



# Bureau of Special Education

Connecticut State Department of Education | April 23, 2020

## Guidance for Children Turning Three during the COVID-19 Health Emergency

*This is a working document, which may be updated frequently due to the rapidly changing response to this pandemic emergency and ongoing Federal guidance updates.*

Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7DD and the Office of Early Childhood's implementing order allow for children who turn three during the COVID-19 health emergency to continue to receive Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) services with their Birth to Three provider. This expansion of coverage is intended to ensure that all children and families are receiving the necessary support services during this unprecedented crisis, where as a result of school closures and social distancing mandates, there may be a delay to complete comprehensive evaluations to determine a child's eligibility to transition to services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B.

This expansion of early intervention services is in effect only for children who turned three on or after March 16, 2020, through the end of the period of school class cancellations.<sup>i</sup> If a local educational agency (LEA) has been or is able to complete a comprehensive evaluation of a child who turns three on or after March 16, 2020, appropriate transition planning and placement team (PPT) meetings should be convened, and if eligible, an individualized educational program (IEP) developed. In such cases, an IEP should be developed and services implemented, to the greatest extent possible, through the continued educational opportunities that the LEA is providing to the school population. A parent may choose not to have the IEP implemented on the child's third birthday (e.g., wait for schools to be back in regular session by parent choice). An LEA may choose to contract with a Birth to Three provider to provide the IEP services.

Children who turn three during the school closure period, and for whom eligibility for IDEA Part B services have not yet been determined because a comprehensive evaluation involving face-to-face or in-person evaluations is delayed due to public health orders, are able to have their IFSP continue to be implemented by Birth to Three providers. The LEA should continue to maintain regular contact with the family and should keep documentation of these contacts. These contacts are an important interim step in developing a positive relationship with the child and their family and will help with immediate engagement once public health restrictions are lifted.

When school resumes normal operations, the LEA must complete the comprehensive evaluation and determine eligibility for transitioning children, as soon as possible, and if eligible, develop and implement the IEP.

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<sup>i</sup> This expansion of services based upon age does not apply to any child who turned three prior to March 16, 2020. While this change allows a child to receive services under Part C (Birth to 3) if they are older than 3, they retain the right, at any time, to instead receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) under Part B of the IDEA.