

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

July 2012

TRANSITIONS FROM EARLY INTERVENTION

1Q: What does "In-By-3", early intervention transition, transition from Part C to Part B or AzEIP Transition mean?

A: The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), both Part C/Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) and Part B/Preschool Programs, requires that children participating in AzEIP transition to Part B preschool programs by the child's 3rd birthday. This means an Individualized Education Program (IEP) must be developed and implemented (date the IEP is written) *or the child must be found ineligible and a PWN provided to the Parents by the child's 3rd birthday*. Due to decisions made by the IEP team, (including the parent) the child may have a start date that is after the date the IEP is written (i.e., children with summer birthdays would start when school begins or parents may choose a later start date). As with all IEPs, Extended School Year (ESY) services must be considered.

2Q: Why do children who were served in Part C (AzEIP) have to be "In-By-3"?

A: Children identified with special education needs and served under Part C of IDEA between the ages of birth to 3 should not have an interruption in services during this very important developmental time. Families who have children with disabilities are under an increased amount of stress and should have a smooth transition. The Part B State Performance Plan (SPP) requires 100% compliance for In-By-3 (IEP is written by age 3) and the Part C SPP requires AzEIP Service Coordinators must demonstrate 100% compliance to hold a Transition Conference and Transition Planning Meeting between the child's age of 2.6 and 2.9. AzEIP Service Coordinators should begin the scheduling process early (perhaps 2.2 – 2.4) to ensure the meeting is scheduled and held between 2.6 and 2.9. If the school district is

unable to attend, the AzEIP Service Coordinator is required to hold the meeting by age 2.9 and send a School District Alert to the State AzEIP Office.

3Q: What is an Alert?

A: The Alert System is to assist the AzEIP Service Coordinator if there are difficulties with school district personnel or if school district personnel are having difficulties with an AzEIP Service Coordinator. AzEIP Service Coordinators are instructed to make an alert if school district personnel will not schedule a transition meeting between 2.6 and 2.9. School district personnel are instructed to make an alert if they receive a late referral due to service coordinator delay or do not receive Transition Planning Data on February 1st or September 15th. Any other situations that are resulting in frustrations or delays should always be reported in an Alert. The Alert System is never punitive, but meant to assist the AzEIP Service Coordinator and/or school district personnel that have already tried to resolve issues on their own. To initiate an alert, school districts should e-mail C2BInbox@azed.gov and AzEIP Service Coordinators/Service Providing Agencies should e-mail their designated AzEIP contact. Send an email with the child's initials, date of birth and explanation/timelines for the situation.

4Q: What if a parent calls Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) to refer their child that only has 45 days before they turn 3?

A: For children who were found eligible for AzEIP services during this time (age 2.10½ to 3 years old), the Service Coordinator will assist the parent in contacting the school district by providing the parent with contact information to the school district. Districts should count these children as child find referrals and are not included in the "in-by-3" requirement. A child find referral gives the district 45 days to screen and 60 days to determine eligibility from the date consent for evaluation was signed.

5Q: What if a parent calls Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) to refer their child that is between the ages of 2.9 and 2.10½?

A: Children who are found eligible for AzEIP services between 2.9 and 2.10½ will follow the referral path for eligibility evaluation and Individual Family Service Plan IFSP development by AzEIP. The IFSP will focus on a transition referral to the school district. AzEIP will send all evaluation information to the school district (with parent permission). No Transition Conference is required unless specifically requested by the parent. Upon receipt of the PEA Notification/Referral Form, the district will provide Procedural Safeguards, a Prior Written Notice for referral and begin a Review of Existing Data. Best practice is to get the child "in-by-3" if possible. If unable to meet the "In-By-3", districts should classify the child as a late referral TO Part C which is deductible reason in the Annual Special Education Reporting process.

6Q: What if a parent calls Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) to refer their child who is between the ages of 2.10½ and 3?

A: The AzEIP Service Coordinator gives the family the specific contact name and telephone number of the school district and refers the family directly to the school district. The Service Coordinator no longer uses the Child Find Tracking Form in the Child Find IGA as OSEP determined that was a violation of the family's privacy. AzEIP Service Coordinators are asked to assist the family as much as possible by giving up to date contact information and allowing the family to call them back if there are any difficulties.

7Q: What is the difference between a student who is "*referred for transition*" from AzEIP and a student who is "*referred*" from AzEIP?

