



**QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**  
**TRANSITION FROM FIRST STEPS TO**  
**EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL**  
**EDUCATION (ECSE)**

This is a live Question and Answer session addressing the content of a pre-recorded presentation titled “Transition From First Steps to Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE).”

Please make sure your telephone, web camera, and/or microphone are turned OFF.

November 17, 2014  
1:00 p.m.

Missouri Department of Elementary  
and Secondary Education

## Participating in this QA Session

- The agenda for today is to review key points from the recording *Transition from First Steps to Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)* and to provide answers to questions submitted prior to this webinar.
- Additional questions may be submitted by typing in the chat window. These questions will be answered at the end of the webinar.
- This session is being recorded. To find the recording, visit the DESE webinar page at [www.dese.mo.gov/webinar/](http://www.dese.mo.gov/webinar/) and click on the “Recorded Webinars” button.

## First Steps Key Point: **Directory Information**

- ❑ If a child **is eligible** for First Steps, the child is also potentially eligible for ECSE.
- ❑ **Directory information** is the child's name, birth date, parent's name, address and phone number.
- ❑ Directory information is provided to ECSE **at least 90 days** prior to child's third birthday, unless the parent opts out.
- ❑ If a child's **eligibility for First Steps is unknown**, and the parent requests to be referred to ECSE, written parental consent (i.e., Release of Information form) must be obtained before sending **any information** to ECSE.

## First Steps Key Point: **Opt Out**

- ❑ Parents can **opt out** of providing directory information to ECSE.
- ❑ To opt out, parents must sign the **Opt Out Form** and return the form to the Service Coordinator no later than the Transition Plan meeting.
- ❑ If the parents do not opt out, **in writing**, by the Transition Plan meeting, then directory information will be sent to ECSE at the Transition Plan meeting.
- ❑ If the parents **first opt out** of sending directory information to ECSE and **later change their minds**, the parents must complete the Reversal of Opt Out section of the Opt Out Form.
- ❑ Once the parent has signed the reversal section, the Service Coordinator **must** send the form to ECSE as soon as possible.

## First Steps Key Point: Transition Meetings

- ❑ All children in First Steps **must** have a Transition Plan meeting no later than 90 days prior to the third birthday.
- ❑ **With parent permission**, a Transition Conference is held no later than 90 days prior to the third birthday.
- ❑ There are specific discussions and activities required at a Transition Plan and a Transition Conference that **must** be documented in the IFSP.
- ❑ The Transition Plan and Conference may be **combined** as one meeting.

## ECSE Key Point: Evaluation Process

- ❑ The date that ECSE receives complete directory information, in any manner, **is the date of referral**. No exceptions.
- ❑ The initial evaluation process **must** be followed for First Steps referrals in order to meet compliance timeline requirements for the 30-60-30 timeline **unless** the timeline is compressed for the IEP to be in place by the third birthday. No exceptions.
- ❑ There are allowable extensions to the **first 30 and the next 60 days**, but there are **no** acceptable extensions to the last 30 days.

## ECSE Key Point: IEP Exceptions

For children in First Steps, there are **three exceptions** to having an IEP developed by the third birthday:

- ❑ A referral **TO** First Steps that is **less than 90** days before the child's third birthday;
- ❑ The parent **refuses to provide consent** for an initial ECSE evaluation;
- ❑ The parent initially opts out of the First Steps notification to the school district and subsequently **changes their mind** (opt out reversal) **less than 90** days before child's third birthday. Documentation of the opt out reversal should be maintained with the ECSE referral.

## Question One

What is the deadline for a First Steps parent to decide to opt out or send directory information to ECSE?

**Answer:** At the Transition Plan meeting, the Service Coordinator **must confirm** whether the parent opted out or directory information was sent to ECSE. Since confirmation must be documented in the Transition Plan IFSP, the action must be completed **before** the meeting is over. It is not appropriate for the Service Coordinator to include documentation in the IFSP of actions that took place **after** the meeting concluded.

