

Tips for Caregivers

Preparing Your Child for the Transition from Part C to Part B Services



If you are a parent or caregiver of a child who has been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or other developmental disability and who will be transitioning from early intervention services to services provided by the school system, this tip sheet is for you. Transitioning from family-centered services provided in Part C to school-provided services in Part B is a significant change for both families and young children. And when your child has autism, there are additional considerations and steps you may want to take to help your child experience a smoother transition to school or community-based settings. Whether you plan to attend your local school or continue services in the current community-based setting, such as a child care center, the school system is responsible for services within Part B.



Action Steps to Support Your Child's Transition to School

Here are several steps to consider taking prior to your child starting in Part B services:

| STEP | IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS |
|---|--|
| Contact the school or community-based setting to ask if they offer tours or allow visits. | » If enrolling in a school-based setting, the school should offer an on-site visit prior to your child enrolling in the program.* |
| Ask about the daily class schedule for your child's program. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Make minor adjustments to home routines, if needed, to more closely match the schedule your child will have at their school or community-based program. » Set up home routines to practice waking up, preparing, and driving to the school or community-based program. » Make a list of the changes that will take place during this process and share the list with your child's early intervention (EI) providers. |
| Expose your child to short time periods of separation from you. | » Allow your child the opportunity to independently attend therapy sessions or spend time with grandparents or family friends. |
| Practice having your child follow short, simple directions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Have your child practice sitting at the table for short periods of time to eat a meal or complete an activity. » Have your child help clean up their toys or other belongings. |
| Teach independence by encouraging your child to be actively engaged in caregiving routines. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Offer the opportunity for your child to practice making choices. » Encourage your child to wash their hands independently. » Practice getting dressed independently, especially after using the restroom. |
| Talk to other families who are receiving services through Part B to learn more about their experiences during their child's transition. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Visit Tennessee Disability Pathfinder to find a parent and caregiver support group. » TRIAD's Families First Program has an online community group and offers virtual training for parents and caregivers. » Remember, everyone's transition experience is unique and individualized to their child's strengths and needs. |
| Discuss a plan catered to your child's individual needs with your early interventionist and other care providers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Ninety days before your child's third birthday, your early intervention team will set up a meeting with the Part B system (i.e., your child's school of zone). » For more information on the transition process and timeline in Tennessee, check out the Extended Option resources from Tennessee Early Intervention (TEIS). |

*According to Rule 0520-12-10-05.3(e) The program shall maintain documentation that the parent was offered an on-site visit of the program to review the facility and the opportunity to review the program's policies and procedures prior to the child being enrolled into the program. Exception: On-site visit is not required for children of homeless families.



Teaching and Practicing Skills

In addition to the previous action steps to prepare for your child's transition to their school or community-based setting, there are several skills to work on that can help your child be more successful. See below for possible strategies. Talk to your early interventionist about a plan for working on these skills ahead of the transition.

| SKILL | POSSIBLE STRATEGIES |
|--|--|
| Imitating | During playtime, encourage imitating actions with objects (e.g., banging on a drum, stacking blocks). You can practice actions like clapping or stomping your feet while singing songs with built-in actions (e.g., "If You're Happy and You Know It," "The Wheels on the Bus"). |
| Following directions | Start with one-step directions that are built into natural opportunities, such as "Give me your cup" when your child is requesting a drink, or "Put it in" while playing with a shape sorter. Give the directions and wait a couple of seconds for them to respond. If they don't respond, repeat the directions while modeling what you want them to do (e.g., say "Put it in" while putting the circle shape into the shape sorter). |
| Sitting and staying on task | Have your child sit at a small table to play with a preferred activity. You can use a visual timer to let them know how long they are expected to stay at the table. Start with very short periods of time and slowly increase how long they are expected to stay at the table. |
| Basic play/ independence skills | Set your child up with toys you know they can play with independently. Let them know where you will be (e.g., "Daddy will be in the kitchen while you play"). Check in occasionally to provide positive praise for them playing nicely on their own. |
| Allowing others to play in their space | While your child is playing, sit near them and begin playing. For example, if they are playing with blocks, sit near them and get some of your own blocks to play with. Your child should not be expected to share their blocks with you, but if they do, be sure to give positive praise. |
| Following a routine/visual schedule | Visual supports can help your child know what they are supposed to be doing at different times of the day. You can create a visual schedule with pictures of each activity they will complete during the day (e.g., get dressed, eat breakfast, brush teeth, play with toys, eat a snack, take a nap, etc.). Before moving on to the next activity, have your child "check" their schedule to see what they are doing next. Visuals can also be used to teach the steps in a routine like washing hands. |
| Transitioning from a preferred to a non-preferred activity | Give your child plenty of notice that a transition is coming up. Use first/then statements to let them know what they will get to do after the non-preferred activity is done. For example, "First we go inside and then we watch Bluey" or "First we go to the store, then we get to go to the park". You can use visuals to make the concept more concrete. |
| Communicating basic wants/needs | Have your child initiate communication for what they want or need by setting up situations where they need you to gain access to a preferred item or activity. For example, place their snack in a clear container they can't open on their own so they communicate that they need help. They may communicate this by handing you the item, saying or signing "open" or handing you a picture of what they want. |



Resources

Check out these resources to support your child's transition to school or community-based Part B services:

» **Early Learning**

www.tn.gov/education/districts/early-learning.html

» **The Arc Tennessee**

(833) 596-1553

Email: specialeducation@thearctn.org

» **Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR)**

www.parentcenterhub.org

» **Support and Training for Exceptional Parents (STEP)**

(800) 280-7837 (English) or (800) 975-2919 (Spanish)

Email: gethelp@tnstep.info

» **TEIS Extended Option Website**

www.tn.gov/disability-and-aging/disability-aging-programs/teis/teis-extended-option.html

» **TRIAD Course**

[From Early Intervention to School-Based Services: A Toolkit for Caregivers](#)

To access, first register for a free account or log in to an existing account at triad.vkclearning.org.

Then click on the link above to launch.

A more extensive list of service organizations can be accessed via Tennessee Disability Pathfinder at TNpathfinder.org.