

Key Considerations and Essential Questions for School Administrative Units assuming the Transition of FAPE for Children Ages 3-5 with Disabilities

Purpose:

This addendum supplements the existing readiness assessment to specifically evaluate each SAU’s preparedness to implement Maine’s updated guidance for the provision of FAPE to children ages 3–5 with disabilities under IDEA Part B. It focuses on the critical elements and key considerations of *Child Find & Referral, Evaluation & Eligibility, IEP Development, LRE & Placement, Service Delivery, Data Management, and Transition from Part C to Part B.*

General Education Information:

The following questions are intended to provide context and are not scored.

1. Is your SAU currently offering Public Pre-K for eligible 4-year-olds?
2. If you do offer public Pre-K, are you able to offer it to all eligible 4yos in your catchment area (serve universally)?
 - a. If no, how close are you to universal?
3. Does your SAU partner with any licensed community-based providers to provide public Pre-K? (childcare centers, family childcare, Head Start etc.)
 - a. How many partners?
 - b. Who are they?
4. Do you have established relationships with existing community providers other than those partnering for pre-k programming?
5. What outreach has your SAU had with your community providers?

Section 1: Child Find & Referral Readiness

Purpose: Ensure each SAU has a compliant and effective system to identify, locate, and evaluate preschool-aged children potentially in need of special education.

Indicator	Evidence Data Source	Readiness Rating 1-4	Notes (who, what, when)	Notes
1. Public awareness materials (brochures, website notices,	Website, flyers, newsletters	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress;		

outreach campaigns) are updated to include children ages 3–5.		3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
2. A written communication strategy is in place to inform families about the transition of FAPE from CDS to the SAU, including contact information and referral procedures.	Written procedure	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
3. Child Find procedures explicitly include outreach to community partners and referral sources (Head Start, childcare, private preschools, physicians, and homeless outreach).	Written procedures, partner MOUs	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
4. Referral system is accessible to families and providers year-round, including summer months.	Referral forms, intake logs	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
5. In accordance with MUSER, Section IV.2.a, the SAU has established written protocols to document the date, source, and nature of all referrals, as well as a defined process for the intake, tracking, and assignment of evaluations	Sample referral logs, documentation form	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		

6. A designated point of contact is identified within the SAU to receive and manage referrals.	Who is that person?	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
7. Staff are trained to act on referrals in a timely manner and provide procedural safeguards upon initial referral.	PD logs, training rosters	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
8. Partnership procedures are in place with CDS and Early Intervention providers for transition referrals beginning at 2 years, 3 months. This includes identifying key CDS personnel to assist with transition activities.	Transition MOU, documentation flow.	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
9. Child Find and family engagement materials are culturally responsive and available in languages representing the community.	Translated materials and interpretation services available for families	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		

Section 2: Evaluation & Eligibility Readiness

Purpose: Confirm that SAUs can meet Maine’s 60-day timeline and implement legally compliant preschool evaluations.

Indicator	Evidence Data Source	Readiness Rating 1-4	Notes (who, what, when)	Notes
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1. Written evaluation procedures ensure evaluations occur within IDEA timeline (60 calendar days).	Policy manual, internal guidance	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
2. Staff understand parental consent, PWN, and evaluation planning requirements for children under 5.	Training records, sample notices	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
3. ECSE personnel have been identified (SLP, OT, PT, psychologist, ECSE teacher for 3–5-year-olds).	Staff rosters, certifications	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
4. Process is in place to ensure evaluations and eligibility meetings occur during summer months, as needed.	Summer procedures, case examples	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
5. Assessment and evaluation tools are age appropriate, and staff have been trained. (e.g., BDI-3, DAYC-2, DP-4)	PD logs, purchased item receipts	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		

6. Screening and evaluation tools are culturally and linguistically appropriate and staff understand how language acquisition differs from disability indicators and avoid over- or under-identification of dual language learners for special education services.	Evaluation tools, Language Acquisition Plans	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
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Section 3: IEP Development & Implementation Readiness

Purpose: Evaluate whether SAUs can develop developmentally appropriate IEPs for preschoolers and have them in effect by the child’s 3rd birthday.

Indicator	Evidence Data Source	Readiness Rating 1-4	Notes (who, what, when)	Notes
1. Training provided if applicable to special education personnel on how to write IEPs that include preschool-specific Present levels of academic, adaptive, and functional performance (PLAAFP), developmental goals, and LRE statements.	Sample IEPs, DOE template	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
2. Staff understand differences between preschool and school-age learning standards – preschool learning standards are Preschool - Maine Early Learning and Development Standards (P-MELDS)	PD agendas, staff interviews	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		

3. Procedures ensure IEPs are in effect by each child's 3rd birthday, including those occurring during the summer months.	Transition checklist, sample timelines	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
4. IEP team composition meets IDEA requirements (parents, ECSE teacher, SAU representative, ML teacher if applicable, evaluators).	Meeting notices, attendance logs	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
5. Parents are provided prior Written Notice (PWN) and procedural safeguards in their preferred language.	Communication samples	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		

Section 4: Placement & Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Readiness

Purpose: Ensure the SAU's preschool placement options reflect the full continuum of LRE and promote inclusion.

