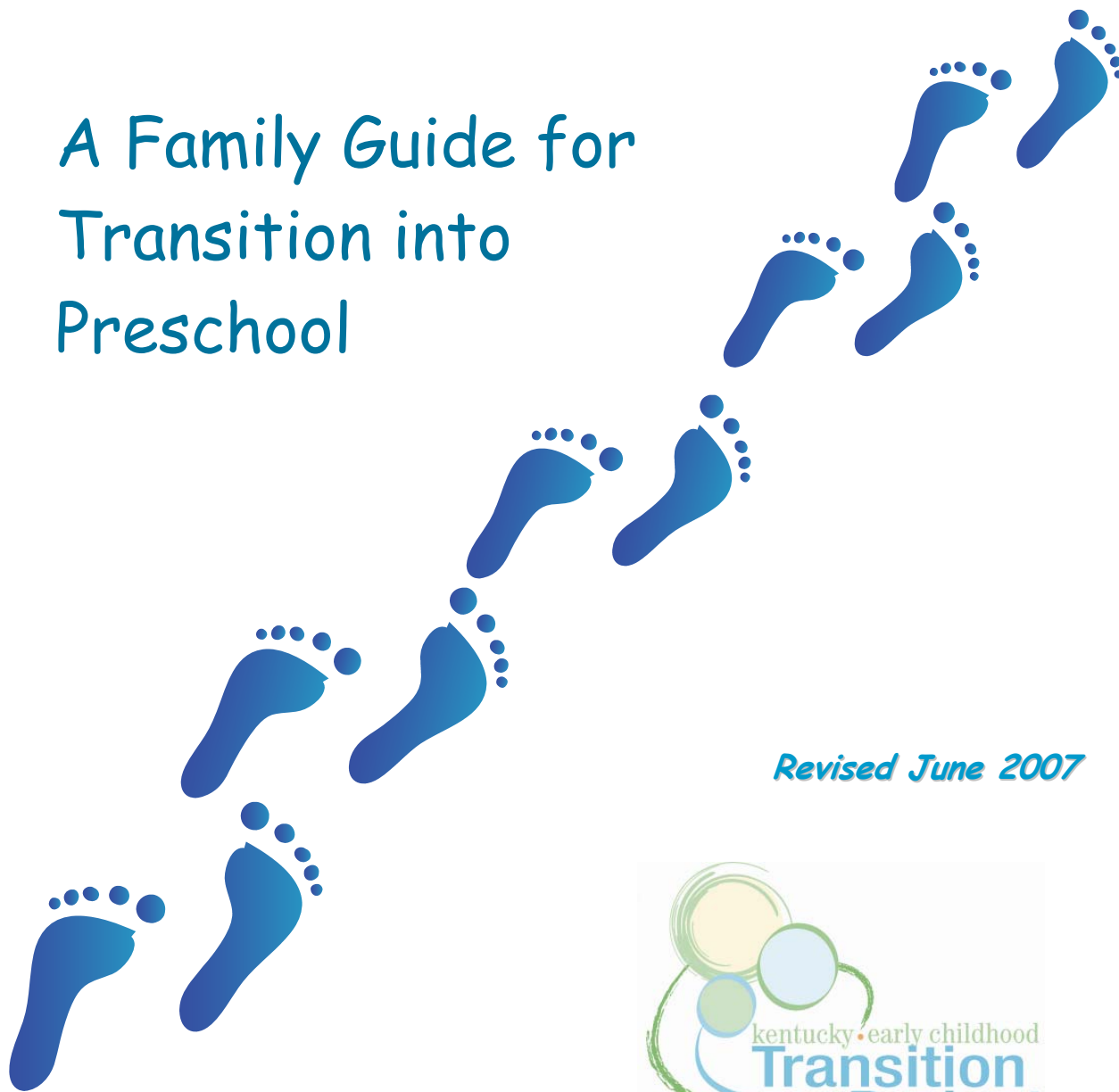


PRESCHOOL

FIRST STEPS

# "STEP BY STEP"

A Family Guide for  
Transition into  
Preschool



*Revised June 2007*

**UK**

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY  
Human Development Institute  
University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities



**Kentucky**  
UNBRIDLED SPIRIT™

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Authors/Acknowledgements ..... 2

Welcome/Introduction..... 3

Best Wishes from Mary Calie ..... 3

What is Preschool? ..... 4

What Do Kentucky Preschool Programs Look Like? ..... 5

How Do I Feel About Sending My Child to Preschool?..... 7

What Role Does Family Play in the Transition Process?..... 8

What is the Difference between First Steps and the Preschool Program? ..... 9

**What Happens in a Successful Transition?** ..... 10

**The Transition Steps**

**STEP #1** ..... 10

    Initial Contact- Importance of Permission

    The Transition Conference

    Planning for Transition

**STEP #2**..... 11

    Referral (Importance of Permission) and Evaluation

**STEP #3**..... 13

    Eligibility

**STEP #4**..... 14

    Individualized Education Program

**STEP #5**..... 14

    Placement/Services – (Decision-making time for family)

**STEP #6**..... 15

    Implementation

**STEP #7**..... 16

    Review

Steps to Services “At a Glance” ..... 17

What Choices Do Parents Have in this Process? ..... 18

Transition Tips ..... 19

Family Transition Checklist ..... 21

Admissions and Release Committee Tips..... 23

Child Information Form ..... 24

Program Options Form..... 25

More Information ..... 26

Glossary ..... 28

Acronyms ..... 30

**Transition Handbook Committee Members:**

**Brenda Mullins – KECTP Director**

Ann Blackburn, Head Start

Mary Calie, Parent, Berea

Phyllis Hall, Anderson County Regional Training Center

Judy Hurst, PUSH Preschool, Frankfort

Teri Mehler, EK Child Care Coalition

Carol Schroeder, HDI/UK

Reviewed by First Steps staff/KDE staff

**Spanish and Braille versions available!**

**Contact KECTP at HDI: 859.257.1267 or 859.351.2224**

**<http://www.transitiononestop.org>**

The authors gratefully acknowledge the following agencies and persons for their helpful contributions in developing this handbook:

**Families across the Commonwealth of Kentucky**

Missouri First Steps Program

Kentucky Head Start Collaboration Project

Kentucky Early Intervention System/Cabinet for Health and Family Services

Project STEPS

Betty Reynolds, Ashland Regional Training Center

Polly Beste

Carrie Poynter

Shannon Rosberg

Beth Rous

Jamie Grove

Diane Wright – HDI/UK

Revised June, 2007

**Kentucky Early Childhood Transition Project is jointly funded by the Kentucky Department of Education and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, through federal funds under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Preschool and Infant/Toddler).**



**WELCOME!**

**BEST WISHES FROM MARY CALIE**

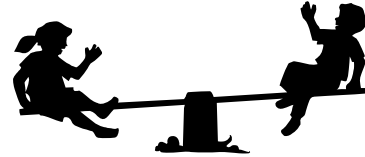
*“Hi, my name is Mary Calie. Welcome to preschool!!! We designed this handbook to help folks like you and me deal with the formal aspects of having a child transition into a preschool program. Our educational system intends for each child to have an individualized education that appropriately addresses each child’s needs and builds on his/her strengths. It is ironic that when my daughter was entering preschool I felt that the transition process seemed too impersonal to meet our unique situation. However, I found that by using the steps outlined in this handbook, we were all better able to prepare for and understand the transition process.*

*Preschool was a rich experience for my daughter and for the rest of our family. I am so happy that we decided to send her to preschool. The progress she made was surpassed only by how much fun she had! I believe using the steps outlined in this handbook helped me realize I needed to be as involved in my daughter’s education as anyone at school. Remember, many parents have been through this before you. Some chose to send their child to a public preschool, some to a Head Start program or a private program, and I can’t tell you how much I’ve learned from them. You’ll see some of their ideas in gray shading throughout the handbook. You’ll recognize my comments in italic print. Congratulations on being ready for the move into preschool. I hope the information included in this handbook helps you to participate fully in your child’s education and answers some of your many questions. If the process seems murky at times, don’t hesitate to call on the professionals in the early intervention program and your local preschool programs. They are there to help you. All of us working together will make Kentucky a better place in the future.”*

*Best Wishes ♥ Mary Calie*

## WHAT IS PRESCHOOL?

Preschool programs for three- and four-year-old children are found in a variety of settings. This will vary across communities, so talk with your public school, early intervention professionals, neighbors and others about what your community has to offer. What is preschool? The best way to answer the question would be to visit local preschool programs, see them in action, talk with providers and ask questions.



