

Beat it! Get lost! Scram! – Helping Children and Families Successfully Transition from Part C to the Future

Which U.S. state is the birthplace of eight U.S. presidents, produced the first peanuts grown in the U.S. and is the only one that allows children to transition from Part C to Part B at age two? If you guessed *Virginia*...you're right! More on that last item in a moment...but first: ***What is transition?***

In the context of Part C of IDEA, *transition* is the entry or exit of children and families to and from early intervention supports and services. Each of the children we serve transitioned into the system at some point or another, and *all* children served will transition out of the system at an appropriate time (and in all cases before the child's third birthday.)

Of course, ***not all children will share the same transition destination.*** Some may require and be found eligible for special education services provided by a local school system under Part B of IDEA. Others may benefit from Early Head Start or similar community programs and opportunities designed to strengthen and build upon skills acquired during the child and family's participation in Part C. And still others may have no need at all for targeted services and supports following their transition from Part C.

Indicator 08 (and its three components) is one of three Part C of IDEA *compliance* indicators (along with Indicators 01 and 07). ***Because it's a compliance indicator, each local early intervention system is expected to get "it" right—each and every time.*** And here's what's meant by "it":

- **08A – Transition Steps and Services:** Every child and family will have a completed transition plan in place within required timelines (see below) that identifies for them all appropriate transition steps and services;
- **08B – Notification to the LEA and SEA:** For each child who is potentially eligible¹ for Part B services, timely notification (unless the parent opts out) is made within required timelines to both the local education agency (LEA) and the State education agency (SEA); and
- **08C – Transition Planning Conference:** For each child who is potentially eligible for Part B services, a transition conference is held (with parent approval) within required timelines with a representative of the LEA.

Now about those required timelines.... Unless family (not system) reasons impact the process, the transition plan (steps and services) and transition conference components of Indicator 08 must occur no more than 9 months and no less than 90 days before the child's *anticipated date of transition* and the notification must be sent to the LEA and SEA at least 90 days before the child's *anticipated date of transition*.

[SARCASM WARNING] Luckily, calculating the anticipated date of transition is straightforward and simple: Subtract a) 9 months from the child's third birthday to identify the start of the timeline and b) 90 days from the child's third birthday to identify the end of the timeline.

¹ Children in early intervention are considered "potentially eligible" for Part B unless there is a clear expectation that they will no longer require services by the time they reach age 3. The determination of whether a particular child in early intervention is potentially eligible for Part B is made by that toddler's IFSP team as part of the transition process.

LOL! Just kidding. It's not that simple....

Remember those fun Virginia facts about presidents and peanuts...and Virginia being the only state to allow children to transition from Part C to Part B at age two? *That's* where the sassiness of Indicator 08 comes into play!

Specifically, **children in Virginia are age eligible for Part B services at the start of the school year in which the child is 2 by September 30...***which means a child could potentially have more than one anticipated date of transition...which means the Indicator 08 timeline depends on the family's preferences for transition timing and can even change over time. Yikes!*

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PRACTICE EXERCISE

ITC Harmonious Hills completed an initial IFSP on February 1, 2021, for baby girl Ayana who was born on July 25, 2020. Ayana will turn one in July 2021 and two in July 2022. Because the IFSP team has no reason to believe at this time that Ayana will no longer require services by the time she reaches age three, Ayana is considered to be potentially eligible for Part B. Because she would be over age two (2-years-2-months) by September 30th of the 2022-23 school year, Ayana could potentially transition before her third birthday.

Using this information, pinpoint the *exact* day Ayana will transition out of Part C, her *precise* transition destination, and the *specific* 9-month and 90-day required timelines to be followed.

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It's a trick! *Nobody knows*. Ayana's family may not wish to even *think* about special education services until Ayana is two-and-a-half, despite the service coordinator's offer to initiate earlier discussions. Ayana may progress quickly and end up developing typically when compared to her peers. The family might initially be eager for transition at age two, only to decide as the date draws closer that Part C is the better fit for Ayana.

In Ayana's case, two dates in particular could serve as her anticipated date of transition: her third birthday (07/25/2023), or the first day of the school year after she turns two (say, 09/07/2022). Ayana could be eligible for Part B...but maybe not. Ayana's family could opt for Part B services...or maybe not. Depending on what decisions are made, the required timeline could begin in January 2022 or not until October 2022.

When people say transition in Virginia is complicated, *this* is (more often than not) what they mean. And they're right: It *is* complicated, but it's not impossible. And it doesn't need to be overly worrisome because of this simple truth: ***The family, working with the rest of their IFSP team, is empowered to choose what makes the most sense at the time...and to alter those decisions as time passes.***

So, take a deep breath—calculate and keep tabs of multiple timelines when needed...communicate clearly and openly with the family about all transition options...document discussions and decisions—and you'll do fine.

You've got this!