

EARLY CHILDHOOD TRANSITION TEAM
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Team Members

Tresco Outreach and Training Services - TRESKO TOTS
New Mexico State University Doña Ana County Head Start - DACHS
Gadsden Independent School District Federal Programs
New Mexico School for the Visually Handicapped - NMSVH
New Mexico School for the Deaf - NMSD
Children, Youth and Families Department - CYFD
Gadsden Independent School District (GISD) Early Childhood Special Education Program - Part B

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this agreement is to define the respective roles of the Gadsden Independent School District Early Childhood Transition Team (ECTT) members in order to ensure coordinated and adequate planning among the members and to facilitate the integration and coordination of timely services to eligible children from birth through five (5) years of age.

II. GOALS

- A. To ensure that all children with, or at risk for developing, disabilities or developmental delays are identified in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and/or Head Start Performance Standards as early as possible and receive appropriate and necessary services;
- B. To coordinate services among members of the ECTT in order to facilitate a seamless transition of students between and among participating agencies;
- C. To formalize the referral procedures among participating agencies;
- D. To facilitate communication and establish productive working relationships among all members of ECTT by organizing and participating in transition planning conferences at least quarterly.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Tresco Outreach and Training Services (Tresco TOTS)
 - 1. Undertake transition planning for each child and family at least six months before the child is eligible to transition from Tresco TOTS services.
 - 2. In August of each year, notify the GISD special education department of children that reside in the geographic area served by the district that may be eligible for early childhood services including the number of children, the nature of each child's disability and the nature of services the child is receiving.
 - 3. Identify the steps in the individualized family service plan (IFSP) required to ensure a smooth and effective transition to early childhood programs.

4. Inform the parents of a child who turns three years of age during the public school year of the option of either entering the early childhood program anytime during that school year or remaining with Tresco TOTS for the remainder of that school year.
5. Convene a transition conference, with all required members, at least 90 days prior to the anticipated date of transition, but no later than 90 days prior to the child's third birthday, to carry out the steps required for transition to preschool programs for which the child may be eligible.

B. NMSU Doña Ana County Head Start (DACHS)

1. Undertake transition planning for each child and family at least six months prior to the child's third birthday.
2. Participate in and support efforts for smooth and effective transition.
3. Assist parents in becoming their child's advocate as they transition.
4. Prepare staff and parents for the entry of children with severe disabilities in the Head Start program.
5. Consider availability of Head Start and other child development or childcare services in the community.

C. GISD Federal Programs

1. Participate in and support efforts for smooth and effective transition.
2. Assist parents in becoming their child's advocate as they transition.

D. New Mexico School for the Visually Handicapped - NMSVH

1. Provide a comprehensive overview of the transition process including eligibility for vision-specific services and support information for families.
2. With family and LEA, collaboratively consider placement options and participate in the IEP/IFSP process.
3. Participate in the 90-day transition meeting either through attendance or through written documentation of present levels of child's progress, areas of concern and consideration of placement options.
4. Support each family in acquiring a current medical eye report prior to transition.
5. Provide a current functional vision assessment, orientation and mobility assessment, learning media assessment, as appropriate to support decision-making process.
6. Support a family's referral to NMSVH Outreach Department for services if the receiving LEA does not have qualified vision personnel on staff to meet the needs of the child.
7. Work together with other local FIT providers and/or LEA to best meet the needs of children who are blind/visually impaired in the community and support the attainment of outcomes and goals contained in the IFSP/IEP.

E. New Mexico School for the Deaf - NMSD

1. Provide a comprehensive overview of the transition process and provide information on services to families, including eligibility and enrollment information.
2. Contact the local LEA through its Joint Powers Agreements to collaboratively consider placement options and participate in and conduct the IEP/IFSP meeting.
3. Participate in the 90-day transition meeting and if acting as Service Coordinator, facilitate the meeting as per FIT Agency responsibility.
4. Support each family in acquiring a comprehensive and current evaluation including audiological prior to transition by providing evaluation options including use of the NMSD Albuquerque Preschool Evaluation services.
5. Support IEP teams by providing facilitation of in-depth dialogue related to Special Consideration for children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing as mandated by IDEA at the 90-day transition conference and IEP meeting.
6. Refer final receiving agency to NMSD Outreach School Age Consultation Program if placement is other than NMSD Preschool.
7. Refer family to NMSD Step*Hi Home Based Program for direct services to children through age 5 if appropriate and with family consent.
8. Work together with other local FIT providers and/or LEA to best meet the needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing in the community and support the attainment of outcomes and goals contained in the IFSP/IEP.

F. Children, Youth and Families Department - CYFD

1. Investigate referrals of abuse and neglect by a parent, guardian, or custodian.
2. Refer those children identified during the course of an investigation and those children in the department's custody who have, or are at risk for, delays or disabilities to the appropriate agency.
3. Work collaboratively toward the safety and well-being of children and families.

G. MECA Early Intervention Service Providers

1. Introduce families to the transition process and establish an individualized transition plan as a part of the child's IFSP.
2. Provide non-identifying information to receiving agencies regarding the number of children and the nature of their disabilities who are eligible to transition in the coming school year.
3. Arrange for the family to visit potential receiving agency programs.
4. Provide identifying referral information to appropriate receiving agencies including evaluation and assessment information, present levels of performance and current IFSPs in preparation for the 90-day transition conference.

5. Schedule and facilitate an individual transition conference for each child at a time and location convenient to the family, to review the child's service options, renew, review or establish a transition plan, review the current IFSP, evaluation and assessment information, present levels of performance, and ensure the coordination of transition matters including the provision of uninterrupted services to the child and family.
6. Attend IEP meetings as scheduled by Part B service provider.
7. Provide follow-up service coordination, as needed, to evaluate the transition process and ensure that the new services are meeting the child and family's needs.

H. Gadsden Independent School District Early Childhood Program

1. Promote parent and family involvement in transition planning with Tresco TOTS and related services providers at least six months before the child is eligible to enter the GISD early childhood program;
2. Assist parents in becoming their child's advocates as the child makes the transition through systems;
3. Contact Tresco TOTS as part of the district's child find efforts in order to identify children who may be eligible to enter the GISD Part B Early Childhood program in future years;
4. Establish and implement procedures to support successful transitions including parent training; professional development for special educators and general educators; and student and parent self-advocacy training and education;
5. Convene an IEP team including parents and qualified professionals to review existing evaluation data for each child entering the early childhood program and, based on that review, identify what additional data, if any, are needed to determine the child's eligibility for early childhood services or develop an appropriate program;
6. Develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures to ensure a smooth and effective transition from Tresco TOTS to early childhood and/or DACHS programs;
7. Participate in transition planning conferences arranged by Tresco TOTS no less than 90 days prior to the anticipated date of transition or the child's third birthday, whichever occurs first.
8. Initiate a meeting to develop an eligible child's IEP at least 15 days prior to the child's entry into the early childhood program to ensure uninterrupted services. The IEP team will include parents and appropriate Tresco TOTS personnel and other agencies/programs the child has participated in.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the following signatures are affixed:

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Gadsden Independent School District Superintendent Date

Gadsden Independent School District - Early Childhood Program Date

Gadsden Independent School District Federal Programs Date

Tresco Outreach and Training Services - TRESKO TOTS Date

New Mexico State University Doña Ana County Head Start - DACHS Date

New Mexico School for the Visually Handicapped - NMSVH Date

New Mexico School for the Deaf - NMSD Date

Children, Youth and Families Department - CYFD Date

MECA Early Intervention Service Providers - MECA Date