### **Parents should look for several characteristics in a quality preschool program.**

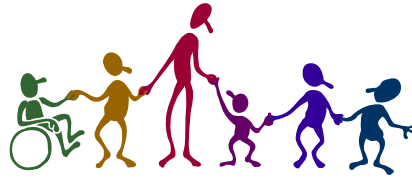
#### **These include:**

- nurturing, safe environments where young children learn by doing;
- a focus on the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of the whole child;
- opportunities for children to learn through concrete, hands-on, play experiences; and
- opportunities for children to learn through exploration.

In a quality preschool classroom, children can select activities from a variety of learning centers such as dramatic play, blocks, housekeeping, science, games and puzzles, books, music, and creative art. The children are learning by seeing, touching, tasting, moving and choosing. What is the best part of preschool? The spontaneous laughter throughout the day!!!

In high quality preschools, teachers have specialized training in early childhood and work with children based on how young children learn. They view each child in preschool as a unique person. Different levels of ability and learning styles are accepted and used to design appropriate learning activities. The classrooms are stimulating, with developmentally appropriate materials and activities. Interactions and activities build children's self-confidence and promote positive feelings toward learning.

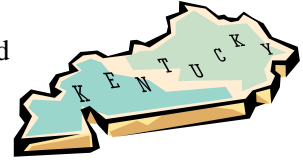
Kentucky preschool programs are implementing the *Building a Strong Foundation for School Success – Kentucky Early Childhood Standards* and the *Continuous Assessment Guide* to make sure your child is growing and developing on a continuum - beginning at birth, supported in preschool, and continued throughout life. A *Parents Guide* is available to help families in understanding the early childhood standards and supporting their child's development at home. Check out the website at <http://kidsnow.gov>. Preschool programs support the vision for Kentucky's young children and their families that "all young children are healthy and safe, possess the foundation that will enable school and personal success, and live in strong families that are supported and strengthened within their communities" (Governor's Early Childhood Task Force, 1999).



## WHAT DO PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS IN KENTUCKY LOOK LIKE?

There are several types of preschool programs in Kentucky. The ones commonly found across the state are described below.

### Kentucky Preschool Program



Everywhere in Kentucky, two groups of children are eligible for state-funded preschool services provided by public schools at no cost to the parents. These two groups include:

- Four-year-olds with a family income at or below 150% poverty level who turn four by October 1 of the school year (the year before kindergarten), and
- Three- and four-year-old children who are experiencing developmental delays or disability regardless of their family income.

State-funded preschool services are available for all eligible children who choose to enroll.

Comprehensive services include:

- preschool education, with activities that develop skills through play,
- partnerships with the parents through parent education and involvement,
- coordination of health and social services,
- developmental, medical and health screenings,
- nutrition (at least one meal per day).

For children with developmental delay/disability, programs also offer the following services:

- special education through inclusive center-based, or home-based services, and
- related services (i.e., occupational, physical, speech/language therapy, transportation).

Specific preschool services will vary from school district to district. While some school districts operate classes at elementary schools, many offer services by contracting with Head Start programs and other community preschools. They may also jointly operate classrooms with these programs. Local hours of operation will vary. Some programs operate a full school day, some a half day and some offer before and after-school child care services to extend the day. Kentucky state funded preschool services must be offered at least 10 hours per week. Some districts offer tuition-based services for other children, or they may serve additional children through local, federal or private dollars. Contact your local school district's preschool coordinator for details.

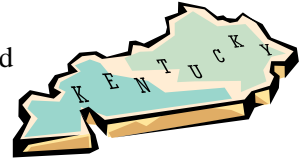
### Head Start

Head Start is a federally-funded preschool program which provides comprehensive child development services for income eligible three- and four-year-old children. While Head Start services are available in every county in Kentucky, the local Head Start program may not serve all areas of the county. Head Start programs must allow at least 10% of their enrollment for children with disabilities. Under certain circumstances, they may fund enrollment for some children who are above Head Start income guidelines. Head Start provides the following comprehensive child development services at no cost to parents:

- An **EDUCATIONAL COMPONENT** where every child receives a variety of developmentally appropriate learning experiences to foster intellectual, social, and emotional growth,
- a **HEALTH COMPONENT** which provides every child with a comprehensive health care program (medical, dental, mental health, and nutrition services),
- a **PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMPONENT** with parent education, and involvement in program planning, and operating activities,
- a **SOCIAL SERVICES COMPONENT** with an organized method for assisting families to assess their needs and providing services that will build upon the individual strengths of families in meeting those needs.

**WHAT DO PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS IN KENTUCKY LOOK LIKE? *(continued)***

Specific services and hours of operation vary from program to program. In many communities, the Head Start program and the school district coordinate by registering and screening children together. Contact your local Head Start director or disabilities coordinator for more information about Head Start services in your area.



**KYAE – Family Literacy**

The Kentucky Adult Education Program (KYAE) provides state funds for family literacy which is available in all counties. The state-funded Family Literacy (FL) program serves parents of children birth to sixteen when the parent(s) need a high school diploma or other education. The program provides the following services:

- adult education,
- coordination with child education,
- parent and child time together,
- parent education about the needs of the child; and
- parent support groups.

Call your local adult education program for more information.

**Even Start Family Literacy Program**

Even Start is a federally-funded family literacy program available in some school districts and community programs. This program serves children from birth through age seven and their parents who are eligible for adult education. Similar to the state-funded KYAE program, the program coordinates:

- adult education,
- child development services (depending on the age of the child),
- intensive parent education and support; and
- parent and child literacy activities.

Some children who are enrolled in preschool or Head Start may have parents participating in an Even Start program. Call your local public school district for more information.

**Private Preschool Programs**

Many communities have a variety of private preschool programs. These programs may be funded through tuition, United Way, or other private or public dollars. Sometimes school districts contract with these programs. Services and hours offered through these programs will vary. Call your local United Way or Child Care Resource and Referral Agency for more information.

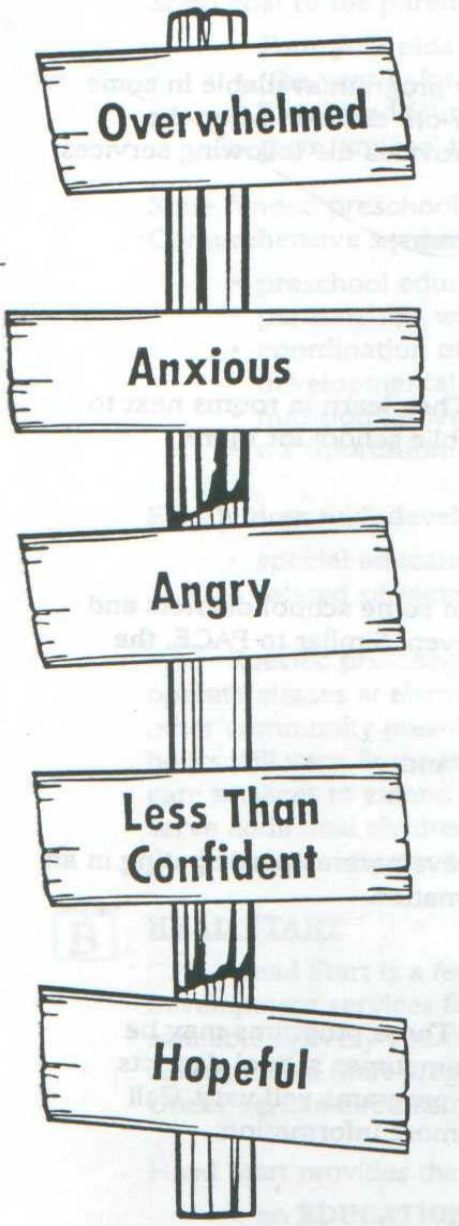
In KY, many early care and education programs participate in the STARS for KIDS NOW Quality Rating System. This system is designed to support families in selecting high quality care for their children. As you visit programs, look for the posted STAR or contact the Child Care and Resource Referral Agency to inquire as to the voluntary participation of a program you are interested in. For more information, go to the <http://www.kidsnow.gov>

## HOW DO I FEEL ABOUT SENDING MY CHILD TO PRESCHOOL?

The process of moving a child from one program to another is what transition is all about. Transition is change. You will want to keep in touch with your feelings and recognize which ones help you with quality parenting and creating positive partnerships in your child's education. So . . .



### IF YOU ARE FEELING:



### REMEMBER:

- Everyone has difficulty with change.
- We are often uneasy when we need more information.
- Many families profit by thinking through the process and sorting through their feelings about change.
- This handbook contains important information about the transition process, plus helpful tips from parents who have already been there.
  
