

# Building Bridges

*Transitioning  
from Early Start  
into the Preschool Years*



A Planning Workbook for Families

Revised 2010

# BUILDING BRIDGES

## THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:

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CHILD'S NAME AND HIS/HER FAMILY

**YOUR CHILD'S SERVICE COORDINATOR** *(THE PERSON RESPONSIBLE TO HELP YOU PLAN FOR THE PRESCHOOL YEARS)* **IS:**



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WHO

PHONE

### OTHER AGENCY RESOURCES:

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WHO

FROM WHERE

PHONE

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WHO

FROM WHERE

PHONE










### YOUR LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT:

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SCHOOL DISTRICT NAME

PHONE

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## Your Child is Turning Three and Transitioning from the Early Start Program

Your child is approaching three years of age and will soon be leaving an early intervention program. This guide is designed to give you basic information on the transition process as well as information on programs and other options for preschool aged children. This information will assist your family in making an informed decision for your child.

With your permission, before transitioning from Early Start, your child's progress will be assessed. The purpose of these assessments is to gather information about your child's abilities and identify areas which may need further intervention. After the assessments, the team will meet to discuss the results of the assessments and to determine if your child is eligible for special education and/or regional center services.

As a parent or caregiver, you have a great deal of knowledge about your child's abilities and challenges. To help the team become more familiar with your child be sure to share your observations with the team. As an active member of your child's team your insight is very important. You will be asked to sign releases so the assessment team can obtain information from your child's services, past evaluations and medical records.

This guide was prepared as a resource to give you timelines of transition, information about preschool options, suggestions for observing preschool programs and ways to prepare for your child's assessment and possible Individual Education Program (IEP) and the Individual Program Plan (IPP) meetings. The next few pages describe the steps in the referral, assessment, IEP, and IPP process.

Your Regional Center Service Coordinator and /or School District Representative is a valuable resource to you during this transition time. Be sure to contact him/her with any of your questions or concerns. It may also be helpful to talk with other parents who are going through or have completed transition with their child. The Family Resource Network staff can put you in contact with other parents.

## Before your child turns 2 ½ years old

### **Your service coordinator should:**

Ask you whether you have started to think about what you want for your child after he/she turns three years old.

Listen to your thoughts and give you information about:

- ❖ Available services and programs such as preschools, in home services, child care, or other community resources.
- ❖ The eligibility criteria of any programs in which you may be interested.
  - Ask for your written permission to share information with administrators of programs in which you may be interested.
- ❖ The next steps in the process of transition.
- ❖ How to contact another parent who has gone through the transition process.
- ❖ Provide you with copies of parents/consumer rights for special education and regional center services, as appropriate.

## Before your child turns 2 ½ years old

### Your family may think about:

Will my child still need special help during the preschool years?

Do I want my child to attend a preschool class, a day care, or stay at home with me or someone else?

How are Early Start programs and special education preschool programs ALIKE and DIFFERENT? (See page 12 of this workbook.)

### Your family may discover:

Talking over my ideas with my service coordinator, family, friends, and/or other parents is a good way to get the most information possible.



When your child is between 2 ½ and 3 years old

If you are thinking about enrolling your child in a preschool classroom, your service coordinator or your teacher may:

Go with you, if you choose, to visit programs or preschools in which you may be interested.



**Your family may think about:**

*What questions do I want to ask about the classrooms I visit? (See the page 14 of this workbook.)*

Your thoughts will be incorporated into a Transition Plan that is written by your Service Coordinator, Service Providers, a Representative from the School District (if appropriate), yourself and interested family members.

When your child is between 2 years - 9 months and 3 years old

**If your child is a consumer of Valley Mountain Regional Center, your service coordinator may:**

Coordinate a case file review with the agency's psychologist and consultant physician. During this eligibility process your Service Coordinator will outline the child's developmental and medical history. The psychologist and physician will complete a thorough review of your child's psychological/developmental and medical records. From this review, the eligibility team will determine if your child meets the eligibility criteria for ongoing services for children age 3 and older. This eligibility team of your service coordinator, VMRC's psychologist and physician will determine continuing eligibility for VMRC and make recommendations for any future follow-up services.

If your child is not found eligible for VMRC services, you will be sent a letter of ineligibility and a packet of information explaining the appeal process. Your service coordinator will provide information about community resources such as Head Start, Child Development Preschools, and private or public preschools available in your community.

