Comparison of Early Intervention (El, Part C of IDEA) and Preschool Special Education Services (Part B of IDEA)

The following “side by side comparison” is intended to assist families and others in understanding the similarities, as well as some differences between **Part C Early Intervention Services** and **Part B Preschool Special Education Services.**

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|  | **Early Intervention (El)** | **Preschool Special Education** |
| Governing Federal Laws | Part C of the Individuals with  Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) | Part B Section 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) |
| Ages Served | Birth until third birthday | 3 through 5 years, unless identified under a birth mandate classification, which includes autism, deaf/blind, hearing impairment, and visual impairment, including blindness. |
| Evaluation | A multidisciplinary team completes a developmental evaluation of all five areas of development, including adaptive, (self- help) cognitive, communication, physical, and  social emotional development. An assessment of the family’s strengths, needs, concerns, and current resources is also conducted. | Appropriately licensed professionals review current information about the child and determine whether further information/testing is needed to determine if the child is eligible for preschool special education. If needed, further evaluation will be provided. |
| Eligibility | A child must have a diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in a significant delay in development OR a child must demonstrate a significant level of developmental delay in one or more areas of development. Information gathered from the evaluation and assessment processes are used to inform eligibility. | A child is found eligible based on the determination of a disability or condition which prevents the child from receiving reasonable benefit from general education without additional supports. |
| Family Involvement | Parent(s) must be involved in the development of the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) and are members of the IFSP team. They inform the goals and outcomes on the IFSP by sharing their goals and priorities for their child and their family. | Parent(s) must be members of the Individual Education Program (IEP) team which includes the evaluation, eligibility determination, and IEP development, as well as making decisions about the education of their child. |
| Direct Family Support | Each eligible infant or toddler and their family is assigned a service coordinator who coordinates services and assists the family throughout their involvement in  the El system. Service providers also work with the family based on the goals in the IFSP. | A case manager may be assigned to each child with an IEP. |
| Type of Plan | An IFSP documents the family's desired outcomes for their child, as well as any supports and services to be provided.  IFSPs are reviewed at least every six months with the family, service coordinator, and EI provider(s)and rewritten annually. | An IEP documents the child's educational goals, services, and placement; the IEP also describes how progress will be measured.  IEPs are revised as needed and are rewritten annually. |
| Service Philosophy | El services support the family's ability to help their child learn and develop, and to empower families to advocate for their needs and the needs of their child. | Special education is an educational service that is instructional in nature. Related services (for example OT, PT, transportation) are provided when they are needed for a child with a disability to access learning; all services listed in an IEP are the responsibility of the local  school district. |
| Delivery of Services | Natural Environments - El services are provided in places where infants and toddlers without disabilities participate, such as the child's home, child care setting, or in other areas in the community. Their family and child's everyday routines of the day are used as natural opportunities for learning. | Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) - To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities and/or special learning needs are educated with children who are nondisabled. Special classes, schooling or other removal of the child from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature and severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. |
| Cost of Services | Services are mostly paid through private insurance (with parent’s consent) and Medicaid. IDEA Part C federal funds are used to pay for services as last resort. | Special education and related services are provided at no cost to parent and within a "Free and Appropriate Public Education" (FAPE) |
| Recipient of Services | Recipients of supports and services may be the Infant/toddler and the child's family. | Special education and related services are provided to the child or on behalf of the child. |
| Procedural Safeguards and Dispute Resolution | Copies of this document are presented to the family during multiple points in the early intervention journey. | A copy of this document will be provided to the family by school district prior to evaluation to determine eligibility for preschool special education service or can be obtained by going to  <http://regulations.delaware.gov/> AdminCode/title14/900/926.pdf |
| Transition | An IFSP meeting is held to develop a Transition Plan for every child between the time the child turns two years three months and two years nine months.  The local school district will be notified if the child is potentially eligible for preschool special education services.  A transition conference is held for each child at least 90 days prior to the child's third birthday | Prior to the child's third birthday an evaluation will be completed to determine if the child is eligible for preschool special education services. If the child is determined eligible for preschool special education services, an IEP will be developed by the child's third birthday. |