- If you are concerned about your child being away from you for longer periods of time, you are not alone.
- Many parents recall experiencing more anxiety than their children!
- Change can be scary, but also exciting.
- You will be able to take pride in sharing new experiences with your child during the coming year.
  
- Adjusting to a new setting with different requirements takes a lot of energy and effort.
- Although it may take more time, families and children benefit from planning for individual needs.
- Sharing with another parent who has been there may help you sort through the transition process.
  
- You are an expert on your child!
- The insight you have gained from personal experience is equal to or as important as the information gathered by professionals.
- Your perceptions are needed to develop a complete picture of your child.
- Your confidence will grow as you gain experience in supporting your child's education in the new setting.
  
- You have good reason to be hopeful – you are entering into a new era in your life with your child.
- You will find support and encouragement as you form relationships with other parents and professionals.
- You will develop positive partnerships through your experiences and as you gain confidence in one another.

Barbara Warnick of Franklin County, mother of Tony, shares her insights . . . “If you are the parent or guardian of a child with disabilities, I would encourage you to look into community services, school programs, and support groups in your area. You are not alone with your child in this situation. True enough, there are many persons who do not possess the insight necessary to gain access into the inner workings of our special children's hearts and minds. Yet, I believe working together is the only way that we can begin to create acceptance of all people, not just the healthy-minded and able-bodied.”

## WHAT ROLE DOES FAMILY PLAY IN THE TRANSITION PROCESS?

*“Now that we have learned a little bit about what a preschool program in your community could look like and explored some possible feelings, let’s begin the journey of your transition process together . . .” ♥ Mary*



“I felt like an onlooker in Martha’s education for the first year or two. That was inappropriate because I have a lot to offer. I can attend meetings, ask questions, speak up with my opinions, and help solve problems. I would encourage every dad to do the same.”

Patrick J. Calie, Berea, KY

“It takes a whole village to raise a child,” says an ancient African Proverb. The local community in collaboration with the school system and other agencies work together to provide a variety of services to meet the individual needs of your child and family. The child and family are active participants in the transition process with the community and the school system. Permission from the family for each step is vital to success.

*“No individual can make a child’s transition totally successful, just like a quarterback alone can’t win the Super Bowl. It takes a team. Transition is a process that takes place over time. You decide the amount and kind of your own involvement in the transition process. As a family you have many activities and things to think about.” ♥ Mary*

Becoming familiar with the law may help you understand and plan for transition. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) includes two key parts for children with disabilities. One part of the law, Part C, defines programs for infants and toddlers with disabilities, from birth to age three. In Kentucky we call this First Steps, Kentucky’s Early Intervention System (KEIS). To this point, your child has been served by First Steps. Part B of IDEA defines programs for children with disabilities from 3 to 21 years through the public school system. In Kentucky the program for preschoolers with disabilities is part of the Kentucky Preschool Program.

Supporting your child’s growth and development at home by requesting and using the *Building a Strong Foundation for School Success – the Kentucky Early Childhood Standards Parent Guides for Birth-Three and for Three and Four Year Olds* will allow you to use strategies during daily routines to prepare your child for transition success. Ask your Primary Service Coordinator or the Preschool Coordinator for copies.

“The main piece of advice that I could give the parent of another preschooler is to trust themselves. My son’s teachers have been absolutely wonderful to him, but that does not undercut my importance as his mom or Bill’s as his dad. Our role as parents of a preschooler and our understanding of him became even more significant since our son needs extra help.”

Marilyn Chasteen, Madison County

**WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FIRST STEPS AND THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY PRESCHOOL PROGRAM?**

Several differences exist between the services offered through First Steps (the lead agency to serve children with disabilities B-3) and the local education agency (the lead agency at the 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday for children with special needs). Some differences between the programs are described below.

<p><b>FIRST STEPS</b>  <b>Early Intervention Services</b></p>	<p><b>KENTUCKY PRESCHOOL PROGRAM</b>  <b>(for children with special needs)</b></p>
<p><b>What ages are covered?</b>                      Birth to three (3) years (infants and toddlers)</p>	<p><b>What ages are covered?</b>                      Ages three (3) and four (4), as of the child’s 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday.</p>
<p><b>What children are eligible?</b>                      Children with a developmental delay, or children with a medical condition which has an established risk for developmental delay</p>	<p><b>What children are eligible?</b>                      Children with a developmental delay/disability that has an “adverse effect on the child’s education performance”.</p>
<p><b>Who determines eligibility?</b>                      The eligibility team comprised of the parents, Point of Entry staff, and Primary Level Evaluator.</p>	<p><b>Who determines eligibility?</b>                      The Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) comprised of a parent, school personnel, and others.</p>
<p><b>How is eligibility determined?</b>                      1) A multidisciplinary evaluation that shows the child has a significant delay in physical, cognitive, communication, social/emotional or adaptive development, or                      2) The child has a medical condition with an established risk for developmental delay.</p>	<p><b>How is eligibility determined?</b>                      Based on a multidisciplinary evaluation drawn from several sources, with required components (current within one year).</p>
<p><b>What are the basic services?</b>                      Screening, service coordination, evaluation, assessment, developmental intervention, family services, nutrition, physical therapy, occupational therapy, communication development, vision/hearing services, respite, assistive technology, and transportation. The services are provided by multiple agencies, linked to First Steps, who work together to provide comprehensive services.</p>	<p><b>What are the basic services?</b>                      Preschool services that focus on all areas of child development (physical, cognitive, communication, social/emotional, and self-help). If the child is eligible for special education and related services, those services will be provided in the context of the preschool program.                       “Related services” if needed to benefit from the specially designed instruction (e.g., occupational, physical, speech therapies; assistive technology; special transportation; parent education; extended school year (ESY) services.</p>
<p><b>Where are the services specified?</b>                      The type and amount of services to be provided in natural environments for the child and family are described in the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). The IFSP addresses child needs and the family resources, priorities and concerns related to identified developmental needs of the child.</p>	<p><b>Where are the services specified?</b>                      The type and amount of services for the child are in the Individual Education Program (IEP).</p>
<p><b>How are services provided?</b>                      Services may be provided in a variety of natural environments. These environments are both places (home, center-based or community settings) and opportunities where a child can enjoy everyday developmentally appropriate activities with children who do not have a disability. The consultative approach used with families by First Steps supports quality interaction between the child and family. Together, they identify teachable moments within daily routines and practice strategies to assure that learning and development occur.</p>	<p><b>How are services provided?</b>                      Services are provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Preschool education and related services may be provided directly by the district, or through contracting or arrangement with other agencies. Settings include centers or classes; parent/child programs at home or elsewhere; and programs where itinerant staff may visit hospitals or other community settings. These environments allow children to interact with same aged peers who do not have a disability.</p>

## WHAT HAPPENS IN A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION?

We have included the following “Steps to Services” that can help you along your journey towards a successful transition into preschool. You can ask your Primary Service Coordinator for a copy of the video, “Fireside Chat with KY Families.” Or for more detail, ask your local director of special education for a copy of the booklet, “Your Child’s Education”. You may also request this resource from the Division of Exceptional Children Services, Kentucky Department of Education. The address is found in the back of this handbook, along with other helpful resources.

*“Now we’re ready to take the first step. As in the world of sports, computers, or cooking, education has a language all its own. As confusing as it may be for newcomers, at times these educational terms allow educators to describe something in one or two words instead of 10, 20, or 100! I keep running across educational terms and names that I have to ask my daughter’s teachers or ARC team about. The fast pace at which educational theory and practices progress means that it is always okay to ask for an explanation of what is being discussed. We have included a glossary and a list of acronyms in the back of this handbook so if we do not define a word in the content, look in the back.” ♥ Mary*



### **STEP 1: THE TRANSITION CONFERENCE**

Your First Steps Primary Service Coordinator (PSC) will contact your local school district up to a year before your child’s third birthday. This is to let the school district know that a child with special needs may be entering. At this time, First Steps will not give specific information about your child or your family’s name.

The First Steps PSC must schedule a transition conference “up to nine months and at least 90 days” before your child’s third birthday. (KY recommends that the transition conference take place as part of the child’s Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) close to age 2.5 years). This gives everyone plenty of time to prepare for the best possible transition. The purpose of the transition conference is to allow you to explore all preschool programs in your community. You will be involved in planning the steps that need to be taken before your child enters the program selected. This is especially important if services will be provided through the school district or other public source. Your permission is needed, and it is very important to participate in the conference so you can make an informed choice.

