

# 15. TRANSITION

## Transition occurs when:

- A child ages out of one program into another—when child is:
  - 3 years old; child ages out of infant/toddler program
  - 5-6 years old; enters elementary school
  - 14 years old; generally enters high school
  - 16 years old; prepares for post-school life
- When a child moves from one agency (school) to another because of change in services, or home placement
- When a child exits special education
- When a child ages out of the public school system



**It is important that the Advocate discuss all concerns with the child's service providers when considering a transition.**

## Preparation for child

The parent and services providers must make transition decisions based on the needs of the particular child, considering physical, social and emotional health. A severely abused child may not be ready for the caregiver separation required to attend most pre-school programs. A 5 year old may not be socially equipped to function in a structured kindergarten classroom. A 14 year old may not be capable of maintaining appropriate behavior with the relative freedom of a high school campus.

## If the child will experience a new school, program location, or service provider, the advocate can:

- Explain the need for the transition to the child (i.e., change of providers, a move, aging out of a program)
- Allow child to get familiar with the new location/providers/teachers before the change
- Gradually reduce the frequency or duration of existing services before transition
- Communicate concerns to new providers and provide relevant information
- Encourage child to share concerns/anxiety about the change
- Monitor child for negative effects of move/change

- Follow-up to ensure the child receives all services outlined in his or her IEP or IFSP (program for young children)

## **Transition for children over 14 years old (See special section)**

### **Transition to another agency/school (transfer of legal obligations)**

If a child changes schools or moves to a new facility, the new agency is responsible for providing special education and related services as outlined in the child's IEP. The receiving agency can adopt the existing IEP if parent and school staff agree the IEP is appropriate and if the IEP can be implemented by the new agency.

If the child's current IEP is not available, or if the new agency or parent believes that it is not appropriate, the new public agency must develop a new IEP through appropriate procedures. This should be completed within a short time after the child enrolls in the new public agency (normally, within one week).

If the parent and the new public agency are unable to agree on an interim IEP and placement, the new public agency must implement the old IEP to the extent possible until a new IEP is developed and implemented.

## **Transition out of Special Education— exiting Special Education**

There are only two situations a student can be exited from special education. A student can be exited from special education when he or she achieves his/her goals and short-term objectives as a senior or at age 22 and receives a high school diploma. A reassessment is not necessary to exit a student upon graduation. A student can also be exited from special education if a re-evaluation indicates that the student no longer has a qualifying disability.

### **Considerations when exiting a child from Special Education:**

It is often important to exit a child from special education services gradually. Once a child exits special education, he or she must go through the IEP process, including referral, assessments, etc. before receiving special education services again. This process can significantly delay a student's access to needed services.

Many times a student can achieve the goals and objectives outlined in the IEP with the services of special education. Unfortunately, some students quickly fall behind again once services end. If a child has achieved the goals and objectives outlined in the IEP, and qualifies to be exited from special education, the parent or advocate can request transition services to aide the child as he or she exits special education. This can include lowering the intensity, duration or frequency of services gradually. The IEP team can reconvene to evaluate the child's progress with reduced services. At that time the IEP team can determine if the student can find continued success without special education services.