## Question Two

How does ECSE find the date the child was referred  
**TO** First Steps?

**Answer:** The First Steps **Release of Information Form** has an item that indicates the child's referral date and whether that date is 90 days or more before the child's birthday. With parent consent, this information is completed on the release. See **page 1** of the **new** First Steps Release of Information form at:  
<http://dese.mo.gov/forms/MO5003041.pdf>

## Question Three

Where can ECSE find the MOSIS ID number assigned to a child in First Steps?

**Answer:** On **page 1** of the First Steps IFSP is the child's MOSIS ID number.

When a child transitions from First Steps to ECSE, the MOSIS ID number **stays** with the child.

ECSE needs to use **this MOSIS ID number** in their district's student information system.

## Question Four

Can First Steps complete the ***First Steps Referral to ECSE Documentation Model Form*** and send it to ECSE as a way to share directory information?

**Answer:** Yes. If First Steps uses the model form as a way to share directory information **only** the top portion for Directory Information is to be completed. ECSE would complete the additional information on the model form.

## Question Five

Is ECSE required to use the ***First Steps Referral to ECSE Documentation Model Form***?

**Answer:** No, neither ECSE nor First Steps are required to use the model form; however, both programs are encouraged to use it as a tool to help ensure timelines are met.

## Question Six

When the parent wants to reverse opt out, must the original form be used for parent signature?

**Answer:** Yes. The Service Coordinator **must** get the original **Opt Out Form** from the child's paper file and the parent **must** sign section 2 for opt out reversal.

## Question Seven

When the parent reverses opt out, what date does ECSE use to determine if it was less than 90 days before the child's third birthday?

**Answer:** It is the date the parents change their minds, indicated by the **date of parent signature** on the reversal section of the **Opt Out Form**. The Service Coordinator must send the signed reversal to ECSE as soon as possible.

If the date of parent signature for reversal is 90 days or more before the child's third birthday, then the IEP **must** be developed by the child's third birthday.

## Question Eight

What documentation is required if the parent reverses opt out less than 90 days (an exception to the IEP developed by the child's third birthday)?

**Answer:** The district will receive a copy of the **Opt Out Form** with the reversal date from the Service Coordinator and **must** maintain this form as documentation that the parents changed their minds less than 90 days before the child's third birthday.

## Question Nine

If a First Steps eligible child is referred to ECSE greater than 120 days before the child's third birthday, is it permissible for ECSE to delay the evaluation until closer to the child's third birthday?

**Answer:** No. Once the referral is received by ECSE, the required activities for the 30-60-30 timeline must be followed. ECSE is responsible for fully informing the parents about the timelines, options and implications of conducting the initial evaluation. It is an option for the parent to choose to wait until closer to age three to sign consent for initial evaluation.

## Question Ten

What is ECSE's responsibility when a child has a Transition Plan/Conference meeting over the summer and ECSE was invited to the meeting but did not go because school was closed?

**Answer:** First Steps **must** send Directory information to ECSE no later than the Transition Plan/Conference meeting. When ECSE returns to school and directory information is received/picked up, that is the date of the referral to ECSE and the initial evaluation timeline **must** be followed.

When transition meetings occur in the summer, ECSE should contact First Steps to find out the status of the child's transition to ECSE.

## Question Eleven

If a child moves to a different school district after the Transition Conference but before ECSE eligibility determination has taken place, is First Steps required to hold another Transition Conference with the new school district?

**Answer:** No, the Service Coordinator is not required to hold another Transition Conference.

## Question Twelve

When a Transition Conference has been held in one school district and the family moves to another school district, does the new district have to follow the original timelines?

**Answer:** ECSE would consider this a transfer and continue the initial evaluation. The new district should use the information from the prior district and continue the timelines for eligibility determination and the development of the IEP.

## Additional Questions

Let's review additional questions received  
during this webinar. . .

## Contact Information

### For First Steps:

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### For ECSE:

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