The transition conference should be planned at a time and place that is convenient for you and the other members of the team. The First Steps Primary Service Coordinator must set up the transition conference. He or she will chair the development of the transition plan as part of your IFSP review. Besides the Primary Service Coordinator and you, people who should attend the transition conference are:

- any family members or friends that you want to invite,
- a representative from the local school district,
- a representative(s) from Head Start and/or private preschool program (if you are considering these),
- staff from other programs that your child may be attending; and
- any other professional that may provide helpful information.

At the transition conference you will discuss:

- possible services available in your community when your child turns three years old,
- the application and/or referral process for program options,
- types of information and experiences you may need to help decide appropriate services for your child,
- arrangements for you to visit programs (see bus form, page 24),
- information and records (i.e., medical, educational, evaluations) that First Steps is keeping for your child and how copies of these records can be shared; and
- additional information that may be necessary to determine if your child could be potentially eligible for preschool services through your local school district or other programs.

## SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION STEPS

“My son was able to see the classrooms and observe the children during their daily activities. This helped us decide which program best suited our individual needs. They explained the special education program to my husband and me and asked us what goals we would like to set for our child. When preparing for a child’s transition, there is always much to learn and experience.”

Sheri Ferguson, Murray, Kentucky

*“Everyone, parents and professionals, may get jittery at those first meetings. We need to be as comfortable as we can... Take as long as you need to understand the information being presented. Be sure to pipe right in there with: ‘I didn’t understand that’, ‘Can we go over that again a little slower, this information is new and unclear to me’, or ‘What could this mean to my child?’”*

*I really like the idea of a transition conference. You will receive lots of information about your local programs. You have a very important role to play in this meeting. You know more than anyone about your child. There is a form in the back of this handbook that will help to introduce your child to the others in the meeting. You may wish to fill it out before the Transition Conference to better organize your thoughts and share your knowledge about your child. Remember, you do not need to make a decision about where your child will attend preschool at this conference. This meeting is for transition planning only and helps to provide the background information needed for the next steps. You will want to explore all the options available and make needed preparations for a smooth transition. ♥ Mary*



### **STEP 2: REFERRAL AND EVALUATION**

If you are considering publicly funded preschool services, the First Steps coordinator will make a referral to the school district for you, with your permission. You will then become a member of a team called the Admissions and Release Committee (ARC). The ARC will discuss the referral. The ARC will also make the rest of the decisions about special education and related services for your child. For children referred from First Steps, the ARC may be comprised of the following:

- you (the child’s parents or legal guardian);
- a representative from the school district who can commit personnel and resources (this is usually the director of special education or the preschool coordinator);
- a special education teacher who is knowledgeable about your child’s suspected disability (this is usually the preschool teacher or other specialist);
- a preschool teacher, if not already included above;
- a member of the educational evaluation team or someone knowledgeable of the results (this is usually one of the above persons);
- a representative from First Steps;
- any other agency providing relevant early childhood services; and
- others knowledgeable about your child.

The purpose of the first ARC meeting is to:

- obtain any background information not gathered during the transition conference;
- determine if enough evaluation information is already available to establish eligibility; and
- obtain your written permission for further evaluation if this is needed.

During this meeting, a representative from the school district will explain your legal rights concerning services for your child. This representative will also share information about the range of services available (called continuum of services) and where these services can be obtained. A decision about eligibility or location of service is not determined at this time. This is simply a time to discuss the referral, the need for further evaluation, and program

**SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION STEPS** *(continued)*

options. This will give you the opportunity to visit various programs if you have not already done so.

“Evaluation” is a process of gathering information about your child’s strengths and educational needs. The first part of the evaluation process is to review existing records and gather information from current or previous service providers. The Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) is allowed and encouraged to use existing current evaluation information from the First Steps program when this is possible. First Steps information can be used if it meets state criteria for educational assessments and is less than one year old. The ARC can review these records once you have given your permission for this.

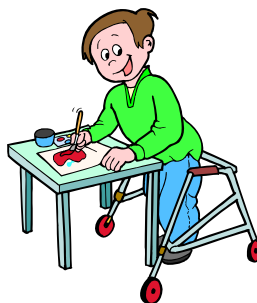
The representative from the school district will explain to you if any additional evaluation information is needed. Your written permission is needed before further evaluations can be conducted. An evaluation usually includes:

- current information on hearing, vision, and health to see if there is a need for further assessment in these areas;
- a developmental and social history, including any health or medical concerns about your child;
- information across all areas of your child’s development to see if there is a need for further assessment in any of these areas: cognition (thinking skills), communication, motor development, social/emotional development, or self-help and adaptive behavior;
- an assessment of your child’s skills in any area where a delay is suspected: cognition, communication, motor development, social/emotional development, or self-help/adaptive behavior;
- observations of your child in natural and familiar places;
- specific information related to the category of disability, if other than “developmental delay” is used; and
- anything else the ARC believes is necessary regarding your child.

Some information can be collected by specific tests. Much of the information is from observations and interviews with you and others who know your child. You are part of this evaluation, too. You will be asked for information about how your child is doing and you have an important role in sharing information about your child. Some questions you may want to ask about evaluation include:

- What will be done and why?
- Why is the information needed?
- What does our family (and the school district) hope to learn about our child?
- Can we schedule the evaluations at our child’s best time?
- How can we be a part of the evaluation?

The evaluations may take place in your home, at the child care center your child attends, or anywhere the child may be comfortable. Members of the evaluation team will work with you to schedule the evaluation activities. You will be asked to give permission to complete the evaluations. If you choose not to have the evaluation process completed, please be aware that the ARC cannot determine eligibility or provide services.



**SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION STEPS** (*continued*)

*“Evaluation represents the efforts of educators trying to ensure that the special resources needed for your child to succeed in preschool are available. This marks the beginning of the preschool staff trying to understand your child’s unique needs. A professional will refine their view of a child many times over as they learn more about the child and work with him on a daily basis.” ♥  
Mary*

When the evaluation is completed, you will receive an invitation to another ARC meeting to discuss the results of the evaluation. As a member of the ARC, you can see the evaluation information and you can ask for a copy before the ARC meeting. You may find it helpful to request that you get a copy of a written report of the evaluation results several days before the meeting. This will give you time to review the information and have your questions ready.



**STEP 3: ELIGIBILITY**

The ARC will use the evaluation results to determine if your child is eligible for services. Your child is eligible if he or she meets specific criteria for at least one of the disability categories and the ARC determines that this disability has an “adverse effect” (a negative impact) on “educational performance” (how your child learns and can use his or her skills). Your child may qualify under one of the specific disability categories (vision or hearing impairment, communication disorder, etc.). Or your child may qualify under the disability category of “developmental delay”. Developmental delay is unique to children under eight years of age and is consistent with the First Steps definition of developmental delay. A list of categories that may be used is at the end of this booklet (*page 29*).

Eligibility under First Steps differs from eligibility under preschool guidelines. For example, in First Steps, your child may have received services just by having a specific physical condition shown in medical records. Now, the ARC must show that the condition has an adverse (negative) effect on your child’s learning and skill development.

When this link is found between your child’s delay or disability and “educational performance” (learning and skill development), then your child is eligible for “special education”. “Special education” in Kentucky can be provided in a preschool classroom, your home, or another setting, and it can be provided directly by the school district or through contract. But it always:

- focuses on all areas of your child’s development (physical, cognitive, communication, social/emotional and self-help/adaptive skills), and
- includes “specially designed instruction” to meet your child’s identified needs. This “specially designed instruction” is what we mean by “special education”.

Your child also may be eligible for “related services”, like physical or occupational therapy. Related services are provided if they are necessary for your child to benefit from special education, the specially designed instruction in the preschool education programs. Related services can include special transportation, parent education as well as therapy (speech, physical, occupational) and other supportive services. More information about some related services can be obtained from the Division of Exceptional Children Services, at the Kentucky Department of Education (contact information on page 25).



**SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION STEPS** *(continued)*



**STEP 4: INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM PLANNING**

After the ARC determines that your child is eligible, the ARC will develop a written Individual Education Program (IEP). The IEP can be written in the same meeting where the ARC reviews the evaluation and decides if your child is eligible. Some parents also find it helpful to develop the IEP at a meeting that is separate from this meeting. This allows them time to think through what programs or services will be most appropriate in meeting their child's individual needs.

The Individual Education Program (IEP) is written especially for your child. The ARC develops and reviews the IEP. **AS PARENTS, YOU ARE IMPORTANT MEMBERS OF THIS TEAM.** The law requires that each child's IEP be developed by a team of people, not just one person. The IEP tells the following:

- what your child can and cannot do (present level of performance),
- what your child is going to be working on during the coming year (goals),
- what special services will be provided for identified areas (specially designed instruction and related services),
- what special supports (modifications and adaptations), supplementary aids and services your child will need to function in a regular preschool program,
- when specially designed instruction and related services will start and how long they will last; and
- how and when your child's progress will be measured and how and when this information will be shared with you.