A: Only children who were found eligible by AzEIP up to age 2.9, and "referred for transition" are required to be "In-By-3". There is a "point of referral" (documented by the PEA Notification/Referral Form) before, during or after the Transition

Conference where parents are given their procedural safeguards, and prior written notice is given for referral and review of existing data/collection of additional data from the LEA. For children eligible for AzEIP after age 2.9, the Service Coordinator will provide the district's contact person's name and number to the family to call directly and self refer (see previous question). If AzEIP finds a child to be eligible when the child is between 2.9 and 2.10 ½, AzEIP will evaluate and develop an IFSP around transition and send records with a PEA Notification/Referral Form to the district. The district will do their best to get the child "in" as close to age 3 as possible, however if the child is not In-By-3 the district will document the child as a Late Referral TO AzEIP (deductible) and report the child during the Annual Special Education Data Collection process.

8Q: What is a Transition Planning Meeting?

A: The Transition Planning Meeting is a discussion between the AzEIP Service Coordinator, IFSP team members and the family that can occur together with, or separately from, the Transition Conference between the time the child is 2.6 and 2.9 years old. It is a meeting to formalize steps in the transition process using the Transition Conference. Additional participants the family would like to invite to the Transition Conference (ie: school district representative, Head Start representative, private child care or preschool program representative) will be invited to the meeting. If the family would like to share information with these programs, the Service Coordinator will obtain the parent signature documenting permission to share information before the meeting starts. **The transition planning meeting and the transition conference are to be held at a time and place convenient for the family.** Districts must plan for participation in the meetings over summer, winter and spring breaks as their **participation in the meetings is required** if the parents have requested them to attend.

9Q: Why should the AzEIP Service Coordinator and family consider inviting Head Start? What if there are no openings at Head Start or the transition team does not think Head Start would be an option due to financial status or the nature of the child's disability?

A: Even if Head Start would not initially appear to be an option, it may be an option in the future. It is important that Head Start be aware of the child in case the opportunity for enrollment arises. Children with disabilities are often “bumped up” on waiting lists due to being high-risk and do not always have to meet the low-income eligibility requirements. It may increase the odds of the child getting into Head Start at the time of transition or in the future if Head Start is involved in the Transition Conference.

10Q: Why should the family and the AzEIP Service Coordinator consider inviting the family’s child care provider?

A: Most early childhood programs in Arizona are not full-day programs. The family’s child care provider may be able to assist in discussions regarding the child’s development, be interested in what services the child is and may be receiving in the future and be able to assist in discussions regarding transportation. Remember, for a district to consider providing transportation as a related service in the Individual Education Program, the child care provider would need to be in the district of residence.

11Q: Why does the school district no longer receive the names and birthdates of children that will be transitioning in the coming months for planning purposes?

A: OSEP determined that providing a name and birth date from AzEIP to the school district without providing the parent an opportunity to opt-out of the early intervention transition process or obtain permission for sharing information is a violation of the family’s privacy. AzEIP Service Coordinators will provide Transition Planning Data on February 1st (for the following 16 month period) and September 1st (for children turning 3 between September and May) in the form of a number for how many students will be transitioning. AzEIP Service Coordinators will provide the number zero if no children are anticipated to be transitioning. If the school district does not receive Transition Planning Data from their AzEIP Provider (AzEIP Only Service Providing Agency, Division of Developmental

Disabilities (DDD) and Arizona School for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB), they are instructed to Alert Arizona Department of Education (ADE)/Early Childhood Education (ECE) at Kathy.coloma@azed.gov.

12Q: When does the school district receive the PEA Notification/Referral Form?

A: Receipt of the PEA Notification/Referral Form is considered the point of referral. Referral must occur prior to the time the child is 2.9 and most often will happen during the Transition Conference, but may occur before or after the Transition Conference. A copy of the form is also sent by the Service Coordinator to the Arizona Department of Education. The purpose of the transition process is to help families understand and make informed decisions about their child's education options. The family also has the opportunity to opt-out of referral no later than 2.8, in which case the referral would never be made to the district. Usually in order to understand options and make informed decisions, attending a Transition Conference is necessary. The Transition Conference is scheduled and facilitated by the AzEIP Service Coordinator. All programs the parent might be interested in (e.g. Head Start, child care, school district special needs preschool programs, etc.) are invited to attend the Transition Conference and explain their program to the parents.

If the parent has given permission to share information prior to the Transition Conference, the AzEIP Service Coordinator should send information with the Release to Share Information form, however, that does not constitute a referral. It allows the school district and/or other programs to be familiar with the child and better establish a relationship with the family during the Transition Conference.

13Q: If a child is referred for transition by AzEIP prior to June 30, but does not have their 3rd birthday after July 1, how should this student be reported by the school district?

