

Boise State University

**ScholarWorks**

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IPS/BAS 495 Undergraduate Capstone Projects

Student Research

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Summer 2023

## **Organizing the Process**

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Organizing the Process

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Summer 2023

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### Abstract

The capstone project that I chose to complete for this semester is program organization. Our developmental preschool program offers services for children with disabilities from three to five years of age. Having a well-organized and structured program is a foundational must as so much time is consumed with paperwork and meetings. As a first-year preschool teacher, I started the school year with more questions than answers, and answers that confused me even more. The way it is currently set up is with piles and piles of loose files stacked up on a desk, and post-it notes with all sorts of information as well as reminders. We constantly receive referrals for new students throughout the year, and the piles and piles of files on a desk make it very difficult to keep track of what needs to be done.

*Keywords:* Organization, Flow, Simplicity

## **Section 1: Introduction to your Capstone Project**

Teacher burnout is real, and walking in those shoes was not an easy task. When the school year began, I felt confident that I would learn program processes pretty quickly, but I soon realized that it was going to be a very bumpy road. I had some experience with special education paperwork as a translator, but not with the entire process from referral to eligibility. I felt like I was digging a deeper and deeper hole as the year went on, but then realized that we did not have an organized process and that was making the admin part of the job harder. We were spending too much time on paperwork, and less and less time in the classroom. My idea for my capstone project was inspired by the children in our program. I asked myself, are we spending meaningful time in the classroom with the children or are we taking that time away from them due to paperwork overload?

The project began with the question, how can I help simplify the paperwork process and eliminate piles and piles of documents sitting on a desk? We began by emptying out all the filing cabinets in the classroom that had been used by previous teachers. We found procedures dating back to 2008, piles and piles of unnecessary double copies of parent information, student information, pamphlets, old testing materials etc. With the help of the school administrator, school psychologist, speech pathologist and program director we created a list of what processes needed to be clarified and what practices needed to be updated. I began my search to obtain special education manuals, and program information to create quick guides, a para to do list, and classroom schedule. Now that I have all that completed, the next step is to implement it once we go back to school.

## Section 2: Elements coming together

As a newbie my perspective was “chaos”, and the answers to my questions were just not making sense. I felt like the program was still functioning based on old practices, and did not meet the current student demand. The enrollment number has tripled from a few years ago, and there is not enough adult help to meet the needs of the program. Due to funding, the district cannot hire more people to help, therefore the team had to brainstorm other ways to help with the overload. We had a couple of meetings before the school year ended, and discussed what I could work on during the summer. The proposal template in IPS492 helped me identify what was the problem I was most interested in working with now and feel that once I can get my professional life organized then I can start conquering other aspects of my life. In a way I blended my either/or statement and included a para to do list. I still have to complete a para schedule.

At first, I was very frustrated, because there are only two teachers in our developmental preschool program; the other teacher was not 100 percent on board with changing certain aspects of the program. It took some time to understand the other teacher's perspective and consider her point of view. I know that change is not easy to adapt to, especially when processes have been done the same way for years. I approached the problem with frustration and did not realize that the vibe I was sending was more aggressive than helpful. I also knew that if I did not try to find a solution, then we would have another school year spending more time out of the classroom instead of working with the children.

I knew we did not have a huge budget, and it would be extremely difficult to hire more help. Our program was not flowing like it should, and everyone was extremely overwhelmed. There was so much unnecessary clutter, and there was not a specific place where I could find the answers to my questions. Service providers were overwhelmed with the number of children that

were falling through the cracks, and having to rush evaluations because they did not have notifications for new students that needed to be assessed. Instead of having so much paper clutter, I thought about creating a spreadsheet that included all children, from new referrals to current students where everyone could keep track of their eligibility and annual status. Create a filing system to keep track of potential students, eligibility progress, and goal monitoring.

I was able to accomplish my project with the help from everyone on the team. Working with the school psychologist and speech pathologist was extremely helpful, as they worked directly with me to figure out what it was I needed to learn and where I could find the information I needed to research. They also worked with me on creating a spreadsheet that could be shared with the team, that way everyone knows exactly what is going on with every student and any assessments that need to be completed. The most important thing is to have everyone on the same page, and aware of what goes on. For all of us to have the same information and follow a similar process so that our workflow is not as hectic.

### **Section 3: Results**

The fact that I was able to overcome the fear of saying what I felt was not working or the challenges I was facing as a newcomer made an impact, because in previous years the building administrator and program director had not been directly involved. The results will be better measured once we go back to school. Almost everyone in the team has been involved with the creation of my project, therefore I do not foresee that it will be unsuccessful. I also know that there might be changes along the way if there is information that needs to be added. The project was cost effective because I created PDF documents for it, and the only expense I really had was printing the special education manuals, purchasing three ring binders, and dividers. The use of technology helped with creating and organizing everything I needed. All stakeholders will

benefit from having a program that is better organized and is not so time consumed in paperwork. Success will happen when every child is monitored, tracked, and accounted for without compromising teacher sanity. The actual impact is having competent, knowledgeable, and resourceful teachers that have the time to do what they are hired to do, which is teaching. Children benefit from teachers that have the time to facilitate meaningful learning, and families benefit from teachers having the time to communicate with them.

