

# Transitioning to Kindergarten



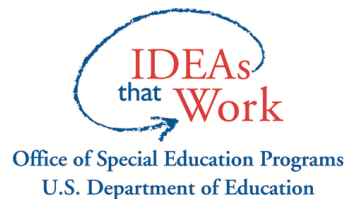
For Parents  
of children  
with  
Disabilities



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1. Explore the impact of transitioning to a new school.

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2. How to prepare, and what to expect.

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3. Adjusting to the transition, and preparing your child.

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# What do you think of when you hear the word “transition”?

- Stress
- Uncertainty
- Nerves
- Anticipation
- Change
- New Routines

- Fresh start
- Opportunities
- Excitement
- Energized
- Growth
- New Goals



When transitioning to kindergarten, your child may experience changes in a variety of areas.

A new school

Increased  
expectations

New Teachers

Bus Ride

Different peers

New Schedule

New therapists

Greater emphasis  
on academic  
learning



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What are your concerns as you think about your  
child transitioning to Kindergarten?



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# Special Education Services for your child

## Preschool

- Qualify based on Disability or Developmental Delay Diagnosis
- Access services in community, home, or preschool setting
- Provided individually or in groups

## Public school

- Qualify due to an identified disability: 13 categories
- Services provided in class or out of class
- Provided individually, in groups, or in classroom (push-in)



# Adapting Expectations...

- Continue to learn about Special Education laws and regulations.
- Review the current copy of Maine Unified Special Education Regulations (MUSER), Chapter 101, “Programs for Children with Disabilities 5-20” p.

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- Review the school policy manual.
- Become familiar with the standard processes and procedures at the new school.



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# What role does Children's Developmental Services (CDS) play in the Transition IEP meeting?

- In the spring, CDS will contact the local school and schedule a transition meeting.
  - Meeting dates: Apr 1<sup>st</sup> to June 15<sup>th</sup>
- CDS staff notify parents and providers of the meeting logistics and the purpose of the meeting.



# What role does Children's Developmental Services (CDS) play in the Transition IEP meeting?

- CDS is responsible for providing the current IEP.
- CDS must also produce the most recent evaluations and assessments necessary for transition to kindergarten.
  - i.e. neuro-psych evaluation



## What role does the school play in Transition IEP meeting?

- Facilitate the meeting
- Observe the student in the preschool classroom.
- Discuss child's current special ed needs & services
- Consider any additional evaluations needed before the start of kindergarten

- Send the written notice & IEP with the determinations of the meeting, to the IEP team members



# What is the parent's role in the Transition IEP meeting?



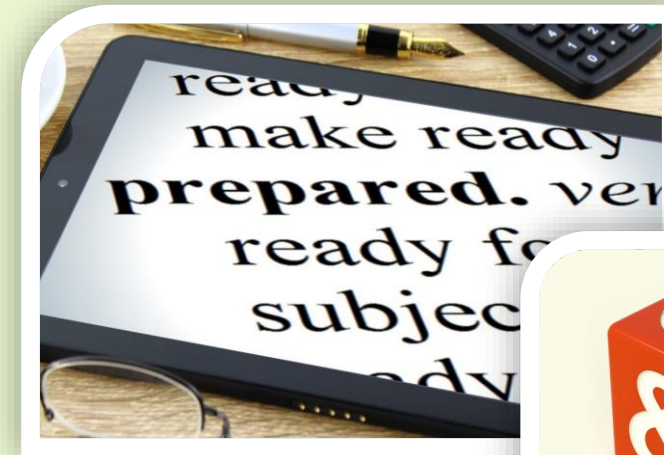
- You are an equal member of the IEP Team.
- You are a **contributor** → you are an expert on your child.
- You are also a **learner** → the school may have ideas which you have not thought about.



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# What is the parent's role in the Transition IEP meeting?

- You help to set the tone of the meeting → being prepared helps to ensure the meeting will move forward swiftly and productively.
- Come with data to support your request for services.
- Bring a prioritized list of your concerns.
- Share updates from any outside therapies.



# Preparing for the Transition IEP Meeting

You should gather the following information.

