



## about the Transition Process



### **What is the transition process from Early Steps to Pre-Kindergarten Exceptional Student Education (Pre-K ESE)?**

In Florida, Early Steps is the comprehensive statewide program of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities. Early Steps has the responsibility of providing services until a child's third birthday. After that, the responsibility belongs to the school district Pre-kindergarten Exceptional Student Education (Pre-K ESE) Program for Children with Disabilities. There are certain requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and a timeline of specific activities that must take place to ensure a smooth transition from Early Steps to Pre-K ESE or other community programs. Families and professionals work together to prepare for a smooth transition.

### **What is your role in the transition process?**

There are many ways you can help to make the transition process go smoothly, such as attending scheduled meetings and taking your child to screenings, developmental evaluations, and physical examination appointments. In addition, you can gather important papers needed to assist with the transition process. These may include the following:

- Your child's birth certificate and social security card
- Proof of your residency, such as a recent copy of a utility bill
- A record of your child's immunizations
- Your child's recent individualized family support plan (IFSP) and any current reports from professionals providing services to your child

Information for families related to the transition process is also available at the TATS website in the section for the Florida Transition Project. Link to Transition: <https://tats.ucf.edu/transition/>

**Part C of IDEA** is a federal program that assists states in operating a comprehensive statewide program of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities, from birth until their third birthday, and their families. In Florida, the Part C program is called Early Steps.

For more information, access the following Early Steps Web site: <https://floridaearlysteps.com/>

**Part B of IDEA** is a federal program that assists states in operating educational programs for children with disabilities who are ages 3 – 5. Part B services also include children with developmental delays who are ages 3 – 9.

For more information, access the following Florida Department of Education website: <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/early-education/>



This *TATS Talks* discusses the transition process from Early Steps to Pre-Kindergarten Exceptional Student Education and the steps that are involved to ensure a smooth transition for the child and the family.

**What is the transition timeline?** There are certain activities that must be completed within an established timeframe before a child being served in Early Steps turns three years old to ensure a smooth transition from Early Steps to Pre-K ESE services.



## The Transition Process

**Transition Planning** - Your Early Steps service coordinator will talk with you about the transition process and will help you develop a plan throughout the time your child receives services from Early Steps. The plans you make will be written on your child's IFSP.

**Notification** - At least nine months before your child's third birthday, Early Steps is required to notify the school district Pre-K ESE program that your child may be eligible for services. This information helps the school district plan for services for your child. However, you may choose not to share your personal information at that time. Your service coordinator will provide a copy and explain the Understanding Notification brochure.

**Transition Conference** - Early Steps must hold a transition conference by the time your child is 2 years and 9 months of age if your child is potentially eligible for school district services. Even if your child is not potentially eligible for school district services, Early Steps will still make a reasonable effort to hold a transition conference and will provide you with information about community resources.

- You and your service coordinator will decide the date, time, and place where the transition conference will be held. The service coordinator will invite other participants.
- You and your service coordinator are required participants in the transition conference. If your child is potentially eligible for the Pre-K program, with your consent, the service coordinator is required to invite the school district representative to the transition conference.
- Other participants you may want Early Steps to invite include the following: other members of your child's IFSP team, someone from the program where your child is currently being served, representatives from Head Start, childcare, Children's Medical Services or others. You may also want to invite a family member or friend. If you need a translator, Early Steps will arrange for one.

The Early Steps service coordinator will facilitate the transition conference and invite participants to discuss topics that may include the following:

- Your concerns regarding transition
- Activities and strategies to address your concerns
- The services available from the school district
- How and when evaluation and eligibility determination take place for the school district
- Other agencies and community providers that may benefit your child and family





### ***The Transition Process – continued***

**Child Outcomes Measurement System** – The purpose of the Child Outcomes Measurement System is to collect information about your child's progress over the time that they are served in either or both Early Steps and district Pre-K Exceptional Student Education (ESE) services. If your child has had an IFSP in place for at least six months, Early Steps may conduct the Child Outcome Summary (COS) process as part of the Child Outcomes Measurement System. If your child is eligible for school district Pre-K ESE services, the school district may gather information related to the COS upon your child's entry into and exit from the Pre-K ESE program. Your input is valuable during the process of collecting information about your child's functional use of skills. You will be provided details about your child's skill development throughout school and classroom activities and routines. In addition, your input related to your child's progress will be considered as an important part of the COS information.

