



# Practice Manual

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## Chapter 10: Transition

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
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# 10 TRANSITION

Transitions occur at several points in time for children enrolled in the First Steps program. All families experience transitions within First Steps with new providers, beginning early intervention services or changing early intervention services. The Service Coordinator and providers support the family during each transition and may make referrals for other community services or provide information on family support programs, as appropriate.

Transition is discussed throughout the family's participation in First Steps to promote continuity of services and provide families with a smooth exit from First Steps. This chapter describes the process of planning for transition out of First Steps, which includes sharing directory information, conducting a transition meeting and, if applicable, arranging for summer third birthday services.

## SECTION I: PLANNING FOR TRANSITION OUT OF FIRST STEPS

*Missouri Part C State Plan Section XIII. (34 CFR 303.209)*

Transition out of First Steps is a process rather than a specific event. Successful transition involves the Service Coordinator understanding the family's needs and planning for services and supports when the child turns three years old.

The Service Coordinator uses the *Checklist for Transition and Exit Activities* (see Chapter 10 Documents) to ensure timely preparation for transition out of First Steps.

For a child under age two, transition planning involves the Service Coordinator introducing the parent to information about the transition process at each Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting, which includes explaining that a transition meeting will occur before the child turns three years old and when First Steps services end.

When the child is near two years of age, the Service Coordinator begins more detailed conversations with the parent about plans for the child after First Steps and the timelines for a transition meeting. This discussion typically occurs at an IFSP meeting near the child's second birthday to give the parent time to research different options for services at age three including Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) at the school district, early childhood programs or other community services.

The Service Coordinator shares a packet of information with the parent, as appropriate, at the IFSP meeting. The packet of information may include: the *Parent Transition Handbook* (see Chapter 10 Documents) and a list of local programs and service options for children over age three.

When preparing for transition with a child who has a summer third birthday, the Service Coordinator explains the parent must pursue ECSE services in order to have the option to continue First Steps after age three. For more information about summer third birthdays, see Section IV.

At the IFSP meeting, the parent is not expected to make decisions about options at age three. The Service Coordinator allows the parent time to process the information before planning for a transition meeting.

## SECTION II: SHARING DIRECTORY INFORMATION

*Missouri Part C State Plan Section XIII. (34 CFR 303.209)*

After the parent has an opportunity to consider options for the child after age three, the Service Coordinator follows up with the parent to discuss sharing directory information to make a referral to the school district, or opting out of sharing directory information, prior to scheduling a transition meeting.

### A. Directory Information

All children eligible for First Steps are potentially eligible for ECSE services. The SPOE is required to notify the child's local school district when the child is approaching age three. The local school district (i.e., the district where the child resides) is the Local Educational Agency (LEA). The notification assists the LEA with child find efforts and helps ensure a smooth transition if the child is eligible for ECSE services.

#### 1. Notification to the LEA

Notification to the LEA occurs when directory information is sent to the child's school district. Directory information includes the following five items:

- Child's name;
- Child's birth date;
- Parent's name;
- Parent's address; and
- Parent's phone number (including documentation of no phone number).

If the child is eligible for First Steps, then a Release of Information (ROI) is not required to be signed by the parent in order to share directory information with the school district. Directory information may be provided to the school district all at once or over several contacts. Additionally, directory information may be provided to the school district in a variety of ways (e.g., phone call, email or IFSP meeting notification) and by anyone with knowledge of the child (e.g., parent, Service Coordinator, First Steps provider). The Service Coordinator should provide directory information in a written format.

Once the school district has received all five directory items, then notification is complete and the ECSE referral timeline begins. For more information on ECSE requirements, including training presentations and documents, see Chapter 10 Links.

Before the Service Coordinator can share any additional information between First Steps and the school district, the parent must sign a ROI form indicating what additional information can be shared with the school district.

For more information on releasing information, see Chapter 2.

## 2. Notification Timelines

The timeline to notify the school district of a child who is approaching age three depends on when the child is determined eligible for First Steps. There are no acceptable reasons for missing the notification timeline.

For children determined eligible for First Steps 90 days or more before the third birthday, the Service Coordinator sends directory information to the school district at least 90 days before the child's third birthday, unless the parent opts out of sending directory information.

