

Transcript for the video:

Approaching the Transition Out of Birth to Three

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Narrator: If your child has been receiving Birth to Three services for a while, it can be hard to think about what comes next.

Lisa Opert, Parent: The first day I dropped Milo off at school, I cried.

Solsairy Lopez, Parent: I never left him off these hours with anybody that I do not know.

Ana González, Parent: How is my child going to be with them? Is he going to be okay?

Francisco González, Parent: No sabía cómo iba a reaccionar mi hijo dentro de la escuela.

Brenna Chorzempa, Parent: He's been by my side day one, and then having this diagnosis I've kind of hugged him a little tighter.

Narrator: What can you expect as you begin the transition process? What are the different steps? And how can you prepare yourself and your child?

Approaching the Transition Out of Birth to Three

Daphne Cyr, Service Coordinator, Birth to Three: As the child gets closer to being two and a half, we make a referral to the school district.

Karen Scheinerman, Service Coordinator, Birth to Three: We reach out to the school district with the parents' permission, and we talk about the two-step process that we have to help transition the family to the school district's responsibility.

Donna Notti, Birth to Three Director: We are going to help you build a good relationship with the next people. This is what's so important. Everything is about us all being able to communicate, being able to be on board for your child.

The Transition Meeting

Narrator: An early step in the transition process is what's called the transition meeting. This informal meeting allows families and school personnel to get to know each other and begin preparing for later steps.

Donna Notti: The transition meeting takes place with the public school, and the family, and Birth to Three and it is Birth to Three's meeting. So, it is our responsibility to prepare a family properly for this meeting and what is going to happen, what is going to be discussed.

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Natasha Akers, Parent: She prepared me to answer a lot of questions, prepared me for what was going to happen. Any question I had, she was right there. Any concern I had, she was right there.

Daphne Cyr: We're a team. We're going to do this together. I'm here to help you, and we're going to do what we can to get that little person enrolled in the right program that's a good fit.

Narrator: Families are able to make a choice about where to hold the transition meeting.

Amy Doyle, Parent: So when we had the transition meeting, we had three people come over to our house and our service coordinator was there. It was really great because it was in my son's natural environment, so they got to see him play and interact with me there instead of me just explaining everything to them.

Lisa Opert: Our transition meeting we chose to hold at the public school. I went in very nervous to that meeting, but when we were there, the people were so warm, I was able to watch them interact with my child. I was able to see that they were really good people, which calmed my nerves.

The Planning and Placement Team (PPT) Meeting

Narrator: The next step is the Planning and Placement Team Meeting, or the PPT. This meeting is held at the school.

Andrea Brinnel, State Department of Education: That's the eligibility PPT. At that meeting, they will then either decide to accept some evaluations from Birth to Three, because they're current, or choose to do their own evaluations, or a combination of both of those.

Solsairy Lopez: You won't go by yourself. You'll have somebody that you know with you, so that's the easy part.

Donna Notti: It is really our role to make sure the parent can really represent their child the best.

Amy Doyle: She did teach me to kind of be the lead voice there. When we met with the school system, I kind of knew what to expect and knew which questions to ask, so they really did help me prepare for that.

Lisa Opert: I had talked to my husband a bunch and discussed what we thought the school needed to know. So, we literally went in with a checklist of things we wanted to talk about, and as we talked about them, we checked them off.

John Durham, Public School Transition Team: If you're little nervous about it, bring a family member or friend to, if nothing else, just to sit with you. They don't have to say

anything. But, you as a parent, have a legal right to bring whoever you would like to the PPT.

PPT 2

Narrator: The second PPT meeting will determine whether a child is eligible for special education services.

Andrea Brinnel: That team, which includes the parents and it, also, includes a representative from Birth to Three. If they find at PPT 2, when they review the evaluations, that the child does have a disability and requires specialized instruction, then they'll design an Individualized Education Program.

Narrator: The Individualized Education Program, or IEP, describes the special education services an eligible child will receive.