If your child meets the eligibility criteria for ongoing services from VMRC your child's case will be transitioned to a new service coordinator who specializes in coordinating services for children age 3 and over. You and the new service coordinator will meet to develop an I PP or I ndividual Program Plan. Please refer the section PREPARING FOR YOUR CHILD'S I PP on page 22.

**You may:**

Invite other family members to attend this meeting.

Ask for copies of psychological and or medical records prior to the meeting.



Within one month before your child  
turns 3 years old

**Your service coordinator will:**

Schedule and hold a meeting to “transition” (move) your child from the Early Start program.

There are several types of meetings which could be held, depending on what services your child has been receiving and what services your child will receive after age 3:

- Final IFSP meeting
- Transition IEP meeting
- IPP meeting



**Your family may think about:**

What is important that I share about my child and family at these meetings? (See pages 18 regarding the Individual Education Program (IEP) and page 22 for the Individual Program Plan (IPP)).

# SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CHILD

The following information pages are designed for you to share information about your child. You may complete these forms and take them with you to your child's Transition and Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) Meeting, Assessment Appointment and /or IEP meeting. Use additional paper if necessary.

My child's favorite toys and activities are:



My child's favorite foods are:



Allergies:

Things my child does not like:



Important people in my child's life:



My child communicates his/her wants and needs by:



My child is really special. Here are some neat things about him/her that I want you to know:



Some of my concerns are:



My child can do things by him/her self:  
(Eating, dressing, toileting, bathing)



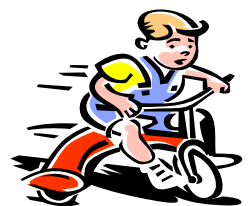
Some goals for my child are:



I need more information about:



When my child wants to move around, he or she will:



# HOW EARLY START PROGRAMS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE *ALIKE*

- Both provide *individualized* services to children and families
- Both have trained staff and specialists that work with children and their families
- Both use a team approach
- Both work with you to write an individualized plan for services for your child

# HOW EARLY START PROGRAMS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE *DIFFERENT*

- Preschool programs usually provide services in a classroom while Early Start programs usually provide services in the home or center.
- While parents are welcome in preschool programs, children typically attend preschools without their parent.
- Preschool programs usually provide lots of opportunities for play with other children during the school day.
- Children may receive preschool services several times a week.
- Children receiving special education services will have an *Individual Education Program (IEP)* with goals and objectives for your child. This will go along with a separate *Individual Program Plan (IPP)* written by Valley Mountain Regional Center (VMRC) for children who are eligible for regional center services.

## Steps for Finding a Quality Preschool

Getting started with the search for a preschool program for your child is often the most difficult “first step”. Once you have some experience investigating preschool options, it will be much easier for you to continue your search for the program for your child. Here are some suggestions for beginning your search.

**Begin to determine the unique needs of your child and family.** You know your child best. Does your child feel most comfortable in large or small groups or in individual settings? Do you want your child integrated or included with typical developing children, or do you want your child to be educated with other children with special needs? Does your child have medical needs that will need attention at school? What activities does your child enjoy? Does your family need preschool hours to accommodate work or school schedules? Think about the environment that you feel would best suit your child.

**Identify several programs that might be beneficial to your child.** Your Service Coordinator and/or School District Representative can help with this. Friends, relatives, other parents and professionals can all provide recommendations for programs they might know. Prepare to investigate these programs by developing a list of questions that you can ask on the phone or in person. A sample checklist is included on page 15. Acquire information about programs by calling your local special education unit.

**Screen programs by telephone call.** Prepare a list of anything that is absolutely necessary for your child. For example, proximity to home, hours of preschool, etc. Use these kinds of questions to help you determine which preschools warrant a tour and which will not fit your needs. This will save you time and allows you to focus on the possibilities instead of the problems.

**Discuss the range of options with school personnel and arrange to visit programs with a District Representative, if possible, following the assessment.** Different programs have differing policies on visitation. If you cannot visit immediately, ask to talk with the classroom teacher and/or parents already involved in the program. Prepare a list of items you want to observe on your visit or use the checklist. Make notes after the visit of what you liked or didn't like about the programs and what will be beneficial to your child.

**Prior to the IFSP/IEP Meeting, try to identify potential programs for your child.** Remember that the IFSP/IEP team will make suggestions for programs for your child based on all of the gathered evaluations. You will be able to visit any placement programs recommended before you agree that your child can attend that program.