For children determined eligible for First Steps less than 90 days but 45 days or more before the third birthday, the Service Coordinator sends directory information to the school district as soon as possible after the child is determined eligible for First Steps, unless the parent opts out.

If a child is referred to First Steps less than 45 days before the child's third birthday, the SPOE is not required to conduct evaluation, assessment or IFSP activities. The Service Coordinator may help the family make a referral to the school district or the parent may make a referral directly to the school district. Any time the child's eligibility for First Steps is unknown, the Service Coordinator must have the parent sign a ROI before sharing any information about the child and family with the school district.

### B. Opt Out

First Steps has an opt out policy, which means the parent can request, in writing, that directory information not be shared with the school district. The Service Coordinator informs the parent of the opt out policy when explaining directory information.

To opt out, the parent must sign the ***Opt Out Form*** (Chapter 10 Forms) and return the form to the Service Coordinator. If the parent chooses to opt out of sending directory information, the Service Coordinator informs the parent that failure to notify the school district 90 days or more before the child's third birthday may result in a gap in services between First Steps and ECSE.

#### ➤ Opt Out Reversal

Opt out reversal means the parent initially opted out of sending directory information to the school district then later decides to send directory information. If the parent wants to reverse opt out, the Service Coordinator provides the previously completed Opt Out Form

and the parent completes the Reversal of Opt Out section. Once the parent has signed the reversal section, the Service Coordinator sends the form to the school district as soon as possible.

If the parent opted out of sharing directory information and then reversed opt out, in writing, 90 days or more before the child's third birthday, then directory information must be sent to the school district not fewer than 90 days before the child's third birthday.

If the parent opted out of sharing directory information and then reversed opt out, in writing, less than 90 days before the child's third birthday, then directory information must be sent to the school district as soon as possible. In this case, a gap in services may occur due to the delay in sending directory information to the school district.

## SECTION III: TRANSITION MEETINGS

*Missouri Part C State Plan Section XIII. (34 CFR 303.209)*

When preparing to schedule a transition meeting, the Service Coordinator discusses ECSE and other community services with the parent to determine which option for a transition meeting will work best for the family. A transition meeting is an important step to ensuring a smooth, successful transition to preschool or other services.

Depending on who the parent wants to invite, there are three options for transition meetings: Transition Plan, Transition Conference with ECSE, or Transition Plan/Conference.

### A. Transition Plan

The Transition Plan is an IFSP meeting held for all children participating in First Steps to discuss program and service options for the child after age three. The purpose of the Transition Plan meeting is to develop a plan for a successful transition out of First Steps.

#### 1. Meeting Timeline

The Transition Plan meeting must be held not fewer than 90 days, and at the discretion of all parties, not more than nine months before the child's third birthday. "At the discretion of all parties" means the required participants are involved in scheduling the date and time of the meeting. Parent/child delay is the only acceptable reason for missing the Transition Plan timeline.

The Transition Plan meeting may be combined with a required First Steps Initial, Six-Month Review or Annual Review IFSP meeting, if timelines permit. The Transition Plan meeting may also be held as an Inter-Periodic Review IFSP meeting if a required meeting is not due. When conducting the Transition Plan meeting in conjunction with another IFSP meeting type (e.g., Six-Month Review), the IFSP requirements for the primary meeting type must also be met. For more information on conducting IFSP meetings, see Chapter 6.

#### 2. Meeting Participants

At the Transition Plan meeting, a plan for the child to exit First Steps is developed; therefore, Transition Plan meeting should be conducted in-person. The Transition Plan meeting must include the following participants:

- The Service Coordinator;
- The parents;\*
- The persons directly involved in conducting an ongoing assessment, if applicable;\*\*
- Other family members, as requested by the parent;

- An advocate or other person outside the family, as requested by the parent; and
- Service providers, as appropriate.

\*The Transition Plan meeting is required for continued participation in First Steps; therefore, the Service Coordinator cannot hold the meeting without the parent.

\*\*If the persons who conducted the ongoing assessment cannot attend the Transition Plan meeting, they must participate by one of the following alternate methods: conference call; make pertinent records available at the meeting (i.e., “by report”); or have a knowledgeable, authorized representative attend in their place (i.e., “by substitute”).

