



Bridge to Preschool

Navigating a Successful Transition

Information for Families who have Children who are Deaf / Hard of Hearing

Created by the Colorado School
for the Deaf and the Blind CSDB



and

Colorado Families for Hands & Voices



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Welcome

Dear Families,

“Hey, I’m finally getting the hang of this... now we have to transition?”

For those of us parents who have already been through the transition process, we want you to know that you can make it through successfully, with your child’s needs met, and with confidence in the choices you are making. We also want you to know that we understand what it feels like to be going into the unknown when you are finally feeling settled in the ‘here and now’. Right when you are starting to understand what some of the acronyms mean, (IFSP, Part C, EHDI etc.) all of the sudden you are faced with transitioning into services where things are different (IEP, Part B, school based services)

Change, change, change....

Planning for the transition from early intervention (Part C) to preschool services

(Part B) is a very important step in the life of your child and family. Probably from early on in your experience in Early Intervention Services, you became aware that at the age of three there would be a transition process which may include:

- ❖ A change of people who have been serving your child
- ❖ A change of location of services
- ❖ A change in which part of the law oversees services in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- ❖ New opportunities

We’re here to help!

This packet was developed by a group of professionals and parents who want to support you during this time. It is not everything you’ll need, but we hope that there is enough information to get you through the process of transition, and to know where to get help if you need it. You’ll need the input of other parents, professionals you trust, and adults who are deaf and hard of hearing to give you their perspectives as you transition into the next phase of education and life with your child. The truth is, ‘transitions’ are a part of life that is ongoing, will probably cause some stress, and an inevitable part of the journey of raising a child who is deaf or hard of hearing. It is also an exciting part of the journey...your child is growing, you are gaining confidence in your knowledge, and your involvement in your child’s education will pay off with big dividends!

So, let us know if we can help, and enjoy this packet of information.

Sincerely,

The Transitions “Team” – Janet, Sara, Dinah, and Denise

What Happens at Transition?

Your child will soon be turning 3. Services that you have been receiving under Part C of IDEA (The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) will be ending and your child will begin to receive services under Part B of this same law. Eligible children can receive special services and assistance (special education and related services) under this law.

You will be assisted by your Early Intervention Service Coordinator and your Colorado Home Intervention Program (CHIP) facilitator in this transition from Part C (newborn – 2 services) to Part B (three – 21 services). Transition planning will begin months before your child enters preschool so that you have adequate time to explore your options and feel comfortable with your child's placement.

The first step in the transition process involves a transition meeting with your team. At this time the procedures in your district will be shared with you. As part of this process you will be referred to your local school district's Child Find. This referral can be made by your Service Coordinator, Colorado Hearing Resource (CO-Hear) Coordinator, CHIP facilitator, or by the family.

Child Find is responsible for assessment and identification of young children (0-6) who might be eligible for services under IDEA. The team's evaluation may include any or all of the following: health, vision, hearing, motor, social/emotional, general intelligence, and communication skills. These tests must be conducted in your child's preferred mode of communication (spoken language, sign language or a combination). These evaluations are offered by the district at no cost to you as the parent.

The purpose of these evaluations is to identify your child's special education needs. Many school district Child Find teams are accepting the F.A.M.I.L.Y. Assessment as either part of this evaluation or in lieu of other assessments. Make the team aware of this or other assessments that have already been completed on your child. This will avoid unnecessary duplication. Your Child Find Team can review these assessments and make a determination as to what additional information is needed.

Your CHIP facilitator may be able to attend this evaluation with your family. It is important that someone be in attendance at this meeting who has expertise in the unique issues with young children who are deaf and hard of hearing. Some districts have designated professionals to participate in all Child Find evaluations with young deaf and hard of hearing children, while others do not.

Do not be afraid to ask questions of the team. You are an important part of this process. Discuss this process with your CHIP facilitator or CO-Hear Coordinator. They will have experience in your district and can assist you with the process.

Once the evaluations are completed, a team will be convened. Again, you are an important member of this team. At this meeting the assessment results will be shared and discussed as they relate to your child's educational needs and subsequent placement. Once your child has been determined eligible for services, the IEP team will develop an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) for your child. This plan will state the goals for your child and the services that will be provided by the school district.

There are many options for educating your child. The law mandates that a continuum of services be discussed. One basic tenet of IDEA is that public agencies must ensure that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions, are educated with children who are not disabled. Additionally, in 1996, Colorado passed The Deaf Child's Bill of Rights, which served to strengthen the program options for deaf students in the state of Colorado. As your child moves into Part B services, you will work with a team of professionals to develop a plan (IEP) that addresses the unique needs of your child. As part of this process you will develop a Communication Plan for your child which ensures among other things that all educational options have been explored

A Brief Introduction: Laws Governing a Child's Transition to Preschool

Your baby receiving early intervention services from the start of intervention to age three is participating with your family in the federal Part C program. Part C is a set of services created by a portion of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, originally passed in 1973 and reauthorized in 2006. The current name is "IDEA 2004", which gives some idea how complicated the legislation is, as it took more than two years for the regulations to be written and approved by Congress.

Part C and Part B: What does this mean?

IDEA covers children birth through age 21 who have special needs. There is a division in the regulations and agencies in charge (or "lead agency") for children under three years of age (Part C) and over three years of age, or school age (Part B). The focus of this manual is on the transition from Part C to Part B, or from early intervention to preschool services through your school district.

Part C: The Zero to Three Years

Each state administers the Part C early intervention program somewhat differently. In Colorado, Part C is administered by the Department of Human Services, which for most parts of the state contracts through the Colorado Home Intervention Program for specialized services to families raising babies and toddlers who are deaf and hard of hearing. The Colorado Home Intervention Program, or CHIP, is the nonprofit agency families know best, but families may have contact with their Community Center Board, the Department of Human Services "face" in each community. (See index for a list of Community Center Boards in Colorado.)

The Part C program is a federal program that partially funds states' efforts to provide services to babies and toddlers. It was established by the federal government in 1986 to

- ❖ improve the enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities
- ❖ reduce costs of special education through early intervention
- ❖ minimize the need for institutionalization and promote independent living
- ❖ enhance the capacity of families to meet their child's needs.

Agencies providing Part C services must provide services to every eligible child and family throughout the state, and

follow the philosophy of natural environments. They must also involve the family in the service plan that is updated every six months, (Individual Family Service Plan, or IFSP), and provide for transition planning to the school age or Part B system.

Part C to Part B Transition: What the Law Says

There are guidelines in the law covering the different steps required to complete a child's transition between services. The service coordinator (and sometimes this is the Co-Hear coordinator) must start the process of transition at least six months before the child's third birthday. This period is filled with assessments needed by the school, visiting school programs, learning even more about how one's child learns and communicates best... so most families would benefit from even more transition time to mull over decisions and meet the key people who will be involved in their child's life in school. This additional time can greatly ease pressure on parents as well as allow for more time for the family and the school personnel to develop a positive relationship.

- ❖ A suggested timeline for families and CHIP facilitators to be completed during home visits and community visits to area preschools is listed below.

9-12 months prior to the child's third birthday:

- ❖ Request information on transition, the law, options, and timelines in a format useful to you as parents.
- ❖ Family and CoHear coordinator/CHIP Parent Facilitator: Set general timelines for transition planning.
- ❖ Consider articles or other resources on preschool selection and parent experiences from Hands & Voices.
- ❖ Begin to identify area preschools to visit together.
- ❖ Discuss the child's learning style and modes of communication across a variety of settings.
- ❖ Consider the option of meeting other families of preschoolers.
- ❖ Bring your questions to the continuing home visits.

6 months prior to child's third birthday:

- ❖ Visit preschools. Consider use of rating scales as one method to prioritize needs.
- ❖ Begin to become familiar with district IEP form and learn about the Communication Plan.
- ❖ Check over current IFSP to be read by school district personnel. Does it fit your child's strengths and needs?
- ❖ Consider the need for private therapies as bridge to school based program.

3 ½ months prior to third birthday:

- ❖ Finalize Transition plan draft in preparation for meeting.
- ❖ Write down questions for team.
- ❖ Begin work on transition portfolio if applicable to your family.

90 days prior to third birthday:

- ❖ Participate in eligibility determination.
- ❖ Complete the transition plan with your IEP team based on the individual needs of your child and family.
- ❖ Communicate to school about transition portfolio and ascertain specific needs in the portfolio.
- ❖ Advocate as needed with school for equipment needs or environmental changes to be in place prior to first day of school.
- ❖ Create flexible plan based on child's developmental needs.
- ❖ Begin to look at draft of IEP during home visits.

