



First Steps

#4

Keys to Help Families and Children with Transition

Our children do not come with instructions. Parents Reaching Out provides resources that help families make informed decisions about the care and education of their children. We thank the families who have asked questions and found successful ways to advocate for their child for providing the inspiration for these fact sheets.

“Transition is a link between two worlds. The one world is safe, secure, familiar...the other is a world of unknowns.” As families, we know that transition begins the day our child is born and continues as he or she moves to day care, Head Start, public school or other settings. IDEA 2004 (Federal Law) tells us that transition planning starts several months before your child’s third birthday. The keys below will help you prepare for transition from the Early Intervention program to the next stages of life for your child.



Keys to successful transitions for families:

1. The first key to a successful transition path for children is **highly involved parents** and other family members. Families must be equal team members in the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) / Individual Educational Program (IEP) or Individual Service Plan (ISP) process to insure successful transition from the early intervention program.
2. The second key is a **well thought out plan for the future that is developed early and followed by all**. There will be several meetings regarding preparing for transition beginning 6 months prior to the actual date of transition. Plan to attend and participate in these meetings.
3. Transition is a team process involving families, early intervention staff and staff from the new setting for your child. Medically Fragile Case Managers are also a part of this team when a child is receiving these services.
4. A fourth key is understanding everyone’s role on the team.
5. A fifth key is to have high expectations for the future. Expect things to go well, set clear time lines, and well-defined roles for each team member.
6. Visit the new location to understand what services will look like. Does the proposed setting meet your expectations and vision for your child’s future?
7. Talk about and promote your child’s strengths, interests and abilities.
8. Share your dreams for your child. Share some of the strategies that you are using at home that work well for your child.



Transition sets the tone the future. Being highly involved in the process increases positive relationships that will benefit your child for years to come. Stay focused on your dreams for your child.

Parents play an important role in helping their child adjust to change. Here are a few key things that parents can do at home to help with transition:

1. Read books about moving to a new school or new place. Your community library staff might have ideas for great books to help your child get ready for transition.
2. Discuss going to the new setting (school, Head Start, child care)
3. Arrange for visits to the new setting.
4. Let your child select items needed at the new setting (such as backpack, lunchbox).
5. Take your child's picture in the new setting. Display the picture and talk about things your child enjoyed doing during their visit(s).
6. Discuss your child's new schedule with him or her. Help your child become excited about the new place.
7. If your child will be riding a bus to the new setting, take the child for a bus ride and/or discuss the process involved in riding the bus to school.
8. Allow your child to bring a transitional object with them to the new setting (e.g. nap rug, snuggly toy, family picture). Note: You may want to check with staff in the new setting to see if they have suggestions and to make them aware that your child will be bringing a transitional object.
9. If your child does not have much experience in social settings, join a playgroup, attend reading circles at the local library or engage in similar activities to provide your child more experiences with group settings.
10. Practice routines your child will need in the new setting (e.g., changing from shoes to slippers upon arrival or putting backpacks in a special place).



Parents Reaching Out believes that when "we start early, we will end well".

Transition can seem very complex because of the many things we need to remember. Parents Reaching Out has developed a number of family friendly booklets and fact sheets to help you through the transition process. We also offer a transition workshop, Next Steps.

We invite you to call our office or visit our website to learn more about our materials and workshops. Call us today to schedule a workshop or check out workshops dates in your area.

For more information call Parents Reaching Out. We offer phone consultations and provide workshops in English or Spanish to communities throughout New Mexico. This publication was developed under a grant from the New Mexico Department of Health Family Infant Toddler program. However, the views here expressed do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Health and should not be assumed to be an endorsement by the New Mexico Department of Health.