



KIT

"Keeping In Touch"

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Resource Article



Transitions from early intervention do not *only* occur when children turn three. Rather children transition between and among programs for a variety of reasons. These reasons include moving from current communities of residence, adding new or different services, and leaving early intervention because services are no longer needed. While the underlying reason for the transition may make some less complicated than others, early intervention transition is regarded as a challenging time for families as it involves moving from what is known to something different. Recognizing that transition can be difficult, working to ensure smooth transitions for children and families remains an essential goal for both sending and receiving agencies.

To help advance the ultimate goal of smooth transitions, researchers at the National Early Childhood Transition Center conducted a study to examine recommended practices for early childhood transitions. Through a series of studies, transition stakeholders identified 21 different practices important for effective transitions. These 21 practices formed the framework of a survey presented to members of national early childhood organizations (Division of Early Childhood [DEC] and National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC]) to determine the extent that participating professionals agreed with the 21 recommended practices. Using a Likert scale participants rated their level of agreement with each of the transition practices.

The results of this study, presented in this month's KIT article, illustrate that all 21 practices were validated with at least 75% of respondents indicating that they agreed or strongly agreed with the practice statements. In addition, 20 of the 21 practices met the more rigorous validation measure with 90% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the practice statements.

The transition practices examined and validated in this study provide a useful framework for examining local level transition practices. While the complexity of early intervention transitions cannot be eliminated, it may be possible for programs to reduce transition challenges by implementing recommended interagency service system and child/family preparation and adjustment practices.

Rous, B. (2008). *Recommended transition practices for young children and families: Results from a national validation survey*. (Technical Report #3). Lexington: University of Kentucky, Human Development Institute, National Early Childhood Transition Center. Available at http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/nectc/Documents/technicalReports/Updated_Tech_Reps/Tech%20Rep%203.pdf

On the WWW

The National Early Childhood Transition Center (NECTC) was established to "examine factors that promote successful transitions between infant/toddler programs, preschool programs, and public school programs for young children with disabilities and their families." The NECTC site is packed with transition related resources and useful links.

<http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/nectc/Default.aspx>

What Do the Data Say?



What is the average amount of time families receive early intervention support and services from Army EDIS early intervention programs?

To answer this question Special Needs Program Management Information System (SNPMIS) data for the past two DoD reporting years (01 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 and 01 July 2007 to 30 June 2008) were examined. Time in program was calculated from referral date to discharge date for all children with active IFSPs discharged within this time period. Children referred and not found eligible were not included.

The average time in program has remained essentially the same over the past two DoD reporting years. The average time in program for DoD year 2006/07 and 2007/08 was 10.6 and 10.8 months respectively. The median (9.4 months) was the same for both years as was the range (0 months to 3 years).

Further analysis was completed to determine the percentage of children that received early intervention services for more than 12 months. In DoD year 2006/07, 33% of the children discharged had received early intervention services for more than 12 months. In DoD year 2007/08, 35% of children discharged received services for more than 12 months. Looking closer, it was discovered that only 4% of children discharged in DoD year 2006/07 had received services for more than 2 years. This percentage increased to 6% in DoD year 2007/08.

Factors contributing to time in program include the mobile nature of the military population, age at referral, and continued presence of a developmental delay. Considering these factors and others it is not surprising that the length of time that children and their families receive EDIS early intervention services is often less than one full year. As supportive relationships are formed and valuable services are extended, in these varied periods of time, it is critical that emphasis is placed on helping

families identify and enhance natural learning opportunities that occur between visits and during transition times. It is also important that families be provided support in understanding and planning for transitions.

Contacts for non EDIS Part C programs can be found at the NECTAC web site. The direct link is:

<http://www.nectac.org/contact/Ptccoord.asp>

Contact for other EDIS programs is at the EDIS website:

www.edis.army.mil

Consultation Corner

This section of the KIT features consultation, in the form of questions and answers, from national experts and leaders in the field of early intervention.



From June through September 2008, the Consultation Corner will feature Dr. Beth Rous and Caroline Gooden responding to questions related to our focus topic:

Transition from EI to Preschool

Q: What are **five critical elements** to include in an effective **IFSP transition plan** for a toddler turning three?

A: A **transition plan** is required for all children exiting early intervention services. In some programs, the transition plan represents a separate document that is attached to the IFSP. In others, transition is addressed on the general IFSP form. Regardless of the format for the transition plan, transition outcomes for the child and family should be included on the IFSP at any time concerns or needs are identified by the IFSP team members, specifically the family.