On or before the child's third birthday:

- ❖ Complete first IEP, including Communication Plan

with IEP team and parent facilitator/CoHear support.

- ❖ Consider the need for more parent to parent support.
- ❖ Continue facilitator visits at school if applicable to further ease the transition to preschool.
- ❖ Share transition portfolio with preschool program prior to first day of school.

Advocate's Note: A child should be eligible under the eligibility label "child with a hearing loss" to enjoy the protection of the Communication Plan. Some schools may list the child as "Preschooler with a disability", when that isn't the most appropriate label. Discuss the eligibility label with your team.

- For a side by side comparison of Part C and Part B services, please see the article "A Comparison Between Infant/Toddler Supports and Services and Preschool/School Age Supports and Services on page 12. (For full article on this topic, go to: hand-sandvoices.org/articles/education/law/transition.html)

- For an additional checklist, see Appendix E: Checklist for Developing Transition Plans (A tool for Professionals)

Who will attend the transition meeting?

The team needs to include parents and/or guardians, first of all. A representative must be present who can make decisions on behalf of the lead educational agency, (LEA) otherwise known as the school district. The service coordinator or CoHear will likely lead the discussion. The child's parent facilitator, the CoHear may attend, and staff from the future delivery system in Part B, the school district, should attend. A deaf education teacher is generally present on behalf of the future service providers and the district. One regular education teacher must also attend. School audiologists and speech therapists should also attend.

If a child has additional health care needs, other professionals may also be invited. Childcare providers or extended family or others invited by the parents with a special interest or knowledge of the child may attend, including an advocate or another adult to support the parents and take notes at the parents' discretion.

Ahhh Paperwork: Content of the Transition Plan

- ❖ Current evaluation and assessment information

- ❖ Explanation of how the family will be included in the transition process
- ❖ List of steps to prepare the child for the new setting or services
- ❖ Detail of needs for modification of the new setting, educational needs (i.e. special health care needs) or typical service delivery based on the unique needs of the child.
- ❖ Documentation reflecting a discussion with the parents regarding the variety of service options and other issues related to the child's transition

Children Who Are Not Eligible for IDEA/Part B

All children with hearing loss are eligible for services under Part C. Part B requires an educational need for specialized services that some children may not demonstrate.

If a child is not eligible for Part B preschool services, the transition plan must include options of other appropriate services for the child. This may include private therapies, other preschools, community activities, or the creation of a 504 Plan to ensure the continuing need for equipment or preferential seating is met. All children leaving early intervention at age three must have a transition plan whether or not they are eligible for services under Part B of IDEA.

Summer birthdays:

If a child turns three during the late spring or summer, it is the responsibility of the IEP team to determine when preschool services will begin for that child. Preschool services may be provided during the summer if the child meets that school district's criteria for extended school year (ESY) services. Otherwise, the school district is not responsible to provide preschool services until the date when school resumes for the next school year.

Transportation:

Children eligible for Part B services are also eligible for special transportation to and from school in order to provide access to special education. While parents may certainly transport their young child to preschool themselves, transportation by bus may be necessary to ensure that a child can regularly receive special education services.

(See Appendix B for a memo from The Colorado Dept. of Education)

TIPS for Transition between Early Intervention and School Age Programs

1. PREPARE for the IFSP/IEP transition meetings
 - Observations
 - Familiar with rights and available services under the law
2. Think of preschool as transition
 - Transition doesn't have to conclude in 6 months!
3. Maintain consistent and effective communication
4. Establish roles and expectations together
 - A "game plan"
5. Continue home visits
6. Flexible programs and schedules
 - Young children may not be ready for the same kind of schedule as older preschoolers.
 - Individualize!

7. Use the Communication Plan
 - Communication is the focus – not the method
8. Establish a parent support group
 - Participate in Hands and Voices as well as getting to know other parents at your school
9. Facilitate kindergarten visitations
 - Begin to visit early to allow time to process information
 - Share information with perspective kindergarten teachers so that they are familiar with your child's needs

Adapted from Johnson, C. "Supporting Families in Transition between Early Intervention and School Age Programs" Hands and Voices Communicator, Winter 2001.

Overview: Comparison of Part C and Part B

	PART C	PART B
GOALS	The focus is on supporting the family to meet the developmental needs of their child with a delay or disability	The focus is on the child and his/her educational needs
AGE	Covers children birth through age 2; eligibility determined by medical condition or by significant delay in development.	Covers children 3 -21; eligibility determined by specific categories of disability or for 3 & 4 year olds, significant developmental delays
SERVICE COORDINATION	Each eligible infant or toddler and their family must be provided with one service coordinator	Under special education law, there is no requirement that a service coordinator be designated for a child and their family
SERVICES	Services and supports are documented in an IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan); services and supports may be provided by a variety of agencies	Special education and related services are documented in an IEP (Individual Education Plan); all services are the responsibility of the local school district.
DELIVERY OF SERVICES	Requires services and supports to be provided in “natural environments”.	Requires special education and related services to be provided in “least restrictive environment”
FEES	Families may be assessed fees for services and supports based on ability to pay; state department of education is the “payor of last resort”	Special education and related services are provided at no cost to the child, i.e. “Free Appropriate Public Education”
RECIPIENT OF SERVICES	Recipients of services and supports may be the infant/toddler and/or the child’s family.	Recipient of special education and related services is the child only.
ASSESSMENT	Parents may obtain their own assessment at their own expense when they disagree with the assessment results or the appropriateness of the assessment used.	Parents may obtain an independent educational evaluation (IEE) at school district expense if they disagree with the accuracy or appropriateness of the school district’s assessment unless the district requests a due process hearing to prove the accuracy or the appropriateness of its assessment.
DISPUTE RESOLUTION	Dispute resolution through administrative complaint process, mediation or due process hearing; after using these, parents may file a civil court action, but are not entitled to recover their attorney’s fees	Dispute resolution available through all of the same processes as Part C; attorney’s fees incurred for due process hearing or civil action may be awarded to parents under certain circumstances.
PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS	Procedural safeguards include prior written notice of meetings, etc., confidentiality of information, right to decline some services or supports without jeopardizing others, transition planning, right to examine agency records related to the child and obtain copies at reasonable cost, written consent before assessment or initiation of services and supports, right to have outside evaluation obtained at parent expense be considered by IFSP team and included in child’s records.	Procedural safeguards include prior written notice of meetings, etc., confidentiality of information, right to examine school district records related to child and obtain copies at reasonable cost, written consent required before initial assessment and placement, extended school year services if child requires them, transition planning, right to decline a service on the IEP without jeopardizing other services, right to have outside evaluations obtained at parent expenses considered by IEP team and included in child’s record.

Taken and adapted from: Long, M.J. (Ed.), (1999). First Steps to Discovery: A Parent Guide to Colorado’s Early Childhood Services Under Parts C and B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Denver: The Legal Center.

Transition From Early Childhood Connections (PART C): Roles and Responsibilities

PARENTS	EARLY CHILDHOOD CONNECTIONS (Part C)	SCHOOL DISTRICT (Part B)
Become involved in transition process early to make sure that as many choices as possible are available	Share necessity for timely involvement with families for therapy, preschool, private and publicly funded options. Share information with Part B. Inform school district on number of children and what their needs are	Assure an array of services are available based on individual needs of the child
Consider a wide range of options when discussing transition with service coordinator	Share, explain & record information about transition at IFSP meetings review Child Find procedures and regulations	Share information about privately and publicly funded services and program options that are specific and realistic
Be aware of your rights under Part C and Part B	Inform families of their rights/procedural safeguards in Part C	Inform families of their rights/assurances in Part B
Determine if you are willing to share with school district and sign for consent for release of records and/or evaluation	Support families to release eligibility information when appropriate. Review what information has to be shared with Part B of Child Find	Share information with families about the evaluation process and completes assessments required for Part B eligibility
Agree to participate in transition process at a level that feels comfortable	Schedule and host a transition meeting based on family preference at least 90 days prior to anticipated transition	Participate actively in the transition planning meeting
Complete required enrollment forms if accessing school district programs		Complete necessary consent forms
Be ready to share information about my child's present and anticipated activities, concerns, and our family priorities in terms of goals and objectives for the IEP	Attend IEP if possible and provide feedback on the IFSP- IEP transition	Complete IEP prior to entrance into Part B program, or within 30 days if entrance under district transfer guidelines
Ask questions whenever anything is unclear	Provide general information on the transition process	Provide specific information about district programs and service options at a joint meeting

Part B: School based services according to the IDEA: The Basics

At age three, everything changes

The local school district is responsible for providing the child with hearing loss with services after age three. (Part B) This may mean services in a preschool program, provided as an adjunct to private school, or even home based services if the child's needs require that. Hallmarks of this system include such language as: eligibility, least restrictive environment (LRE), "free and appropriate public education" or FAPE, and the deaf child's bill of rights/communication plans.

