



## **Transitioning from Early Intervention to School Services**

All children in CSLOT's Early Intervention program will begin the transition that introduces him or her to the public education system. The Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), developed by your Regional Center's Service Coordinator and CSLOT, is replaced by an Individual Education Plan (IEP), if services are necessary after your child leaves CSLOT on his or her 3rd birthday.

The Regional Center Service Coordinator is obliged to inform you that your child may be eligible for special education and related services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. They will schedule an IEP meeting with your child's school district before your child turns 33 months of age. The school district then assumes responsibility for your child's continued services, if needed.

The purpose of this transition meeting is to prepare for a change in services, including:

- Review of your child's current IFSP goals and progress made.
- Explain steps necessary to help your toddler adjust to, and function in, a new setting.
- Explain community resources available to a child not eligible for services.
- Explain educational services available to a child eligible for services.
- Explain steps necessary for movement into the new services for children who may continue to be eligible such as transferring reports, IFSPs, and/or medical records to the school district.
- Determine if further assessments by the school district are needed to determine if your child is eligible for continued services.
- Determine a date for conducting a final review of the current IFSP.
- Determine a date for the IEP meeting to discuss results of testing performed by school district specialists (psychologist, speech pathologist, educational specialist, preschool teacher, behavior specialist, and/or occupational therapist). Recommendations for eligibility depend on the test results obtained by these specialists and your concerns as parents. At the meeting, one or more of these specialists will be present and an administrator from the school district will conduct the meeting.

Your child's IEP is developed according to federal laws providing every child a "Free Appropriate Public Education," or FAPE, which says that children with special needs must receive an appropriate evaluation, be served in the least restrictive environment, include parents and student in decision-making and be offered procedural due process. The IEP is a legal document which states the services needed by your child and his or her treatment goals. Persons who must be present at IEP meetings include parent; teacher; school district representative; someone who can interpret evaluation results, usually a psychologist; and an interpreter, if needed. Parents may request that an invitation be sent to their child's Regional Center Service Coordinator and CSLOT therapist.



The Individual Educational Plan must include:

- A statement of your child's present levels of educational and functional performance
- A statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals
- A determination of how progress will be measured and when
- Special education, related services, and other supports available to your child
- The extent to which your child will *not* participate in regular classes or activities
- Any individual accommodations your child may need
- The date for the services to begin, the frequency, location and duration of services

The IEP can be a very positive experience for families. Since you have already had the experience of the IFSP through your Regional Center, you can expect continued expertise regarding your child's present abilities. You will be informed of the areas in which he or she shows strength, and what can be done to maximize potential in weak areas. You and your team decide on therapy goals for each of the weak areas and decide the setting in which these goals may best be met.

Goals on the IEP cover academics, self-help, leisure and recreation, vocational skills, motor skills, and social/behavior skills. These goals must be practical, clearly stated, and accomplished within one year. There must be at least one goal for each area of need as stated in your child's present levels of educational/functional performance. The educational setting must be the least restrictive one available to your child. Whenever possible, your child will be considered for inclusion in a regular classroom with his or her peers, although some children benefit primarily from special day classes where he or she can receive intensive services. You can visit the recommended preschool settings prior to the meeting.

At the IEP meeting, there is a lot of information discussed in a vocabulary which may be new to you. If you inform the IEP team at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting, you can bring a recording device so that you can listen again to what was said. You can prepare for the meeting by writing down the areas which you would like to see addressed, so that the team can help in the writing of specific and measurable goals. Be sure to ask for a copy of parent's Rights and Procedural Safeguards before your meeting. Also, be sure to ask questions when you don't understand something. All team members present at the IEP meeting sign the IEP document. Parents sign to say they attended the meeting, and then check a box for agreement (or not) with the IEP and understanding of eligibility (or not).

To receive Regional Center services after the age of 3, your child must be diagnosed with: Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, Mental Retardation, or other Developmental Disabilities. These all require specially designed services which cannot be met with modification of a regular school environment. Your Service Coordinator will inform you in writing if your child continues to be eligible for Regional Center services, which no longer include educational services, as these are the responsibility of the school district. If your child continues with the Regional Center, an Individual Program Plan meeting is scheduled, an Individual Program Plan (IPP) is developed, and the Regional Center determines what the needs of your child and family are, and



how these can best be supported by the Regional Center. Thus, your child may have an IEP and an IPP.

CSLOT offers continuing services after the age of 3, but these services are no longer paid by your Regional Center. Insurance companies will pick up CSLOT's tab in certain circumstances. Sometimes school districts will contract for services, but often parents pay privately. After you leave CSLOT, keep in touch with us by visiting our website which is often updated with clinical information, summer camps, and new programs.

While your child is with CSLOT, take an opportunity to attend a workshop at Parents Helping Parents (PHP), a non-profit, public service agency which works with families who have children with special needs. PHP hosts a 3-hour workshop on transition planning which you can attend by making a reservation on their website: [www.PHP.com](http://www.PHP.com). In addition, the Community Association for Special Education (CASE) has an excellent handbook which will help you get off to a good start and serve as a resource to you in the years ahead: *Special Education Rights and Responsibilities*. Also, feel free to ask your child's therapist about watching *The First IEP: Parent Perspectives*, by Deborah Chen and Annie Cox. You can view it at the clinic while you are waiting for your child.