



**MAINE
PARENT
FEDERATION**

Transition to Public School



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Note for Families

Maine is in the process of shifting responsibility for preschool special education (ages 3-5) from Child Development Services (CDS) to local School Administrative Units (SAUs).

In some areas, your school district will provide IEP services starting at age 3.

In other areas, CDS will continue to provide services until the transition to Kindergarten.



Explore the impact
of a new school

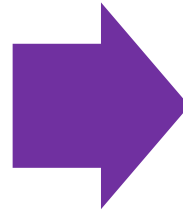
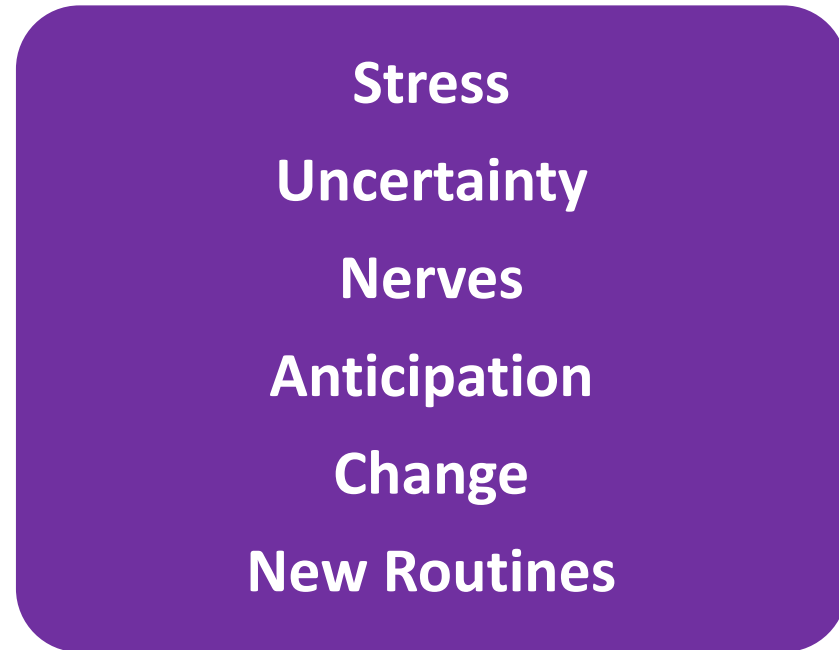
The transition
process & what to
expect

Tips & best practices

What are your concerns
for your child as
they enter the public
school system?



Changing our mindsets



Your child will experience many new changes and opportunities, it's important to think about these and plan ahead.



A row of 24 colored pencils in various colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, pink, grey, black, brown) standing upright. A white hand silhouette is pointing to one of the pencils.

Parent preparation...

Continue to learn about Special Education laws and regulations, including IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act).

Review the current copy of Maine Unified Special Education Regulations (MUSER),

- Chapter 101, “Programs for Children with Disabilities 5-22” p. 143
(includes IDEA federal language)

Review the public elementary school website and get familiar with the school handbook.

Become familiar with the standard policies and procedures of the new school administrative district (SAU).

Early Intervention



Early Intervention

Early Intervention (EI) Services

- Provided to infants and toddlers (birth to age 3) with disabilities, developmental delays, or at risk of developing one
- Family-focused and delivered in everyday settings (home, childcare, community)
- Individualized supports that build on family strengths

Types of Supports

- Therapies (OT, PT, Speech, etc.)
- Assistive technology
- Family education and training

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

- Developed with families and specialists
- Outlines goals for the child's growth and development
- Guides services and supports for the child and family



Referral for EI can be made by parents or providers for any child under age 3, online, by phone, or by fax. *There are procedures in place to address late referrals.

Early Intervention ends at age 3 (unless an Extended IFSP is needed). After age 3, support moves into the **school-based system**, usually preschool or pre-kindergarten.

In Maine, Early Intervention is provided through **Early Intervention for ME**.

