

**Issues and Options for Extended
School Year Services
for Young Children with Disabilities
October, 1998**

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The following presents issues and options associated with planning and implementing extended school year (ESY) services for young children with disabilities, focusing in particular on children transitioning from early intervention programs to preschool programs through the public schools, Head Start and/or other agencies. This paper was developed by the WV Early Childhood Transition Steering Committee.

1. **Issue:** Where can we find the time for planning for transition, including the consideration of ESY?

Response: Doing advance scheduling helps the process go more smoothly and in a more timely fashion. If participants have a regular routine schedule for meetings, it will save time in the long run and avoid hassles of last minute scheduling. Negotiate on an interagency basis procedures and timelier for the following:

Step 1: Each semester, develop a list of children for transition consideration and scheduling. Identify for each student likely stakeholders who will need to be involved in transition planning.

Step 2: Develop a semester schedule of monthly meetings to do transition planning for the children listed in step 1, with each child's meeting scheduled approximately 6 months prior to his/her 3rd birthdate. Schedule these meetings with parents, sending agency staff (early intervention) and potential receiving agencies as appropriate (public schools, Head Start and/or other agencies such as child care). In scheduling, consider various meeting locations: at the EI program, in the child's home, in the public schools or other potential receiving agencies, or in other sites mutually convenient for attendees.

Step 3: Prior to the transition planning meeting, sending agency staff should take such steps as needed with the family to help them learn about and prepare for the transition process.

2. **Issue:** What constitutes critical skills?

Response: Critical skills are those needed for the child to be able to function independently and participate in environments appropriate for children of a similar age. The IFSP or IEP must identify at least 1 critical skill in 1 or more of the following areas:

- Cognition
- fine motor
- gross motor
- communication
- social/emotional/affective development
- self-help

3. **Issue:** How do you document retention/recoupment for children entering the school system, e.g., for children entering preschool services from early intervention or early Head Start?

Response: a. Establish Criteria - Include criteria for identifying data needed to determine ESY in local interagency agreements. Criteria should include:

- definition of critical skills and what constitutes appropriate documentation
- definition of regressing and what constitutes appropriate documentation
- how to share data
- how to address the needs of children who are entering the system with an IFSP
- how to address needs of children NOT entering the system with an IFSP

b. Documenting - Based on criteria and procedures established through local interagency agreements, consider documentation needs as part of IFSP development. That is, what are critical skills on which data should be maintained re: transition and ESY. Have the transition conference occur 6 months prior to the child's third birthday to accommodate this. Use "natural" times to document regression/recoupment for children birth to 3, such as illnesses, holidays, vacations, etc.

4. **Issue:** What if "critical skills" are not on the IFSP because for focus of the IFSP is more focused on family concerns than those recognized as "critical skills"?

Response: IFSP transition planning must include "child preparation". Thus, schedule this meeting 6 months prior to the child's third birthday and discuss critical skills in light of child preparation. Let the parents know the reason why these need to be addressed i.e., to help determine whether or not the child will need ESY services. Then, use the six month period between the transition conference and the third birthday to gather data.

Issue: What are the options for ESY services to young children with disabilities?

Response: It is important to NOT think of ESY as a "summer program". Rather, ESY services should be based on the individual needs of children as identified in their IEPs. As such, it is helpful to use a "case management" approach through which individual children are linked to an array of options, based on need, such as:

- a. play groups
- b. summer Head Start
- c. school/center based
- d. library hours
- e. parks and recreation programs
- f. parent and child groups
- g. home based services
- h. Parents as Teachers program
- I. other community programs

The committee would welcome hearing from local programs regarding options they have found effective for dealing with ESY issues. Such feedback should be sent to:

Insert contact person's information