### 3. Scheduling the Transition Plan Meeting

The Service Coordinator must schedule the Transition Plan meeting early enough to ensure the required meeting participants can attend and the meeting is conducted within timelines. The Service Coordinator must send the parent and other participants the *Transition Meeting Notification* letter (see Chapter 10 Letters), which indicates First Steps services end upon the child’s third birthday. A copy of the Parental Rights Statement must be included with the letter. Best practice is to send the letter to the parent ten days prior to the Transition Plan meeting date.

#### ➤ Unable to Locate the Parent

If the parent is unable to locate, the Service Coordinator is not required to hold the Transition Plan meeting. However, the Service Coordinator is required to send directory information to the school district using the last known parent contact information. The Service Coordinator must follow First Steps guidance to determine if the parent is unable to locate and document all attempts to contact the parent. For more information on unable to locate after the Initial IFSP, see Chapter 6.

### 4. Conducting the Transition Plan Meeting

At the Transition Plan meeting, the IFSP team discusses the transition process and prepares the child and family to leave the First Steps program. During the discussion about program and service options, the Service Coordinator may share specific examples available in the community, which may include:

- ECSE,
- Head Start,
- Title I preschool,
- Private preschool,

- Parents As Teachers,
- Child care, or
- Local early childhood programs.

The IFSP team must carefully consider adding new early intervention services, including assistive technology devices, near the time a child will be exiting First Steps. Authorizing new services a short time before the child exits is not appropriate because the child may not have the opportunity to make progress toward IFSP outcomes while in the program. For more information about determining services at IFSP meetings, see Chapter 6. For more information about obtaining assistive technology devices near transition, see Chapter 8.

If during the transition planning process the Service Coordinator did not provide the parent with a copy of the Parent Transition Handbook, then a copy should be provided at the Transition Plan meeting.

The Service Coordinator must document in the transition section of the IFSP the following steps and services discussed during the Transition Plan meeting:

- **The plan for transition, including the options, steps and services to help prepare the child for a new setting.** The Service Coordinator documents discussions regarding options for services after the child turns three years old and any steps to be taken or services needed to assist in the family's transition from First Steps.
- **Dates the directory information and the IFSP, evaluation and assessment are sent to the LEA, or the date the parent opted out.** The Service Coordinator documents the date directory information was sent to the school district or the date the parent signed the Opt Out Form. The parent has until the end of the Transition Plan meeting to sign the Opt Out Form or the Service Coordinator will send directory information to the school district by the conclusion of the Transition Plan meeting. Documentation in the IFSP cannot include any actions that took place after the meeting ended.

Additionally, the Service Coordinator documents, with written parental consent (i.e., ROI), the date the following information was sent to the school district:

- **The most recent IFSP.** This means the last IFSP completed for the child. For the Initial/Transition IFSP meeting, the most recent IFSP is not applicable.
- **The most recent evaluation of the child.** For children eligible based on medical or other records, the most recent evaluation is not applicable, but for children eligible based on developmental delay, the most recent evaluation is the Developmental Assessment of Young Children - Second Edition (DAYC-2).

- **The most recent assessment of the child.** For all children, the most recent assessment may be the initial assessment or it may be an ongoing assessment.

The Service Coordinator may use the *Transition Meeting Information Sent to ECSE* letter (see Chapter 10 Letters) when sharing additional information with the school district.

If the parent does not want to share a specific document (e.g., an assessment report) with the school district, then the Service Coordinator should document this in a case note.

## 5. Completing the Transition Plan Process

After the Transition Plan meeting, the Service Coordinator completes the IFSP meeting process. This may include entering meeting attendance, completing data entry of the required sections of the IFSP, entering authorizations, sending copies of all documents to the appropriate individuals and entering case notes. For more information on completing the IFSP process, see Chapter 6.

### B. Transition Conference with ECSE

The Transition Conference with ECSE is an IFSP meeting held with school district personnel when the parent gave permission to invite ECSE. The Service Coordinator case notes the parent's verbal permission to invite the ECSE representative. The purpose of the Transition Conference with ECSE is to provide the parent with information about ECSE services.