Early Intervention for ME, Birth to 3

<https://www.maine.gov/doe/earlyinterventionforme>

Transition to Public
School includes

Shift from Early Intervention Services to school
based Early Childhood Special Education Services

Early Childhood Special Education |
Department of Education



Changes in eligibility qualifications and delivery
of services



Early Intervention

- Qualifications based on Disability or Developmental Delay (Birth to 3, or extended IFSP to age 5)
- Allows access to services with a family-centered focus
- Build fundamental skills and promotes family support systems

Public School

- Qualifications include the 13 Identified Disability Categories under IDEA
- Disability must negatively impact ability to access general curriculum.
- Allows access to services in class, or out of class
- Services provided individually, in groups, or in classroom (push-in)

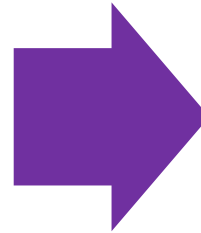


Transition Conference

The Transition Conference is the first step in the transition to school based special education services and must be held at least 3 month before a child's 3rd birthday.



The Early Intervention Team will schedule and convene the meeting, and the School Administrative Unit (SAU) will lead the conversation.



During the Transition Conference, the SAU has the role of providing information on the process of eligibility and next steps, explaining possible services and supports and providing registration resources.

The family can take notes during the meeting and should prepare possible questions ahead to ensure they understand next steps.

*Late referrals

SAU Early Childhood Education Team

Special Ed Teacher

Fulfills school role of
Case Manager

Ensure fidelity of
writing and carrying
out the IEP

Acts as first point of contact for
parents

Special Ed Administrator

Has authority to
make financial
decisions

Is required to
oversee IEP meeting

May be filled by principal,
assistant principal,
instructional strategists, or
director of specialized
education

Therapists

May overlap in goals

Work collaboratively
to schedule service
times (as to not
overload student)

Should look for natural
opportunities to integrate
services and provide therapy
(push-in)

After the Transition Conference

A child's Early Intervention Services will continue until the day before their third birthday. Any changes within the IFSP after the Transition Conference will involve the early childhood special education team at the SAU.

At age 3, services typically shift from an IFSP (family-centered plan) to an IEP (a school-based plan), which focuses on the child's educational needs.

- In some cases, families may choose to continue with an Extended IFSP (instead of moving immediately to an Individualized Education Program, or IEP). This option continues support up to age 5. Your team will talk about whether this option is appropriate.

IEP Initial Referral Meeting

A referral meeting is held after the Transition Conference, and before the IEP eligibility meeting.

This is convened by the early childhood special education team at the School Administrative Unit, and the Early Intervention for ME representatives are invited.

The goal of this meeting is to:

- Discuss the child's present levels of performance, strengths, and challenges.
- Review any existing evaluations
- Allow the team to propose additional evaluations to determine services and accommodations in the public-school setting.

Parental Consent must be obtained before the evaluations are conducted.

School Administrative Unit (SAU) has 45 school days once the consent is signed and Early Intervention for ME (Child Development Services) 60 calendar days.

Under IDEA federal law, Parents should receive a copy of the evaluations at least 3 days prior to the IEP Eligibility Meeting.



School days are only the days when school is in session, not including weekends, professional development days, holidays or vacations etc.



Calendar days are regular weekdays.

Important documents for Parents

The SAU is responsible for providing the parents with all Written Notices under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as well as the Notice of Procedural Safeguards.

Procedural Safeguards outline the rights and protections provided under federal law to ensure that children with disabilities and their parents are treated fairly in the educational process.

Advance Written Notice

Parents will receive an Advance Written Notice from the SAU prior to the meeting listing who will be present and the reason for the meeting.

Prior Written Notice

A Prior Written Notice is sent following the meeting. This provides a summary of the meeting and outlines what actions the school plans to take, or refused to take, related to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of your child.

IEP Initial Eligibility Meeting

The eligibility meeting occurs after the Initial Referral Meeting and must be held before the child's third birthday.

This meeting is convened by the SAU early childhood special education team, and again, the Early Intervention for ME representatives are invited to participate.

Parents should receive the Advance Written Notice before the meeting and Prior Written Notice after the meeting.