Eligibility

In early intervention, a child is eligible if there is a risk for delays. Prematurity would be one reason that a child would qualify for early intervention. In the school system, a child must be found eligible for special education services. A child must require specialized instruction and/or related services in order to benefit from the curriculum. There are eight major "labels" of eligibility, with hearing loss being one of them. Eligibility is required to be considered at the first IEP and every three years afterwards, at what is called the "triennial IEP meeting" until the child either graduates or through age 21.

Looking at hearing loss specifically, Colorado law lists specific criteria beyond the diagnosis of a permanent hearing loss in one or both ears that might qualify a child for special education services. A child must have both an educationally significant hearing loss and one of the other criteria that demonstrates eligibility. The following is summarized from the Exceptional Child's Education Act, 2005:

1. A child with a hearing disability shall have a deficiency in hearing sensitivity as demonstrated by an elevated threshold of auditory sensitivity to pure tones or speech where, even with the help of amplification, the child is prevented from receiving reasonable educational benefit from regular education.

- ❖ A "deficiency in hearing sensitivity" shall be one of the following:
- ❖ An average pure tone hearing loss in the speech range (500 - 2000 Hz) of at least 20 dBHL in the better ear which is not reversible within a reasonable period of time.
- ❖ An average high frequency, pure tone hearing loss of at least 35 dBHL in the better ear for two or more of the following frequencies: 2000, 4000 or 6000 Hz.
- ❖ A unilateral hearing loss of at least 35 dBHL

which is not reversible within a reasonable period of time.

2. Criteria for a hearing disability preventing the child from receiving reasonable educational benefit from regular education shall include one or more of the following:

- ❖ Sound-field word recognition (unaided) of less than 75% in quiet as measured with standardized open-set audiometric speech discrimination tests presented at average conversational speech (50-55 dBHL). Interpretation shall be modified for closed-set tests.
- ❖ Receptive and/or expressive language delay as determined by standardized tests:
 - under 3 years: less than one-half of expected development for chronological age.
 - 3 to 8 years: 1 year delay or more.
 - 9 to 13 years: 2 years delay or more.
 - 14 to 21 years: 3 years delay or more.
- ❖ An impairment of speech articulation, voice and/or fluency.
- ❖ Significant discrepancy between verbal and nonverbal performance on a standardized intelligence test.
- ❖ Delay in reading comprehension due to language deficit.
- ❖ Poor academic achievement.
- ❖ Inattentive, inconsistent and/or inappropriate classroom behavior.

2004 IDEA regulations note: At the time of publication, Colorado hasn't yet published their own regulations based on the new law (passed August 2006.) Under the new federal guidelines, a child who is advancing from grade to grade, hasn't failed a course, or otherwise appears to be "doing well" can't be denied services. How this is interpreted by the states remains to be seen, but parents would do well to continue to document difficulties a child has with language acquisition and comprehension along with successes in academics to show continued need, if applicable, for special education.

A child with a condition in addition to hearing loss may be found eligible, under the term "multiple disabilities" as well. Sometimes, the hearing loss is not yet thoroughly identified, and then the category "preschool child with a disability" can be used until the next eligibility review by age six. A delay in development still must be present. This category is intended for use only until the next review when the more appropriate determination can be made. In either case, parents and professionals should be sure to include the Communication Plan in the child's IEP.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Considering the learning environment for the child with hearing loss is a tricky proposition. The philosophy of IDEA suggests that a child's neighborhood school, or the school he or she would attend if there wasn't a hearing loss to consider, is the least restrictive placement. As often is the case, this law was created out of past negative experiences of parents and students being isolated from their typically developing peers, and separated from what's going on in the regular classrooms. In current research, however, investigators note that for children with hearing loss, particularly those who get the most information from a visual sign language, a classroom of hearing peers may be more isolating for that particular child. For that reason, a child's ability to interact with peers and adults in his or her school life should be considered carefully when making placement decisions. Is there a hard and fast rule of what is an LRE? No. The scenarios are as individual as your child and family, and your child's most appropriate placement could change radically through the years.

FAPE

Remember all the alphabet soup in this line of work? FAPE stands for Free and Appropriate Public Education. There are many resources available on this concept. What is important to mention in this stage of your child's life is that services necessary for your child to benefit from education must be free to you as the parent. Transportation, equipment, therapies... these should all be considered as part of

your child's educational plan. One caveat is that the new regulations determined that cochlear implant mapping is not a service a school provides, but routine checking of the implant or hearing aid's function is a required service. Also noteworthy is the concept that "appropriate" education is open to some interpretation. Appropriate does not mean "best", but... as parents, we can use current research to help a school delineate between most appropriate practices and "what we've always done".

The Communication Plan/The Deaf Child's Bill of Rights

Through the advocacy of many parents and professionals, the federal law recognizes that children with hearing loss require special considerations in planning for their education. Included in this packet is the actual working of the law in Colorado. On the following pages is an in-depth discussion of the Communication Plan that was created out of the law for use in Colorado schools.

When used to its fullest potential, the Communication Plan generates a full discussion among the IEP team about how to match the school's environment with the child's educational needs. For even more discussion of this topic, including specific action plans, see the Hands & Voices website at www.handsandvoices.org

References utilized:

<http://www.handsandvoices.org/idea04regs/index.htm>
2004 IDEA Final Regulations Finally Here Volume X,
Issue 1 the Communicator

http://www.handsandvoices.org/articles/education/law/dcbr_revisited.html DCBR Revisited: The Deaf Child's Bill of Rights, Six Years Later 2003 Communicator (aack which one?)

Wrightslaw: IDEA 2004 by Peter W. D. Wright, Esq. and Pamela Darr Wright, Harbor House Law Press Inc., September 2005.

Cognition in the Classroom: The Academic and Social Implications

An Interview with Dr. Brenda Schick, The Hands & Voices Communicator, Winter 2004, Volume VII, Issue 3.

Communication Plan for Child/Student Who is Deaf/Hard of Hearing

The IEP team has considered each area listed below, and has not denied instructional opportunity based on the amount of the child's/student's residual hearing, the ability of the parent(s) to communicate, nor the child's/student's experience with other communication modes.

1. The child's/student's primary communication mode is one or more of the following: (check those that apply)

aural, oral, speech-based English-based manual or sign system American Sign Language

Issues considered:

Action plan, if any:

2. The IEP team has considered the availability of deaf/hard of hearing adult role models and peer group of the child's/student's communication mode or language.

Issues considered:

Action plan. If any:

3. An explanation of all educational options provided by the administrative unit and available for the child/student has been provided.

Issues considered:

Action plan, if any:

4. Teachers, interpreters, and other specialists delivering the communication plan to the child/student must have demonstrated proficiency in, and be able to accommodate for, the child's/student's primary communication mode or language.

Issues considered:

Action plan, if any:

5. The communication-accessible academic instruction, school services, and extracurricular activities the child/student will receive have been identified.

Issues considered:

Action plan, if any:

Fast Facts



August/2004

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS Communication Plans for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students

Do all students with hearing loss have to have a Communication Plan?

Yes – all students, 3-21 years or until high school graduation, must have Communication Plans as part of their IEPs. Students for whom hearing loss is a secondary disability or who have concomitant visual impairments are included.

How frequently must the Communication Plan be reviewed?

The Communication Plan must be reviewed annually at the IEP meeting and modified when necessary. The Communication Plan should be completed prior to the development of the IEP goals with input from all members of the IEP team including the parents.

How is the Communication Plan developed?

The Communication Plan is individualized for each student and results from thoughtful discussion about that student and his/her communication access, social and instructional needs. It is not a checklist. If a district or BOCES does not use the state IEP form, they must insure that all five required Communication Plan components are addressed on the form used to ensure compliance with ECEA 4.02(4)(k). Meaningful discussions of each of five Communication Plan components will result in any necessary "Action Plans" to address relative needs. Teachers must also insure that there is meaningful correlation between the Communication Plan, the student's IEP goals and how the student functions in his/her educational environment.

How do I know that I am filling the form out correctly?

- a. Ask yourself if each point has been sufficiently explored and if the action plan reflects those conversations.
- b. Include on the form who will be responsible for carrying out each part of the plan that requires action.
- c. Include initial or review dates on the form

What if the parents don't use the same mode of communication as their child?

The student cannot be denied instructional opportunities based on their parents' ability to communicate.

What if a student who uses a different mode of communication than the one emphasized in our program wants to transfer to our school?

