



COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS A-Z™

Communication Considerations at the Time of Transition from Part C to Part B Services

by Janet DesGeorges

1. What are the Communication Considerations for Transitions from Part C to Part B? (Early Intervention B-3 services to School Age services)

When a child turns three, Intervention services they were receiving under Part C, now moves to the educational arena of Part B of the IDEA. Transition planning from an IFSP to an IEP includes moving from a “family-centered” model to a “student-centered” model of services. The impact of communication choices, availability of services, and student needs in a classroom setting begins to emerge in a way that parents must be prepared for.

2. What issues are at the forefront of Transition from Early Intervention to School Based Services?

The issues that are at the forefront of the transition process usually center on the following areas:

a. Eligibility of the child for Part B services:

“Disability” alone does not qualify a child for special education. Eligibility depends on a qualifying condition and the need for specialized instruction and related services. Particularly for children who have been early identified and well served in early interven-

tion, this may be an issue. Eligibility teams often mistakenly look at only one component of a child's progress (academic) and fail to address the communication needs, the social/emotional needs, as well as the academic needs of the student. For example, even if a child is doing 'well', does the child need access to an FM system, access skills (i.e. the ability to be understood), or sign language support?

b. Parents Role as part of an IEP 'team' rather than primary decision makers.

Parents must be prepared to negotiate school services as part of a 'team' through honing advocacy skills and being able to articulate a child's communication needs. Parents should know the difference between their right to choose their child's 'language' vs. an IEP team determination of services or methods.

c. Availability of a continuum of services/school settings/communication modes offered at the school level.

The beauty of special education is that the student's unique needs should be addressed based on their individual needs, not just what a school 'has to offer'. When a school offers support for only one communication mode, it is the right of parents to advocate that their child's communication needs be supported.

3. What should every parent or professional know about their rights regarding communication options as they enter the school years?

For the first time in IDEA history, the reauthorization of 1997 included language regarding the communication needs of students who are deaf and hard of hearing that still exists today. At its very essence, "Communication Considerations" is now REQUIRED to be considered at every student's IEP Planning meeting.

4. Where else can I find information about this subject?

Bridge to Preschool: Navigating a Successful Transition
<http://cohandsandvoices.org/docs/Bridge-Revised2012.pdf>

Supporting Families in Transition between Early Intervention and School Age Programs. By Cheryl Johnson, Special Education Unit, Colorado Department of Education.
http://www.handsandvoices.org/pdf/trans_cheryl.pdf

Advocacy and Special Education Law Support: www.wrightslaw.com

Communication Considerations A to Z™ is a series from Hands & Voices that's designed to help families and the professionals working with them access information and further resources to assist them in raising and educating children who are deaf or hard of hearing. We've recruited some of the best in the business to share their insights on the many diverse considerations that play into communication modes & methods, and so many other variables that are part of informed decision making. We hope you find the time to read them all!