#### 1. Meeting Timeline

The Transition Conference with ECSE must be held not fewer than 90 days, and at the discretion of all parties, not more than nine months before the child's third birthday. "At the discretion of all parties" means the required participants are involved in scheduling the date and time of the meeting. The Service Coordinator considers the school district calendar and the child's birth date when preparing for the Transition Conference with ECSE.

If the parent did not want to invite ECSE to the Transition Plan meeting, and the parent later wants to have a Transition Conference with ECSE, then the Service Coordinator must hold another, separate meeting within timelines. However, if the timeline has passed, the Service Coordinator must hold the Transition Conference late and document the reason for the delay as parent/child delay. Parent/child delay is the only acceptable reason for missing the timeline for a Transition Conference with ECSE.

The Transition Conference with ECSE may be combined with a required First Steps Initial, Six-month or Annual Review IFSP meeting, if timelines permit. The Transition Conference

with ECSE may also be held as an Inter-periodic IFSP meeting if a required meeting is not due. When conducting the Transition Conference with ECSE in conjunction with another IFSP meeting type (e.g., Six-Month Review), the IFSP requirements for the primary meeting type must also be met. For more information on conducting IFSP meetings, see Chapter 6.

## **2. Meeting Participants**

At the Transition Conference with ECSE, the IFSP team discusses the differences between First Steps and ECSE; therefore, the Transition Conference with ECSE should be conducted in-person.

The Transition Conference with ECSE must include the following participants:

- The Service Coordinator;
- The parents;
- ECSE representative;
- The persons directly involved in conducting an ongoing assessment, if applicable;\*
- Other family members, as requested by the parent;
- An advocate or other person outside the family, as requested by the parent; and
- Service providers, as appropriate.

\*If the persons who conducted the ongoing assessment cannot attend the Transition Conference with ECSE, they must participate by one of the following alternate methods: conference call; make pertinent records available at the meeting (i.e., “by report”); or have a knowledgeable, authorized representative attend in their place (i.e., “by substitute”).

## **3. Scheduling the Transition Conference with ECSE**

When planning for the Transition Conference with ECSE, the Service Coordinator must schedule the meeting early enough to ensure the meeting participants can attend and the meeting is conducted within timelines.

Since ECSE is a required participant at the Transition Conference, the Service Coordinator must collaborate with ECSE in scheduling the meeting. The Service Coordinator should involve ECSE in planning for the Transition Conference with ECSE several weeks in advance in order to find a meeting date, time and place that works for the parent, ECSE and the Service Coordinator. The family’s home is not the only option for the location of the Transition Conference with ECSE. The meeting may be held at the school building as an opportunity for the parent to become familiar with the ECSE program.

If the Transition Conference with ECSE timeline falls during the summer when school may not be in session, it is acceptable to schedule the meeting before or after summer break, as long as it is held within timelines.

➤ **ECSE Invitation**

The school district decides who is going to serve as the ECSE representative. The Service Coordinator should be familiar with personnel at the school district to know who to invite to a Transition Conference with ECSE.

If the ECSE representative invited is unable to attend the Transition Conference, the Service Coordinator should reschedule the meeting if timelines permit. However, if ECSE does not attend the second attempt to hold the meeting or rescheduling the meeting will cause timelines to be exceeded, the Service Coordinator holds the Transition Conference without the ECSE representative.

The Service Coordinator must send the parent and other participants the ***Transition Meeting Notification*** letter (see Chapter 10 Letters), which indicates that First Steps services end upon the child's third birthday. A copy of the Parental Rights Statement must be included with the letter. Best practice is to send the letter to the parent ten days prior to the Transition Conference with ECSE meeting date.

#### **4. Conducting the Transition Conference with ECSE**

At the Transition Conference with ECSE, the IFSP team discusses the steps to transition from First Steps to ECSE. The Service Coordinator should have a ROI for the ECSE representative signed by the parent prior to the date of the meeting; however, the parent must sign the ROI before the Transition Conference with ECSE begins.

The ECSE representative explains ECSE referral, evaluation, eligibility process, consent, timelines, and special education services. The Service Coordinator must have basic knowledge of the differences between First Steps and ECSE programs and be able to explain this to the parent if the ECSE representative is unable to attend the Transition Conference. The Service Coordinator may provide a copy of the Parent's Guide to Special Education (see Chapter 10 Links) as a means to explain the ECSE eligibility process to the parent.