- a. A student's experience with other communication modes cannot be the basis for denial of instructional opportunity.
- b. The amount of the student's residual hearing cannot be used as the basis for denial of any instructional opportunity.

When the original law passed in 1996, there was language which stated, "nothing in this subsection shall require a school district to expend additional resources or hire additional personnel to implement the provisions of this subsection" (ECEA 22-20-108 4.7, III (g)). Is this still true?

No. The US Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) deemed this section to be inconsistent with FAPE (free appropriate public education) under IDEA. All services determined by the IEP team to be needed for the student must be provided for by the school.

Components of the Communication Plan: Discussion Points

1. What kind of discussions should we have about "The Child's Primary Mode(s) of Communication"?

- a. A clear identification of mode and consensus on how the student is communicating and whether his/her language development is appropriate should be addressed.
- b. Consideration should be given to the changing communication needs in different environments (e.g., various classes, "centers", cafeteria, gym, computer lab, home, community).

- c. Consideration should be given to the different communication partners (e.g., teachers, other students, family) of this student.
 - d. The parents need for training to develop/improve skills in their child's primary communication mode should be considered.
- 2. What about "availability of deaf/hard of hearing peers and adult role models of the student's communication mode"?**
- a. Discuss the opportunities for direct communication that are available to this student. Does s/he have communication peers in the classroom? On the sports team? How will authentic peer relationships be supported and encouraged? How often is enough?
 - b. Consider participation in state sponsored regional activities for D/HH students as well as summer programs such as Aspen Camp School for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing.
 - c. Plan for adult role models of the student's communication mode to be included in his/her school experience and/or in meaningful ways involved in the child's life.
 - d. Discuss opportunities for hearing peers to improve communication skills with the student.
- 3. Must *all* educational options be presented and explained?**
- a. All educational options provided by the school district or administrative unit must be explained to the family. This includes neighborhood schools, center-based programs, and schools of choice.
 - b. An explanation of all educational programs *available* to the student must be provided. That would include residential deaf schools, charter schools, regional programs, and schools of choice.
 - c. Explaining all educational options does not require the IEP team to be experts in every program available in the state. Offer to loan the family the State Directory of D/HH Services so they can review *all* options if they're interested.
 - d. The placement decision is made by the IEP team, including parents, based on the child's IEP and communication needs.
- 4. Must teachers, interpreters, and other specialists delivering this Communication Plan have demonstrated proficiency in, and be able to accommodate for, the student's primary communication mode?**
- a. Special education providers must be fully qualified according to CDE licensing (teachers, SLPs, ed interpreters, Para educators, audiologists).
 - b. The providers' skills should be linked to the child's individual communication needs based on their mode or language.
 - c. The general educators working with this student should be been trained to support the child's communication mode.
 - d. Identify who is evaluating the "demonstrated communication proficiency" of the service providers. Is the evaluator qualified to do so?
 - e. Any paraprofessional or teaching assistant assigned to the student should also be proficient in his/her mode of communication.
 - f. CDE/CSDB D/HH consulting services should be utilized for consultation, evaluation, inservice and/or staff mentoring.
- 5. What does communication accessibility for academic instruction, school services, and extracurricular activities that apply to this student look like?**
- a. Identify how access will be provided to school announcements, field trips, assemblies, etc..
 - b. Identify the assistive communication devices and technologies that are needed (flashing fire alarms, TTYs, acoustical adaptations) to provide access for the student.
 - c. Describe how the student will communicate with hearing peers on the playground, at the football game, during sports team practice, or on the bus.
 - d. Describe the plan for accessibility in group communication settings where multiple speakers are talking. Describe how this student's communication will be translated back to the class (if necessary).
 - e. Determine that films and media being shown in the student's classes are closed captioned. Identify the other accommodations that are needed.

THE IEP CHECKLIST

RECOMMENDED ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH HEARING LOSS

Name: _____

Date: _____

Amplification Options

- Personal hearing device (hearing aid, cochlear implant, tactile device).
- Personal FM system (hearing aid + FM).
- FM system/auditory trainer (without personal hearing aid).
- Walkman-style FM system.
- Sound-field FM system.

Assistive Devices

- TDD.
- TV captioned.
- Other.

Communication Accommodations

- Specialized seating arrangements:

- Obtain student's attention prior to speaking.
- Reduce auditory distractions (background noise).
- Reduce visual distractions.
- Enhance speechreading conditions (avoid hands in front of face, mustaches well-trimmed, no gum chewing).
- Present information in simple structured, sequential manner.
- Clearly enunciate speech. Allow extra time for processing information.
- Repeat or rephrase information when necessary.
- Frequently check for understanding.
- Educational interpreter (ASL, signed English, cued speech, oral).

Physical Environment Accommodations

- Noise reduction (carpet & other sound absorption materials).
- Specialized lighting.
- Room design modifications.
- Flashing fire alarm.

Instructional Accommodations

- Use of visual supplements (overheads, chalkboard, charts, vocabulary lists, lecture outlines).
- Captioning or scripts for television, videos, movies, filmstrips.
- Buddy system for notes, extra explanations / directions.
- Check for understanding of information.
- Down time / break from listening.
- Extra time to complete assignments.
- Step-by-step directions.
- Tutor.
- Note taker.

Curricular Modifications

- Modify reading assignments (shorten length, adapt or eliminate phonics assignments).
- Modify written assignments (shorten length, adjust evaluation criteria).
- Pre-tutor vocabulary.
- Provide supplemental materials to reinforce concepts.
- Provide extra practice.
- Alternative curriculum.

Evaluation Modifications

- Reduce quantity of tests.
- Use alternative tests.
- Provide reading assistance with tests.
- Allow extra time.
- Other modifications: _____

Other Needs? Considerations.

- Supplemental instruction (speech, language, pragmatic skills, auditory, speechreading skills).
- Counseling.
- Sign language instruction.
- Vocational services.
- Family supports.
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing role models.
- Recreational/Social opportunities.
- Financial assistance.
- Transition services.

School Placement Considerations for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

The one thing that parents of deaf and hard of hearing children understand better than anyone else is that the choices in communication, educational placement options, and other decisions about raising their children are complex, individualized. It takes a great degree of flexibility and understanding of the issues. Unfortunately, parents often lack the necessary knowledge and advocacy skills when confronted with a ‘one size fits all’ model by the systems that are there to support them. When it comes to the considerations of educational placement for the deaf or hard of hearing child, parents become ‘equal partners’ in the process by knowing the law and understanding the communication needs of their child..

You’re in the Game – Come Prepared

Do you know the answers to these questions?

- ❖ Can you question a school districts’ ‘philosophy’ of educational placement?
- ❖ Do you, as the parent, have a right to participate in this decision?
- ❖ How do you effectively advocate for appropriate school placement based on the individualized needs of your child?

What are the legal considerations in school placement decisions?

- ❖ LRE, or “Least Restrictive Environment” placement for students in special education is not just a place, but also the setting in which the student will be in the least restrictive environment based on his individualized needs.
- ❖ IDEA Section 300.46 (a)(2)(iv) addresses the consideration of the unique communication needs of deaf and hard of hearing students, including:
- ❖ Opportunities for direct communication with peers and professional personnel
- ❖ The child’s unique language and communication mode, academic level, and full range of needs
- ❖ Opportunities for direct instruction in the child’s language and communication mode.
- ❖ Only when the individualized needs of the student have been addressed should a team begin the discussion of WHERE those needs will be met.
- ❖ Factors which cannot be used in determining placement: Category of disability, significance of disability, availability of special education and related services, configuration of the service delivery system, availability of space, administrative convenience.

Looking at the big picture of School Placement: Academically, Communicatively, and Socially.

Three of the main issues in considering placement are of equal importance and intertwined in such a way that they must be addressed in the context of one another in order to effectively place a student in the appropriate school setting:

- ❖ Academic level of the student
- ❖ Communication mode or language (regardless of the degree of hearing loss)
- ❖ Opportunities for direct interaction with peers.

A Continuum of Placement Options

A full continuum of placement, program and service options to serve d/hh students more effectively, including those students with additional disabilities should include, but not be limited to:

- ❖ Regional programs (combined in resource and general ed. Settings) that provide the critical mass of age and language-appropriate opportunities for direct instruction and communication with staff, peers, personnel, and services.
- ❖ a State school for the deaf (Residential and Day School)
- ❖ General education placements with all necessary support services, such as itinerant teachers credentialed in d/hh education, interpreters, and assistive listening technology.
- ❖ Special day classes and resource programs, as required by federal and state laws, which may include reverse mainstreaming, partial mainstreaming, and team teaching opportunities.
- ❖ Nonpublic schools, virtual schools, home instruction, hospital instruction, and institutions required by federal and state laws to meet the needs of students with disabilities that cannot be met within the traditional public school setting.

