ESD) classroom. These classrooms, for children with special needs only, have fewer students and more aides than regular classrooms, and can consequently tailor instruction more specifically to a child’s IEP goals. They are not run by the local school district, but rather by a county-wide special education program.

Since a team usually agrees about a child’s needs and potential, it seldom considers more than two placement options.

## Actively Seek the Best Placement for Your Child

If you think you may like your child to attend a school other than your neighborhood school, it is a good idea to start early. Ask friends with older children and early intervention/early childhood special education consultants for suggestions about teachers and programs.

Arrange visits to see classrooms you’re interested in and talk to the teachers. Then, talk to your EI/ECSE consultant, as well as professionals whose opinions you value, about what you observed in the classroom you visited. Sometimes, other people can help you clarify your feelings, give you some extra information and advise you on how to present your reasons for wanting a particular placement.

Nearly all school personnel will welcome you to their schools, especially if you call in advance for an appointment. A few, however, may discourage you from visiting if you live outside that schools attendance boundary. Persevere politely!

Let the transition team know – early – what placement you want and why so they can work with you. The placement team will usually try to accommodate parents’ wishes. Enlist the help of principals, teachers, consultants and representatives from Developmental Disabilities and Direction Service, as well.

## Emotions Parents Report Experiencing

Entering public school for the first time is an exciting rime. It is an opportunity to make new friends, meet new teachers and parents. You and your child should be proud of all your successes and can look forward to exploring many new opportunities in kindergarten.

Whether or not their child has special needs, certain feelings are common among parents who have a child starting school. All children make the transition to school and most parents have some of these feelings. They are the normal “growing pains” parents experience as their children grow up.

- ❖ Pride in your child’s accomplishments
- ❖ Letting go
- ❖ Concern about losing control
- ❖ Excitement and anticipation
- ❖ Potentially being less involved in decisions and services
- ❖ Worry about sending your child to school on the bus
- ❖ Concern about having less contact with teachers
- ❖ Visualizing a young and small child in school
- ❖ Looking forward to, yet feeling concerned about, working with a new team who will provide the individualized, personalized and nurturing care your child needs

## Advice from Parents Who Have Been Through This Transition

- 1) Communication is stressed by parents:
  - “Let the teachers know what your child’s needs are.”
  - “Be sure teachers are informed face-to-face or by phone.”
  - “Talk, talk, talk, talk, talk...”
  - “Check in with the teacher frequently.”
  - “Use a notebook to communicate between home and school.”
  - “Hang in there; problem solve as a team. Things may not be just right or as you expected at first, but things can be worked out.”
- 2) IEP goals and objectives are very important; spend time and think them through.
- 3) Take notes at meetings.
- 4) Both parents should attend meetings when possible.
- 5) Bring someone with you – a friend, or someone from Developmental Disabilities Services or Direction Service.
- 6) Be realistic about what your child can accomplish when writing an IEP; separate yourself from your emotions.
- 7) District staff want to help and are your allies.
- 8) Teachers get to know your children almost as well as you do and love them!
- 9) Be flexible; it’s not always perfect. Choose your battles; it’s okay to compromise.
- 10) Make meetings pleasant by bringing treats. Take time to celebrate successes – support what is working.
- 11) Have a positive attitude and work TOGETHER – the best approach is always to work things out and get the team to agree.
- 12) Be supportive of the people who work with your child; let them know you appreciate them.
- 13) Be informed about the law (IDEA)
- 14) Find out who will be at the transition meetings
- 15) Remember, you don’t have to make a decision immediately; you can think things over.
- 16) Don’t be afraid to ask questions

- 17) Inquire about the possibilities.
- 18) Humor is very helpful!
- 19) Spend time at the school – volunteer, help out.
- 20) Pace yourself for the long haul
- 21) You are your child's case manager. Be sure IEP goals and objectives are being met. Call an IEP meeting if it is needed.
- 22) Be prepared to serve as an advocate for your child and to help educators learn about him or her. Many regular classroom teachers may not know much about children with special needs.
- 23) If your child has special medical needs, be sure to let teachers, principals and therapists know exactly what medical care you authorize.
- 24) To work better with the school district, think in terms of educational goals rather than the services you may want.
- 25) Be specific when writing IEP goals – include timelines and who will do what.
- 26) Expect IEP meetings to become easier over the years as team members get to know each other, and your child, better.
- 27) Bring a picture of your child to meetings to help the team focus on your child as an individual.
- 28) Look at what your child can do and write the IEP in positive terms.
- 29) Consider asking a specialist to come to your child's classroom to talk to the other children about his or her disability, or offer to do it yourself, if you think this could help the other children better understand and accept your child.
- 30) Don't apologize for your child's disability.
- 31) Your child is entitled to the same attention from the teacher that other students receive. Sign up for parent-teacher conferences even if you've just had an IEP meeting.
- 32) Ask questions about administrative or educational decisions concerning your child.
- 33) Urge teachers to educate themselves about your child's disability
- 34) Trust your instincts – go with your heart!

## **Advice from School District Administrators**

- Ask questions when you do not understand something or if you want to know something.
- Do not be intimidated by the professionals.
- Call back after a meeting or conversation if you have questions.
- Visits sites to get a first-hand view of them.
- Communication and dialogue with school personnel is very important.
- Call your school district's special education director if you are having problems.
- Remember that most of the transitions to kindergarten go very well.