## From CDS

- IEP's and Progress Reports
- Recent Evaluations
  - i.e. Neuro-Psych, Academic, Therapeutic

## From The Receiving School

- Classroom Observations

## Parents

- Recommendations made by doctors, counselors, or therapists.



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## Looking out for the parents.

It's important to keep in mind that all formal CDS/school assessments need to be provided to the parents by CDS/school 3 days in advance of the meeting, to ensure proper time to review.



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# Preparing for the Transition IEP Meeting

## Transition IEP Meeting Team Members:

- CDS Case Manager
- Preschool Teacher
- Therapists
- School Case Manager
- School Special Ed Administrator



# Preparing for the Transition IEP Meeting

Think through any questions you may have.

- Student to teacher ratio?
- Typical school day schedule?
- Ask to take a tour of the school.
- Ask to meet the staff, including any ed techs.



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# What to Expect at the Meeting

## Determine appropriate services:



- Therapies (OT, PT, Speech)
- Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) → carryover successful use of accommodations and programs already in use and develop new kindergarten appropriate accommodations and programs
- Placement which best meets your child's Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- Ed tech support
- Extended school year services (ESY)



# What to Expect at the Meeting



## Determine Goals

- Academic (i.e. reading, writing, math)
- Social/Emotional
- Functional/Developmental
- Behavioral
- Therapeutic Goals (i.e. OT,PT, Speech)



# What to Expect at the Meeting

## Determine Accommodations

- Sensory items
- Preferred seating
- Breaks
- Assistive technology
- Additional time to complete work/tests
- Advanced warning of emergency drills, headphones.



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# What to Expect at the Meeting

## Determine Readiness for Kindergarten

Children born between July 1<sup>st</sup> and December 15<sup>th</sup> who have an active IEP as of December 1<sup>st</sup>, may be considered to continue to receive services through CDS for an additional year or enter kindergarten. This is an IEP Team decision.



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# Adjusting to the transition

- Communication in kindergarten often feels different than in preschool.
- Parents may feel a shift in the frequency of communication with staff.
- Setting up a home-school communication log may be helpful to ensure the information coming home is dependable and beneficial.

- Keep records of all communication
  - Types of communication - phone/email/meeting logs
  - Date
  - Person's name
  - Person's position
  - What was said



# Adjusting to the transition

- Parents are responsible for coordinating any therapies or support services apart from the school day.
- Fostering communication between any outside providers is crucial in maximizing the effectiveness of services delivered.
  - i.e. school OT should be communicating with private OT
  - This will require the school and outside providers to sign releases.



# The Purpose of the Public School IEP Meetings

- To Review Evaluations
- To Determine Services
- Annual IEP Meeting.



*Did you know...  
parents may request a meeting to review  
the plan at any time throughout the year.*



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# Getting to Know the New Team

## The Special Ed Teacher:

- Often fulfills school role of Case Manager
- Ensures the fidelity of writing and carrying out the IEP
- Typically acts as first point of contact for parents

## The Special Education Administrator:

- Has the authority to make financial decisions
- Is required to oversee the IEP meeting
- Role may be filled by a principal, assistant principle, instructional strategist, or director of specialized instruction

## The Therapists:

- May overlap in some goals
- Work collaboratively to schedule service times (i.e. not overload the student)
- Should look for natural opportunities within the school day to integrate & provide therapy, which may be referred to as “push-in”



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# How to Prepare Your Children

- Express excitement about the upcoming change!
- Take them for a tour of the building & practice their routes.
- Participate in town rec. programs.
- Meet the staff.



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# How to Prepare Your Children

- Keep steady expectations and rules at home which echo those at school!
- Create a social story about attending the new school.
- Help to build their confidence with positive feedback & encouragement for GOOD behavior!
- Encourage your child to ask questions about the upcoming change.



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# How to Prepare Your Children

- Schedule play dates!
- Plan a consistent summer schedule.
- Engage your child in creating an “About Me” for their new teacher.



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## Wrapping Up...

- Preparation & organization are key ingredients in a smooth transition.
- Coming to the IEP meeting with a positive attitude and a team player mindset will take you far.
  - Give every transition at least 6 weeks before making additional changes.





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