# Check list for visits to preschools

## Program

- The atmosphere is relaxed and accepting of children.
  - A written statement of policy concerning behavior management is given to parents.
  - You can enroll your child at a convenient time.
  - The length of the day is appropriate.
  - There is a daily schedule with a good balance of structured activities and free play.
  - The age range of the children in the program suits your needs.
  - Fees, if any, are acceptable.
- The staff communicate well with children.

## Services Provided

- Physical, occupational, and/or speech therapy are available.
- Special education teachers assist in the program.
- Individual therapy is available.
- Group therapy is available.
- Inclusion in a regular preschool program is available.
- Toilet training is available.
- Nutritious meals and/or snacks are provided.

## Staff

- There are enough adults to guide and supervise the number of children at the school.
- The adults responsible for the program are certified teachers or therapists.
- Teachers and teachers' aides provide the children with guidance during activities.
- The staff create a warm and comfortable environment for the children.

## Parent Participation

- Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled regularly.
- Parent participation in classroom activities is encouraged.
- Observation by parents is allowed.
- A parents' organization or support group is available.

## Facility

\_\_\_\_ Facility is clean & well maintained

\_\_\_\_ Classrooms are sectioned into areas for play, work, or quiet times

\_\_\_\_ Space is provided in the classroom for a clothes and /or work bin for each child.

\_\_\_\_ There is adequate space for the number of children in the program.

\_\_\_\_ Adequate heating and cooling is provided.

\_\_\_\_ There is an outdoor play area, which consists of grass and dirt, covered and uncovered, hard and soft areas.

\_\_\_\_ There are sufficient drinking fountains inside and outside.

\_\_\_\_ There are enough restrooms available.

## Activities

\_\_\_\_ There are a variety of activities so that each child has a chance to be successful.

\_\_\_\_ Children are grouped for activities, either by age, skill level or interest.

\_\_\_\_ Learning is recognized as an active process. Children participate in activities and use manipulatives while learning.

\_\_\_\_ Children participate in activities that require responsibility, such as water plants, wiping the table, etc.

\_\_\_\_ Activities are planned which are creative and productive.

\_\_\_\_ Children participate in indoor and outdoor play.

\_\_\_\_ There is enough time allowed for both active play and rest.

\_\_\_\_ Children participate in self-directed, individual activities, and group activities.

\_\_\_\_ Children participate in both noisy and quiet activities.

\_\_\_\_ Imaginative play is encouraged.

\_\_\_\_ Activities that encourage language development and talking are included.

\_\_\_\_ Music activities, including singing, listening to music, playing instruments and dancing are included.

\_\_\_\_ Art activities that encourage experimenting and creating are included.

\_\_\_\_ Children have opportunities to read and to listen to reading.

\_\_\_\_ If there is television watching, adult direction is used to encourage thinking and language skills.

\_\_\_\_ Children participate in community programs, field trips and library visits.

## Activities (continued)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Children participate in activities that require large muscle movement such as running, and small muscle movement such as pasting and cutting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Children are provided with experiences that stimulate all their senses: hearing, seeing, touching, tasting and smelling.

## Vocabulary and Note Space

*Write down any terms or words that are unfamiliar to you. Ask for an explanation so you will understand the significance of what is being discussed. Your questions are important and show that you care about your child and his/her preschool needs.*

## Materials

- \_\_\_\_\_ There are enough materials for a variety of activities, including: sand, water, paint, fabric, clay, crayons, blocks, puzzles, balls and wheeled toys.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Children can supply materials.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Toys and safe materials are placed within children's reach.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Unsafe materials are out of children's reach.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Books on a wide range of interests are available.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A variety of "noisemakers" is available.
- \_\_\_\_\_ There is a variety of safe playground equipment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Materials are appropriate for the age and skill range of the children.

(For families preparing for preschool special education services)

# PREPARING FOR YOUR CHILD'S IEP (Individual Educational Program)

Now that your child is turning 3 years old it is time to transition from Early Start services to services for preschool-age children. Every child in special education has the right to an Individual Educational Program (IEP) that describes the needs of the child and the appropriate program to meet those needs. You will meet with members from your school district's assessment team and others to develop an IEP (Individual Educational Program). This plan will be created at least yearly and will describe what your child is able to do now, your child's goals for the next year, and what services school will provide to help your child to meet these goals.

