



ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

October 4, 2010

Memorandum #10-2

ISBE Guidance Relating to Transitioning from Early Intervention to Early Childhood Special Education Services when Children Turn Three

This document is intended to provide non-regulatory guidance on the subject matter listed above. For specific questions, please contact the person(s) identified in the document.

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TO: Directors of Special Education
Other Interested Parties

FROM: David Andel 
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Division Administrator, Early Childhood

DATE: October 4, 2010

SUBJECT: ISBE Guidance Relating to Transitioning from Early Intervention to Early Childhood Special Education Services when Children Turn Three

Using the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) to assist in determining eligibility and in writing the Individual Education Program (IEP)

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must ensure that children who receive early intervention services before they turn three and who will receive early childhood special education services, experience a smooth and effective transition and have an IEP or IFSP developed and being implemented by their third birthday [34 CFR 300.124]. During this process the LEA must implement all required procedural safeguards, including, but not limited to, providing any necessary parental notifications and requesting any necessary parental consents.

Each school district shall ensure that a full and individual evaluation is conducted for each child being considered for special education and related services. The purpose of an evaluation is to determine:

- ✓ *Whether the child has one or more disabilities*
- ✓ *The present levels of academic achievement and functional performance of the child*
- ✓ *Whether the disability is adversely affecting the child's education*
- ✓ *Whether the child needs special education and related services*

Parents may provide written consent to share reports and/or evaluation results written by qualified professionals outside the educational realm (e.g. while the child received early intervention services) with the IEP team. In the determination of eligibility to receive special education services, the IEP team may consider these reports to be sufficient with no further evaluations needed for determination of eligibility [34 CFR 300.305].

If the team reviews this information and agrees that it is sufficient for decision making, then the following steps may occur:

- All components of the Identification of Needed Assessments (*domain review*) of the Consent for Evaluation information must be present in the IFSP and/or related current reports in order to proceed in determining eligibility for special education purposes. These include the status of the following factors:
 - ✓ Academic Achievement
 - ✓ Functional Performance
 - ✓ Cognitive Functioning
 - ✓ Communication Status
 - ✓ Health
 - ✓ Hearing/Vision
 - ✓ Motor Abilities (*fine and gross motor*)
 - ✓ Social Emotional Status

Since the three (3) year old child has not been in an “academic” environment and cognitive (IQ) scores are not stable at this age, teams may find it more appropriate to state “readiness” skills and the child’s ability or inability to participate in age appropriate activities without significant specialized instruction or support services in the necessary domain areas. This documentation can then be used to determine whether a child is eligible to receive special education services and under what eligibility category he/she should be placed.

- At this time, goals and objectives may be written by the team in order to meet the child’s needs. Annual goals are statements of what the child needs to learn and should be able to learn over the next year in order to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum. The goals and objectives should reflect consideration of the Early Learning Standards. Also, related services may be considered in order to support the goals and objectives and progress in the general curriculum [23 Illinois Administrative Code 226.230].
- Once goals and objectives are written, the team will determine what services the child will receive and where the child will receive his/her services. To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities should be educated with children who are nondisabled and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily [23 Illinois Administrative Code 226.240].

Should you have any questions, please contact one of the individuals listed below:

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