The IFSP document includes the following activities discussed during the Transition Conference with ECSE:

- **Discussion at the transition conference.** The Service Coordinator documents the IFSP team's discussion about the differences between First Steps and ECSE, including the Part B eligibility process. Additionally, the Service Coordinator documents the ECSE representative's contact information (i.e., name and phone number).

## 5. Completing the Transition Conference with ECSE Process

After the Transition Conference with ECSE meeting, the Service Coordinator completes the IFSP meeting process. This may include entering meeting attendance, completing data entry of the required sections of the IFSP, entering authorizations, sending copies of all documents to the appropriate individuals and entering case notes. For more information on completing the IFSP process, see Chapter 6.

The Service Coordinator should follow up with the family and ECSE to determine the status of the child's eligibility for ECSE. If the child was found ineligible for ECSE, First Steps services will continue until the child turns three years old. The Service Coordinator works with the family to find other options for the child after age three. If the child was found eligible, the Service Coordinator should attend the child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting, if invited.

### C. Combining the Transition Plan and the Transition Conference with ECSE

If the parent is interested in pursuing ECSE services for the child, then the Service Coordinator prepares for the Transition Plan meeting to be held at the same time as the Transition Conference with ECSE.

The Service Coordinator schedules and invites participants to the combined Transition Plan/Conference with ECSE meeting. An invitation to the Transition Plan/Conference with ECSE meeting may be sent to ECSE with or without complete directory information.

When holding a combined meeting, the requirements for both the Transition Plan meeting and the Transition Conference with ECSE must be met.

### D. Additional Considerations for Transition Meeting Timelines

The timeline for a transition meeting may need to be adjusted for two parent/child reasons: opt out reversal and late referral.

#### 1. Opt Out Reversal

If the parent initially opts out of sending directory information to the school district, but changes his/her mind and completes the reversal section of the Opt Out Form before the Transition Plan meeting is held, then, with parent permission, the Service Coordinator may hold the Transition Plan and Conference with ECSE together.

However, if the parent changes his/her mind after the Transition Plan meeting was held and wants to have a Transition Conference with ECSE, then the Service Coordinator must hold a

Transition Conference. If the timeline for the Transition Conference passed before the reversal section of the Opt Out Form is completed, then the Service Coordinator must hold a Transition Conference with ECSE late and document the reason for delay as parent/child delay.

## **2. Late Referrals**

Late referrals are children who are approaching age three at the time of their initial referral to First Steps.

### **a) First Steps Referrals 134 to 90 Days Prior to Child's Third Birth Date**

For children referred to First Steps less than 135 but 90 days or more prior to the child's third birth date, a Transition Plan meeting is required. With parent permission, a Transition Conference with ECSE is conducted and may be held at the same time as the Transition Plan at the Initial IFSP meeting. The Service Coordinator must send the parent and other participants the *Initial/Transition Meeting Notification* letter (see Chapter 10 Letters), which indicates the child is eligible for First Steps and notifies the parent that First Steps services will end upon the child's third birthday. A copy of the Parental Rights Statement must be included with the letter to the parent. Best practice is to send the letter to the parent ten days prior to the meeting date.

### **b) First Steps Referrals 45 to 89 Days Prior to Child's Third Birth Date**

For children referred to First Steps less than 90 but 45 days or more prior to the child's third birth date, a Transition Plan meeting is required but a Transition Conference with ECSE is not required. The Transition Plan meeting is held at the same time as the Initial IFSP meeting. The Service Coordinator must send the parent and other participants the *Initial/Transition Meeting Notification* letter (see Chapter 10 Letters), which indicates the child is eligible for First Steps and notifies the parent that First Steps services will end upon the child's third birthday. A copy of the Parental Rights Statement (see Chapter 2 Documents) must be included with the letter to the parent. Best practice is to send the letter to the parent ten days prior to the meeting date.

### **c) First Steps Referrals Less than 45 Days Prior to Child's Third Birth Date**

For children referred to First Steps less than 45 days prior to the third birth date, the Transition Plan and Transition Conference with ECSE are not required because the SPOE does not have enough time to conduct the 45-day timeline activities.

