

Early Childhood Special Education Position Statement High Plains Education Cooperative

Federal and State laws require special education and related services for students with disabilities. The laws are intended to ensure that children with disabilities are provided a free and appropriate public education in accordance with their individual needs. Early childhood special education as defined by the federal law known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is for 3, 4, and 5 year-old children with disabilities who require special education.

General Philosophy about Early Childhood Intervention:

High Plains Educational Cooperative early childhood intervention is family focused and supports children who may have disabilities in one or more of the following: social, communication, motor, cognitive and adaptive skills. Support services are provided to children in their natural environment, which may include the home, daycare, preschool, and community settings. Collaboration occurs between the adults who care for the child so that learning occurs all day, everyday.

Early Childhood Special Education Assessment:

Children are assessed in their natural environment through play activities using a curriculum-based assessment that measures the child's skills across all developmental domains (social, communication, motor, cognitive, adaptive). Caregivers report child's interests and their priorities and then learning activities are developed and embedded within the child's daily routines.

Transition Services from Infant Toddler Programs (Part C) to Early Childhood Services Ages 3-5 (Part B):

Before the child's third birthday, High Plains Educational Cooperative collaborates with Part C Infant/Toddler providers by:

1. Going on a joint home visit to meet the family and child
2. Providing information about the transition process and services provided by Part B providers
3. Reviewing IFSP outcomes and family priorities
4. Conducting a team meeting with family and Part C providers to plan appropriate instructional goals

Our goal is to provide a seamless transition of services for the family.

Transition Services from Early Childhood to Kindergarten:

Early Childhood providers team with elementary interrelated service providers by:

1. Sharing developmental information by reviewing IEP outcomes
2. Going on joint transition visit to preschool or other setting
3. Conducting transition meeting with family, general education teachers, early childhood special education and interrelated service providers

HPEC Early Childhood Practices:

1. High Plains Educational Cooperative believes in providing services to children in their natural settings (those settings the child would attend if they did not have a disability).
2. High Plains Educational Cooperative believes in embedding a child's instructional goals within their daily activities. Learning can occur throughout each day and between visits of professionals.
3. High Plains Educational Cooperative believes children learn best through developmentally appropriate play and by participating in a variety of learning opportunities.
4. High Plains Educational Cooperative supports the concept of Primary Coaching where one member of a multidisciplinary team provides support to a family or other caregiver while receiving coaching and supports from other team members.
5. High Plains Educational Cooperative believes that parents are their children's best teachers. Coaching and collaboration occurs between the Early Childhood professional and the parent to develop the most appropriate learning goals and activities for children.
6. High Plains Educational Cooperative believes in continual staff development. Research based practices and interventions are integral to support services.