Possible issues to address when considering placement:

- ❖ Philosophy of center-based program and compatibility to student’s communication needs.
- ❖ The “Least Restrictive Environment” should be defined in context to the communication needs of the child
- ❖ More than one type of placement should be discussed (i.e. mainstream, center-based etc.)

- ❖ There may be biases within in the team about communication methods or range of placement.
- ❖ Preconceived ideas on placement based on degree of hearing loss.
- ❖ Itinerant services -their availability and appropriateness
- ❖ NCLB (No Child Left Behind) regulations regarding schools that do not meet “Adequate Yearly Progress”

Finding the right school placement for a student who is deaf or hard of children requires an IEP team to truly look at the individual needs of that student. The successful education for our children is accomplished when their academic, social, cognitive, and communicative needs are met. In this way, the mission of special education is fulfilled, to prepare

students for employment and independent living. Only then, will the efforts of educating deaf and hard of hearing students be fulfilled.

This Fact Sheet is derived from a full article on this topic which can be accessed through www.handsandvoices.org. Click on the “What Parents Need to Know” Series link.

Note: If you are experiencing difficulty in understanding or navigating the transition process into an IEP, check out the RESOURCES section on Page ## for information on Advocacy and where to get help! Also, Colorado Families for Hands & Voices provides support to families and can be reached at sarak17@aol.com or janet@handsandvoices.org

Preschool Programs

Now it is time to observe preschool programs in your area! You may be wondering “What do I look for? How do I know if this program is potentially a good match for my child?”

Two different checklists have been included in this packet to assist you in this task. Please review these observation guides and select the one that is most “user-friendly “ for you. Both lists highlight the same information.

These lists are not designed to be comprehensive but rather to serve as guides when you are observing preschools. They should assist you in observing different areas that are important to your child’s success. Not all of the areas may apply to all programs and not all of the listed areas may be important for your child’s programming. Discuss the critical areas with your CHIP Parent Facilitator, CO-Hear Coordinator, or private speech-language therapist. If your child has multiple needs, you should also discuss placement issues with other providers serving your family (i.e. PT, OT, and vision).

Remember there is no “one size fits all”. The key is meeting the individual needs of your child.

Guidelines for Programs

Below are some suggestions for parents when pursuing an appropriate educational program:

- ❖ Look for a program that is truly individualized
- ❖ Ensure appropriate amplification and assistive technology is available
- ❖ Look for a Language-rich environment
- ❖ Program should encourage parental involvement through support and guidance
- ❖ Well-trained, well-supported educational staff
- ❖ Commitment to educational options
- ❖ Adherence to IDEA
- ❖ Offers a range of support services for students and families
- ❖ Curriculum is developmentally appropriate with expectations supporting one year’s growth in one year’s time
- ❖ Appropriate physical environment that promotes learning
- ❖ Opportunities for interaction with peers

Preschool/Kindergarten Placement Checklist for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

This checklist is intended to assist parents when considering preschool or kindergarten placement options for their deaf or hard of hearing child. The information should be obtained through observation and discussion with the current early intervention provider and the prospective teacher(s) and IEP team. Placement decisions should consider the child's communication, pre-academic, and social needs in the context of the proposed learning environment.

Teacher Interview

Name of School: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Individual Interviewed: _____

Title: ___ Deaf Education Teacher check type: classroom itinerant consultative
 ___ Preschool or Kindergarten Teacher ___ Special Education Teacher ___ Other

If not a deaf education teacher/specialist, describe previous experience with children who are deaf or hard of hearing: _____

Days program offered: _____ Hours per day: _____

Child's communication mode(s): _____ Mode(s) observed in classroom: _____

Total number of children in classroom: _____ Number of children with hearing loss: _____

Age span of children: ___ to ___ Child: adult ratio: _____

Average speaking/signing distance between teacher and child: _____ ft

Number of children who are typical language models: _____

Amplification used or available: ___ Personal FM ___ Classroom FM/Infrared Other _____

Related and Support Services:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Available?</u>		<u>Has had training with D/HH?</u>		<u># of hours in classroom/week</u>
Speech-language therapy	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	_____
Educational audiology	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	_____
Occupational therapy/physical therapy	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	_____
Psychology	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	_____
Counseling by psychologist or social worker	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	_____
Other support services available:	___ Deaf/Hard of Hearing Role Models				
___ Parent counseling and training	___ Parent Support Groups/Activities				
___ Transportation	___ After school programs				

Comments _____

Classroom Observation

I. Classroom- Physical Environment	YES	NO
1. Is the room size conducive to learning? (A large room/high ceiling can distort sound; a small room may be noisier.)	_____	_____
2. Is the room adequately lit? (Lighting and shadows may affect speechreading and signing abilities.)	_____	_____
3. Is the ambient noise level for the classroom within recommended standards (noise ≤ 35 dbA and reverberation $\leq .6$ msec, ANSI S12.60.2002)?	_____	_____
4. Is the room treated to reduce noise (carpet on floor, acoustical ceiling tiles, window coverings, cork or other wall coverings)?	_____	_____
5. Are noise sources in the classroom minimized (e.g., fish tanks, ventilation/heater fans, computers)?	_____	_____
6. Does noise from adjacent spaces (hallways, outside the building) spill over into classroom?	_____	_____
Comments _____		

II. General Learning Environment	YES	NO
7. Does teacher(s)/adult(s) use a variety of techniques to elicit positive behavior from children?	_____	_____
8. Are there a variety of centers (fine motor, art, manipulatives, science, music, dramatic play, sensory, literacy)?	_____	_____
9. Is there a schedule identifying daily routines?	_____	_____
10. Is there a behavior management system that provides clear structure for the class and consistent rules?	_____	_____
11. Does the curriculum standards-based including a variety of themes, topics, and children's literature?	_____	_____
12. Does the teacher use lesson plans to guide daily activities?	_____	_____
13. Are activities modified to meet a variety of children's needs?	_____	_____
Comments _____		

III. Instructional Style	YES	NO
14. Classroom Discourse and Language		
a. Are the teacher(s) and other adults good language models for the children?	_____	_____
b. Is language consistently accessible to the child? (If sign is used, do all adults in the classroom consistently sign, including their communications with other adults?)	_____	_____
c. Are peer responses repeated?	_____	_____
d. Is vocabulary and language expanded by an adult?	_____	_____
15. Teacher's Speaking Skills		

- | | | |
|--|-------------------|-------|
| a. Is enunciation clear? | _____ | _____ |
| b. Is rate appropriate? | _____ | _____ |
| c. Is loudness appropriate? | _____ | _____ |
| d. Is facial expression used to clarify the message? | _____ | _____ |
| e. Are gestures used appropriately? | _____ | _____ |
| f. Are teacher's (or other speaker's) lips available for speechreading? | _____ | _____ |
| g. Is teacher's style animated? | _____ | _____ |
| h. Is a buddy system available to provide additional assistance or clarification? | _____ | _____ |
| 16. Use of Visual Information | | |
| a. Are props or other visual materials used for stories and activities? | _____ | _____ |
| b. Are appropriate attention-getting strategies utilized? | _____ | _____ |
| c. Are fingerplays, action songs, and dramatic play used in circle time, story time, centers, etc. | _____ | _____ |
| 17. Small Group/Circle Time | | |
| a. Are all children encouraged to share and participate? | _____ | _____ |
| b. Does the teacher face children when speaking? | _____ | _____ |
| c. Do the children face one another when speaking? | _____ | _____ |
| d. Does the teacher lead group activities in an organized, but child-friendly manner? | _____ | _____ |
| e. Is appropriate wait time utilized to encourage children to think and participate? | _____ | _____ |
| f. Are children seated within the teacher's "arc of arms"? | _____ | _____ |
| g. Does teacher obtain eye contact prior to and while speaking? | _____ | _____ |
| h. Is the FM microphone passed around to all speakers? | _____ | _____ |
| 18. Use of Sign | ___Not Applicable | |
| a. Is sign consistently used by all adults in the class? | _____ | _____ |
| b. Is sign consistently used by all children in the class? | _____ | _____ |
| c. Does the type of sign used in the classroom match the signs used by this child? | _____ | _____ |
| d. Is fingerspelling used? | _____ | _____ |
| e. Are gestures used appropriately? | _____ | _____ |
| f. Are there opportunities for parents and peers to learn to sign? | _____ | _____ |
| 19. Opportunities for Hands-on Experience | | |
| a. Are a variety of materials available? | _____ | _____ |
| Check those used: ___books ___visual props ___audio tapes ___video tapes | | |
| ___objects for dramatic play ___manipulatives | | |
| b. Are stories experienced in a variety of ways? | _____ | _____ |
| c. Are there field trips? | _____ | _____ |
| d. Are cooking experiences available? | _____ | _____ |
| e. Are art and sensory activities activities conducted? | _____ | _____ |
| 20. Amplification/Equipment | ___Not Applicable | |
| a. Are personal amplification (hearing aids/cochlear implant) and assistive devices (FM, infrared) checked at school each day? | _____ | _____ |
| b. Is amplification used consistently in all learning environments? | _____ | _____ |

