

Questions and Answers – Pre-K ESE Areas of Concern

Q. C to B transition - delay in services. Should districts provide compensatory services for them? Should districts be continuing C to B transition and providing them with remote learning? This is not the best scenario for families just coming into the school district, but it is the result of the COVID-19 situation. An additional area of concern is with some children who are of age to transition, and districts are unable to get evaluation data to determine eligibility.

A. *The district determines if compensatory services are needed. Some districts are providing enough support virtually for some students. It would depend on what services are provided and the students' individual needs. Districts should document attempts and services well. As far as determining eligibility, if evaluation data is not sufficient to determine eligibility, the district should document what they have collected, document what data is considered insufficient, the reason why it is insufficient and the methods used to attempt to complete the evaluation. If face-to-face is needed to complete the evaluation, then document that the evaluation will be completed upon returning to a face-to-face school environment.*

Q. Transition to K with DD, but will turn 6 prior or early in year so will lose services - can we temporarily use the Federal definition and extend DD until age 9 until we are able to have our legislature finalize the bill?

A. *No, we cannot extend DD eligibility. If the student is not scheduled to turn 6 until around September, but there is sufficient data to indicate they may need and qualify for speech or language, then the district can start the evaluation process and complete as much of the evaluation digitally as they can. Once they are face to face, complete the unfinished portions of the evaluation.*

Q. How do we address evaluation for children who have not passed screeners? Since the majority of children receive their ESE eligibility prior to the age of 5, how do we address the backlog of children who did not pass screeners, need evaluation (many can't receive an evaluation remotely) and who have lost out on receiving services as they would have been found eligible during this time?

A. *An evaluation can be started virtually; eligibility can be determined by the team through observations and the items that can be done virtually. A BDI will not be done at this time for the purpose of Child Outcomes, but eligibility may be determined by other means. If determined eligible, the student would be staffed virtually and receive the same opportunities other students in school have been getting at this time. If the parents choose to wait on placement until school resumes its normal way of work, document that and revisit it at that time.*

Q. We would like further guidance on the **specific criteria for possible additional year in Pre-K.** Is there a cut-off date for students as to when they must transition/enroll in KG? If we have a student who will turn 6 years of age before Feb. 1st, is this student eligible to remain in Pre-K or will that student need to go to KG due to compulsory school age requirements? We are aware of the ramifications of a student remaining an additional year in Pre-K, and we want to make sure that we are following DOE guidelines.

A. *For those prekinders going into kindergarten, those students that are not 6 years old until next school year, they can keep DD and make sure each school Psychologist is aware that they need to be dismissed or determined eligible in another area. If the IEP team feels that the student is no longer in need of services, then the IEP team can determine that dismissal is best and proceed with the process virtually or as determined best by your school district, documenting well. For those turning 6 years old before the 2021-2022 school year, language*

and speech evaluations can be done through virtual tools such as Telehealth. Please refer to the [Technical Assistance and Training Systems \(TATS\)](#) website for more resources.

In regards to your retaining prekindergarten children for an additional year, parents have the ability to request retention of their child in the current grade for the 2020-2021 year. If parents, teachers and school leaders (the IEP team) determine it is in the best interest of the student, then the child may be retained. Parents play an important role in planning for their students' education. Promotion decisions should be made in consultation with parents, teachers, and school leaders (IEP Team) based on the students' classroom performance and progress monitoring data. According to [Florida Statute 1003.21](#) the compulsory school attendance age for K-12 is 6 years old, "all children who have attained the age of 6 years or who will have attained the age of 6 years by February 1 of any school year". This would mean that a child with a birthday of September 15, 2014 would be required to attend K-12.

Depending on availability in your area, summer VPK programs or community VPK programs may be supplemental programs that can be utilized. We are waiting on guidance from the Office of Learning regarding summer procedures for VPK.