This is a very important meeting. **Remember, no one knows your child better than you!!**

**Gross Motor:** Large movements like crawling, running and jumping

**What my child can do now:**

**Something I would like my child to work on:**

**Fine Motor:** Small movements like holding a crayon or small toy,  
scribbling, etc.

**What my child can do now:**

**Something I would like my child to work on:**

**Cognitive:** Ways my child plays, learns and solves problems, etc.

**What my child can do now:**

**Something I would like my child to work on:**

**Language/Communication:** *Receptive* - What my child understands

**What my child can do now:**

**Something I would like my child to work on:**

**Language/Communication:** *Expressive* - How my child communicates wants and needs

**What my child can do now:**

**Something I would like my child to work on:**

**Social/Emotional:** How my child gets along with others.

**What my child can do now:**

**Something I would like my child to work on:**

**Self-Help:** Eating, dressing, toileting, helping at school or home, etc.

**What my child can do now:**

**Something I would like my child to work on:**

**Readiness/Pre-Academic:** colors, letters, numbers,

**What my child can do now:**

**Something I would like my child to work on:**

**My child's strengths:** (For example, "Ann is usually in a happy mood and eager to learn.")

**What are things about my child's personality that the teacher should know?** (For example, "Rafael never gives up." "Maria gets cranky when her routine is changed.")

**What health or medical problems does my child have that may effect his/her school activities?** (For example, "Adam has heart problems and needs to rest occasionally.")

**Hopes and dreams we have for our child...**

(For consumers of  
Valley Mountain Regional Center)

# **PREPARING FOR YOUR CHILD'S IPP (Individual Program Plan)**

Now that your child is turning 3 years old it is time to transition from Early Start services to services for older children. If your child qualifies for VMRC services after 3 years of age, your VMRC Service Coordinator will meet with you to develop an IPP or Individual Program Plan. This plan will be created at least yearly, close to the time of your child's birthday. It will describe what your child is able to do now, what you want your child to be able to do in the next year, and what services VMRC will provide to help you and your child to meet these goals.

**Your child's IPP meeting is a very important meeting. Remember, no one knows your child better than you!!**

**Things my child...**

Likes a lot

Does not like

*Really* does not like

**Some great things about my child...**

**These things make my child feel happy...**

**These things make my child feel sad...**

**These are my biggest worries about my child's future...**

**My child and family currently receive these services...**

- 1.**
- 2.**
- 3.**

**My child's health needs are...**

**These people are important to my family so I want to invite them to my IPP meeting...**

**My child and I like to do this for fun...**

**My family and friends think these things about my child...**

**If my world were perfect, this is what my child and family would be doing...**

**At home...**

**At school...**

**In the community...**

**With our friends...**

## ALPHABET SOUP

<b>AB</b>	Assembly Bill	<b>LD</b>	Learning Disabled/Learning Disability
<b>ADA</b>	Americans with Disabilities Act	<b>LEA</b>	Local Education Agency
<b>ADD</b>	Attention Deficit Disorder	<b>LH</b>	Learning Handicapped
<b>ADHD</b>	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	<b>LRE</b>	Least Restrictive Environment
<b>APE</b>	Adapted Physical Education	<b>LSH</b>	Language, Speech & Hearing Specialist
<b>ASD</b>	Autism Spectrum Disorder	<b>MD</b>	Muscular Dystrophy
<b>CAC</b>	Community Advisory Committee	<b>MH</b>	Multihandicapped
<b>CCS</b>	California Children Services	<b>MS</b>	Multiple Sclerosis
<b>CDE</b>	California Department of Education	<b>OH</b>	Orthopedically Handicapped
<b>CH</b>	Communicatively Handicapped	<b>OHI</b>	Other Health Impaired
<b>CP</b>	Cerebral Palsy	<b>O&amp;M</b>	Orientation and Mobility
<b>CPS</b>	Child Protective Services	<b>OT</b>	Occupational Therapy
<b>DD</b>	Developmentally Delayed	<b>PDD/NOS</b>	Pervasive Developmental Disorder/Not Otherwise Specified
<b>DDS</b>	Department of Developmental Services	<b>PL</b>	Public Law (Federal)
<b>DHOH</b>	Deaf and Hard of Hearing	<b>PT</b>	Physical Therapy
<b>DIS</b>	Designated Instruction and Services	<b>RC</b>	Regional Center
<b>ED</b>	Emotionally Disturbed	<b>SB</b>	Senate Bill
<b>FAPE</b>	Free Appropriate Public Education	<b>SDC</b>	Special Day Class
<b>FRN</b>	Family Resource Network	<b>SELPA</b>	Special Education Local Plan Area
<b>HSA</b>	Human Services Agency	<b>SH</b>	Severely Handicapped
<b>ICC</b>	Interagency Coordinating Council	<b>SSI</b>	Supplemental Security Income
<b>IDEA</b>	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	<b>SST</b>	Student Study Team
<b>IEP</b>	Individualized Education Program	<b>TDD</b>	Telecommunications Device for the Deaf
<b>IFSP</b>	Individualized Family Service Plan	<b>UCP</b>	United Cerebral Palsy
<b>IPP</b>	Individual Program Plan	<b>VI</b>	Visually Impaired
<b>IQ</b>	Intelligence Quotient	<b>VMRC</b>	Valley Mountain Regional Center

