


**The Transition Process:
From Birth to Three to Special Education**

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Connecticut's federally funded Parent Training and
Information (PTI) Center

CPAC is a statewide non-profit organization that
offers information and support regarding special
education law to families of children with disabilities



Workshop Outcomes

- Participants will increase their understanding of the transition process from Birth to Three services
- Participants will gain knowledge of the key components of special education services under IDEA



Workshop Outcomes

- Participants will learn ways that they can effectively advocate for their children and communicate with schools



- Participants will gain a better understanding of their role as an equal partner and member in the PPT



Legal Basis for Special Education

- Federal: Public Law 108-446 IDEA
 - The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act
- State: Connecticut General Statutes (Section 10-76a to 10-76h)



IDEA (Part C)

- “Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities”
- Serves children from birth through age two who meet eligibility criteria for early intervention services
- Services provided through Birth to Three



IDEA Part B

- Serves children ages three through twenty-one or graduation from high school, whichever comes first
- Inclusive of 3, 4 and 5 year olds with disabilities who meet the eligibility criteria for special education



IDEA Part C

- Ages birth to 2
- Focuses on the family (IFSP)
- Natural environments
- Services are provided through Birth to Three

IDEA Part B

- Ages 3 – 21
- Focuses on the child (IEP)
- Least Restrictive Environment
- Services provided through the LEA



Child with a Disability



- Age 3 through 21
- Identified as “disabled” under one of the 13 federal disability categories
- And who, because of their disability, require special education and related services




Special Education & Related Services

- **Special Education:** Specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, that meets the unique needs of a child with a disability
- **Related Services:** Those services that are required in order for a child to benefit from special education




Six Principles of IDEA

- Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
- Appropriate Evaluation
- Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- Parent/Student Participation
- Procedural Safeguards



What is a PPT?

- The **Planning and Placement Team (PPT)** is a group of individuals that meet to review referrals, decide on evaluations, determine and develop the IEP.
- Parents, teachers, administrators and related service personnel are equal participants in the PPT.
- The PPT must meet at least once per year



New Requirement from IDEA '04

- A PPT member may be excused when:
 - The parent and the agency agree due to the fact that the member's area is not being discussed
 - The parent consents in writing and the agency also consents; and
 - The member submits in writing to the parents and the team his or her input into the development of the IEP prior to the meeting



What does IDEA say about transition?

- "smooth and effective"
- Convening the 90-day conference
- Participation by the local educational agency (LEA)
- By third birthday, an IEP developed and implemented



Special Education Process

- Step 1. Referral
- Step 2. Transition Conference
- Step 3. Evaluation
- Step 4. Eligibility
- Step 5. IEP
- Step 6. Placement



Referral

- 6 to 12 months before child's 3rd birthday
 - Give written permission to Birth to Three program to refer your child to LEA
- OR**
- You may refer your child by using a State Department of Education referral form at any time



Transition Conference

- Purpose is to plan for and support the child's transition from B-3 to preschool special education and to prepare parents for a PPT meeting
- Participants include: parent, service coordinator, LEA representative, and anyone else parent, LEA or service coordinator feels would be helpful
- Conference must be convened at least 90 days and up to 9 months prior to child's 3rd birthday




Evaluation

- Process used by PPT to determine a child's strengths and weaknesses and to determine if child is eligible for special education
- Parent consent must be given in writing before the first evaluation




Evaluation

- Must be done by trained and knowledgeable evaluator(s)
- Must be in all areas related to the suspected disability
- Is more than just one test or assessment procedure
- Must be given in the child's native language
- Must not discriminate against the child because of race or culture




Independent Evaluation

- Parents can choose to seek an independent evaluation on their own.
- The school district must consider results of any independent evaluation, however they are not required to agree with or implement all or any of the results or recommendations.



Eligibility

- A PPT will be scheduled to review the results of the evaluation
- Parents will receive a written copy of the evaluation results
- The information will be reviewed to determine:
 - Does the child have a disability?
 - Does the disability have an adverse affect on the child's education?
 - Does the child require special education and related services?



What if my child is determined ineligible?

- **Dispute Resolution** options include mediation and due process
- **Early Childhood SRBI** (scientific research-based interventions)
- Under **Child Find**, school districts must locate, identify and evaluate all children with disabilities, ages 3 through 21 who are in need of special education services



The IEP

- The Individualized Education Program is a written plan that details each child's special education services.
- All students receiving special education services must have an IEP.
- The IEP must be reviewed at least annually.



The IEP

Components of the IEP include written statements of:

- Present levels of educational performance
- Measurable annual goals and short-term objectives
- Special education & related services and supports (needed to make progress and participate in non-academic activities)
- Extent the child will NOT participate with non-disabled peers
- Modifications in standardized assessments
- How progress will be measured
- Transition service needs



Placement

- Program before placement
- Individually determined based on IEP
- First consideration must be general education with supplemental services and supports
- Must be in the “least restrictive environment” (LRE)
- LRE: “to the maximum extent appropriate children with disabilities are educated with children who are not disabled



Changes and Amendments to the IEP

- Changes to an IEP can be made without a team meeting if the parents and district agree and develop a written document to amend or modify the current IEP.
- The IEP can be amended rather than redrafting the entire document – unless the parent requests a copy of the revised IEP.



How can parents participate?


- Parents are considered **equal partners** with school personnel in making educational decisions.
- The team should consider parents’ concerns and the information that they provide regarding their child.



Parents as Partners

Before the PPT



- Talk with school personnel, get to know team members.
- Talk with your child about school.
- Review information about your child.
- Think about your child's strengths and needs.
- Learn about special education laws.



Parents as Partners

During the PPT


- Listen carefully
- Share thoughts and concerns
- Stay focused on the topic at hand
- Ask questions, ask for clarification
- Consider options
- Take notes



Parents as Partners

After the PPT

- Keep in touch
- Look for student progress
- Give positive feedback
- Review and revise the IEP as needed
- Keep records



Putting It All Together

The PPT meeting can serve as one way for parents and school personnel to communicate. It enables them, as equal partners, to make joint educational decisions.



References & Suggested Readings

- Bureau of Special Education, CT SDE (2007). *A Parent's Guide to Special Education in Connecticut*, Middletown, CT.
- Connecticut State Department of Education (2010). *Early Childhood SRBI: Supporting All Children*, Hartford, CT.



References & Suggested Readings

- Bateman, B.D., & Linden, M.A. (2006). *Better IEPs: How to develop legally correct and educationally useful programs* (4th edition). Verona, WI: Attainment Company.
- Wright, Pam & Pete. (2006). *From Emotions to Advocacy: The Special Education Survival Guide* (2nd edition). Hatfield, VA: Harbor House Law Press, Inc.