

# Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities

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## **PRESCHOOL TRANSITIONS**

### POLICY

It is the intent of the Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities to provide preschool students, both those with developmental delays and typically developing peers, with smooth transitions into the Stark DD preschool program when first enrolling; within the Stark DD preschool program when changing classrooms; and into the next setting, whether another preschool program or a kindergarten placement.

Stark DD early childhood staff members shall work in partnership with Stark County Early Intervention Service Coordinators, local school district representatives, and parents in providing all necessary information, transition meetings, tours, and support to assure a smooth transition for each preschool aged child.

<b>Historical Resolution Information</b>		<b>Reviewer(s):</b>  Early Childhood Director
<b>Date</b> 1/22/19	<b>Resolution Number</b> 01-03-19	

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## **PRESCHOOL TRANSITIONS**

### PROCEDURES

#### **Students with Special Needs**

Prior to entering Stark DD Preschool:

- Early Intervention Service Coordinators may invite the Stark DD Early Childhood Director to attend Transition Planning Conferences for children enrolled in early intervention that are held approximately 90 days prior to a child's third birthday. Services that may be available to that child through Stark DD will be discussed with the parents at that time.
- For children not involved with early intervention, school districts will directly refer a child for possible enrollment and may invite the Stark DD Early Childhood Director to attend an IEP/placement meeting.
- Parents will have an opportunity to tour the Stark DD preschool center at a time convenient to them so they have more information with which to help make the decision for their child's placement.
- For children whose IEP teams end up choosing Stark DD for preschool, the parents will be encouraged to bring their child to the weekly early childhood community playgroup that is held at Eastgate Early Childhood & Family Center in order to acquaint the child to the environment prior to beginning preschool.

For children age-eligible to transition to kindergarten services:

- The teacher has informal discussions with parents of children who will be 5 years old the following fall and eligible for kindergarten, to start the transition process.
- Beginning in February, formal Transition meetings are held with parents, teachers, the Stark DD Early Childhood Director, and district special education representative during which evaluation, placement options, and possible services are discussed.
- Visits to placement options for the child are set up with the parents and the district. Teachers are permitted and encouraged to attend visits if the parent would like.
- Observations of the child, while at Stark DD preschool, may be planned with district staff so they have a better idea of the needs and strengths of the child they are getting the next year.
- Depending upon the child, on occasion a school district may have a child spend Fridays of the second semester of preschool in a kindergarten classroom in the district they feel will be a good fit for the child. This is so everything will not be brand new for the child the following fall.

#### **Typically Developing Peers**

Prior to entering Stark DD Preschool:

- Parents complete an application to attend the Stark DD Preschool program.
- Children attend a play based developmental skills screening. Five to ten children typically attend each screening session.

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- Parents are given a tour of the Stark DD preschool while their child is participating in another room with the staff and an overview of the typical peer program is presented to the group.
- For children who are asked to be part of Stark DD as a preschool typical peer, the parents are encouraged to bring their child to the weekly early childhood community playgroup that is held at Eastgate Early Childhood & Family Center in order to acquaint the child to the environment prior to beginning preschool.
- If the screening team has concerns about the age appropriate development of any of the peer applicants, parents will be encouraged to contact their local school district and request an evaluation just to make sure they are developmentally on target.

When ready to transition to kindergarten:

- Notices are sent home directing parents to watch for kindergarten registration activities within their home districts from about January on of their last year in preschool.
- Teachers discuss options for placement with parents during parent conferences in March and offer support/guidance.
- Classroom staff completes the Transition Skills Checklist, which is used throughout the county, which allows the receiving teacher to know a little about each child prior to entering their kindergarten classroom.

## **For All Students Attending Stark DD Preschool – Special Needs and Typical**

- Classroom staff will conduct home visits, prior to the school year starting, in order for the child and parents to meet the staff and begin establishing a relationship centered around the child.
- An Open House is held the day before preschool begins in order for the child and parent to visit the preschool building and classroom. A school bus will also be available during the open house in order to give the child and parents the opportunity to sit on the bus and ride around the parking lot prior to that first day of school.
- Half of the students are scheduled to attend the first day of school with the other half of students attending the second day of school. This allows the students to adjust initially to the preschool environment with fewer students and thus less visual and auditory stimulation.
- Fire Drills and Tornado Drills are held each of the first two days with only half of the students present so that these often upsetting activities may be handled with only a few students at a time.

## **For All Students Who Change Classrooms within the Stark DD Preschool**

- Parents receive a letter with the name of their child's teacher prior to school starting. We then follow all other beginning of the year procedures as previously listed.

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- If the school year has already begun and the need arises to change a child's classroom, the parents are called by the Early Childhood Director and the reasons for needing the classroom change are discussed. An offer is made to meet in person with the parents to discuss the change further.
- If the change is okayed by the parent, a plan is arranged between the old and new classroom staff members for the child to spend graduated time within the new classroom with staff from the former classroom, decreasing their time with the student in the new classroom.