



Beyond ECI: Next Steps for Your Child



Does your child receive services from the Early Childhood Intervention program (ECI)? If so, you and your ECI team have developed outcomes and activities to help your child grow and learn, addressed your child's health needs, and addressed the needs of your family. Now that your child is getting older, it is time to start planning for when he or she leaves ECI.

All children must exit ECI by their third birthday. We call the process of exiting out of ECI "transition." Successful transitions require planning ahead with your ECI team and other partners, such as community service providers. Your ECI team will work with you to develop steps and services for transition that are specific to your child and family when your child is between 27 months old and no later than 90 days before your child's third birthday. Your ECI team will assist you in finding resources for your child and family for when your child is no longer enrolled in ECI.

Choices for your child after ECI

There are many options for your child after he or she exits from ECI. You and your ECI team can determine what choices will be best. Your service coordinator will help you determine what might be needed for your child to participate in any of the following:

- Child care settings
- Private therapy
- Charter schools
- Head Start*
- Parent's Day Out programs
- Community recreation programs
- Neighborhood play groups
- Library story hours
- Classes for children, such as art, music, gymnastics or swimming
- School district Preschool Programs for Children with Disabilities (PPCD)

**Head Start is a federal program that promotes the school readiness of young children through agencies in their local community. Head Start and Early Head Start programs support the comprehensive development of children from birth to age five, in centers, child care partner locations, and in the children's homes. Parent involvement is a large component of the Head Start program. Children are eligible for Head Start based on income requirements. Head Start also has slots specifically reserved for children with disabilities. The Program Locator can help you find the program nearest you: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/HeadStartOffices>*

Texas Parent to Parent

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Questions to help you decide which option to consider:

- What does my child like to do?
- How do I want my child to interact with others?
- What are my goals for my child in the next year?

Choices for your child in your community

Your service coordinator will help you explore options and schedule transition meetings with the organizations or programs in your community that you might like your child to attend after he or she exits from ECI. Your service coordinator and other team members can also provide strategies to help your child fully participate in these programs and activities.

Attending a transition meeting does not mean your child has to enroll in the program you are considering. These meetings will give you a chance to learn more about the services offered, find out about next steps and ask questions.

Remember, transition is a time to look at all of your child's options. Your child can enroll in both community programs and activities, and enroll in the school district PPCD. If you are considering several options, you may have more than one meeting. If you are considering a group program for your child, the meeting may include visits to the program sites.

Things you may want to ask about include:

- Eligibility requirements
- Scheduling
- Costs/Insurance
- Transportation
- Documents needed to enroll in the program
- Any special diet needs for your child
- Giving and/or storing your child's medication
- Special accommodations such as wheel chair ramps

Things you may want to share include:

- Important information about your child and family
- Your hopes and dreams for your child
- Your child's favorite toys and activities

Choices for your child in your local school district

Public schools have services called the Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD) that begin for eligible children on their third birthday. If you want to explore PPCD services, and you give your approval, you will participate in a transition conference with representatives of your school district and ECI.

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The transition conference usually occurs three to nine months before your child's third birthday. The meeting will be conducted in your native language using words and terms you can understand. To get the most from this conference, let your service coordinator know if you need translation or interpreter services, including sign language.

At the conference, the school district or ECI staff will:

- Explain eligibility requirements for PPCD services
- Explain the evaluation procedures for determining eligibility
- Explain the steps and timelines
- Explain your parental rights
- Explain the different types of information that may be needed from you
- Answer your questions and consider your concerns
- Discuss extended year services and locations where services may be provided
- Explain that children may receive PPCD services in pre-kindergarten classes, and community settings such as preschool or Head Start

To help school district staff understand your family, you can:

- Share ideas for goals and objectives that are important to your family
- Invite friends, relatives, and child care staff who may have useful information to the conference
- Describe your child's current activities and routines
- Describe what you want for your child in terms of future activities and routines

Note: The school district program will address your child's educational needs, but unlike ECI, it does not address family needs. Before you transition out of ECI, your service coordinator will help you access services to meet your family's other needs.

For additional information on your child's transition, please contact your ECI service coordinator.

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