

Kinship Quarterly

Strengthening Families
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Early Childhood Intervention Services - Beyond ECI:

Are you the caregiver of a child receiving services from Health and Human Services Early Childhood Intervention program (ECI)? If so, you and the ECI team will develop goals and activities to help the child grow and learn, address the child's health needs, and the needs of the family. When a child nears their third birthday, it is time to work on a plan for transitioning him or her beyond ECI.

All children must exit ECI by their third birthday. We call the process of exiting out of ECI, "transition." Successful transition requires planning ahead with the ECI team and community service providers. Planning begins when your child is at least 27 months old, and no later than 90 days before the child's third birthday. ECI works with you to identify services and develop steps for transition specific to your child and family, and will assist you in finding programs that can continue once the child is no longer enrolled in ECI.

Determining Options

You and the ECI team will work together to determine the best options and what may be needed for the child to participate. Some examples are:

- Child care
- Private therapy
- Charter schools
- Head Start*
- Parent's Day Out programs
- Community recreation programs
- Neighborhood play groups
- Library story hours
- Classes for children, such as art, music, gymnastics or swimming
- School district Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)

**Head Start is a federal program that promotes school readiness for young children through agencies in their local community. Head Start and Early Head Start programs support children's comprehensive development from birth to age five, in centers, child care partner locations, and the children's homes. Children are eligible for Head Start based on income requirements; some slots are specifically reserved for children with disabilities.*

Parent involvement is a large component of this program. The Head Start Program Locator can help you find the program nearest you: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/HeadStartOffices>

Choices in your community

You and the service coordinator will discuss the child's interests, how you would like for the child to interact with others, and what your goals are for the child. They will help you explore options and schedule transition meetings with organizations or programs in your community that you might like the child to attend, and can also provide strategies to help the child fully participate in these programs and activities.

These meetings give you a chance to learn more about the services offered, find out about next steps and ask questions, but does not require the child to sign up. This is a time to look at each of the child's options. There may be more than one meeting, and if you are considering a group program for the child, the meeting may include visits to the program sites.

Important questions:

- Eligibility requirements
- Scheduling
- Costs/Insurance
- Transportation
- Documents needed to enroll in the program
- Availability for a child's special dietary needs
- Giving and/or storing child's medication
- Special accommodations such as wheel chair ramps.

Information to Share:

- Important information about the child and family
- Your hopes and dreams for the child
- The child's favorite toys and activities.

Choices in your local school district

Public schools have services called the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) which begin for eligible children on their third birthday. Eligibility is explored in a transition conference with representatives of your school district and ECI, three to nine months before the child's third

birthday. Meetings are conducted in your native language; please let your service coordinator know if you need translation or interpreter services, including sign language.

At the conference, school or ECI staff will:

- Explain eligibility requirements for ECSE services
- Explain procedures for determining eligibility
- Explain the steps and timelines
- Explain parental rights
- Explain the different types of information that may be needed from you
- Answer your questions and discuss your concerns
- Discuss extended year services and locations where services may be provided
- Explain that children may receive ECSE services in pre-kindergarten classes, and community settings such as preschool or Head Start.

To help school district staff understand your family, you can:

- Share ideas for goals and objectives that are important to your family
- Invite friends, relatives, and child care staff who may have useful information to the conference
- Describe the child's current activities and routines
- Describe what you want for the child in terms of future activities and routines

*Note: The school district program will address the child's educational needs, but unlike ECI, it does not address family needs. Before the child transitions out of ECI, your service coordinator will help you access services to meet your family's other needs.

For additional information on the child's transition, please contact your ECI service coordinator. For more information on ECI services, please visit the [ECI website](#).

ECI article provided by HHSC

Ten Inexpensive Activity Ideas for Children During Hot Summer Days:

1. Learn some new magic tricks and put on a magic show: <https://www.positive-parenting-ally.com/magic-tricks-for-kids.html>
2. Use baking to teach children about fractions.
3. Make popsicle stick catapults and let kids do target practice with mini marshmallows: <https://www.muminthemadhouse.com/make-lolly-popsicle-stick-catapult/>
4. Create Origami animals: <https://www.origamiway.com/origami-animals.shtml>
5. Collect and paint rocks
6. Teach kids how to plan a meal, create a shopping list, and make preparing food fun: <https://www.weareteachers.com/teaching-students-menu-planning-a-real-life-classroom-application-with-life-changing-implications/>
7. Decorate your sidewalk with washable sidewalk chalk and sidewalk paint.
8. Create a flower or vegetable garden, in the ground or in plastic pots.
9. Create an indoor obstacle course: <https://www.parents.com/fun/activities/indoor/indoor-obstacle-course-ideas-for-kids/>
10. Fun with bubbles, and easy bubble science experiments: <https://tipnut.com/make-bubbles/>
<https://www.homesciencetools.com/article/how-to-make-super-bubbles-science-project/>

Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT):

A one-time benefit for eligible families to buy food; families must meet at least one of these criteria:

- Children up to 21 years old who are certified for free or reduced-price meals at school in Texas during the 2019-2020 school year.
- Children 5-18 years old who received SNAP food benefits for the month of March 2020.
- Children who attend a school that offers free meals to all students (Community Eligibility Provision or Provision 2).

