



What is transition for children with disabilities from preschool to kindergarten?

If your child will be five (5) years old by September 1st, it's time again to think in terms of transition. For most children with developmental delays, disabilities or special health care needs, this is usually a transition from a special education preschool program to a district kindergarten class. This transition may be from a partial-day program to a full-day program, from school district pre-kindergarten to kindergarten or from one school to another. Your child's strengths and needs will be recorded on the Individual Educational Plan (IEP).



During the transition process, the IEP team will determine if your child is still eligible for special education services. As an equal partner on the IEP team, you should take time to become informed on special education rules and requirements, reflect on options and ask questions.

You and the rest of the IEP team will determine what services, supports or other choices are best for your child. Decisions regarding your child's placement and services will be made by reviewing assessment

information and other documentation from your child's teachers and therapists, as well as any other professionals who may have been providing services for your child.

School districts and schools develop programs that are based on state guidelines to serve their students in the most effective way possible. The Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS), along with other agencies provide training to school staff, district administrators, families and others on current instructional practices and give the districts information about state and federal laws related to the education of exceptional students.



The BEESS Resource and Information Center provides many materials to help parents understand their child's exceptionality, their child's right to a free appropriate education and the processes and activities that are involved in exceptional student education. Helpful links are listed below:

- [FL BEESS Resource & Information Center](#)
- [FL Division of Early Learning](#)
- [Technical Assistance and Training System \(TATS\)](#)
- [Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources Center \(FDLRS\)](#)



This *TATS Talks* discusses the transition process from prekindergarten to kindergarten and the steps that are involved to ensure a smooth transition for the child and the family.

What is your role in the transition process?

Your role in the transition to kindergarten may include the following:

- Stay informed with information from reliable sources. Many Florida websites have feature information related to Early Childhood education, and include topics related to kindergarten. Examples are [FL Division of Early Learning](#), [Technical Assistance and Training System \(TATS\)](#), [Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources Center \(FDLRS\)](#), [FL Inclusion Network \(FIN\)](#)
- Seeking information and assistance from your child's current teacher, your district's resources and family training opportunities and your district's website information about registration and preparing for the transition to kindergarten.
- Preparing a list of questions and/or concerns to ask at the IEP review meeting and participating in the IEP review process
- Visiting your child's new classroom/school, if possible or meeting your child's teacher at kindergarten orientation or another pre-arranged time
- Facilitating communication between your child's Pre-K teacher and kindergarten teacher by utilizing resources that provide ideas and important facts about your child. Examples of these types of resources can be found on TATS FL Transition Project webpage ([TATS Transition Resources](#)): [Getting to Know Me & My Family and Teacher to Teacher](#) are fillable books that facilitate the sharing of information.

What are some questions you may want to ask?

Q: What information will I need to provide to the school district?

A: If your child is transitioning from a non-school district program into kindergarten, you will need to provide registration information, such as proof of residence; release of information and consent forms; birth certificate; immunization records; and other information as required by the school district. Check with the new program to find out what additional documentation is needed.

Q: What type of classroom will my child be in, and will there be accommodations for my child to help him or her learn new rules and skills?

A: Most programs have an informational brochure or document to help parents become aware of what new skills children will be learning and how the teachers can make accommodations to assist your child (see page 3 for suggestions). You will also participate in the development of your child's IEP, and you can discuss services and accommodations that are important for your child.

Q: How will I know if my child is making progress?

A: The school district will provide you with updates on your child's progress, and there will be an annual review of your child's IEP. You can always request a review earlier if you have concerns.

It is helpful to keep a list of questions. Be sure to ask them when meeting with your child's teacher or school administrators. Make sure you get all your questions answered in a way that you understand.

What are some terms you may hear at an IEP or other meeting?

