

FEEDBACK FOR THE NYS PRESCHOOL TASKFORCE
Submitted to Subcommittee
August 13, 2007

Parent Responses

- What if age 3 really meant 3 and children needed to move into preschool at the time of their 3rd birthday?
 - Benefits
 - It would offer a solid rule which everyone would abide by.
 - Comments
 - The children who turn three in May/June would stand to lose summer services because there would not be enough time to document regression.

- What if Extended School Year did not have the strict regression requirements/justification and children could automatically have 6 weeks of limited services when entering Preschool over the summer?
 - Benefits
 - ALL children can benefit from consistency.
 - Challenges
 - It all comes down to money--the biggest challenge? Getting districts and counties to agree to this.
 - No Impact/Doesn't Matter
 - There would be a tremendous positive impact on the children (and their families) who are in need of consistency and intensive programs to maintain skills.
 - Comments
 - ***"My child has multiple challenges and is low functioning child --having to prove regression is impossible if there is no place for the child to regress to--my heart was broken---again---in listening to my service providers fighting with the county about trying to get summer services for my child.....What parent should ever have to go through this pain?"***

- What if all providers served both EI and Preschool programs?
 - Benefits
 - More seamless transition and consistency
 - Ease of transition

- If you are a provider of one system (EI or Preschool) and not in the other, please list the reasons why.
 - Comments
 - ***"Some counties limit the number of contracts they have with EI providers because this is a way to limit the number of***

services they have available ---I found this out after taking a county to mediation."

- What gaps from system to system need to be addressed to make the transition seamless for families and most effective for children?
 - Comments
 - Counties play games with families "we don't have services right now or here is the list ---give people a call"
 - Too much variability among counties---some counties send reps that dictate to the committees what the services will be that "they" will approve---it has nothing to do with what the child needs.
 - Cost effectiveness of SEIT vs. Center-based programs
 - Parent advocates---need training so they are effective
 - **"Need for integrated settings for even the most severely handicapped child--who better to model appropriate behavior than a typically developing child? The committee chairperson stated to me---your child does not need speech---he can't even make a sound...this is a gap---who is training these people??"**
 - Understanding the continuum of services---**"A county rep told me my child needed a self contained placement if a 1 to 1 aid was needed---that 1 to 1s are not allowed in integrated settings (really!!!!)---but everyone else thought with a 1 to 1 he would do great in an integrated placement---that is where I want him".**
 - **"My child had a great transition from EI to preschool---the preschool was very accomodating. We were allowed to visit and send time in classrooms and with the therapists. This allowed me to get to know the people who would be working with my child. Now it is time to transition to school age and I am having a very hard time. I wish the process could be the same...it would really help me out. Maybe there could be a discussion of what transition activities should look like, with a range of options that families could pick from....or maybe have teachers from the public school spend a day visiting during the summer. My preschool has offered to go to my child's classroom in the fall to assist in the transition if the district indicates they want this to happen. As a parent I want this to be a part of my child's IEP for the fall."**
- How can communication be improved from system to system?
 - Comments
 - **"What communication? As a parent I served on the regional planning groups for EI---the recommendation then (and now) isone system for 3-5 based in an educational model (not a medical model). This would be a good starting point---maybe really listen...."**

- ***“Even this task force has a steam roller feel to it.....have the committee chairs visited preschool programs? How does one chair a committee without this context?”***
- What needs to be put in place to ensure successful integration into early childhood programs (child care, UPK, Head Start, etc.)?
 - Comments
 - ***“Parents need to have a choice in where to place their young children---Is the state ready to have charter school options for pre-K so parents can opt out of a low performing district right away?”***
- How can we increase the capacity and availability of preschool programs (i.e. special classes) that some children require?
 - Comments
 - Incentives for people to work/teach in rural areas and create unique programs that allow children to progress
- What other suggestions around transition and service delivery would you like to make?
 - Currently EI has service coordination for the 0-3 piece, but many parents have felt that there is nothing in 3-5 that takes this place.
 - ***“Parent choice for evaluation and placement is a really strong part of the current system; please don’t change things that ar working really well for families”.***
 - Preschools serve in the role of coordinating services and keeping families connected with one another...How do we keep families connected later in school age programs?
 - ***“Half day programs are a joke...does this mean young children only need half on what everyone else gets-----this at a time when their development is growing with the greatest speed. This has always confused me...I think it is a money thingnot what children really need. Look at Kindergarten...does half day work there??”***
 - Too much emphasis on finances at CPSE meetings, not enough on serving the needs of the child--this presents a CONFLICT OF INTEREST. ***“My child with autism got 3 half hours of servces per week in EI--- BECAUSE the county rep told me that was the maximum they could give out---and I believed them”.***
 - There needs to be more involvement of preschool staff with transitioning into school based programs--currently preschool staff are discouraged from attending the CSE transition meetings by many districts---they don't want to hear from the preschool staff who really know the child because they are afraid they made need to provide more services than their standard formula..
 - ***“Parents need to have easily understandable information training sessions on what their rights are. Handing them 3 pages of***

procedural safeguards does not in fact really inform parents. Parents don't know about many of the resources---there needs to be a better way to get information to families about what is out there".

- **"Preschool services were the gold standard for me---once I hit the district I became a "bother". I hear the same from other parents....public schools just don't get what they need to do for young children. Has there been any thought to extending the time children can spend in preschool to include their kindergarten year?"**
- **"I was counseled by the district to keep my older child out of school because he had an August birthdate...they indicated that children this young don't have the social skills or maturity to cope---I would NEVER send a preschooler to the public school system---it is scary to think about it. Are they really ready for potty training? They are not the experts in this area and are struggling to keep up with all of the new state requirements for older children."**