I shared my capstone project with the special education program director and received positive feedback from her. She thought the project looked good, and suggested some changes to the program flyer, and the “consent to test” guide. I will make the necessary changes and share it with the rest of the team.

#### **Section 4: Conclusion**

The results that I wanted to accomplish with the project is to start the year with a plan. Share the quick guides created, the schedules, spreadsheet, and to do list. I knew I was going to have to read a lot, and after reading through the special education manuals I realized that special education is very complex. All the work that happens behind the scenes up to the eligibility meeting is an extensive process, and that is only the beginning in a child's educational journey. What I wish I would have done differently is work more with the other teacher to get her input as well. We are expected to work together for the future success of the program, but sometimes fixed mindsets make it a bit more challenging. Our first team meeting coming back from break will be on August 16th, and my project will be discussed with the other teacher so that she is on the same page as well. My hope is that she is willing to share her opinions and be more open to the use of technology for our paperwork process.

## Section 5: References

Idaho Training Clearinghouse. <https://idahotc.com>

About Infant Toddler Program | Idaho Department of Health and Welfare.

<https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/services-programs/children-families/about-infant-toddler-program>

<https://www.sde.idaho.gov/sped/sped-manual/files/chapters/chapter-5-individualized-education-programs/The-Idaho-IEP-Guidance-Handbook.pdf>

<https://www.jeromeschools.org/>

Jerome School District Special Education program director, school psychologist, building Administrator, speech and language pathologist.



### Section 6: Appendix

- Link to PDF files/ Capstone project

See end of document

- This is a snipped image of the spreadsheets created to track the student eligibility process.

I could not share the actual link because it has actual student names and dates of birth.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	Student Name	Date of Birth	IFT Program	IFT Transition Meeting Date	Eligibility Meeting Date	Annual IEP	Annual IEP Due Date	Meeting Date	Eligibility	Eligibility Due Date
2	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	FALSE			TRUE	02/03/2024		FALSE	2/24/2026
3	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	TRUE			FALSE			FALSE	
4	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	FALSE			TRUE	02/05/2024		FALSE	2/6/2026
5	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	FALSE			TRUE	2/13/2024		FALSE	2/14/2026
6	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	TRUE			FALSE			FALSE	
7	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	TRUE			FALSE			FALSE	
8	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	FALSE			FALSE	1/26/2023		FALSE	1/27/2026
9	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	FALSE			TRUE	5/15/2024		FALSE	5/19/2025
10	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	TRUE			FALSE			FALSE	
11	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	FALSE			TRUE	5/10/2024		FALSE	5/12/2026
12	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	FALSE			TRUE	5/16/2024		FALSE	5/17/2026
13	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	FALSE			FALSE	5/24/2023		FALSE	5/25/2026
14	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	FALSE			TRUE	1/26/2024		FALSE	1/6/2026
15	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	FALSE			TRUE	10/17/2023		FALSE	10/17/2025
16	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	FALSE			TRUE	4/24/2024		FALSE	4/26/2026
17			FALSE			FALSE			FALSE	
18			FALSE			FALSE			FALSE	
19			FALSE			FALSE			FALSE	
20			FALSE			FALSE			FALSE	
21			FALSE			FALSE			FALSE	



**Idaho Infant Toddler Program  
Family Guide for Transition**

*What Happens When My Child Turns Three?*



DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

# Special Education Manual 2018

*Approved by the State Board of Education*

*October 18, 2018*

IDAPA 08.02.03.004



IDAHO STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL EDUCATION  
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[WWW.SDE.IDAHO.GOV](http://WWW.SDE.IDAHO.GOV)  
CREATED 10/18/2018

app 1

app 3

app 4

app 5



## Early Childhood Webinar Series – Part C Notification and Tracking


Shannon Dunstan - SSIP and Early Childhood Coordinator  
Alisa Fewkes - Data and Reporting Coordinator

***Supporting Schools and Students to Achieve***

SHERRI YBARRA, ED.S., SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

# Idaho IEP Guidance Handbook



 **IDAHO SESTA**  
SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORT  
& TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE



A colorful background featuring a rainbow with pink, orange, and green bands, set against a light blue sky with white, fluffy clouds. Small pink and orange flowers are scattered throughout the scene.

# J.E.E.P

## **DEVELOPMENTAL PRESCHOOL**

**Monday- Thursday**

**Morning Session: 8:30am - 11:00am (3-4 yrs)**

**Afternoon Session: 12:00pm - 3:00pm (4-5 yrs)**

**Meals provided**

(free, reduced, or full price- must submit application)

**Transportation provided to  
and from school**

**830 10th Avenue E Jerome ID 83338**

**(208) 324-1287**

# Consent for Assessment Process



- |                           |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |
|---------------------------|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| AA= Anchor Assessment     | - | Fill out all required information, including all determined necessary assessments. | - | Obtain parent/guardian signature, and upload to EDPlan | - | Inform district office that consent has been signed by parent/guardian | - | Send the original signed consent through district mail, and wait for testing approval. |
| ST= Speech Therapy        |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |
| PT= Physical Therapy      |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |
| OT= Occupational Therapy  | - | Finalize document and print.   | - | 60 day timeline to complete assessment(s) begins       |   |  |   |  |
| DH= Developmental History |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |

# ED PLAN ELIGIBILITY GUIDE

1. **Click on the Referral > Eligibility Tab**

2. **Click on the Evaluations Tab**

(make sure to click The team is not considering Specific Learning Disability (SLD))

3. **Under Assessment Data/Evaluations**

You should see all of the assessments that were clicked on the consent form here.

