



**Parent Options for
Summer Third Birthday Services
February 2014**

Parents of children who are eligible for First Steps, eligible for Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) and who have summer third birthdays April 1 through August 15 may choose to: (1) continue First Steps services until school starts in the fall after the child’s third birthday; or (2) transition to ECSE on the child’s third birthday.

If the child is in the process of eligibility determination for ECSE, First Steps services must continue after age three until the child’s eligibility for ECSE is known. If the child is determined ineligible for ECSE, First Steps services after age three will end. If the parent does not pursue ECSE, First Steps services after age three are not available.

If the parent chooses to continue First Steps services after the child’s third birthday, the child will receive First Steps services through an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) until school starts in the fall after the child’s third birthday. Once school begins in the fall, the child will transition to ECSE services. The parent must provide consent to continue First Steps services after age three and a Summer Third Birthday IFSP meeting must be held before the child’s third birthday. Parents who choose to continue First Steps services have the right, at any time, for their child to receive ECSE services instead of First Steps services.

If the parent chooses ECSE services on the child’s third birthday, the child will receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) upon the child’s third birthday. Parents who choose ECSE services cannot later choose to return to First Steps services once consent for ECSE services is obtained and the child has turned three.

Differences between First Steps and ECSE services

Services	First Steps	ECSE
Types	Early intervention services are identified by the IFSP team, which includes the parent, and designed to meet the developmental needs of a child with a disability. Services are available throughout the calendar year.	Special education services are identified by the IEP team, which includes the parent. Services are available throughout the school-year, however, the IEP must include a statement indicating the child’s eligibility or ineligibility for Extended School Year services.
Location	Early intervention services are delivered in the child’s natural environment, including home and community settings, to the maximum extent appropriate.	Special education and related services are provided in the least restrictive environment, to the maximum extent appropriate. Removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment only occurs when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classrooms with use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.
Procedural Safeguards	State regulations for First Steps detail the rights of children and parents who participate in First Steps.	State regulations for ECSE detail the rights for all parties involved in the education of students with disabilities.
Cost	Families pay a monthly fee for early intervention services delivered through an IFSP, except certain services provided at no-cost.	Special education and related services are at no-cost to the parent and designed to provide a FAPE through an IEP.