

Support Across Settings: Improving Child Outcomes Through Collaborative Partnerships

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Impact Statement

Specific procedures and processes in place at the school district level will ensure consistency and fidelity in planning and implementing a coordination of services for children with Individual Education Plans within a shared placement model which will result in improved family and child outcomes

- A shared placement model is defined as model where children are enrolled in and attend multiple programs

Concerns

- Lack of parent knowledge regarding their right to invite child care professionals to the participate in the PPT process
- Variability in child care professionals participation during the initial evaluation and planning stages
- Lack of specific processes or procedures in place after identification to ensure a standard level of coordination occurs between child care, families and school district
- Potential additional stressors on a child
 - Increased transitions throughout the day
 - Settings with differing approaches to learning and behavior can be confusing for children
 - Differing availability of supports (personnel, visuals, communication, etc.) among settings can impact how a child is able to access and participate in all experiences in all settings
- Potential additional stressors on a family
 - Responsibility of sharing information between placements falls on family
 - Settings with differing approaches to learning and behavior may provide conflicting information to families regarding strategies

Research and Resources

Sources

- Connecticut Office of Early Childhood Website
- Connecticut Department of Education Early Childhood Special Education Website
- Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center Website
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Education, Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children With Disabilities In Early Childhood Program, January 5, 2017
- National Institute for Early Education Research, Connecticut Preschool Special Education Needs Assessment report, April 28, 2020
- Joint Memo issued by the Commissioners of the Office of Early Childhood and the State Department of Education, April 11, 2022 regarding children who receive services and attend child care programs

Research Review

Review of the Connecticut Preschool Special Education Needs Assessment [report](#) dated April 28, 2020 which was conducted by the National Institute for Early Education Research

- 53% of preschool children with Individual Education Plans in the public school were enrolled in half day programs (defined as 2.5 hours per day, 5 days per week, minimum 180 days per year)
- School principals/center directors indicated that 78% of classrooms included preschoolers with Individual Education Plans
- Child care classrooms which included children with Individual Education Plans averaged 1.7 children with Individual Education Plans per classroom

Research Review

Review of [joint memo](#) issued by the Commissioners of the Office of Early Childhood and the State Department of Education dated April 11, 2022 regarding children who receive services and attend child care programs

- Emphasized the critical importance of planning and implementing a coordination of services for children with Individual Education Plans who receive support services and who attend child care programs
- Identified 3 main categories of consideration: child needs, coordination of services, and family needs

Objectives

- Review processes and procedures in place during the initial evaluation process and development of the IEP and determine changes to processes or procedures which will promote collaborative partnerships with parents and community child care providers
- Establish processes and procedures that promote collaborative partnerships with parents and community child care providers during implementation of the IEP

Proposed Process and Procedural Changes

- Utilize resources developed by Sophia Lampe and shared on the Connecticut Birth to Three website
 - Transition Timeline Planner
 - Transition Worksheet

Proposed Process and Procedural Changes

- Transition Meeting and/or PPT 1
 - School District Representative will review Transition Timeline Planner with the family and provide the Transition Worksheet
 - The [Transition Timeline Planner](#) was edited in two sections to include the following statement: Parents may bring any other individuals to the PPT meeting, or request individuals be invited. This can include other family members, healthcare providers, child care providers, or any other individuals who have knowledge or information to share about your child.

Proposed Process and Procedural Changes

- Transition Meeting and/or PPT 1
 - Prior to use, the [Transition Document](#) will be edited to include a section where information from other caregivers/child care staff can be documented with parental consent
 - The School District Representative will review the Transition Worksheet with families and encourage them to bring the completed form to the next meeting

Proposed Process and Procedural Changes

- PPT 2
 - The Transition Worksheet will be reviewed at PPT 2
 - The Transition Worksheet will be documented in Prior Written Notice as a written record the school district used to support actions

Proposed Process and Procedural Changes

- PPT 2
 - During initial development of the IEP, the team will consider including Indirect Services if it is determined there will be a shared placement model
 - Indirect services would include consultation provided by a special education teacher to collaborate with the child care teacher in adjusting the learning environment and/or modifying their instructional methods to meet the individual needs of a preschool student with a disability who attends a child care program

Proposed Process and Procedural Changes

- Indirect services would include parent training
- Specific information regarding the frequency and duration of indirect consultative services would be determined on an individual basis (e.g. once monthly for one hour)
- Implementation of the indirect services would be detailed in a written collaboration plan developed together with the special education teacher, child care staff and family.

Next Steps

- Develop brief surveys for families and providers to solicit information
 - Identifying priorities
 - Identifying areas where support is needed
 - Preferred means of communication
 - Desired frequency of communication/collaboration
- Survey information would be collected after PPT2 and used when developing written collaboration plan

Next Steps

- Develop a template for the written collaboration plan
- The written collaboration plan must include details of the following components
 - Collaborative meetings between the special education teacher and child care teacher
 - Team meetings between special education teacher, related service providers, family and child care teacher (when possible)
 - Observation of the child in the childcare setting by special education teacher

Written Collaboration Plan

- Collaborative meetings between the special education teacher and child care teacher to discuss
 - IEP goals
 - Evidence based practices
 - Sharing about supplementary aids and services
 - Coordinating schedules
 - Transportation
 - Other topics as needed

Written Collaboration Plan

- Team meetings between special education teacher, child care teacher, related service providers and family
 - Progress updates
 - Sharing strategies
 - Question and answer
 - Other topics as needed

Written Collaboration Plan

- Observation of the child in the childcare setting by special education teacher
 - Fidelity checks
 - Data collection on IEP goals
 - Help inform topics of discussion for collaboration meeting and team meetings

Cycle of Collaboration

- These three components create an intentional cycle of collaboration.
 - Each component informs the next and would be completed in sequence on an ongoing basis
 - Collaboration meetings → Team meetings



Measuring Success

- Data on progress with IEP goals and objectives
- Written documentation of collaborative meetings
- Utilize tools such as [Transition from Early Intervention Services to Part B Preschool Special Education Checklist](#)
- Solicit feedback from families and child care providers
 - [PTAN Partnerships for Preschool Inclusion: Self-Evaluation Tool](#)

Time and Commitment Barrier

“A key ingredient to successful inclusion is a strong partnership between early childhood educators, early interventionists, early childhood special educators, related services providers, pediatric healthcare providers, and other developmental specialists. Strong partnerships are critical to ensuring children receive adequate and appropriate supports and services in their early childhood programs. Many communities believe in the importance of inclusion but have made little progress due to limited planning time or a lack of commitment and support from leaders. Fostering relationships between providers requires an on-going commitment. Equally important is a commitment across providers to build strong partnerships with families, children’s first and most important teachers and advocates.”

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION POLICY STATEMENT ON INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS, January 5, 2017

Time and Commitment Barrier

- Share information with district level strategic partners and decision makers
- Connect with community child care providers to share information about district program and begin building connections
- Include questions about availability and timing on surveys to families and providers

OEC Inclusion Statement

“The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) expects that all children and families have a sense of full belonging and are valued, respected, and supported. OEC policies, funding and services address the needs of children and families to ensure the right conditions for every child to achieve their full potential. This occurs through full participation in everyday activities at home, school and in the community. The OEC, providers, communities and schools adopt and promote the culture, practices and relationships necessary to foster inclusion and meaningful access and participation for the benefit of ALL children. All children, with and without disabilities or differences, their families and their caregivers benefit from inclusive environments.”

OEC Inclusion Statement