

**What is Transition for young children?** For children receiving services through Babies Can't Wait (BCW) early intervention program, the purpose of the transition planning process is to assist families in determining appropriate services for the child beyond the child's third birthday. Services, upon reaching age 3, are provided by the school system where the child resides if the family chooses to select the school system and the child becomes eligible. Transition planning can begin as early as 9 months prior to but no later than 90 days prior to your child's third birthday. The goal is to ensure no interruption of services for a child when turning 3.

## **The Facts you should know:**

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law that governs how states provide early intervention, special education and related services, to children with disabilities. At age 3, supports and services change as eligible children move from part C (BCW/early intervention) to Part B (special education) of the IDEA. The IDEA requires:
  - Part C (BCW) conducts a "transition meeting". In addition to the public school system, participants can be invited from child care centers, *Head Start*, private preschools, other agencies, or any other person you would like to have attend. Prior to your child's 3rd birthday, your BCW service coordinator will schedule one or more transition meetings to discuss your child's needs and early childhood special education program options.
  - Eligibility for Special Education services may be determined for children who are preschool age whenever the parent, an early childhood service provider or other community resource makes a referral. If you are a family already in BCW, your service coordinator should do this for you.
  - Children ages 3 through 5, including 2-year-olds who will be turning 3 during the school year, must receive a comprehensive evaluation to determine eligibility for preschool special education services. All children who transition from BCW to the school system must be evaluated and placed (if eligible) by the student's 3rd birthday.
- When your child moves from BCW to special education, the IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan) is replaced by an IEP (Individualized Education Program). The IFSP serves children from birth to three years old and has a focus on family involvement. An IEP is an education document for children from three to 22 years of age. It focuses on special education and related services in schools.
  - If your child is eligible for preschool special education, a meeting to develop an IEP will be scheduled. You are a member of the IEP team along with individuals from the school system who have knowledge or expertise about your child and/or the curriculum. Parents and the school may also invite anyone they want who has expertise or knowledge, including your BCW service coordinator, other BCW service provider(s), or anyone else who has knowledge or expertise. This meeting is separate from the transition meeting.
  - For children who turn 3 years of age during the summer months, eligibility determination for Part B services and placement must be completed by the 3rd birthday. The IEP team however, may determine to start services when the school year begins.
- As much as possible, special education services are to be provided in the Least Restrictive Environment. That means that your child should be alongside typically developing peers in settings such as preschool, child care, or Head Start programs if the team agrees this is the appropriate setting.
- If you review your child's options and choose not to participate in preschool special education services, you can request services at a later date by contacting your school system.

## Tips for Families:

- ✓ Learn about various options for where your child may receive early childhood special education services, such as community preschool, child care, Head Start, or pre-kindergarten.
- ✓ Plan ahead. Allow enough time to make decisions.
- ✓ Talk with other families about what the transition process was like for them.
- ✓ Ask questions about anything that is unclear, including questions like:
  - When will my child make the transition to a new program?
  - Can I visit the proposed program(s)?
  - Who is my contact person if I have other questions?
- ✓ Make sure your child's medical, educational, and assessment records are up to date. Consider sharing these with the school system if you feel comfortable doing so.
- ✓ You will be asked to give written permission for the BCW staff to refer your child to your local school system and for BCW to share your child's BCW records with the local school system. You will need to decide if you want to consent to do these steps which are important parts of transition planning.
- ✓ Share your hopes and dreams for your child.
- ✓ Participate in the transition process at the level that feels comfortable to you.
- ✓ Help your child prepare for the transition:
  - Talk to your child about going to a new program and visit that setting.
  - Read books about going to preschool.
  - Provide opportunities for your child to play with other children.
  - Encourage your child to communicate with others and ask for help when needed.
- ✓ Advocate for your child. You know his/her needs best. Know what to expect of your child and work with the IEP team and the school district to meet those needs.

## Where to go for more information:

**Parent to Parent of Georgia**  
770 451-5484 or 800-229-2038  
[www.parenttoparentofga.org](http://www.parenttoparentofga.org)

**Department of Community Health/ Babies Can't Wait (Part C Agency)**  
<http://health.state.ga.us/programs/bcw/>

**Transition At 3: Steps for Success** (also available online in Spanish)  
<http://www.health.state.ga.us/pdfs/familyhealth/bcw/stepsforsuccess.05.pdf>

**Georgia Department of Education, Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports**  
404 656-3963 or 800-311-3627 and ask to be transferred to Special Education  
[http://www.gadoe.org/ci\\_exceptional.aspx](http://www.gadoe.org/ci_exceptional.aspx)

**Georgia Department of Education Implementation Manual**  
[http://www.gadoe.org/ci\\_exceptional.aspx?PageReq=CIEXCImpMan](http://www.gadoe.org/ci_exceptional.aspx?PageReq=CIEXCImpMan)  
(See chapter on transition from early intervention to public school.)

Additional resources: Contact the **Babies Can't Wait Early Intervention Coordinator** in your district.  
Contact the **Special Education Director** for your school system.