Indicator	Evidence Data Source	Readiness Rating 1-4	Notes (who, what, when)	Notes
1. The SAU has identified partners for inclusive early childhood placements (Head Start, public pre-K, private childcare) if there is inadequate preschool educational programming available in the SAU or there is a desire to provide multiple educational	MOUs with program partners, program directories	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		

environments. Eligible partners are a 3 Star or higher on the Quality Rating and Improvement Scale (QRIS) or have a waiver in place: Find eligible partners at: www.childcarechoices.me				
2. Teams have consulted with applicable CDS Service and Support Hubs to understand services and supports available from that agency.	CDS Support and Service Hub Information			
3. Teams have reviewed and developed an MOU with CDS and MDOE to understand roles and responsibilities in the transition.	MOU Document			
4. Teams have participated in training provided by the Maine DOE on current guidance and resource tools to support decision making on least restrictive environment (LRE).	IEP documentation, DOE flowcharts	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
5. Members of the IEP team understand that IEP decisions must be based on the student's educational needs and cannot be dictated by staffing or space availability	Review of IEP justifications	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
6. Determine transportation availability for students in	Transportation policy	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress;		

preschool, e.g. universal transportation, transportation to locations off site, parent transportation reimbursement criteria, etc.		3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
7. Transportation providers are identified, and contracts or MOUs are in place for outside transportation services.		1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		

Section 5: Service Delivery & Scheduling Readiness

Purpose: Determine readiness to implement developmentally appropriate specially designed instruction (SDI) and related services for preschoolers.

Indicator	Evidence Data Source	Readiness Rating 1-4	Notes (who, what, when)	Notes
1. Service pages include start/end dates, frequency, duration, and location.	IEP review	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
2. Teams have participated in training and understand Maine's guidance on FAPE and LRE. SAUs understand the general educational programming requirement of a minimum of 6 and 10 hours.	Service logs	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		

3. Understand qualified staff requirements, including 282B-certified or conditionally certified 282B.	Staffing list, certification records	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
4. SAUs have considered options to provide itinerant services and understand staffing requirements associated with these services.		1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
5. Staff providing itinerant services in community partner settings meet childcare licensing background check requirements (DHHS Fingerprinting).	https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/provider-resources/child-care-licensing/becoming-a-childcare-provider/child-care-provider-background-checks	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
6. Understand school year programming schedules for potential mixed delivery service options with community partners.	Program calendars	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		

Section 6: Transition & Coordination

Purpose: Assess preparedness for Part C to Part B transitions and preschool-to-kindergarten transitions.

Indicator	Evidence Data Source	Readiness Rating 1-4	Notes (who, what, when)	Notes
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1. Transition conferences occur 90 days–9 months before 3rd birthdays.	Transition meeting logs	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
2. Procedures ensure IEPs and services are in effect by the 3rd birthday.	Tracking spreadsheet	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
3. Formal collaboration occurs between CDS, SAU and families to ensure timely record transfer, uninterrupted services, and family participation in transition meetings.	MOU, transition meeting documentation	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		

Section 7: Infrastructure & Compliance

Purpose: Verify foundational readiness in data, funding, personnel, and health/safety.

Indicator	Evidence Data Source	Readiness Rating 1-4	Notes (who, what, when)	Notes
1. SAU staff understand Child Count, Child Outcome Summary (COS), and quarterly reporting requirements.	Reporting logs	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		

2. Data entry and verification systems ensure timely, accurate submission.	SIS screenshots, data audits	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
3. Contracted preschool partners meet Star 3 QRIS requirement (or waiver plan).	MRTQ verification	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
4. All ECSE staff hold required Maine certifications/licensure (282B, related service licenses). If they do have the required certifications, a staff certification plan is in place.	HR documentation	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
5. Contracts or MOUs are in place for outside or itinerant providers.	Contracts and MOUs	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		

Section 8: Family Engagement

Purpose: Confirm SAUs are prepared to partner with families as equal IEP team members.

Indicator	Evidence Data Source	Readiness Rating 1-4	Notes (who, what, when)	Notes
1. Families receive information in native	Translated documents	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress;		

language and accessible formats or alternate methods of communicating important information are offered (e.g. utilizing cultural brokers, community forums, social media, etc).		3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
2. The SAU provides flexible options for parent involvement.	Communication logs	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
3. Parents are invited to provide input for COS and IEP development.	Parent feedback forms	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		
4. Dispute resolution procedures are communicated clearly and consistently to families.	Procedural safeguards notice	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		

Section 9: Data and Enrollment

Purpose: Ensure SAUs understand preschool enrollment requirements and data collection responsibilities for state and federal reporting.

Indicator	Evidence Data Source	Readiness Rating 1-4	Notes (who, what, when)	Notes
1. The SAU participates in training on enrollment of children in preschool	Enrollment guidance	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented;		

		4 = Fully Implemented		
2. The SAU participates in training and understands data collections for federal reporting requirements (child outcome summary – COS)	COS Training and LRE placement codes	1 = Not Started; 2 = In Progress; 3 = Partially Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented		

Scoring Summary

Each section may be rated:

- **1 = Not Started**
- **2 = Emerging / In Development**
- **3 = Operational but Inconsistent**
- **4 = Fully Implemented & Sustainable**

Overall Readiness Rating: * This rating does not delay, waive, or alter an SAU’s legal obligation to provide FAPE.

Section:	Score 1-4:	Notes:
Child Find & Referral		
Evaluation & Eligibility		
IEP Development		
Placement & LRE		
Service Delivery		
Transitions		
Infrastructure & Compliance		

Family Engagement		
Data & Enrollment		

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Recommendations & Action Planning

Districts should identify:

- Areas requiring additional **policy development or training**.
- Resource or staffing gaps that may limit compliance;
- Technical assistance needs from Maine DOE or regional ECSE consultants.

Next Steps:

1. Complete readiness assessment with district ECSE leadership team.
2. Submit compiled results to ECSE.Team@maine.gov, DOE ECSE Office.

This tool is intended to support thoughtful planning, identify targeted technical assistance needs, and promote consistent, high-quality preschool FAPE implementation statewide.

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