The goal of this meeting is to:

- Review completed evaluations
- Determine eligibility
- Develop the initial IEP

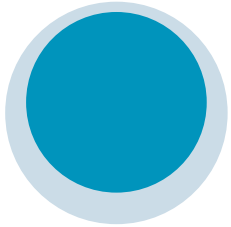
For those with summer birthdays, it may be necessary for SAUs to conduct evaluations and develop IEPs over the summer. The IEP will be implemented at the beginning of the following school year.

School Based Special Education Criteria

- Qualifications include the 13 Identified Disability Categories under IDEA
- Lots of diagnoses fall under one of the 13 categories
- Disability must negatively impact ability to access general curriculum.

The 13 Identified Disabilities under IDEA

- Autism
- Deaf-Blindness
- Deafness
- Emotional Disturbance
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific learning disability
- Speech or Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment (*including blindness*)



IEP Meetings

Are held at least annually to review goals and update the plan

Scheduled to review evaluations, determine services & accommodations and review progress on IEP goals

Opportunity to build relationships and understand each team member's role

Did you know, parents can request a meeting at any time during the school year?

The IEP at Age 3

Present Level of Performance (PLOP)

- Statement describing current academic achievement and functional performance
- Serves as the foundation for IEP goals and services

Goals

- Based on the child's Present Level of Performance (PLOP)
- Address academic, social/emotional, functional/developmental, behavioral, and therapeutic areas (OT, PT, Speech)

What to Expect at the Meeting?

Goals

Academic (i.e., reading, writing, math)

Social/Emotional

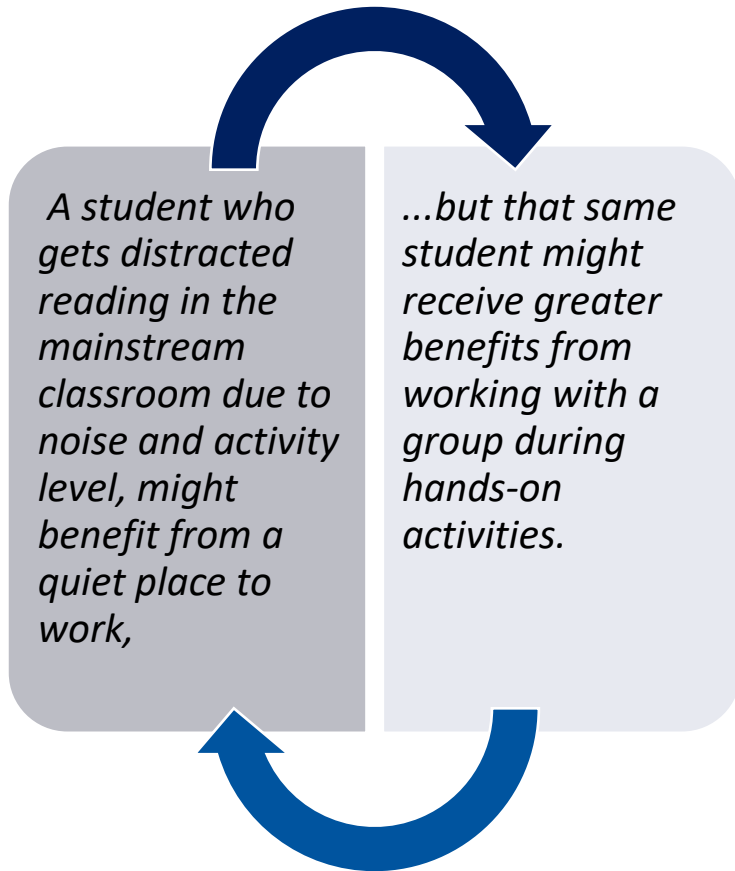
Functional/Developmental

Behavioral

Therapeutic Goals (i.e. OT,PT, Speech)

Well written goals should be **S.M.A.R.T** (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound) and based on the student's **present level of performance** (plop).

Additionally, an IEP should include specific objectives and quarterly dates to ensure a student is making progress. Progress reports should be provided as often as report cards.



