

PRESCHOOL TRANSITION EVALUATION

Legal Requirements

Prior to transitioning a student with a disability from a preschool program to kindergarten or first grade, an appropriate reassessment of the individual shall be conducted pursuant to Article 2 (commencing with § 56320) of Chapter 4 to determine if the student is still in need of special education and services.

It is the intent of the Legislature that gains made in the special education program for individuals who received special education and services, in accordance with this chapter, are not lost by too rapid a removal of individualized programs and supports for these individuals.

As part of the transitioning process, a means of monitoring continued success of the student shall be identified by the IEP team for those student of kindergarten or first grade equivalency who are determined to be eligible for less intensive special education programs.

As part of the exit process from special education, the present performance levels and learning style shall be noted by the IEP team. This information shall be made available to the assigned General Education teacher upon the student's enrollment in kindergarten or first grade.

Legal Reference

EC 56445

Local Procedures

The preschool transition evaluation requires close collaboration between the current District of Service (DOS) providers and the receiving DOR. While the receiving DOR bears primary responsibility for the transition evaluation, the DOS has a better understanding of the student and has developed a working relationship with the parent. It is important, therefore, that the DOS and DOR work together to ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible for both the parent and the student. The first step is to develop an appropriate assessment plan for the evaluation. The DOS will provide the DOR with a written report of the student's present levels of performance, classroom strategies, accommodations and modifications, behavior and other relevant information to assist in this process. If necessary/appropriate, the DOS will also assist the DOR in obtaining written consent for the assessment.

Content of the Evaluation

There is very little legal guidance with regard to what the transition evaluation from preschool to kindergarten or first grade should consist of. We know the assessment has to be "appropriate" and we know that that special education supports should not be removed too soon. With this in mind, the evaluation should focus on answering the following questions:

1. Has the student made expected progress on the goals and objectives in his or her current IEP?
2. What are the student's current levels of performance and current instructional needs?
3. What type of supports will the student need in order to be successful in kindergarten or first grade?
4. Do my recommendations ensure that the student will maintain the gains he/she has made in special education?
5. How will the student participate in general education if appropriate?

In order to answer these questions, the transition evaluation may not require a large amount of formal testing. Information can be obtained from the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), work samples and classroom observations. Observations, are extremely important and should be conducted, not only of the student in the current learning environment but also of the prospective receiving teacher, whether general education or special education. In addition, observations in the proposed learning environment should occur, during which the observer must try to determine whether the student can function adequately in that environment (with or without supports), taking into consideration that the current observation is near the end of a year of instruction.

In the case of a student who does not attend a preschool and only receives speech/language services, the evaluation may be limited to progress in that area. If, however, the speech teacher has concerns about the student's ability to succeed in general education, the assessment should be expanded to include other areas and specialists as appropriate.

Evaluators

As stated earlier, primary responsibility for the transition evaluation rests with the receiving DOR. However, the current service providers should collaborate on the evaluation. The extent and nature of the collaboration will vary depending on the needs of the student. At a minimum, the assessment team must include a special education provider for each type of service listed on the current IEP plus any new suspected areas of need and the prospective receiving teacher. If the prospective teacher is unknown or not available, it should at least be a teacher from the appropriate grade level.

IEP Development

If the IEP team determines that the student will not require the same level of service at kindergarten or first grade, the team will document the following on the present level page of the IEP:

1. The information to be monitored to determine whether the student is progressing adequately.
2. The timeline for monitoring the student's progress.
3. The person(s) responsible for collecting information and monitoring student progress.

Exiting Special Education

If the IEP team determines that the student no longer requires special education and related services, the IEP team will indicate the student's present performance levels and learning style on the narrative page of the IEP. The case carrier shall ensure that this information is made available to the assigned General Education teacher upon the student's enrollment in kindergarten or first grade.

FAQs

Can the current service provider do the entire transition evaluation?

It is important for the receiving district to collaborate in the evaluation in order to make an offer of FAPE, including placement for the student, as the receiving district is responsible for the provision of FAPE. They should have at least observed the student prior to making that determination.

REMINDERS

- All preschool students receiving special education must be reevaluated prior to entering kindergarten or first grade.
- The reevaluation should focus on what the student requires in order to be successful in kindergarten or first grade.
- The receiving school should collaborate with the current services providers on the evaluation.
- If the IEP team exits a student, they must document the student's present performance levels and learning style and communicate that information to the receiving teacher.