Who needs to complete an online application?

- Families that did NOT receive SNAP benefits for the month of March 2020 AND have children who are certified for free or reduced-price meals or who attend a school that offers free meals to all students.
- Families that received SNAP benefits for the month of March 2020, with children under 5 and/or between the ages of 19 and 21 as of March 17, 2020.

Who does not need to submit an application?

- Families who received SNAP benefits for the month of March 2020, who have children ages 5-18 as of March 17, 2020. Benefits will be loaded onto your existing SNAP card by May 22. No action is needed.

How do I apply?

- Your school will email you the application link in early June. Applications will be open until June 30, 2020.
- If you get SNAP benefits and your child is approved for P-EBT, Texas Health and Human

Services (HHS) will put funds on your current Lone Star Card. If you do not currently get SNAP benefits, HHS will mail you a P-EBT card loaded with benefits.

Watch Kids Around Water Safety Campaign Tips

Always Supervise Children who are in or near water!

- ❖ A responsible adult should always supervise children in or around water. Keep new swimmers and non-swimmers within arm's reach.
- ❖ Make sure the adult knows CPR and has a phone to dial 9-1-1.
- ❖ Have floatation devices available to use in a rescue (ones that can reach and float).
- ❖ Drowning is quick and quiet. The adult should be undistracted at all times.
- ❖ Share rules with anyone who may watch your child.

Teach Water Survival Skills

Sign up your child for swim lessons. Make sure they are taught to:

1. Return to the surface if they fall in over their head.
 2. Float or tread water.
 3. Turn in a circle in the water and look for an exit.
 4. Swim 25 yards (75 feet).
 5. Get out of the pool without using the ladder.
- http://www.helpandhope.org/water_safety/

Resources

- **Texas Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program (CEAP)**
<https://www.benefits.gov/benefit/1579>
- **Available Services for Youth and Young Adults in Foster Care**
www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/default.asp
- **Smoke Alarm help and Fire Prevention**
<https://www.tdi.texas.gov/fire/fmalarmprograms.html>
- **The Texas Veterans Portal** connects veterans, their families, and caregivers to benefits earned through their military service.
<https://veterans.portal.texas.gov/>
- **Medicaid – STAR Health** provides a full-range of Medicaid covered **medical and behavioral health services** for children in DFPS care. One benefit is **transportation**. Visit the HHS website to learn more. <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/questions-about-your-benefits#star>
- **IRS Adoption Credit Info:**
<https://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc607>
- Qualifying for and setting up appointments for **WIC:**
[Texas WIC](#)
- Agencies qualified to verify caregivers as foster parents in Texas:
https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Adoption_and_Foster_Care/Adoption_Partners/private.asp

Parenting Resources

- **Texas Parent to Parent** - For parents and caregivers of children and youth with disabilities. Information about Medicaid changes, transition planning, education, and access to local resources. Holds conferences and workshops free or with stipends available. www.Txp2p.org
- Resources and links for Parenting help www.helpandhope.org
- Information about DFPS Kinship Care [www.dfps.state.tx.us/Adoption and Foster Care/Kinship Care/](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Adoption_and_Foster_Care/Kinship_Care/)
- PBS Kids www.pbs.org – Learning fun with your child’s favorite characters
- Star Fall www.starfall.com: Practice phonics skills with read-along stories
- Reading Success tips and worksheets www.sightandsoundreading.com/
- Child Safety Questions and Answers [www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child Protection/Child Safety/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Child_Safety/default.asp)
- Summer Camp Information <http://www.campsusa.org/resources/>
- YMCA Camps <http://www.ymca.net/find-a-y-camp/>
- Boys & Girls Clubs of America <https://www.bgca.org>
- Parenting a Child Who Has Experienced Trauma: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/child-trauma.pdf>

Regional Kinship Caregiver Support Groups

Regional Kinship Support Groups (KSG) provide regional/local opportunities for kinship caregivers with open CPS cases to obtain greater insight of the CPS system. The KSG is a venue where kinship caregivers who have successfully exited the CPS system share their experiences, knowledge of the system, procedures, etc. with kinship caregivers currently involved with CPS.

Please contact your Kinship caseworker to locate a Regional Support Group near you. Tips and Information about upcoming Kinship Caregiver Groups are on our Facebook Page for Kinship Caregivers: www.facebook.com/TexasKinshipCaregivers.



Report abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children, the elderly, or people with disabilities at (800) 252-5400 or www.txabusehotline.org.