## Lane County Special Education Contacts and Kindergarten Transition Coordinators 2017-2018

<b>District</b>	<b>Special Education Contact</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Kindergarten Transition Coordinator</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Bethel	Amy Tidwell	541-689-3283 ext. 2030	Sue White	541-689-0512 ext. 2122
Blachly	Kim Shepherd	541-925-3262 ext. 105	Kim Shepherd	541-925-3262 ext. 105
Creswell	David Bascue	541-895-6005	Amber Lyda	541-895-6181
Crow-Applegate-Lorane	Georgann Squire	541-935-2227	Georgann Squire	541-935-2227
Eugene #4J	Cheryl Linder	541-790-7828	Katie Mason	541-790-4950
Fern Ridge	Karen McKenzie	541-935-7733	Karen McKenzie	541-935-7733
Junction City	Katie Bradford	541-998-6311 ext. 621	Katie Bradford	541-998-6311 ext. 621
Lane ESD	Sue Mathisen	541-461-8374	Sue Mathisen	541-461-8374
Lowell	Amber Hansen	541-937-2105 ext. 207	Amber Hansen	541-937-2105 ext. 207
Mapleton	Brenda Moyer	541-268-4471	Brenda Moyer	541-268-4471
Marcola	Tami White	541-933-2411 ext. 1202	Tami White	541-933-2411 ext. 1202
McKenzie	Brent Meister	541-822-3313	Brent Meister	541-822-3313
Oakridge	Chad Harrison	541-782-2813	Eva Anderson Carey Walters	541-782-2813
Pleasant Hill	Lisa Taylor	541-736-0417	Lisa Taylor	541-736-0417
Siuslaw	Lisa Utz	541-997-5456	Margie Westfall	541-997-5460
South Lane	Chad Hamilton	541-942-0147	Chad Hamilton	541-942-0147
Springfield	Brian Megert	541-726-3250	Shannon Kelly	541-726-3250

## **Books to Prepare Children for the Transition to Kindergarten**

**Annabelle Swift, Kindergartner**, by Amy Schwartz

**Countdown to Kindergarten**, by Alison McGhee

**Curious George's First Day of School**, by Margret Rey

**David Goes to School**, by David Shannon

**First Day Jitters**, by Julie Danneberg

(**Que nervios! : el primer día de escuela**), by Julie Danneberg

**First Day, Hooray!**, by Nancy Poydar

**Francine's Day**, by Anna Alter

**Franklin Goes to School**, by Paulette Bourgeois

(**Franklin va a la escuela**), by Paulette Bourgeois

**Froggy Goes to School**, by Jonathan London

**If You Take a Mouse to School**, by Laura Numeroff

**Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come**, by Nancy L. Carlson

**Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten**, by Joseph Slate  
(Many other titles in the Miss Bindergarten series)

**Mouse's First Day of School**, by Lauren Thompson

**My Kindergarten**, by Rosemary Wells

**My Teacher Sleeps in School**, by Leatie Weiss

**The Kissing Hand**, by Audrey Penn

**The Night Before Kindergarten**, by Natasha Wing

**Those Mean Nasty Dirty Downright Disgusting But...Invisible Germs**, by

Judith Anne Rice

**Tom Goes to Kindergarten**, by Margaret Wild

**Twelve Days of Kindergarten**, by Deborah Lee Rose

**Welcome to Kindergarten**, by Anne F. Rockwell

**When You Go to Kindergarten**, by James Howe

**Who Will Go to School Today?**, by Karl Ruhmann

## Resources

- Ready 4K

Text Ready4K to 313131

This program offers three free text messages a week to help parents or providers prepare their child for kindergarten. The first text is a Fact (research based fact). The second one is a Tip (applying the fact to an activity) and the third one is a Growth Idea (expanding the activity and skill). They are fun facts and easy tips that are scientifically proven to help children do better in school. The free program is sponsored by the Lane County Early Learning Alliance and was developed by the Center for Education Policy Analysis at Stanford University.

- The Arc of Lane County  
4181 E St.  
Springfield, OR 97478  
Voice: 541-343-5256  
Fax: 541-343-4387

<http://www.arclane.org>

A nonprofit organization that provides advocacy, support and information for children and adults with developmental disabilities

- Lane County Developmental Disabilities  
125 East 8<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Eugene, OR 97401  
Voice: 541-682-3695  
Fax: 541-682-3879

<https://www.lanecounty.org/cms/One>

A county-wide program offering case management for children and adults with disabilities and their families

- Direction Service

1144 Gateway Loop, Suite 200  
Springfield, OR 97477  
Voice: 541-686-5060  
Fax: 541-686-5063

<http://www.directionservice.org/index.cfm>

A nonprofit organization that provides information, referrals and case coordination for children and adults who are disabled and their families.  
Ages birth to 21

- Disability Rights Oregon

610 SW Broadway, Suite 200  
Portland, OR 97205  
Voice: 1-503-243-2081  
Toll-free: 1-800-452-1694  
Fax: 1-503-243-1738

<https://droregon.org/>

Offers free legal assistance to children with disabilities and their families

- FACT Oregon

13455 SE 97<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Clackamas, OR 97015  
Voice: 1-503-786-6082  
Toll-free: 1-888-988-3228  
Fax: 1-503-786-6084

[factoregon.org/](http://factoregon.org/)

FACT Oregon is a family leadership organization based in Oregon for individuals and their families experiencing disability, working collaboratively to facilitate positive change in policies, systems and attitudes, through family support, advocacy and partnerships.