Comments _____

Reflection

IV. Individual Child Considerations	YES	NO
21. <i>Language Considerations/Abilities</i> Think about how your child communicates thoughts, ideas, and needs. Think about how your child communicates and interacts with other children. Will your child's communication needs be nurtured in this classroom environment? Does the child have sufficient language abilities to benefit from instruction in the classroom? Will this child develop English language competency in this environment?	_____	_____
22. <i>Social Interactions</i> Think about how your child plays alone and in groups. Think about how your child interacts with other children. Will your child's social needs be nurtured in this classroom environment? Will this child be encouraged to develop self-advocacy skills?	_____	_____
23. <i>Auditory Skills</i> Does your child attend well? Is your child able to listen in noise? Think about what your child does when he/she cannot hear? Does your child take responsibility for his/her hearing aids? Will your child's auditory needs be supported in this classroom environment? In the lunchroom and other school environments? Is the staff qualified and able to support the child's auditory needs?	_____	_____
Comments _____ _____ _____ _____		

V. School Culture	YES	NO
24. Is there evidence that the school administration supports students with disabilities?	_____	_____
25. Is the school/district administrator knowledgeable about hearing loss?	_____	_____
26. Is the school committed to making the necessary accommodations for children with hearing loss?	_____	_____
27. Is the teacher open to consultation with other professionals or specialists?	_____	_____
28. Does the teacher provide opportunities for individualized attention?	_____	_____
29. Is the teacher welcoming of children with special needs?	_____	_____
30. Is the teacher willing to use amplification technology (hearing aids, FMs, cochlear implants)?	_____	_____
Comments _____ _____		

Pre-school Evaluation Chart

Development Needs	School #1	School #2	School #3	School #4	School #5
Development of receptive and expressive language skills focused on primary communication mode.					
Exposure to additional sign language vocabulary on a daily basis.					
Daily structured auditory training specific to my child's needs.					
Daily speech therapy specific to my child's needs.					
All communication and instruction using simultaneous speech and _____ at a language level above child's current communication level.					
Daily classroom activities focused on speech and language development.					
Accessibility					
Full access to classroom materials via my child's communication mode.					
Daily listening check for equipment and knowledge of how to resolve any problems so that student does not have any "down time" for hearing.					
Access to the use of assistive technology devices.					
Qualified, experienced instructors/interpreters.					
Social Needs					
Opportunities for frequent exposure to adults with hearing loss fluent in child's language modalities.					
Daily opportunities to interact with peers with hearing loss using child's language modalities.					
Access to school wide programs and activities via student's communication mode.					
Full access to classroom activities via student's communication mode.					
Average					

Rate each category from 0-5

Transition to Preschool

Additional RESOURCES

The transitions between early intervention and preschool services, and later preschool and kindergarten, are emotional for all parents as they watch their little ones grow. Add a disability such as hearing loss, and these emotions are magnified. Issues associated with the disability intertwined with the responsibility of making the right choices for their children's future often results in a time of uncertainty that is exacerbated by an education process that can seem unwelcoming.

1. The first and perhaps most important step in making the transition is educating yourself about your child's specific needs and the services or programs available to meet those unique needs. Having some familiarity should help families in the IFSP/IEP transition meeting. Here are a few great places to start:

- ❖ Early Childhood Connections Website - www.cde.state.co.us/earlychildhoodconnections/transition.htm.
This page contains information, guidelines, and checklist on the transition planning process as well as sample transition plans.
- ❖ Colorado state department of education-deaf/hard of hearing - www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-Hearing.asp
This page contains program directory for schools throughout the state, parents rights, Deaf Child Bill of Rights, numerous other articles and documents pertaining to hearing loss.
- ❖ Supporting Families in Transition between Early Intervention and School Age Programs - www.handsandvoices.org/articles/education/law/transition.html
An article with a comparison chart between Part C and Part B services. Also contains helpful information on making the transition successful.
- ❖ A Question of Automatic Eligibility: Does My Deaf/HH Child Need an IEP?
www.handsandvoices.org/articles/education/law/auto_elig.html. An article focused on questions of eligibility, federal and state laws, and an IEP vs. 504 Plan

2. Visit preschool programs and envision your child participating in the program. Try to envision what it would look like with your child in the environment. How would your child interact? What if any accommodations need to be made? Is there access to other students or adults using the same communication mode? Two checklists exist to help in this area:

- ❖ Parent Checklist: Preschool/ Kindergarten Placement for Children Who are Deaf/Hard Of Hearing
www.handsandvoices.org/pdf/parent_checklist.pdf
- ❖ McGurran Preschool Evaluation Chart - www.handsandvoices.org/pdf/preschool_eval.pdf

3. Find parent support and collaboration. Parents who are heading into this transition period can benefit immensely from knowledge gained by parents who have already been through it. There is an article on preschool from a parents perspective at the link listed below.

- ❖ Surviving Preschool: Experiences of the Reluctant Parent -
www.handsandvoices.org/articles/fam_perspectives/preschool.html
- ❖ A Student's Perspective - www.handsandvoices.org/articles/fam_perspectives/alexhtml

4. Parent involvement is crucial to the success of any program. Once your child enters into a program, visit with teachers frequently. Staying involved will help assure that the program is meeting your child's needs. There are assessments available to assure the program is meeting individual needs.

- ❖ Functional Auditory Performance Indicator - www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/download/pdf/FAPI_3-1-04g.pdf
- ❖ Colorado Individual Performance Profile (Pre-CIPP) - The Pre-CIPP is available by contacting Amy Dodd at CU Boulder, amy.dodd@colorado.edu

Adapted from Supporting Families in Transition between Early Intervention and School Age Programs by Cheryl Johnson, Colorado director of special education)

Resources on the Law and Advocacy

Websites:

www.handsandvoices.org

Colorado Families for Hands & Voices maintains this website which includes information on advocacy, the Colorado Deaf Child's Bill of Rights, the IEP process, and upcoming workshops.

www.wrightslaw.com

A very informative website on the law and advocating for your child with special needs.

www.ndepnow.org

Information about Deaf Education Reform movements around the country.

<http://clerccenter2.gallaudet.edu/KidsWorldDeafNet/e-docs/IDEA/appendix>

Clerc Center at Gallaudet University

<http://www.agbell.org>

Alexander Graham Bell Association

Beginnings for Parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

www.beginnings.org

Books:

Wright, P. & Wright, P. (2002). From Emotions to Advocacy: The Special Education. Survival Guide. Hartfield, VA: Harbor House Law Press, Inc.

Wright, P. & Wright, P. (1999). Wrightslaw: Special Education Law. Hartfield, VA.: Harbor House Law Press, Inc.

Tucker, B.P. (1997). IDEA Advocacy for Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing: A Question & Answer Book for Professionals and Parents. Washington, DC.: AG Bell.

Siegel, L. M. (2001). The Complete IEP Guide: How to Advocate for Your Special Child: Second Edition. Washington, DC: AG Bell.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A: The Transition Portfolio

Appendix B: CDE MEMO: Transportation for Preschoolers with Disabilities

Appendix C: The Deaf Child Bill of Rights: An Act

Appendix D: Frequently Asked Questions About Transitions from Part C to Part B

Appendix A: The Transition PORTFOLIO

An Exciting tool that you can use during the transition process

How to develop a relationship with your future preschool staff (portfolio)

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Biopoem
- ❖ Cover page
- ❖ Important people and pets
- ❖ Communication Methods
- ❖ Parent/Caregiver Information

INTRODUCTION

As your child leaves services through The Colorado Home Intervention Program and moves on into a new and exciting phase in their education, it is necessary to plan for that upcoming change. Any transition—particularly for young children with hearing loss—can be a time of both excited anticipation and concern for parents/caregivers, teachers as well as the child. For these children, there can be many issues surrounding their school program: complex expressive and receptive communication, equipment needs, health needs, and information teachers and paraprofessionals need to create a quality preschool experience (Demchak & Greenfield, 2000).

Transitions are more likely to progress smoothly if pertinent information is comprehensive and individualized and is presented to the new team members in a manner that is easy and useful to use. This is not intended to replace any required records maintained for your child, but rather focuses on details that are critical to your child's everyday functioning and learning.