A: School districts report Preschool Transition Data through the Department of Education's Annual Special Education Data

Collection process. (See Preschool Transition General Instructions in the Annual Special Education Data Collection Application). AzEIP referrals are reported in row 1. **Report only those children who have reached their 3rd birthday during the fiscal year (on or after July 1 and on or before June 30 of the reporting year).**

14Q: How do school districts report preschoolers through the Annual Special Education Data Collection Report who did not have an IEP written or were found not eligible by their 3rd birthday?

A: Report each child by SAIS ID or a unique student ID using the child's initials or combination of letters and numbers up to 10 characters in length). Answer each question in the Annual Special Education Data Collection Report on each row and report the reason late, and the number of days after their 3rd birthday the IEP was developed or the PWN indicating ineligibility was provided to the parent. Only children who were late referrals TO Part C (i.e., children who were eligible for AzEIP between the ages of 2.9 and 2.10 ½) or were considered "parent/child unavailability" that delayed the process will be deducted from the formula that calculates the percentage of children who were "In-By-3". Only count each child under one reason.

An AzEIP Alert email should be issued to ADE documenting late referrals FROM Part C due to AzEIP Service Coordinator delay, or any time you are have questions or concerns regarding the transition from Early Intervention. Send an email to C2BInbox@azed.gov with the child's name, date of birth and explanation/timelines for the late referral FROM Part C. Do not wait to issue an alert until it is too late to help. Often, systemic issues can be identified and resolved early so your next referral will be compliant.

For the Annual Special Education Data Report, indicate how many late referrals were received from Part C due to "service coordinator delay" and were not due to parent reasons or late referrals TO Part C in Row 8.

15Q: How do school districts indicate that there were no delays on the Annual Data Collection Report?

A: Report 0 (zero) in rows 4 and 7.

16Q: What happens if the AzEIP Service Coordinator does not meet the 100% requirement for holding a Transition Conference between the child's age of 2.6 and 2.9 as required by the Part C State Performance Plan (SPP) that was not due to "family circumstances" or the parent opting out and opting back in?

A: The school district will send an alert to C2BInbox@azed.gov and ADE will work with the AzEIP State Office to follow up. School districts are held accountable for getting a child In-By-3 even if the AzEIP Service Coordinator is late referring the child due to Service Coordinator Delay. This action requires the school district to do a *VERY* rushed transition which is not fair to the family, and if they do not get the child In-By-3, the district must go through a Corrective Action Plan. While this seems very unfair, OSEP has made this decision and we are doing our best to work within these parameters.

17Q: Why are children who are counted as a late referral FROM Part C due to service coordinator delay considered "not deductible"?

A: OSEP does not allow late referrals FROM Part C to be deducted from the child count on the SPP/APR. The expectation is that Part C and Preschool Programs will work together for seamless transitions. School districts are instructed to make an Alert to C2BInbox@azed.gov **EVERY** time the school district receives a late referral due to AzEIP Service Coordinator Delay. Any PEA Notification/Referral Form not received by the time a child is 2.9 years old when the child was eligible for AzEIP prior to age 2.9 is considered late due to service coordinator delay unless the family originally opted-out of referral at 2.8, then chose to proceed with referral at a later date. While this may seem unfair that the school district be held accountable, it is a decision of OSEP and we must do our best within these parameters.

18Q: What happens if the school district does not meet the 100% requirement for transitions from Part C to Part B (In-By-3)?

A: Districts will receive a Corrective Action Plan and must provide their written process and procedures to the Arizona Department of Education/Early Childhood Special Education (ADE/ECSE) unit. These written process and procedures should be agreed upon with the AzEIP Supervisors in their area. Districts must also demonstrate three consecutive months of 100% In-By-3 data. ADE suggests keeping the front pages of all IEPs and Prior Written Notices (PWN) indicating ineligibility for all early intervention transition students. Make sure the date of birth and date of IEP/PWN are indicated for quick verification when called upon during corrective action processes or random validation audits.

19Q: Why are children who did not pass hearing and/or vision screening considered “not deductible”?

A: OSEP decision is that delays caused by not passing a vision and/or hearing screening are not an acceptable reason to be deducted in the formula for the State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR). IDEA regulations require a smooth transition which means there should be no interruption in services. We encourage AzEIP Service Coordinators to assist families in accessing hearing screenings (typically otoacoustic emissions (OAE) screening). Many children develop a hearing loss between their newborn screening (required by Arizona DHS rules) and the preschool hearing screenings (required by AzDHS rules). Any child receiving speech-language services or who has other high risk factors should have regular hearing screenings. Networking among agencies (Head Start, AzEIP, School Districts, Community Clinics, etc.) may help the AzEIP Service Coordinator assist the family in accessing hearing and vision screenings and, in the process, assist the family in having a smooth transition.
