

# Thinking About Transition

Transition means change. It happens in everyone's life in many different ways. Some of us look forward to change, while others don't like it. Either way, change is a part of life. Perhaps one of the best things we can do for our children is teach them to deal with change. Transition in early intervention services means going from one program to another, such as:

- ◆ from the hospital to your home, or
- ◆ from infant-toddler services to preschool services, or
- ◆ from preschool services to kindergarten.

These mark what may be the first of many transitions, including educational transitions. They show the end of one service and the beginning of another. When your child turns three, responsibility for funding services changes from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services to the Public Schools of North Carolina. This transition on the third birthday involves a change in who pays for your child's services, and it involves new providers or teachers, and different settings. Discussions and planning meetings will take place with your Early Intervention Service Coordinator (EISC) before your child turns three and you can talk about your options and the transition process.

## Helpful Hints for a Smoother Transition

Transition involves talking and working together with others in your home, school, and community. The following activities and tips have been useful to North Carolina families involved in the transition process.

- ◆ Start early. You can never begin a transition process too soon. Keep a simple journal (notebook) about your child's activities, interests, and milestones. Medical reports and previous evaluation summaries are important. This notebook will quickly provide information to your child's service provider during that transitional period. Think about these early years as a time to learn more about the programs in your community.
- ◆ Be prepared to share any ideas that have worked for you with your child (such as behavior strategies, communication systems, likes, and dislikes).
- ◆ Ask your child's teacher if your child can bring a comfort item from home (such as a stuffed animal or favorite toy) during the transition period.
- ◆ Explain to your child's teacher how you can be reached when questions arise.
- ◆ Visit and tour your child's future school with and without your child.
- ◆ Encourage communication between your school personnel and private providers who work with your child.
- ◆ Find out what the Preschool Program offers for new families and choose how you will participate (such as open house, observation scheduling).
- ◆ Meet as many school employees as you can who will be a part of your child's school day (such as secretary, bus driver, janitor, teacher, principal, and others).
- ◆ Ask your child's new teacher for a list of times when the two of you can talk during the year. Find out other ways you can communicate with each other on a regular basis, like a notebook system, phone calls, or email.
- ◆ Ask about ways to link with other families in your community (such as parent-to-parent support groups, Family Resource Center, Health Department resources).
- ◆ Ask about special transportation, if needed.
- ◆ Check buildings to see if they are accessible for your child. Look at how the room is arranged and restroom adaptations.
- ◆ Talk with other families of children who have already moved into the Preschool Program.
- ◆ Contact the Family Support Network (FSN) at (800) 650-6526 or the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC) at (800) 962-6817.