A transition portfolio is designed to be a strategy that documents critical information about your child. As the child's parent, you are the most crucial person to provide that information. Your CHIP Parent Facilitator and your CO-Hear can discuss with you what information is needed to include in this portfolio to help your child be successful in preschool. This is designed as a guide and should look different for every child. Examples with questions are provided, but all may not be relevant to your child. There is also an opportunity to create additional forms specific to your child.

We hope that this portfolio is a positive helpful guide for your family and the new school team to prepare for your child.

This portfolio was derived from "A Communication Competency Model-Massachusetts Match Maker Project"



PORTFOLIO COVER PAGE

Initial Portfolio Date _____



My name is: _____

This is how I say/sign my name _____

I have had a hearing loss since _____

My CHIP Parent Facilitator is _____

You can contact her/him at _____

I am involved with IRP _____ yes _____ no

My IRP instructor is _____

You can contact her/him at _____

My primary mode(s) of communication
are _____

Sign language, speaking, pointing, gesturing

My primary language is _____
English, Spanish, other

The type of amplification I use in my left ear is

None, hearing aid, BAHA, Cochlear Implant

The type of amplification I use in my right ear is

None, hearing aid, BAHA, Cochlear Implant

I keep my batteries in _____



A BIOPOEM

Writing a Biopoem is a great way to provide a written snapshot about your child.

- Line 1: First name
- Line 2: Traits which describe your child's character (list 4)
- Line 3: Relative (brother, sister, son, daughter, etc.of.....)
- Line 4: Lover of.....(3 things or people)
- Line 5: Who feels..... (3 items)
- Line 6: Who needs.....(3 items)
- Line 7: Who fears....(3 items)
- Line 8: Who gives....(3 items)
- Line 9: Who would like to see...(3 items)
- Line 10: Resident of
- Line 11: Last name

MY BIOPOEM

Line 1 _____
Line 2 _____
Line 3 _____
Line 4 _____
Line 5 _____
Line 6 _____
Line 7 _____
Line 8 _____
Line 9 _____
Line 10 _____
Line 11 _____



IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND PETS

Here is a list of important family, friends and pets in my life and activities I enjoy doing with them

This is my family
(put family pictures here)

Family names and titles



COMMUNICATION METHODS

Communication is made up of two parts: receptive and expressive. Like all people your child uses a variety of ways to communicate. The communication section of the portfolio can introduce new teachers and support personnel to your child's communication system. You may want to check several items under each section or add your own ideas.

You can get my attention best by:

- _____ calling my name
- _____ touching me
- _____ getting my eye contact and signing my name
- _____ other _____

I understand you best when:

- _____ I can see you face
 - _____ You use sign language
 - _____ You speak as you use sign
 - _____ I am close to you
 - _____ You show me a picture or act out what want
 - _____ You have me watch another child first
- You communicate using _____ number of words in each sentence.

This is how my child will let you know how he/she is feeling

- Tired _____
- Sick _____
- Angry _____
- Frustrated _____
- Hungry _____
- Need for toileting _____

Here are some words that are difficult for people outside my family to understand

- Word _____ how I say it _____
- Word _____ how I say it _____
- Word _____ how I say it _____
- Word _____ how I say it _____

Here are some words that I have a home sign for

- Word _____ How I sign it _____
- Word _____ How I sign it _____

APPENDIX B - Transportation for Preschoolers with Disabilities

Published by the Colorado Department of Education

Information for Staffing Teams

*Section 619 Preschool Special Education
Colorado Department of Education
9/19/01*

Regulations regarding transportation for students with disabilities describe transportation as a required related service if deemed necessary for a child to receive benefit from special education and a free appropriate public education (FAPE). For preschool age children, the question of transportation as a required related service pertains to access to special education programming. Preschool children with disabilities are obviously too young to walk to school. They also attend preschool by virtue of their disability and IEP services, that is, there is no mandated preschool program for all preschool age children in our state. Therefore, transportation should be offered when the district ascertains that the child would be unable to attend the program without transportation support. Elena Gallegos, attorney for the Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center, offered this response to CDE's inquiry regarding preschool transportation:

“...My understanding is that a preschooler with a disability that does not impair his/her general mobility, is entitled to special transportation as a related service if the child is attending school only pursuant to an IEP. This is because the preschooler cannot be expected to walk to school to access special education, and, the child would not be attending school at that age but for his/her disability.”

Many staffing teams and administrators express concern that this guidance opens the floodgate for families to request transportation as a ‘convenience’ rather than when it is absolutely necessary in order to assure access. When teams ask families, “Do you want transportation services?” or “Do you need transportation services?”, families may indeed assume that it is a simply a standard part of the preschool “package”. It may be more useful to phrase the question, “how do you intend to transport your child to preschool?” It becomes clear that A family is unable to transport their child, then the administrative unit (BOCES or school district” must make arrangements to transport the child and it should be included in the IEP paperwork.

APPENDIX C DEAF CHILD BILL OF RIGHTS

HOUSE BILL 96-1041

BY REPRESENTATIVES Keller, Kerns, Sullivan, Sullivant, Armstrong, Chlouber, Clarke, Dean, Friednash, Gordon, Kaufman, Knox, Lyle, Mace, McElhany, Morrison, Nichol, Reeser, Saliman, Snyder, and Tucker;
also SENATORS Hopper, Meiklejohn, Feeley, Hernandez, Johnson, Martinez, Matsunaka, Pascoe, Perlmutter, Rupert, and Tanner.

An Act

CONCERNING THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. Legislative declaration. (1) The general assembly finds that:

(a) Pupils with low-incidence disabilities, as a group, make up less than one percent of the total statewide enrollments for kindergarten through grade twelve; and

(b) Pupils with low-incidence disabilities require highly specialized services, equipment, and materials.

(2) The general assembly further finds that:

(a) Deafness involves the most basic of human needs: The ability to communicate with other human beings. Many deaf and hard-of-hearing children use an appropriate communication mode, sign language, which may be their primary language, while others express and receive language orally and aurally, with or without visual signs or clues. Still others, typically young deaf and hard-of-hearing children, lack any significant language skills. It is essential for the well-being and growth of deaf and hard-of-hearing children that educational programs recognize the unique nature of deafness and ensure that all deaf and hard-of-hearing children have appropriate, ongoing, and fully accessible educational opportunities.

(b) It is essential that deaf and hard-of-hearing children, like all children, have an education in which their unique communication mode is respected, utilized, and developed to an appropriate level of proficiency;

(c) It is essential that deaf and hard-of-hearing children have an education in which teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing, psychologists, speech therapists, assessors,

administrators, and other special education personnel understand the unique nature of deafness and are specifically trained to work with deaf and hard-of-hearing pupils. It is essential that deaf and hard-of-hearing children have an education in which teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing are proficient in the primary language mode of those children.

(d) It is essential that deaf and hard-of-hearing children, like all children, have an education with a sufficient number of language mode peers with whom they can communicate directly and who are of the same, or approximately the same, age and ability level;

(e) It is essential that deaf and hard-of-hearing children have an education in which their parents and, where appropriate, deaf and hard-of-hearing people are involved in determining the extent, content, and purpose of programs;

(f) Deaf and hard-of-hearing children would benefit from an education in which they are exposed to deaf and hard-of-hearing role models;

(g) It is essential that deaf and hard-of-hearing children, like all children, have programs in which they have direct and appropriate access to all components of the educational process, including, but not limited to, recess, lunch, and extracurricular social and athletic activities;

(h) It is essential that deaf and hard-of-hearing children, like all children, have programs in which their unique vocational needs are provided for, including appropriate research, curricula, programs, staff, and outreach;

(i) Each deaf or hard-of-hearing child should have a determination of the least restrictive environment that takes into consideration these legislative findings and declarations;

(j) Given their unique communication needs, deaf and hard-of-hearing children would benefit from the development and implementation of state and regional programs for children with low-incidence disabilities.

SECTION 2. 22-20-103, Colorado Revised Statutes, 1995 Repl. Vol., is amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW SUBSECTION to read:

22-20-103. Definitions. As used in this article, unless the context otherwise requires:

(1.7) "COMMUNICATION MODE OR LANGUAGE" MEANS ONE OR MORE of the following systems or methods of communication applicable to deaf and hard-of-hearing children:

(a) AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE;

(b) ENGLISH-BASED MANUAL OR SIGN SYSTEMS; OR

(c) ORAL, AURAL, OR SPEECH-BASED TRAINING.