**Referral to the School District and Determination of Eligibility for School District Services -**

If you are interested in school district services, you will be given information about the process for determining eligibility for the school district program. You will be asked to sign a consent form so your child's information can be shared with the school district.

The school district will review information provided by Early Steps, your child's service providers, as well as yourself, to determine if your child is eligible for school district services, or if there is a need further evaluation. If further evaluation is recommended, an appointment will be arranged with you. Once the evaluations are completed, you will be invited to a meeting to discuss your child's potential eligibility for school district services.

**Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Written and Implemented** - Once your child is determined eligible, a meeting is held, and an IEP is written. The IEP meeting must include your family and others that you ask the school district to invite, such as the Early Steps service coordinator, a staff member from the program where your child has been receiving services, or anyone else you would like to have present at the meeting. If your child will be receiving services in a Head Start program, a representative from that program will also be invited.

If your child received Early Steps services, had an IFSP, and has been determined eligible for school services, an IEP must be written and implemented by your child's third birthday.

If your child is eligible for school district services, you will be given information about enrolling your child in the Pre-K ESE program for the IEP to be implemented. It is important for you to follow the guidelines for enrollment so services can begin on time. It is important to let the school district know if you change your mind at any time.

After transitioning from Early Steps, the services your child will receive from the school district or other program will be different from those in Early Steps and will depend upon your child's eligibility. The school district focuses on services that will help your child make progress in his or her educational setting, and these may not be the same services as those your child received in Early Steps.

### Brief Guide to Acronyms

BEESS	Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
CARD	Center for Autism and Related Disabilities
COS	Child Outcomes Summary
CMS	Children's Medical Services
DBS	Division of Blind Services
DD	Developmental Delay
DEL	Division of Early Learning
ES	Early Steps
ESE	Exceptional Student Education
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
FDLRS	Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System
FDOE	Florida Department of Education
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act
IEP	Individual Educational Plan
IFSP	Individualized Family Support Plan
LEA	Local Education Agency
LES	Local Early Steps
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
PRE-K	Pre-kindergarten
TATS	Technical Assistance and Training System
VPK	Voluntary Pre-kindergarten



### Links to Additional Information:

**Early Steps State Office** is the office that administers Florida's early intervention system under IDEA, Part C for eligible infants and toddlers (birth to 36 months) with significant delays or a condition likely to result in a developmental delay.  
[http://www.cms-kids.com/families/early\\_steps/early\\_steps.html](http://www.cms-kids.com/families/early_steps/early_steps.html)

**Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS)**, in the FL Department of Education (FDOE) administers the IDEA, Part B program for Pre-K children with disabilities.  
<http://www.fldoe.org/ese/>

**FL Division of Early Learning (DEL)** Includes information on Early Childhood programs.  
<https://www.floridaearlylearning.com/>

**TATS Florida Transition Project** This section of TATS website provides information related to the Transition process, as well as resources for families.  
<https://tats.ucf.edu/transition/>

**TATS Family Involvement** The TATS site also includes a Family Involvement section with resources. Documents for TATS Talks to Families are also available in Spanish.  
<https://tats.ucf.edu/family-involvement/>



Technical Assistance and Training System (TATS)  
 3280 Progress Drive  
 FAAST Center, Suite 250  
 Orlando, FL 32826

Tel: 407-823-3058  
 Fax: 407-823-1360  
 Email: [tats@ucf.edu](mailto:tats@ucf.edu)  
 Website: <https://tats.ucf.edu>

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