1. Prior to the child's third birthday, a Transition Conference is held as part of the regular IFSP meeting. At this time, a more formal transition plan is developed that represents coordinated **planning among all**

IFSP team members including the family. Representatives from all programs that the family is considering for services should be invited to participate in the IFSP meeting/Transition Conference. At this meeting, program representatives should explain the services they provide, program referral procedures, and timelines. The family needs to be able to ask questions regarding any program option. For children who may be eligible for special education services through the school district at age 3, information about eligibility, the differences between the Early Intervention program and the preschool services, and the potential continuum of services should be provided. It should be reinforced that the family does not have to choose a placement until the end of the referral and evaluation process.

2. During IFSP meetings, the Service Coordinator is responsible for facilitating the meeting and helping all IFSP team members **identify all family priorities and concerns** regarding transition. The family needs to have an opportunity to share about their child and their family, to express any concerns they have, and to have their preferences written in the plan.
3. The team must develop strategies (steps) to **prepare the child and the family** for potential receiving agencies. Preparation strategies need to address child needs such as having opportunities to develop and practice skills needed for success in the next environment, and family needs such as having information about and being linked with resources to help them meet their specific child and family needs. Refer to NECTC documents for additional information on strategies for preparation, including:

http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/nectc/Documents/technicalreport/Validation_Survey_Final.pdf

And

<http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/nectc/documents/TRANSITIONALERTS/Validation%20Survey%20TA4.pdf>

4. The transition plan must specifically outline procedures for the **transfer of records**

from the Early Intervention setting to the receiving agency. All necessary release forms must be explained by the receiving agency and signed by the family.

5. The **timelines for referral** should be documented on the transition plan, including the dates for referral, evaluation, receipt of report and by whom, and the actual placement. All members must receive a copy of the Transition Plan for implementation activities (steps to services) by a specified time prior to initiation of referral.



Q: Knowing that transition planning should include more than timelines and information sharing, what should teams consider to **facilitate the child's adjustment** to change in services/settings as he/she transitions out of early intervention (even if the family elects to have their child remain at home)?

A: Children's adjustment to new settings is critical to success, both academically and socially. NECTC has identified three major areas in which transition outcomes can be measured for children: (1) engagement in the social and physical environment (2) adaptation to the structure and culture of the new environment; and (3) continued growth and development. Keeping these three areas in mind can help both sending and receiving teachers choose strategies that support both the child's preparation for and subsequent adjustment to new environments. A full description of these outcomes is provided at:

http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/nectc/Documents/technicalreport/Validation_Survey_Final.pdf

And

<http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/nectc/documents/TRANSITIONALERTS/Validation%20Survey%20TA4.pdf>

The following practices (and sample strategies for implementation) have been identified and nationally validated as supporting children's adjustment. They are further explained in the two NECTC documents linked above.

- Transition team members share appropriate information about each child making a transition.
 - Develop a goal matrix to show how goals are addressed throughout the day
 - Provide accessible/convenient information to receiving teacher, including specific activity teachers (PE, music, etc).
- Transition plans are developed that include individual activities for each child & family.
 - Use a family services notebook or handbook with a section for medical information, IFSPs, agencies, and EI staff names to organize all papers and introduce families to services system.
 - Have family and providers visit public school and programs after eligibility determination.
- Children have opportunities to develop & practice skills they need to be successful in the next environment.
 - Implement strategies that will help children learn in developmentally appropriate ways the skills they will need.
 - Have early intervention providers visit preschool placements to get a "feel" for where they are sending children.
- Families are aware of the importance of transition planning & have information they need to actively participate in transition planning with their child.
 - Simplify communication and information regarding transitions so they are clear and to the point (e.g., address different literacy levels and languages).
 - Prior to transition, invite parents to an orientation specifically for them.

- Staff follow-up on children after the transition to support their adjustment.
 - Have early intervention staff visit the preschool program to see how children are doing.
 - Conduct evaluation and follow-up (i.e. contact family to learn how transition went and what could have been better).

Continuing Education for KIT Readers



The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) is offering a continuing education opportunity for EDIS KIT readers.

In line with the focus on transition, readers are invited to receive continuing education contact hours for reading the monthly KIT publications (June through September 2008) and completing a multiple choice exam about the content covered in these KITs.

If you are interested, take the exam online at www.edis.army.mil and upon successful completion, you will receive a certificate of non-discipline specific continuing education contact hours.

Please send your Consultation Corner questions and KIT ideas via email to ediscspd@amedd.army.mil