SECTION 3. 22-20-108, Colorado Revised Statutes, 1995 Repl. Vol., is amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW SUBSECTION to read:

22-20-108. Determination of disability - enrollment. (4.7) (a) IN

DEVELOPING AN INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (4) OF THIS SECTION FOR A CHILD WHO IS DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING, IN ADDITION TO ANY OTHER REQUIREMENTS ESTABLISHED BY THE STATE BOARD, THE COMMITTEE SHALL CONSIDER THE RELATED SERVICES AND PROGRAM OPTIONS THAT PROVIDE THE CHILD WITH AN APPROPRIATE AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMUNICATION ACCESS. THE COMMITTEE SHALL CONSIDER THE CHILD'S SPECIFIC COMMUNICATION NEEDS AND, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE UNDER PARAGRAPH (g) OF THIS SUBSECTION (4.7), ADDRESS THOSE NEEDS AS APPROPRIATE IN THE CHILD'S INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM. IN CONSIDERING THE CHILD'S NEEDS, THE COMMITTEE SHALL EXPRESSLY CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

(I) THE CHILD'S INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION MODE OR LANGUAGE;

(II) THE AVAILABILITY TO THE CHILD OF A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF AGE, COGNITIVE, AND LANGUAGE PEERS OF SIMILAR ABILITIES;

(III) THE AVAILABILITY TO THE CHILD OF DEAF OR HARD-OF-HEARING ADULT MODELS OF THE CHILD'S COMMUNICATION MODE OR LANGUAGE;

(IV) THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE, DIRECT, AND ONGOING LANGUAGE ACCESS TO TEACHERS OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING AND INTERPRETERS AND OTHER SPECIALISTS WHO ARE PROFICIENT IN THE CHILD'S PRIMARY COMMUNICATION MODE OR LANGUAGE; AND

(V) THE PROVISION OF COMMUNICATION-ACCESSIBLE ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION, SCHOOL SERVICES, AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES.

(b) TO ENABLE A PARENT TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS CONCERNING WHICH EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS ARE BEST SUITED TO THE PARENT'S CHILD, ALL OF THE EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL DISTRICT AND AVAILABLE TO THE CHILD AT THE TIME THE CHILD'S INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM IS PREPARED SHALL BE EXPLAINED TO THE PARENT.

(c) NO DEAF OR HARD-OF-HEARING CHILD SHALL BE DENIED THE OPPORTUNITY FOR INSTRUCTION IN A PARTICULAR COMMUNICATION MODE OR LANGUAGE SOLELY BECAUSE:

(I) THE CHILD HAS SOME REMAINING HEARING;

(II) THE CHILD'S PARENTS ARE NOT FLUENT IN THE COMMUNICATION MODE OR LANGUAGE BEING TAUGHT; OR

(III) THE CHILD HAS PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH SOME OTHER COMMUNICATION MODE OR LANGUAGE.

(d) NOTHING IN THIS SUBSECTION (4.7) SHALL PRECLUDE INSTRUCTION IN MORE THAN ONE COMMUNICATION MODE OR LANGUAGE FOR ANY PARTICULAR CHILD. ANY CHILD FOR WHOM INSTRUCTION IN A PARTICULAR COMMUNICATION MODE OR LANGUAGE IS DETERMINED TO BE BENEFICIAL SHALL RECEIVE SUCH INSTRUCTION AS PART OF THE CHILD'S INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM.

(e) NOTWITHSTANDING THE PROVISIONS OF SUBPARAGRAPH (II) OF PARAGRAPH (a) OF THIS SUBSECTION (4.7), NOTHING IN THIS SUBSECTION (4.7) MAY BE CONSTRUED TO REQUIRE THAT A SPECIFIC NUMBER OF PEERS BE PROVIDED FOR A CHILD WHO IS DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING.

(f) NOTHING IN THIS SUBSECTION (4.7) SHALL ABROGATE PARENTAL CHOICE AMONG PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AS PROVIDED IN SECTION 22-20-109 OR ARTICLES 30.5 OR 36 OF THIS TITLE OR AS OTHERWISE PROVIDED BY LAW.

(g) NOTHING IN THIS SUBSECTION (4.7) SHALL REQUIRE A SCHOOL DISTRICT TO EXPEND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES OR HIRE ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL TO IMPLEMENT THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SUBSECTION (4.7).

SECTION 4. Safety clause. The general assembly hereby finds, determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety.

Approved: March 18, 1996

Capital letters indicate new material added to existing statutes; dashes through words indicate deletions from existing statutes and such material not part of act.

APPENDIX D

Frequently Asked Questions About Transitions from Part C to Part B

Not all children who have been receiving Part C services will make a transition to Part B services when the child turns three. For example, some children who were eligible for Part C services may not meet the eligibility criteria for special education services when they turn three years old. When children do transition to Part B, however, some common issues and questions may arise.

What do we do about summer services for children who turn three years old in the late spring or summer?

Good transition planning will insure that, prior to the end of the school year when the child turns three, the appropriate assessments and the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) have been completed so that the child can begin services at the start of the school year. This will insure that families know what services their children will be receiving and will prevent delays at the beginning of the school year. IEPs developed in the spring should be reviewed again in the fall to insure that services identified are still appropriate given growth and change that will occur in the summer. Early Childhood Connections (ECC) and Community Centered Boards (CCBs) should not be paying for services after a child turns three years old. The transition planning team needs to assist families in identifying alternatives for the summer months, including accessing community activities that take place during the summer.

Who will be the service coordinator once a child turns three years old?

The Part C service coordinator will serve as the child's service coordinator until the child turns three and the family begins to assume this role. In Part B, there is no requirement for a child and family to have a service coordinator, however, one strategy for assisting families is to make sure that they have the opportunity to connect with other families.

It is important to note that children eligible for the Health Care Program for Children with Special Needs (HCP) can receive care coordination from HCP up until the age of 21. Additionally, if families are receiving Family Support Services from the Community Centered Board, Resource Coordination will be provided.

What might happen if our family does not think that the school district preschool program is appropriate for our child?

The family is part of the IEP planning team and should have input in the design of their child's educational plan. The development of this plan should include consideration of the amount and type of service appropriate for the child and a discussion of the least restrictive environment (LRE) for receiving those services. The school is required to provide appropriate educational services based on the child's needs outlined in the IEP. The school district may contract for these services so that a child could continue to receive the same services that were provided under Part C, the only change being the funding source. If the family and district are not in agreement, there are established dispute resolution procedures, such as the federal complaint process, mediation, or due process. The family always has the option to refuse services.

Derived from CDE 2001 Transitions

APPENDIX E Checklist for Developing Transition Plans (A tool for Professionals)

Transition planning activities: 9- 12 months prior to the child turning three

- Discuss with the family what the transition process is, what their options may be and help them understand the significance of the role they play in their child's transition
- Make contact with the Local Educational Agency (LEA) or BOCES
- With written parental consent, release information about the child to the LEA/BOCES (ex. forwarding names of potentially eligible children, IFSPs, etc. as appropriate)
- Begin planning to convene a meeting at least 90 days before the child's third birthday with the approval of the family and decide with the family who will be invited to attend.
- Provide families information about the spectrum of supports and services for which their child may be eligible or which the family may want to participate in
- Arrange visits with the family to public and private programs which may be options for the child at age 3
- Acquainting families with Part B resources, issues, and procedural safeguards.

Transition planning activities: 3 – 9 months prior to the child turning three

- Review of current IFSP and any additional assessment data (FAMILY Assessment should be completed at 33 months to provide additional information to the school)
- Complete additional evaluation needed to determine Part B eligibility

- Determine who needs to attend the transition meeting
- Decide on mutually agreed upon date, time, and location for the transition meeting
- Begin orienting the family to the new program's policies, procedures, formats, etc.

Transition Meeting: No less than 3 months prior to the child turning three or the time at which they may be eligible to begin preschool services

- Hold Transition Meeting with the following participants:
 - Child's parent/legal guardian
 - Service coordinator
 - Personnel from the current service delivery system
 - Personnel from the future service delivery system
 - Medical personnel if the child has special health care needs
 - Others as parents request
- Complete written transition plan including:
 - Description of how the family will be included in the transition process
 - Procedures to prepare the child for changes in service delivery including steps and timelines to help the child adjust to a new setting
 - Old and new evaluation/assessment information used to the make the eligibility determination

Adapted from the Transition Checklist created by Arapahoe and Douglas County Service providers Jan.2005

Please let us know how this packet has supported or helped you. Let us know how we could improve this information for your use.

Contact:

Colorado Families for Hands & Voices

PO Box 3093
Boulder, CO 80307
Or

Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB)

Attn: Colorado Home Intervention Program (CHIP)
33 N. Institute Street
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

For more information or support, please contact:

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