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# Transition Alert

*Improving the transition process for young children, their families and the professionals who work with them through an examination of factors that promote successful transitions between infant/toddler programs, preschool programs, and public school programs for young children with disabilities and their families.*

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## New Technical Report Available on Transitions for Children from Diverse Settings and with Significant Disabilities

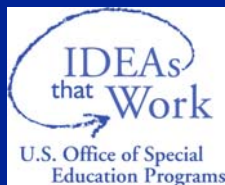
Effective transition planning requires the establishment of trusting relationships among the various participants for decision-making and problem-solving. The relationships in the transition planning process are influenced by the characteristics of individual children; the financial, educational, and social resources of their families; the communicative skills of participating agencies; and community values and capacity (Rosenkoetter, Hains & Fowler, 1994). The early literature on childhood transitions outlined specific issues, strategies, and models to support successful transitions of young children with disabilities and their families, including consideration of the importance of collaboration among programs and families. Existing research, however, did not investigate extensively either the unique needs of children with significant disabilities and their families or those of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families as they transition into preschool and into kindergarten.

To help address this gap, National Early Childhood Transition Center (NECTC) researchers conducted a series of six regional working forums across five states to identify issues, barriers, and successful strategies encountered during transitions for young children with disabilities and their families. Transitions for two specific groups were targeted; (a) children with significant disabilities and their families, and (b) children with disabilities from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families. Data across forums were analyzed and core issues across groups (state and participant types) were identified, collapsed, and used to create 4 Delphi surveys to determine critical issues by population. Participants were asked to rank the importance of barriers for children with significant disabilities and children with disabilities from culturally diverse backgrounds and their families. Results indicate that 25 of the 108 barriers included in the surveys met the criteria of a rating of 6.0 or higher on a scale of 1 to 10.

Findings from this study confirm the importance of paying careful attention to the needs of individual families and children when planning transition services and supports. Seven barriers were identified as specifically relevant to children from culturally diverse backgrounds, ten were specifically relevant for children with significant disabilities, and eight were relevant for children from both groups and their families. Critical barriers identified included cultural and language barriers that exist for many children from culturally diverse backgrounds but were seen as exacerbating the difficulties generally encountered for children with disabilities during transition periods. Other critical barriers for this population included the overall lack of coordination across agency staff and early intervention providers, shortages of staff in rural areas, and a lack of common knowledge about programs and services for young children across different program staff. For families of children with significant disabilities, the stress felt at transition periods and concerns about services were also exacerbated, especially with regard to the need for respite care, therapy services across transition periods, a reduction of special education services as children transition to preschool and then to kindergarten, and a decrease in home visitation services as children get older. The full technical report is available on the NECTC website at: (<http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/nectc/>).

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## Also Available from NECTC

Several documents have been developed that may be of interest to professionals who work with young children with disabilities. These documents are available on the web site.

### Transition Alerts

At a glance information on new resources and materials related to transition.

### Research Briefs

Short papers that provide a summary of research findings and conceptual work.

### Research Spotlights

Short papers on research methods and tools used to gather data during NECTC studies.

### Papers/Reports

Technical reports and papers presenting findings from NECTC studies.

### Presentations

PowerPoint and Poster presentations conducted by NECTC researchers at national conferences and meetings.

### Additional Resources

#### IDEA 2004

One-stop shop for information on IDEA 2004 and implications for transition.

#### Project Information

Brochures and information on the activities of NECTC, including timelines, study goals and timelines, and contact information for NECTC researchers and staff.

#### Measures and Instruments

Copies of measures and instruments used for NECTC studies.

#### On-Line Database

An on-line, searchable database of transition resources and materials.

Bookmark this Site

For more specific information on the activities of the center, go to <http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/nectc/> or contact the project office at 859-257-2081 or toll free at 866-742-4015.