John Durham: The IEPs are goals specifically for your child, and the goals should be driving the interaction with the staff and the child. So, when the Birth to Three folks are interacting with you, there are family goals. That's the whole thing. "How can we help you?" And when you get to the school, it is "How can we help your child?"

Karen Archambault, Public School Transition Team: Well, we have kind of pass the baton, so I'm able to build a relationship with that family and provider, so that I can better assist them with what the child is really going to need in that classroom, and, you know, what are some strengths and weaknesses. And, I think it helps the classroom teacher, also, just pick up that baton and continue to have that great relationship.

Heather Dinowitz, Public School Transition Team: You know, we want your child to become independent, so that we are going to ask that you take a little bit of a step back and let us kind of develop the relationship with your child on our own. And we'll reach out, certainly. We want you to be a part of it. But the roles just shift a little bit.

Narrator: If it is determined that your child is not eligible for special education services, your Birth to Three provider can help connect you with other community-based services to help meet your child's needs.

Alice Ridgway, Birth to Three System Director: And just because you're not eligible when you're two years nine months or three years old, doesn't mean you're not going to want to call your school district six months later when something's changed. And if you form those relationships at a transition conference, I think it's a little bit easier.

Preparing Your Child for the Transition

Narrator: Whether your child will be attending public school or another type of program, it's critical to prepare your child for the transition. This should include saying goodbye to your Birth to Three providers and visiting the new school or program.

Jesstina Martone, Parent: We prepared for the goodbyes. They made a picture book for Summer, because we knew that she was going to miss them, because she's seen them all the time.

Adriana Fontaine, Parent Consultant, CPAC: So my advice for the families that I work with that I know the child struggles with transitions, is social stories.

Donna Notti: We take pictures of the staff, the room, so that the child gets the social storybook prior to going to the preschool. And we go through the book with them, and, "You're going to have Miss Jen," and "Oh! She's going to read books to you," and build up that staff as well.

Amy Doyle: I would ask to kind of visit the new facility that your child is going to ahead of time to prepare them so they can meet their new teacher. It's a big change for a small child, and preparing them as much as you can – it really is key.

Building New Relationships

Narrator: This transition will provide opportunities for both you and your child to meet people who can support your family in new ways.

Jose Rosario, Preschool Teacher: When family do come in and we shake hand or say "Hi" and we say "Hi" to the child. They get to sense that they're already wanted in the classroom. I think that's my role to make sure that family feel as comfortable as they can in the classroom, and welcome.

Kristin Lund, Early Childhood Program Director: I will go over the daily routine, what usually happens in the classroom, and what our policies and procedures are. And then there's a lengthy amount of time for the parent just to ask questions. Because it's my chance to get to know them better. Their chance to get to know me and the program better. And for us to start establishing a trusting relationship.

Lisa Opert: One of the classroom teachers, who is actually his teacher still, she came out and played with him, and she just came and just played. She put no demands on him. And the principal came and popped her head in and just to say, "Hey," like "Hey, welcome! We're so happy to have him. We can't wait for him to start." I left there thinking, "They love that kid already," you know? So, it was it was such a relieving experience when he walked out of there; I remember being able to breathe again.

Brenna Chorzempa: I really feel like that that peer engagement is going to be huge for him and I'm very excited for that.

Natasha Akers: Honestly, just seeing her excel so much more than I could have pictured for her. With so many resources available and so much help available.

Ana González: he comes happy home, and learning and singing. And you could see in his face. And the to me as a parent, that's the best feeling!

Francisco González: Ha mejorado su habla. Su vocabulario. Está agarrando muy bien. Puede ser, yo creo que está agarrando muy bien el inglés, y pues por otro lado el español también.

Amy Doyle: It put my son in a better place, and once you kind of realize that they're on your team and they're on your side to best help your child, it's a great success.

Lisa Opert: The day he went and got his own backpack, because I said, "Let's go to school." He went and got his backpack, and I said, "Okay, you know, he's all set. He loves school." So we did it right.