*"Every IEP looks different. Some children may receive one special service and others may require several. Each IEP is like a specially tailored garment." ♥ Mary*



**STEP 5: PLACEMENT/SERVICES**

After writing the IEP, the ARC will decide where the services will be provided. This is called "placement". Your child will receive services in the "Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)". This means that your child will be served as much as possible with other children his or her age who do not have disabilities. The school district will have a "continuum" or range of how services can be delivered. This includes inclusive (regular preschool) classes, special classes, special schools, and home-based services. Your district may provide services by agreement in a private child care setting or Head Start.

You may want to offer suggestions on what adaptations/accommodations could be made to support your child in this setting (i.e., ramps, therapeutic equipment, additional staff training, etc.). When considering placement, the ARC will first look at the place where your child would be if he or she did not have a disability. The school district must have your written permission to serve your child. This is required by state and federal regulations. You have the right to say yes or no, and you may change your mind at any time. Usually, the ARC meetings to write the IEP and to decide on placement are done at the same time. The school district will attempt to schedule the meeting at your convenience. Remember, your presence is very important at all ARC meetings because you are your child's best advocate. This is your opportunity to exercise your decision making rights as a member of the ARC.

**SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION STEPS (continued)**

*“I wanted my child to be able to learn and play with all the other children her age. After I observed the preschool programs in my area, we were better able to choose a placement in the best setting possible that met the needs of my child.”*

♥ Mary



**STEP 6: IMPLEMENTATION**

Once you have given written permission for services, your child will begin to receive services based on the IEP. Services are provided through the regular school year. The ARC may decide that your child needs more support than this. This is called “Extended School Year (ESY)”. It can include summer services, services over the holidays or school breaks, as well as longer hours during the day or week. Extended School Year services may be provided in different ways other than how services are provided during the regular school calendar.

To decide on extended school year services, the ARC looks at whether your child would lose key skills which would not be easily regained after the break in services. (This is called “regression/recoupment”). Extended school year services are provided only if the ARC decides that these are necessary. If your child turns three over the summer, services will begin at the start of school in the fall.

Services will be provided by school staff and others listed on the Individual Education Program (IEP) as implementers. Specific names are not written on the IEP. Implementers are identified by job title (i.e., preschool teacher, speech therapist, occupational therapist, etc.). These persons are responsible for providing instructional activities to help your child achieve his/her goals. They also will keep records on how your child is doing during the year. You will receive progress reports, updates, and/or home visits according to the schedule on the IEP. Most programs keep the parent well informed. Feel free to visit the program and ask about your child’s progress or to schedule a meeting with your child’s teacher anytime.

**Timelines**

Although it can seem like a very long process between referral and services, a lot needs to happen. Everyone needs to work together to keep the process moving smoothly. The time needed between when you give permission to evaluate your child and when services should begin is 60 school days. (The time the school district is waiting for your decision and the time that school is not in operation are not included in the 60 days). This gives time to collect records, conduct any additional evaluations, hold the ARC meetings to determine eligibility, develop the IEP and make arrangements for the services, including transportation. Federal law requires that children transitioning from Part C services (First Steps) to Part B services have an IEP in place no later than the third birthday. Close cooperation between the First Steps program, the school district and parents is important to assure that the district receives the referral at least 90 days before your child’s third birthday.

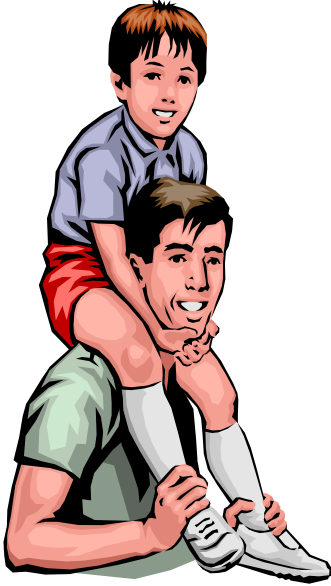
*“As a parent, I want to be assured that implementation of the goals and services listed on the IEP is a routine happening; so I ask questions, visit, and stay in touch with the teachers and therapists. I do all that I can to help support the goals that they are working on at home, but I am a parent, not a teacher or therapist. My role is to enjoy my child while doing what I can to help.”*

♥ Mary

**SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION STEPS** *(continued)*



**STEP 7: REVIEW**

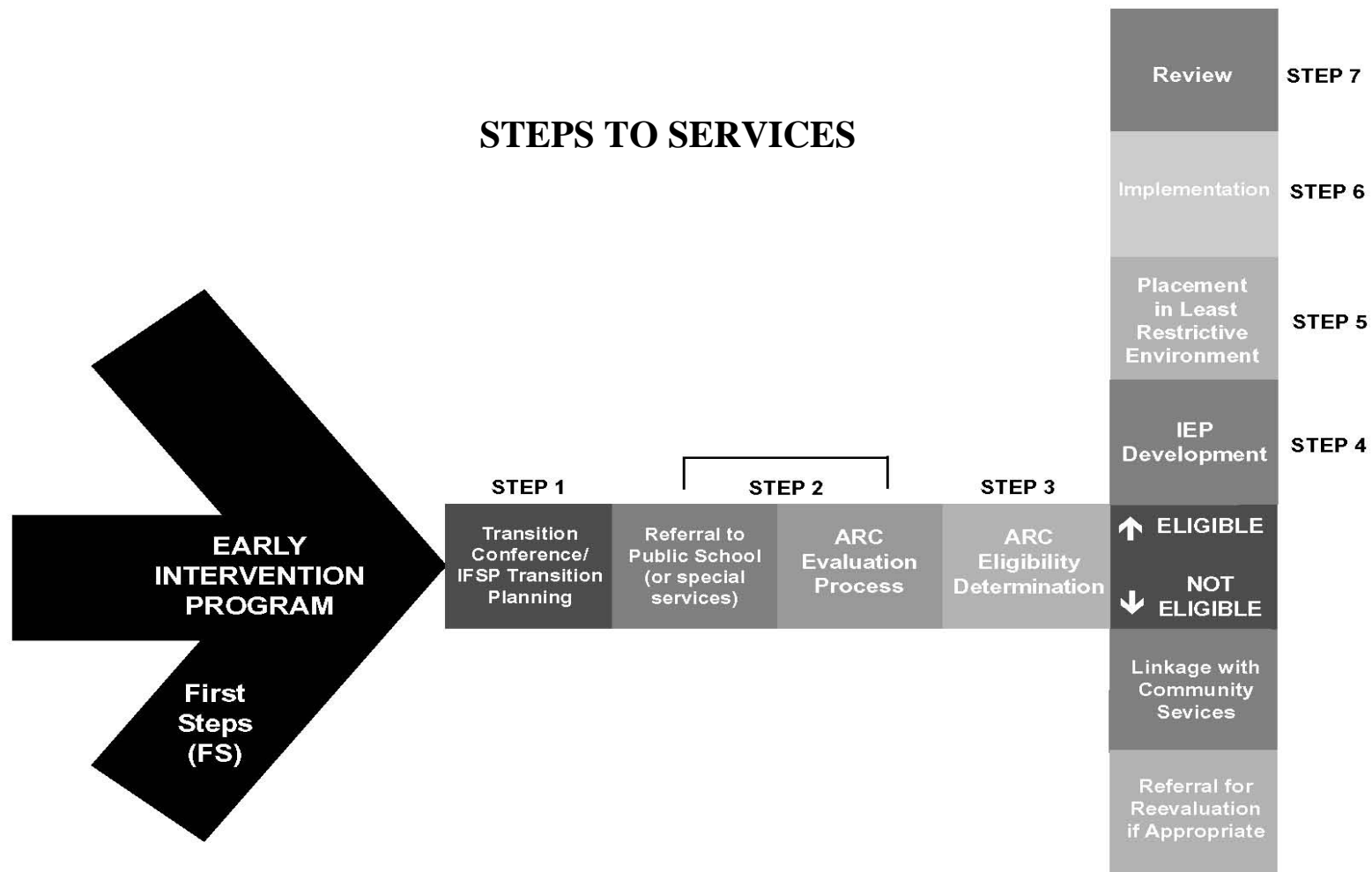


Your child’s progress will be monitored formally and informally on an ongoing basis by you and your child’s teacher. The preschool years are filled with opportunities for growth and development. It is an exciting time for everyone involved with your child and family.

The Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) must review your child’s IEP within one calendar year of the date it is written. This is called the “annual review.” At this time, the ARC will look at your child’s progress toward meeting the goals of the IEP over the past year. The committee will carefully review the information provided by your child’s teachers and therapists, and the records kept by the school related to your child. You, as the parent, will have the opportunity to share what progress you have seen and what concerns you still have. The ARC will then determine if your child still needs special education and related services, and will make changes in your child’s IEP as needed. Although an ARC meeting must be held at least once a year to review your child’s IEP and placement, you or any member of the ARC may request a review anytime.

You will be asked by either your Primary Service Coordinator (PSC) or your school district to complete a satisfaction survey about the transition process. Please complete this survey and return it to the appropriate person. Your feedback is very important and will be used to determine if the transition was successful for both your child and family. These results are helpful in making adjustments to the process to assure a high quality, successful transition for other families in your community.

**STEPS TO SERVICES “at a glance”**



*“This list of steps seems quite complex.” Lisa Isaacs of Somerset, Kentucky, parent of 4-year-old Amelia who has Down Syndrome, suggests an active approach to the transition process. “Know in advance what’s going to happen, what the process is. Be aware. Know the law and read everything that is given to you, so you can keep up with what’s going on. Get a copy of everything – all the records – and keep a portfolio for your child. Familiarize yourself with the preschools. Visit them and talk with the program directors. Start when your child is 2 to 2 ½ years old. You might even want to visit the ones you like more than once.”*


**WHAT CHOICES DO PARENTS HAVE IN THIS PROCESS?**

“Tommy’s transition was made easy because of the assistance that I received from the teachers and therapists. If we had been alone in this process, my son would have missed an excellent opportunity. It is important that parents are vocal about their children and the direction which their education goes in. I really think that the smart parent does a lot of listening to the professional, too. I didn’t think some things would work, but I tried them anyway. They did work so it was good that I listened.”

Genene Parson, Garrard County

*“There may be an occasion when some families are not comfortable with the direction that a child’s educational plan is going. You do not have to agree with the IEP unless you are comfortable with the contents. I think that resolving doubts is important so that uncertainties can be placed behind you and your family can function as trusting members of the child’s educational team. Resolving a concern may not always be fun, but you will be glad that you made the effort. It may simply be that you need more information or just a less complicated explanation of the information. Sitting down with an individual from your local school in a less formal meeting may be all you need to get the information that you require. I think your local school person is always the best place to start. An educator once suggested to me that the meeting could be in my own home, and I especially liked that idea. Independent sources of information and assistance are also available. They include the Kentucky Special Parents Involvement Network (KY-SPIN) at 1-800-525-7746, and Kentucky’s Protection and Advocacy (P&A) at 1-800-372-2988.” ♥ Mary*

You, as the parent member of the ARC, will be invited to all meetings. You will have the opportunity for input into decisions. **Here are some of the choices you will make throughout the process.**

- 
- ✓ **You choose** to make a referral to the school district. Please understand that for services to be funded by the school district, this is necessary.
  - ✓ **You choose** to transfer First Steps records to the school district.
  - ✓ **You choose** to permit the district to evaluate. Please understand that the district needs complete evaluations to determine eligibility and identify appropriate services. They may have to duplicate previous evaluations if they do not have these records.
  - ✓ **You choose** to allow the services of the IEP to start. Please understand the district needs your permission to start services.

If you choose to disagree with a decision made by the committee, you may challenge that decision through formal complaint, mediation or a due process hearing.



## TRANSITION TIPS

At all points, the school district will attempt to include you in meetings and involve you in decisions. The district will ask you for suggestions and listen to your preferences. They will try to accommodate these. However, sometimes they cannot do everything you might ask, or assign the teachers and therapists you prefer. They will work with you as much as possible. They must make sure that your child receives an appropriate education, but not necessarily a perfect one.

### TRANSITION TIPS

Transition from one setting to another involves both communication and cooperation among the home, school, community, and other families who have children with disabilities. The following activities and tips have been helpful to Kentucky families involved in the transition process. Please **choose** those activities that will be the most helpful to your family.

- Start early. Families can never begin the transition process too soon. Transition takes time and planning. Even as early as your child's second birthday, you may want to explore program options that are available in your community for three-year-olds.
- Keep a folder with information about your child all in one place. Keep evaluation information, medical information, and anything that can help you in providing accurate information to the preschool professionals during the transition period.
- Be prepared to share methods that are successful for you in working with your child at home. A form to help you collect your thoughts is included in this handbook (page 23).
- Visit potential programs for your child. Call ahead to schedule a convenient time. We have included a Program Options Form in this handbook (page 24).
- If your schedule does not permit program visitations, ask about video tapes of local programs that will allow you to see the programs "in action".
- Find out what the preschool programs offer for new families and attend these functions (e.g., open house, program visits, training opportunities, etc.).
- In each program, meet as many staff members as you can (e.g., teachers, bus drivers, cooks, program director, etc.). Ask if a program video is available for viewing.
- Get to know your child's new teachers and arrange for your child to meet them before your child's first day in the program.
- Ask your child's new teacher or specialists to observe your child at home or in his or her current program.
- If time does not permit an observation, share a video tape of your child either at home or in the current program with the new teachers.
- Ask the teachers if your child can bring a comfort item from home (e.g., stuffed animal or blanket) during the transition period.
- Share with your child's teachers where they can reach you if questions arise.
- Find out ways to communicate with the teachers on a regular basis (e.g., notebook system, phone calls, progress notes, home visits, etc.).
- Ask about special transportation, if needed.
- Check buildings to see if they are accessible. Look at room arrangement, restroom adaptations, etc.
- Talk with other families of children who have already moved into a preschool program.

**TRANSITION TIPS** *(continued)*

- Find out about the Family or Parent Resource Centers in your community and how they can help you (e.g., local parent support groups, parent meetings, etc.).
- If local support groups are not available, contact Kentucky Special Parent Involvement Network (KY-SPIN) at 800-525-7746. You also may contact your First Steps Training and Technical Assistance Team Parent Consultant to inquire about support group meetings, and other resources. Ask your Primary Service Coordinator for your Parent consultant contact information.
- Attend parent meetings at your child’s program.
- Consult the KECTP web site <http://www.transitiononestop.org> for additional tips and helpful information.

*“If you are feeling overwhelmed in your new role as a preschool parent and educational advocate while juggling the many other roles you play as a parent, know that your jitters are shared by many. Some parents address this problem by sharing their concerns and knowledge in support groups. Others prosper by discussing school news with family or clergy. Knowledge about the transition process and about all aspects of your child’s education will help calm your jitters. It is especially gratifying when you can help calm another parent’s fears by giving them helpful information. We understand best when we have experienced it ourselves.” ♥Mary*

## **FAMILY TRANSITION CHECKLIST**

### **ITEMS TO COLLECT** (to be passed on to preschool)

- Birth Certificate (certificate from the Office of Vital Statistics)
- Social Security card (copy for folder)
- Immunization records (must be up to date)
- Medical Information: School Medical Examination Form with current hearing screening from Physician or Health Department
- Medical Information: A completed vision exam from Optometrist/Ophthalmologist
- Current Program Records (evaluations, IFSP, etc.)
- Medicaid numbers and card copy (if applicable)

### **THINGS TO DO...**

- Make a commitment to complete the steps in the transition process, taking each step outlined in the Step by Step Guide before making any decisions.

#### **STEP #1- Transition Conference/Transition Plan**

- Give permission to schedule a transition conference well before your child's third birthday (between 9 months and 90 calendar days prior to the 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday).
- Give permission (consent) to invite current providers of services, the local school district (lead agency to serve children with disabilities at the 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday) and representatives from other potential preschool programs to be part of the transition conference.
- Give permission to send needed information to the local school district concerning your child. Sign a release of information for early intervention records to be given to the school district.
- Develop a transition plan at the transition conference which includes steps to services as part of your Individual Family Service Plan (or in a separate meeting).
- Complete the activities listed in the transition plan (i.e. visit preschool programs in your community, school district, Head Start, private programs).

#### **STEP #2 – Referral and Evaluation**

- Give permission to initiate the referral process to the local school district. (90-100 calendar days prior to the 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday).
- Ask the PSC if additional information acquired since the transition conference was attached to the referral.

## **FAMILY TRANSITION CHECKLIST (Cont...)**

- Make sure your PSC is invited to the Initial Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) meeting to act upon the referral.
- At the Initial ARC, ask questions about current evaluations, share information about your child's growth and development as well as concerns. If additional evaluations are necessary, give consent to evaluate.