## SECTION IV: SUMMER THIRD BIRTHDAYS

*Missouri Part C State Plan Section XIII. (34 CFR 303.211)*

For a child who has a third birthday of April 1 through August 15, First Steps services may be delivered to the family after age three in order to avoid a gap in services between First Steps and ECSE. The Service Coordinator completes additional activities with the family before the child with a summer third birthday turns three years old.

To receive First Steps after age three, all of the following must in be place before a child's third birthday:

- The Service Coordinator confirms the parent's decision regarding First Steps after age three;
- The Service Coordinator confirms the child is eligible for ECSE, or eligibility determination for ECSE is in process;
- The parent signs the Notice of Action/Consent (NOA/C) to Continue First Steps for Summer Third Birthday Children; and,
- The Summer Third Birthday IFSP meeting is held.

### A. Parent Options

At the Transition Plan and/or Conference with ECSE meeting the Service Coordinator gives the parent the *Parent Options for Summer Third Birthday Services Handout* (see Chapter 10 Documents). The Service Coordinator reviews the parent's options for services after age three and the differences between First Steps and ECSE services.

The Service Coordinator explains if the child is eligible for First Steps and eligible for ECSE, or in the process\* of eligibility determination for ECSE, then the parent has the option of continuing in First Steps until the day before school starts in the fall.\*\*

\*"Eligibility in process" is defined as the child has been referred to the school district and the Service Coordinator confirmed someone at the school district received the referral and the ECSE initial evaluation timeline has started. As long as the child's eligibility determination for ECSE is in process, First Steps services must continue until the child's eligibility for ECSE is known.

\*\*"School starts in the fall" is defined as the first day of student attendance in a school district calendar.

If the parent does not pursue ECSE services and opts out of sending directory information to the school district, then First Steps services after age three are not available. The Service Coordinator informs the parent that First Steps ends the day before the child's third birthday.

If the parent chooses to pursue ECSE services, then the parent has two choices: (1) transition to ECSE on the child's third birthday, or (2) continue First Steps until school starts in the fall following the child's third birthday.

### **1. Parent Chooses to Transition to ECSE**

If the parent chooses to transition to ECSE services on the child's third birthday, the child will receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) through an IEP upon the child's third birthday. Once the child has turned three and the parent gives consent for ECSE services, the parent cannot later choose to return to First Steps services.

Extended School Year (ESY) services are considered for all children who receive IEP services. ESY services are special education services provided beyond the normal school year. ESY services are considered on an individual basis when data collected by the IEP team indicates a child may show a regression in skills due to a gap in services over the summer months.

### **2. Parent Chooses to Continue First Steps**

If the parent chooses to continue First Steps after the child's third birthday, then the child must be eligible for ECSE, or in the process of eligibility determination for ECSE, before age three. The child will receive First Steps services through a Summer Third Birthday IFSP until school starts in the fall. Once school begins in the fall, the child transitions to ECSE services.

The parent must sign a *Notice of Action/Consent to Continue First Steps for Summer Third Birthday Children* (see Chapter 10 Forms) to provide consent for the child and family to continue First Steps after the child turns three years old. The consent form must be translated in the parent's native language. For more information about native language, see Chapter 2.

Written parental consent may be obtained as early as the Transition Plan and/or Conference with ECSE meeting but must be obtained before the Summer Third Birthday meeting begins.

#### **➤ Parent No Longer Wants to Continue First Steps**

If the parent initially signed the Notice of Action/Consent to Continue First Steps for Summer Third Birthday Children but later no longer wants First Steps after age three, then the Service Coordinator completes a Notice of Action (NOA) and provides a copy to the parent. If this occurs before the child's third birthday, then the child will age out of First Steps on the third birthday. If this occurs after the child's third birthday, then First Steps ends immediately. The Service Coordinator case notes all discussions with the parent.

If the child is eligible for ECSE, then the parent has the right, at any time, for the child to receive ECSE services instead of First Steps. However, the child cannot receive First Steps and ECSE services at the same time.

## **B. Summer Third Birthday Meeting**

The Summer Third Birthday meeting is an IFSP meeting to plan for services during the summer months. The Service Coordinator must confirm the child is eligible for ECSE, or eligibility determination for ECSE is in process, prior to scheduling the Summer Third Birthday meeting. The purpose of the Summer Third Birthday meeting is for the IFSP team to discuss school readiness and review the child's outcomes and early intervention services.

