

Why have a Local Transition Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)?

This document was developed to address questions of why an MOA is needed and what requirements that it fulfills for First Steps, Head Start and the Department of Education.

In a position statement introduced in October of 2003, the Department of Education, Division of Exceptional Learners; the Family and Social Services Administration, Division of Family and Children, Bureau of Child Development (First Steps¹); the Indiana Principal Leadership Academy; the Indiana Head Start Association, and the Indiana Association for Child Care Resource and Referral took the position that a comprehensive, community-wide transition system is necessary to insure positive and effective transition experiences for children and families. This system includes:

- An interagency team that assesses the needs of the whole community, with all stakeholders involved, while ensuring the successful movement of children and families between and among agencies (Rous et al., 1994).
- Collaboratively developed policies and procedures, which are essential to the success of the community-wide transition system (Rous, Hemmeter & Schuster, 1999).
- Inclusion of the four critical components for implementing effective transitions: administrative supports, staff involvement and training, family involvement, and child preparation (Hains et al., 1988, Rosenkoetter et al., 1994; Rous, Hemmeter & Schuster, 1999).
- Change at the local level that is supported and facilitated at the state level (Rous et al., 1999; Miller, 1992).

The MOA is a product of interagency negotiation and collaboratively developed policies and procedures that guide the work of interagency stakeholders. MOA's are one means of documenting a comprehensive, community-wide transition system to ensure positive and effective transition experience for children and families. The MOA will provide the Procedures for transition of children between these programs.

In addition, the MOA fulfills specific requirements of First Steps, Head Start and the Department of Education. First Steps requires an MOA with all special education planning districts and Head Start/Early Head Start entities. The Department of Education requires written policies and procedures. Head Start requires the establishment of procedures to support successful transitions. The specific requirements are outlined below.

1. Part C – First Steps Requirements

Title 470, Indiana Administrative Code (IAC) 3.1-11-3 Local planning and coordinating council (LPCC) responsibilities

“The LPCC shall support and facilitate the establishment of interagency agreements with participating agencies to ensure the smooth transition of eligible children from the early intervention system to the preschool system or other appropriate services. The division shall

¹ First Steps moved to Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services, Bureau of Child Development Services in the summer of 2006.

monitor the activities of service providers and service coordinators to ensure that established transition procedures are adhered to.”

This requirement is also reiterated in the 2006-2007 Request for Funds Application Packet (RFF) for First Steps SPOE/LPCC funding.

Under the requirement for Transition and Interagency Agreements, it states, “Have current, signed Memoranda of Agreements (MOAs) with all special education planning districts and Head Start that are actively evaluated and shared with the community.”

Under Minimum Requirements, it states, “Develop and maintain Memoranda of Agreements (MOAs) with all special education planning districts and Head Start for the cluster. Each MOA must be reviewed and updated annually.” (Submitted by June 15)

2. Part B - Department of Education Requirements

Special Education Rules Title 511, Article 7-28-2 June 12, 2002

Section 2. (a) “The public agency shall establish, maintain and implement policies and procedures to assist the child participating in early intervention programs under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act who will be participating in early childhood special education to experience a smooth and effective transition in a manner consistent with Part C of the Act.”

3. Head Start Program Performance Standards on Transition Services

Head Start Program Performance Standards on Services for Children with Disabilities 45 CFR Parts 1304.41 (c) (1)

“Grantee and delegate agencies must establish and maintain procedures to support successful transitions for enrolled children and families from previous child care programs into Early Head Start or Head Start and from Head Start into elementary school...”

“Outreach to encourage communication between Early Head Start and Head Start staff and their counterparts in the schools and other child care settings including principals, teachers, social workers and health staff to facilitate continuity of programming;”