### **STEP #3 – Eligibility Determination (2<sup>nd</sup> ARC)**

- After evaluations have been completed, the school district ARC Chair Person will schedule a 2<sup>nd</sup> ARC. Ask questions about the additional evaluations and potential individual programming possibilities with the local school district. The ARC will determine if your child meets eligibility criteria for special education and related services based upon the information presented.
- If your child is considered ineligible, explore community options or supports provided by the First Steps Service Coordinator.

### **STEP #4 - Individual Education Program (IEP) Development**

- This step usually takes place at the 2<sup>nd</sup> ARC meeting. If your child is eligible, you will participate as a member of the ARC in the development of the Individual Education Program (IEP). Discuss the most recent IFSP from First Steps and share successful strategies you have used with your child.

### **STEP #5 – Placement in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) - Family Decision Making**

- This step also takes place at the 2<sup>nd</sup> ARC meeting. After the development of the IEP, consider placement of your child in special education and related services with the local school district. If your decision is yes, you will need to give “consent” or permission for placement. If you decide another program is best for your child, you will want to express your appreciation for the efforts of the district on behalf of your child and family.

### **STEP #6 – Program/IEP Implementation**

- Implementation of the IEP will begin on your child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Stay actively involved in the implementation of daily activities to support your child's growth and development. The KY EC Standards Parent Guides list ongoing activities which you can use at home to help your child grow and learn and be ready for the next transition – Kindergarten.

### **STEP #7 – Review and Ongoing Family Involvement**

- You will be** invited to attend a review meeting within one calendar year from the date the IEP is written and will receive regular information as to how your child is progressing.
- You will also** be asked to complete a “survey” to help the transition team review the success of the transition steps – this is very important for you to provide feedback about how the transition process worked for your child and family.

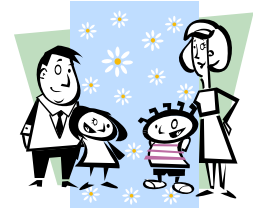


## ADMISSIONS AND RELEASE COMMITTEE (ARC) TIPS

### Some Tips That May Make You Feel More Comfortable As You Prepare for the ARC Meeting

#### **BEFORE ANY ARC MEETING:**

- You may bring someone with you to the meeting. They can be with you in the meeting or be in the building.
- Review any forms you may see at the meeting. Ask an ARC team member to let you see them. They may be posted in offices so families can view them.
- Request copies of any information that will be shared during the meeting.
- Set a time to observe the preschool classrooms.
- Complete a summary of your child's strengths and interests. A sample sheet (page 23) is included that you may want to use. Bring this with you to the meeting, and share the information. You may also bring photos, videos, etc. to share.



#### **DURING ANY ARC MEETING:**

- Arrive early the day of the meeting so you can meet other members of the ARC committee.
- Take your time and feel good about it. This meeting is very important. Don't feel rushed! Ask as many questions as you like.
- Remember, it is the responsibility of the ARC to make decisions for your child's special education program. This will be based upon the recommendations discussed. If you are not in agreement with the decisions being made, know that you can request an additional ARC meeting to follow up on specific areas of concern.
- The school will provide you with a copy of your child's IEP.
- At initial placement, you will be asked to sign a form giving permission for your child to receive special education and related services from the school district. You may withdraw permission at any time.

#### **AFTER THE INITIAL MEETING AND ON-GOING:**

- Always be open to suggestions. The ARC, with you as a member, is a team working together for one cause – to help your child.
- Remember, you are a very important member of the ARC and an expert on your child.
- Based on your knowledge of your child, make a list of:
  - Your child's strengths and needs.
  - Questions and concerns that you may have.
  - What motivates/interests your child?
  - Health and safety concerns including specific medical needs, allergies, etc.
  - Special equipment/adaptations needed.
  - Special assistance your child may need, such as feeding, toileting, etc.
- Keep in close contact with your child's preschool teacher and offer support/assistance. Let him or her know how to reach you.

This list should be used and updated for any of the ARC meetings you attend.

**ADMISSIONS AND RELEASE COMMITTEE (ARC) TIPS *(continued)***

**INFORMATION ABOUT MY CHILD**

This form was designed to help families prepare for an Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) Meeting. Complete each section, take it to the meeting, and share the information with other team members.

<b>These things please me most about my child:</b>	<b>Here's what my child does well:</b>	<b>My child really likes these:</b>
<b>Right now I'm most concerned about:</b>	<b>I would like my child to learn to do these in the future:</b>	<b>My child learns more easily when:</b>
<b>I think these services would help my child:</b>	<b>Other help our family could use is:</b>	<b>I would like to be involved in my child's program in these ways:</b>

**ADMISSIONS AND RELEASE COMMITTEE (ARC) TIPS** *(continued)*

**PROGRAM OPTIONS FORM**

This form is designed to assist families in listing program options discussed during the Transition Conference. The completed form can be used later to schedule appointments for visits or observations with programs of interest.

PROGRAM	ADDRESS	CONTACT PERSON/ NUMBER	DATE FOR VISIT OR OBSERVATION

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

We hope this handbook will prove both informative and helpful. It is our goal as parents and professionals to provide a comprehensive yet uncomplicated process for early childhood transition. We tried to give you a guided tour of what might be ahead. If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact one of the following:

**...additional transition information:**

Kentucky Early Childhood Transition Project  
Human Development Institute (HDI)  
University of Kentucky  
314 Mineral Industries Building  
Lexington, Kentucky 40506-0051  
(859) 257-7898  
HDI Transition Clearinghouse  
<http://www.transitiononestop.org>

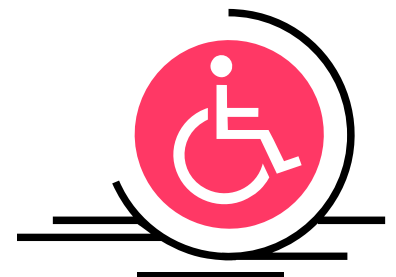
**...on your child's education – call or write:**

Kentucky Department of Education  
Division of Early Childhood Development (502) 564-7056  
Preschool Branch (502) 564-7056  
Exceptional Children's Services (502) 564-4970  
Capital Plaza Tower  
500 Metro Street  
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601  
<http://www.education.ky.gov>  
Click on Quick Links at the top

**...on early intervention resources:**

Cabinet for Health and Family Services  
Division of Adult and Child Health  
Early Childhood Branch (First Steps)  
275 E. Main St.  
Frankfort, KY 40621  
(502) 564-3756 or (800) 442-0087  
<http://www.chfs.ky.gov/dph/firststeps.htm>

**...on the law** . . . contact your local school district, Family Resource Center, Parent Resource Center, or Kentucky Special Parent Involvement Network (KY-SPIN) (1-800-525-7746), <http://www.kyspin.com>, or Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, Protection and Advocacy Division (1-800-372-2988) <http://www.kypa.net>



**FOR MORE LOCAL INFORMATION** (*continued*)

INSERT LOCAL AND REGIONAL RESOURCE  
INFORMATION HERE FOR FAMILIES...



*“We’ve given you lots of information and just as much in the way of the insight of other parents who have transitioned before you. There is no way to predict what your experience with the transition process will hold. But I can guess that it will be somewhat different from any of the experiences in this handbook. After all, we are unique as parents as well as having our own unique children!*

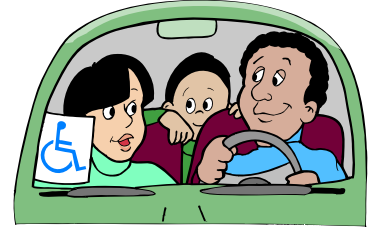
*It is truly wonderful to receive assistance in this time of your child’s life from professionals who have ushered other families through the change into preschool. They have knowledge and experiences to share. I couldn’t have done it without them. My daughter’s life, like other people’s lives, is going to hold a series of transitions. This early experience should help her with other transition experiences in the future. My experience has taught me that transitions are always easier when they are planned and well thought out.*

*Best wishes for a smooth, successful transition and happy preschool experience for your child and family!!” ♥ Mary*

## GLOSSARY

### DEFINITIONS OF TERMS AND PHRASES

The following terms and phrases are ones you as a parent of a child or youth with a disability will hear and use as you work with the school district. The terms and phrases are defined as they relate to children and youth with disabilities.



**Admissions and Release Committee (ARC)** – A committee responsible for making decisions about the identification, evaluation, placement, and provision of a free appropriate public education for a child or youth with disabilities. **Parents of the child or youth are always members of this committee.**

**Annual Review** – A meeting of the ARC that takes place within one (1) calendar year of the date the ARC completed the current Individual Education Program (IEP). At this meeting, the ARC will review and revise the IEP as needed.