Least Restrictive Environment

The **Least Restrictive Environment** (LRE) for a child is not just about where the education is taking place, it's also the who, and the how. It's a combination of location, programming, and practice.

The Least Restrictive Environment for a child can change throughout the day depending on the subject matter, staff, or class composition

- identify the factors that allow a child to succeed and use them for their benefit.

What are Services?

Services are individualized programs and interventions that help a child or young person reach the goals within their IEP.

Services are provided in the student's **least restrictive environment**- alongside their peers as much as possible, while still meeting their unique needs.

Services

Therapies (OT, PT, Speech)

Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)

Para-professional/ed-tech support

Extended School Year Services

What are Accommodations?

An accommodation is a **change in the learning environment or way a task is done** that helps your child access the educational material or show what they know, *without* changing what they are expected to learn.

Accommodations

Sensory items

Preferred seating

Breaks

Assistive technology

Additional time to complete work/tests

Advanced warning of emergency drills

Adjusting to the Transition

Parents are responsible for coordinating any private therapies or support services apart from the school day.

Fostering communication with outside providers and the IEP team is crucial in maximizing the effectiveness of services delivered.

- i.e. school OT should be communicating with private OT
- This will require the school and outside providers to sign releases.

A Well-Prepared Parent

Parents are not just participants in the IEP process; they are equal members of the team. You should be prepared to contribute as an expert on your child. Come prepared with information about your child and questions to ask the team.

You are a Contributor

- You are an expert on your child.

You are a Learner

- The school may have ideas you have not thought about.

How to Prepare Your Children



Express excitement about the upcoming change! Involve your child in the preparation!



Take them for a tour of the building, schedule time to meet staff & practice their transportation routes.



Connect with other families, schedule play dates and/or participate in town rec. programs or community events.



Engage you child in creating an “About Me” activity for the new teacher.

How to Prepare Your Children



Keep

Keep expectations at home which echo those at school and strive for a consistent summer schedule as the beginning of the school year approaches.



Create

Create a social story about attending the new school. The teacher may have photos that can be shared.



Encourage

Encourage your child to ask questions about the upcoming change. If your child is non-verbal pay attention to changes in behavior or increased anxiety.



Help

Help to build their confidence with positive feedback & encouragement for GOOD behavior

Prepare & Document

Think through questions about the school day.

Create a binder for documentation (communication, notices, evaluations, and **IEP**).

Communicate & Advocate

Bring a **prioritized list of concerns** with data to support your requests.

Share updates from **outside therapists**.

Provide input and considerations to your child's **educational plan** (preschool experiences, strengths, challenges, and needs).

Connect & Plan

Ask to take a **tour of the school** and meet with staff (including **Ed Techs**).

Parents can request a **meeting** and reserve additional dates to reconvene.

Key Takeaways

Preparation and organization are key for a smooth transition

Come with a positive attitude and team player mindset

Give every transition time, at least 6 weeks, before making additional changes



Family Support Navigators

Our Family Support Navigators are trained parents who have personal experience navigating the systems of care in Maine and can provide support at no-cost to you!



Family Support Navigators

Assist in organizing
paperwork/documents.

Provide one-on-one support.

Act as a support person during
meeting with medical providers,
educational meetings, etc.

Apply for a Navigator here

Name *(Required)*

First

Last

Address *(Required)*

Street Address

Address Line 2

City

ZIP Code

Phone #1 *(Required)*

Phone #2

Email *(Required)*

I give Maine Parent Federation, Inc. permission to give this information to a Family Support Navigator (FSN) for the purpose of assisting me with the issues I have identified. I understand that a FSN will be contacting me after the Regional Coordinator receives this signed form. *(Required)*

☐ Yes, I give my permission.

What is your child's name? *(Required)*

What is your child's age? *(Required)*

Please continue with our

“Education is Special:

A Guide to Special Education in Maine”
training and materials



Education is Special

A Guide to Special Education in Maine

SURVEY

Reminder





MAINE PARENT FEDERATION

Please stay connected!

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