- **Inclusion**—a term used to describe the concept that supports the right of all children, regardless of abilities, to participate actively in natural environments within their communities. Natural environments are those in which the child would spend time if he or she did not have a disability. These settings include, but are not limited to: home, kindergarten, neighborhood school classrooms, child care, places of worship, community recreation (such as playgrounds and community events) and other settings that all children and families enjoy.
- **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** — an educational setting or program where a child with disabilities receives services designed to meet his or her needs while being educated with children without disabilities, to the maximum extent appropriate.
- **Modifications and Accommodations** — tools and procedures that provide equal access to instruction and assessment for children with disabilities.
- **Self-contained Classroom** — a class composed of children who would benefit from special services within a structured classroom composed solely of children having special needs.

What are accommodations for children with disabilities?

Accommodations are different ways for children to receive information and to demonstrate their learning. Accommodations are the types of changes that allow the child equal access to the curriculum.

The changes do not alter or lower the expectations or content standards; they are adjustments to the instructional methods. Examples of classroom accommodations are listed below:

- Literacy and writing materials are available at a variety of learning levels.
- Toys and learning games are provided for children to promote learning at varying learning abilities and levels.
- Materials can be adjusted for children's different ways of learning and may include accommodations to assist children in seeing, manipulating or understanding the materials or activities.

Assistive technology (AT) is defined as any tool or device that a student uses to do a task more easily, faster or in a better way. Examples of the use of assistive technology are described below:

- AT for Communication: a voice output device (a piece of equipment with a programmed message); communication (picture) boards; augmentative and alternate devices (tablet or device that assists communication)
- AT for Art: adaptive tool grip, stabilized materials with clamps/tape; alternative tools for painting (paint rollers/dot markers); adaptive scissors; computer software
- AT for Books and Literacy: stabilization of books with Velcro, bookstand; adaptive page turners (glue dots, page fluffers); tactile books; recorded books
- AT for Play and Participation: adaptive positioning equipment; switches and switch toys; toys adapted with hand splints/straps for grasping; computer with software for play/games with switch or adaptive keyboard

Guide to Acronyms

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| ADA | Americans with Disabilities Act |
| BEES | Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services |
| CARD | Center for Autism and Related Disabilities |
| COS | Child Outcomes Summary |
| DEL | Division of Early Learning |
| DD | Developmental Delay |
| ECTA | Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center |
| ESE | Exceptional Student Education |
| ESY | Extended School Year |
| FAPE | Free Appropriate Public Education |
| FDLRS | Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System |
| FDOE | Florida Department of Education |
| FERPA | Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act |
| FIN | Florida Inclusion Network |
| IDEA | Individuals with Disabilities Education Act |
| IEP | Individual Educational Plan |
| LEA | Local Education Agency |
| LRE | Least Restrictive Environment |
| TATS | Technical Assistance and Training System |
| VPK | Voluntary Prekindergarten |
| VPK-SIS | VPK - Special Instructional Services |

Links for Additional Information

FL Just Read for Families
<https://www.fldoe.org/academics/standards/just-read-fl/families/>

TATS Talks with Families Series
<https://tats.ucf.edu/tats-talks-to-families/>

Help Me Grow, Florida developmental information for birth – age 8
<https://helpmegrowfl.org/developmental-milestones/>

FL Division of Early Learning resources for transition to kindergarten
<https://www.floridaeearlylearning.com/vpk/transition-to-kindergarten>

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) resources and articles related to transition to kindergarten
<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/kindergarten-here-we-come>

Head Start Early Learning Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center transition resources
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/transitions/article/transition-kindergarten>

Check the website of your school district for specific information related to transition to kindergarten in your district.

Communication Tips

- Speak openly and honestly.
- Communicate in positive terms.
- Listen carefully with total attention to the speaker.
- Gather additional information to clarify issues.
- Give concrete examples of observations to explain a situation.
- Focus on one issue at a time.
- To avoid divisiveness, use words such as: *we*, *us*, and *ours* instead of *you*, *I*, and *mine*.
- Consider the impact of your tone of voice and body language.
- Put your questions in writing and bring to meetings.



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