**Child Find** – Activities the early intervention program and each local school district complete to locate, identify, and evaluate each child or youth, age birth through twenty-one, within the district’s geographical boundaries.

**Confidentiality** – The protection of the privacy of all personally identifiable information and records of a child or youth.

**Due Process** – A system that guarantees each individual equal protection and treatment under the law. It addresses the steps which assure the right of the child or youth with a disability and the parents to be fully informed and included in any decisions which affect the education of the child or youth.

**Due Process Hearing** – A hearing requested by parents of a child or youth with a disability or the school district to settle a disagreement about the identification, evaluation, placement, or the provision of a free appropriate public education.

**Education for All Handicapped Children Act – Public Law 94-142** – The law was passed by Congress in 1975 and has been amended. Preauthorization of the law in 2004 changed the name to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA).

**Evaluation** – A process of gathering information about the educational needs and abilities of a child or youth through individual tests, review of school work and school records, behavioral observations, interviews, and rating scales.

**Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** – IDEA defines FAPE as specially designed instruction and related services provided for children and youth with educational disabilities at no cost to parents. The school may charge incidental fees which are normally charged to children and youth without disabilities or their parents as a part of the regular education program.

**Identification** – Collection and use of all available information to decide if a child or youth has a suspected disability and possibly needs specially designed instruction and should be referred for evaluation.

**Independent Evaluation** – An evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the school district responsible for the education of a child or youth.

**Individual Education Program (IEP)** – A written plan of action developed by an ARC to meet the specially designed instruction and related service needs of a child or youth with a disability.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA)** – The purpose of this law is to make sure that all children and youth with disabilities, who are between the ages of 3 and 21, have available to them a free appropriate public education (FAPE). IDEA includes special education (specially designed instruction and related services) designed to meet the unique needs of the child or youth with disabilities. Reauthorization of IDEA occurred in 1997 and most recently in 2004.

**Kentucky Administrative Regulations (KARs) Related to Exceptional Children** – These regulations establish requirements necessary to assure uniformity in providing specially designed instruction and related services to children and youth with disabilities and to conform with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** - This is the educational setting in which a child or youth with a disability can learn effectively, based upon unique needs and capabilities, and interact with similar age peers who are not disabled.

**GLOSSARY** (*continued*)

**Mediation** – This is one way to settle disagreements between parents and school personnel without going to a due process hearing. Parents and school districts are not legally required to use mediation.

**Multidisciplinary Team Evaluation** – An individual evaluation done by a team or group of people from different professions or disciplines who are trained to give the tests and procedures and interpret results.

**Native Language** – The language used in the home for communication by the parent of the child or youth.

**Non-discriminatory Testing** – Tests given in the language the child or youth uses and in a way that the child or youth can best answer. Test items contain “no bias.”

**Parent** – A biological or adoptive parent, a guardian generally authorized to act as the child’s parent or authorized to make educational decisions for the child (but not if the child is a ward of the state); a person acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent (e.g., a grandparent, step parent, or other relative with whom the child lives) or a person legally responsible for the child’s welfare; a foster parent if biological parent’s authority to make educational decisions has been extinguished and the foster parent has an ongoing, long-term parental relationship with the child and is willing to make educational decisions, or a surrogate parent appointed in accordance with 707 KAR 1:340, Section 7.

**Placement** – The location where the individual education program (IEP) for an individual child or youth with a disability is implemented.

**Procedural Safeguards** – All rights that are guaranteed to the parent and the child or youth with disabilities under Subpart E of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

**Referral** – A written request for a child or youth to be individually tested to determine if the child or youth has an educational disability and needs specially designed instruction and related services.

**Related Services** – Additional services that a child or youth with a disability may need to benefit from specially designed instruction.

**Special Education** – The specially designed instruction that meets the unique needs of a child or youth with a disability that is provided at no cost to parents or guardians.

**Specially Designed Instruction** – Modifications or alterations in instructional methods, techniques, materials, media, or content, needed for a child or youth with a disability to meet Individual Education Program (IEP) goals and objectives.

**Surrogate Parent** – A person assigned by the school district to represent a child or youth with a disability when the natural parents or guardian are not known or cannot be located or when the child or youth is a ward of the state.

**Transition Plan** – A written plan for children or youth with a disability which will assist them in the process of changing from one program to another (e.g., early intervention services to school district education program), one grade to another, one organizational level to another (e.g., primary to intermediate), and entry to exit from school district programs. **The transition plan from First Steps into Preschool is written during the Transition Conference and is part of the IFSP Review.**

**Transition Services** – Services needed by a child or youth with a disability to meet the outcomes in the transition plan of the child or youth.

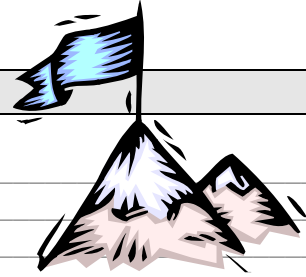
**Triennial Review** – A re-evaluation done every three (3) years on or before the third anniversary of the meeting when the Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) determined a child or youth to be eligible for specially designed instruction and related services.



**KENTUCKY EARLY CHILDHOOD ACRONYMS & PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS**

<u>AGENCIES/PROGRAMS</u>		<u>SERVICES</u>	
<b>CCR&amp;R</b>	Child Care Resource and Referral Agency	<b>ARC</b>	Admissions and Release Committee
<b>CCSHCN</b>	Commission for Children with Special Health Care Needs	<b>EPSDT</b>	Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment
<b>CHFS</b>	Cabinet for Health and Family Services	<b>IEP</b>	Individual Education Program
<b>DACHI</b>	Division for Adult and Child Health Improvement	<b>IFSP</b>	Individualized Family Service Plan
<b>DCP</b>	Disabled Children’s Program	<b>OT</b>	Occupational Therapy
<b>DCBS</b>	Department for Community Based Services	<b>PT</b>	Physical Therapy
<b>DPH</b>	Department for Public Health	<b>SLP</b>	Speech/Language Pathology
<b>DMH/MRS</b>	Department for Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services	<b>SSI</b>	Supplemental Security Income
<b>DMS</b>	Department for Medicaid Services	<b><u>DISABILITY TERMS USED IN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS (707 KAR 1:280)</u></b>	
<b>FRC</b>	Family Resource Center	<b>AU</b>	Autism
<b>FRYSC</b>	Family Resource and Youth Services Center	<b>CD</b>	Communication disorder (or speech/language impairment)
<b>FS</b>	First Steps – Lead agency to serve child with disability and family birth to 3 <sup>rd</sup> birthday	<b>DB</b>	Deaf-blind (both sensory impairments)
<b>KATS</b>	Kentucky Assistive Technology Services	<b>DD</b>	Developmental delay (children under 8 years)
<b>KDE</b>	Kentucky Department of Education	<b>E/BD</b>	Emotional/behavioral disabilities
<b>KECTP</b>	Kentucky Early Childhood Transition Project	<b>FMD</b>	Functional mental disability (previously trainable and severe/profound handicap)
<b>KEIS</b>	Kentucky Early Intervention System	<b>HI</b>	Hearing impairment (deaf and hard of hearing)
<b>KSB</b>	Kentucky School for the Blind	<b>MMD</b>	Mild mental disability (previously educable mentally handicapped)
<b>KSD</b>	Kentucky School for the Deaf	<b>OHI</b>	Other health impairment (includes such health conditions as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, heart conditions, epilepsy, Acquired Immune Deficiency Disorder, etc...)
<b>KY-SPIN</b>	Kentucky Special Parent Involvement Network	<b>OI/PD</b>	Orthopedic impairment or physically disabled
<b>LEA</b>	Local Education Agency (school) – Lead agency to serve child with disability at 3-21 years of age	<b>SLD</b>	Specific learning disabilities
<b>PRC</b>	Parent Resource Center	<b>SLP</b>	Speech-Language impairment
<b><u>LAWS</u></b>		<b>TBI</b>	Traumatic brain injury
<b>ADA</b>	Americans with Disabilities Act	<b>VI</b>	Visual impairment (blind and partially sighted)
<b>IDEA</b>	Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act		
<b>KERA</b>	Kentucky Education Reform Act		
<b>NCLB</b>	No Child Left Behind Act		

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**



Lined area for writing additional notes.







Brenda Mullins, Project Director  
(859) 257-1267 or (859) 351-2224  
[www.transitiononestop.org](http://www.transitiononestop.org)

Updated June 2007

Kentucky Early Childhood Transition Project is jointly funded by the Kentucky Department of Education and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, through federal funds under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (*Preschool and Infant/Toddler*)