## Important Numbers

The agencies on this page serve families in Amador, Calaveras, San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Tuolumne Counties.

### **Family Resource Network**

5250 Claremont Ave., Suite 239  
Stockton, CA 95207  
209-472-3674 or 800-847-3030  
Fax 209-472-3673  
[www.frcn.org](http://www.frcn.org)

### **Valley Mountain Regional Center**

Mailing Address:  
P.O Box 692290  
Stockton, CA 95269-2290  
[www.vmrc.net](http://www.vmrc.net)

### **Main Office**

San Joaquin County  
702 N. Aurora Drive  
Stockton, CA 95202  
Telephone 209-473-0951  
Fax 209-473-0256

### **Branch Office**

Stanislaus County  
1820 Blue Gum Ave.  
Modesto, CA 95358  
Telephone 209-557-2173  
Fax 209-526-5763

### **Branch Office**

Amador, Calaveras, and Tuolumne  
Counties  
704 Mountain Ranch Road, #203  
P.O Box 1420  
San Andreas, CA 95249  
Telephone 209-754-1871  
Fax 209-754-3211

**Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA)  
for special education services in specific school districts.**

**Amador County**

**Amador County SELPA**  
Amador County Office of Education  
217 Rex Avenue  
Jackson, CA 95642  
Telephone 209-257-5330  
[www.amadorcoe.org](http://www.amadorcoe.org)

**Calaveras County**

**Calaveras County SELPA**  
Calaveras County Office of Education  
P.O. Box 760  
185 S. Main  
Angels Camp, CA 95221  
Telephone 209-736-6020 or  
209-736-6016  
[www.ccoe.k12.ca.us](http://www.ccoe.k12.ca.us)

**Stanislaus County**

**Modesto City SELPA**  
Modesto City Schools  
Special Education Office  
426 Locust  
Modesto, CA 95351  
Telephone 209-576-4155  
[www.monet.k12.ca.us](http://www.monet.k12.ca.us)

**Stanislaus County SELPA**  
Stanislaus County Office of Education  
1100 H Street  
Modesto, CA 95354  
Telephone 209-541-2944  
[www.stancoe.org](http://www.stancoe.org)

**San Joaquin County**

**Lodi Area Special Education Region**  
Serving Lodi Unified, New Hope  
Elementary, Oak View Union School  
Districts  
1305 E. Vine Street  
Lodi, CA 95240  
Telephone 209-331-7061  
[www.lodiusd.net](http://www.lodiusd.net)

**Stockton Unified SELPA**  
Stockton Unified School District  
445 W. Weber, Suite 128  
Stockton, CA 95202  
Telephone 209-933-7120 x2560  
[www.stockton.k12.ca.us](http://www.stockton.k12.ca.us)

**San Joaquin County SELPA**  
Serving Banta, Escalon, Jefferson,  
Lammersville, Lincoln, Linden, Manteca,  
New Jerusalem, Ripon, and Tracy School  
Districts

Mailing address:  
P.O. Box 213030  
Stockton, CA 95213

Office located at  
Education Services Center  
2707 Transworld Drive  
Stockton, CA 95206  
Telephone 209-468-4925  
[www.sjcoe.org](http://www.sjcoe.org)

**Tuolumne County**

**Tuolumne County SELPA**  
175 So. Fairview Lane  
Sonora, CA 95370  
Telephone 209-536-2040  
[www.tuolcoe.k12.ca.us](http://www.tuolcoe.k12.ca.us)