### **1. Meeting Timeline**

The Summer Third Birthday meeting must be held before the child's third birthday. There are no allowable exceptions to this timeline. The Summer Third Birthday meeting is held up to 30 days prior to the child's third birthday, but may be held earlier if the meeting coincides with another IFSP meeting timeline (i.e., Six-Month Review).

The Summer Third Birthday meeting must be conducted as an Initial or Annual Review IFSP meeting because a new IFSP period is required to extend the child's participation past age three. For more information on conducting Initial and Annual Review IFSP meetings, see Chapter 6.

For late referrals, depending on if the child's eligibility determination for ECSE is in process, the Initial IFSP meeting may also be the Summer Third Birthday meeting.

### **2. Meeting Participants**

At the Summer Third Birthday meeting, each section of the IFSP must be reviewed and updated; therefore, the Summer Third Birthday meeting must be conducted in-person.

The Summer Third Birthday meeting must include the following participants:

- Service Coordinator;
- The parents;
- The persons directly involved in conducting an ongoing assessment, if applicable,\*
- Other family members, as requested by the parent;
- An advocate or other person outside the family (e.g., ECSE representative), as requested by the parent; and,
- Service providers, as appropriate.

\*If the persons who conducted the ongoing assessment cannot attend the Summer Third Birthday meeting, they must participate by one of the following alternate methods: conference call; make pertinent records available at the meeting (i.e., “by report”); or have a knowledgeable, authorized representative attend in their place (i.e., “by substitute”).

### **3. Scheduling the Summer Third Birthday Meeting**

When planning for the Summer Third Birthday meeting, the Service Coordinator must schedule the meeting early enough to ensure the meeting participants can attend and the meeting is conducted before the child’s third birthday.

The Service Coordinator must send the parent and other participants the *Meeting Notification for IFSP* letter (see Chapter 6 Letters). A copy of the Parental Rights Statement must be included with the letter to the parent. Best practice is to send the letter to the parents ten days prior to the Summer Third Birthday meeting date.

### **4. Conducting the Summer Third Birthday Meeting**

The Summer Third Birthday meeting is conducted like an Initial or Annual IFSP meeting with an additional activity for school readiness. At the meeting, the IFSP team reviews the current outcomes and early intervention services as part of a discussion about school readiness and preparation for the child to transition to ECSE.

School readiness means preparing children and families for kindergarten.

- For children, school readiness means being prepared in the areas of early learning and development, including social and emotional, language and literacy, cognitive, motor, health and physical well-being, and positive attitudes and behaviors toward learning.
- For families, school readiness means an understanding of their child’s current level of development, how to encourage their child, developing a supportive partnership with the school, and an understanding of the school system their child will enter.

Additionally, at the Summer Third Birthday meeting, the Service Coordinator collects financial and insurance information, if applicable, in order to confirm the Monthly Fee Determination. For more information about family cost participation and insurance, see Chapter 5.

After early intervention services are decided by the IFSP team, the Service Coordinator completes a NOA/C to initiate or change services, if applicable. For more information about consent, see Chapter 2.

The IFSP document includes the following activities discussed during the Summer Third Birthday meeting:

- **School readiness.** The Service Coordinator documents the IFSP team’s discussion about school readiness and how summer services will help develop the child’s reading, language and counting skills.

## 5. Completing the Summer Third Birthday Meeting

After the Summer Third Birthday meeting, the Service Coordinator completes the IFSP meeting process as an Initial or Annual Review IFSP meeting. The Service Coordinator enters data including:

- Meeting attendance;
- Financial and insurance information;
- The required sections of the IFSP;
- Authorizations; and
- Case notes.

If an Annual Review IFSP meeting was recently held, then the finalization of a Summer Third Birthday IFSP can be made without the Six-Month Review meeting requirement.

Once finalized, all prior authorizations in the child’s record are canceled effective the day before the Summer Third Birthday meeting date. For more information on completing the Annual Review IFSP process, see Chapter 6.

The Service Coordinator sends copies of all documents to the appropriate individuals.

## 6. Discontinuing First Steps After Age Three

After the Summer Third Birthday meeting, the status of First Steps after age three may change based on actions taken by the parent or ECSE.

### ➤ **Status Change per Parent Action**

If the parent no longer wants First Steps after age three, then the Service Coordinator completes a Notice of Action (NOA) indicating in the reason the parent chose to withdraw from First Steps after age three and provides a copy to the parent. The Service Coordinator case notes all discussions with the parent.

### ➤ **Status Change per ECSE Action**

If ECSE eligibility determination is no longer in process (e.g., the parent does not provide consent for an initial evaluation or the parent is no longer pursuing ECSE services), or if the child is determined ineligible for ECSE, then the child is not eligible for First Steps after age three. The Service Coordinator confirms the information with ECSE and the parent. Upon confirmation, the Service Coordinator completes a NOA

indicating in the reason change in eligibility. The Service Coordinator provides a copy of the NOA to the parent and documents the information in a case note.

If the status of First Steps after age three changes before the child's third birthday, then the child will age out of First Steps on the third birthday. If the status changes after the child's third birthday, then First Steps ends immediately.

However, as long as ECSE is in the process of determining eligibility (e.g., trying to contact the parent or rescheduling a test), First Steps services continue to be provided to the family.

## SECTION V: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Question 1:** If a child moves to a different school district while in the process of determining eligibility for ECSE, is another Transition Conference with ECSE required to be held with the new school district?

**Answer:** No. The Service Coordinator is not required to hold another Transition Conference with the new school district. If the parent signs a ROI for the new school district, then the Service Coordinator may assist the parent in sharing First Steps information with the new school district.

**Question 2:** What happens if the parent first agrees to send directory information to the school district, but then later changes his/her mind before directory information is sent?

**Answer:** The parent completes Section 1 of the Opt Out Form, and the Service Coordinator cannot release any information to the school district upon the date the parent signs the Opt Out Form. If the parent changes his/her mind before holding a Transition Conference with ECSE, then there is no requirement for the Service Coordinator to hold a Transition Conference with ECSE.

**Question 3:** What happens if prior to the Transition Plan meeting, the parent states they do not want to pursue ECSE services. However, during the Transition Plan meeting, the parent changes their mind. When is directory information shared with the school district?

**Answer:** The directory information is shared with the school district before the conclusion of the Transition Plan meeting.

**Question 4:** If the parent first signs the Opt Out Form and later decides to pursue ECSE, is the child able to receive First Steps after age three?

**Answer:** It depends on when the parent makes this decision. If the parent decides to pursue ECSE services after the child has turned three or the school is closed for summer break so the school district cannot confirm the referral has been received, then the answer is no.

If the parent can sign the opt out reversal, the Service Coordinator can send the child's referral to the school and confirm the school district received the referral, the IFSP team can hold the Summer Third Birthday meeting, the parent can sign consent to continue First Steps before the child turns three years old, then the answer is yes.

It is important for the Service Coordinator and parent to discuss the ramifications of signing the Opt Out Form and later deciding to pursue ECSE services, including the receipt of First Steps after age three and a possible gap in services if the referral to the school district was less than 90 days from the child's third birthday.

**Question 5:** If a child is determined ineligible for ECSE, but the parent has filed a due process disputing the determination, can the child receive First Steps after age three?

**Answer:** The status of the child on the day before the child's third birthday is what determines whether the child can receive First Steps after age three. If the school has determined the child not eligible for ECSE, then the child is not eligible for First Steps after age three. If the decision is overturned before the child's third birthday, then the child may receive First Steps after age three.

**Question 6:** Does First Steps pay providers to attend an IEP meeting?

**Answer:** No.

**Question 7:** When the local school district utilizes a special school district or cooperative, with who does the Service Coordinator share transition information?

**Answer:** Directory information must be sent to the school district where the child resides. If the parent gave consent (i.e., ROI) to release the IFSP, evaluation or assessment to the school district, then the Service Coordinator must send those documents to the school district.

Before the Service Coordinator can share any information with the special school district or cooperative, the parent must sign a ROI form to the special school district or cooperative.

**Question 8:** If a child with a summer third birthday is eligible for a 504 plan, can the child receive First Steps after age three?

**Answer:** No. In order for the child to receive First Steps after age three, the child must be eligible for ECSE (i.e., special education services through an IEP), or in the process of eligibility.