## **For the Assessments/ Evaluations**

### **When you put in your information (Anchor Assessment) you will need to:**

1. Click on the Early Childhood Anchor Assessment
2. Click Add Assessment
3. Click the Assessment drop down box and choose the assessment that was given
4. Write in in the interpretive information
5. Mark who the evaluator was
6. Mark the Date it was completed
7. Add in the Subtest areas (These will match what is on the protocol)
8. Mark the score types that you will use (Standard Deviation, Percentile Rank, and Descriptor)
9. Input the scores to match the scores
10. Hit save and it will close out of the assessment
11. Scroll down to the bottom of the assessment you put in
12. Click on the Validity Statement and Testing Observation Tab
13. Input what you observed and if the assessment is considered valid or not
14. Click **save**



## **Click on the Referral > Eligibility Tab**

## **Click on the Eligibility Report Tab**

\*Make sure parents check boxes are marked

## **Under Evaluation Team Information**

\* Make sure all team members are in there (anyone who has done testing) and parents are clicked

## **Under Summary of Findings/ Adverse Effects on Educational Performance**

**Tab C:** N/A. At the preschool level home is the natural environment

**Tab E:** Either mark no or yes. If yes --> At the preschool level there is not an assessment for English proficiency. It should be noted [student] comes from a home where Spanish is the primary language and this was taken into consideration.

## **Under Summary of Evidence**

**Tab A:** Write a short summary of the assessments you completed.

**Tab B:** Write an adverse effect based on what your assessment states or write there is not an adverse effect.

**Tab C:** Write the specially designed instruction based on what the assessment shows or write that [student] does not need specially designed instruction based off the assessments.

## **Under Eligibility Determination**

Do not click if [student] meets or does not meet criteria

\*You will complete this at the meeting based off the team discussion

If you know the date of the meeting, you can input the date of the meeting under the Eligibility Determination Date

If starting a new IEP for a new SpEd kiddo, you click IEP Process

# IEP Guide



## 01

### IEP Overview



1. Click the checkbox for parents
2. Meeting purpose
  - a. Initial = new
  - b. Annual = old
3. If you know the meeting date put it in and the rest of the dates will populate
4. IEP Type = student's in early childhood
  - a. Unless it is a transition to kinder and it will be kinder through age 21
5. Was the student served in Infant Toddler?
6. Put in what assessment and the day they completed it.
7. Put in the IEP team - who is going to be at the meeting?

## 02

### Early Childhood Outcome Rating

1. Complete the ranking section
2. Put in age-appropriate, immediate, and foundational skills
3. Write goals for appropriate outcome areas
4. Click, "Written Progress will be provided with issuance of general education report card"



### Services with LRE

## 03

1. Add Special Education Services for outcome services
2. Related service is where service providers will put in their information
3. Optional statement of delivery - you complete **(Google sheet)**
4. Least Restrictive Environment --> Click, "Enter Early Childhood Placement"
  - a. Answer the questions - you might need to ask parents
5. Placement considerations - **google sheet**



## 04

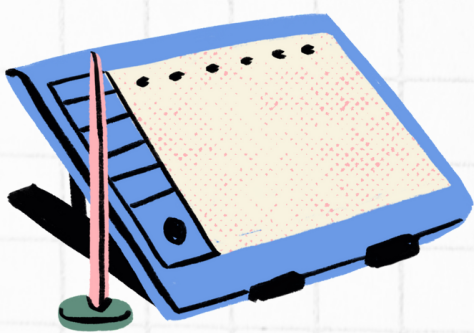
### Special Considerations



1. Transportation - do they ride the bus or dropped off? - **Google sheet**
2. Answer questions based off what you know.
3. Limited English --> if yes, "[At the preschool level, there is not a test for English proficiency. [Student] comes from a home where Spanish is the primary language.]"

### State and District Assessments

1. This Automatically fills in.
2. No for Alternative Assessment and Not Tested at this Grade Level



## 05

### Create and View Forms

1. This includes the written notice - complete after the meeting **(google sheet)**
2. Does the student have Medicaid reimbursable services
3. Was a copy provided to parents - yes
4. Click, "Include Spanish Translated version for draft and final"

# Infant Toddler Transition Timeline

## Child Age: 2 years 6 months

Infant Toddler Program Notification  
Information for child is obtained and tracking begins

## Child Age: 2 years 9 months

Infant Toddler Program has transition meeting with school district

Infant Toddler program provides any assessments progress notes and updates to school district

School district obtains consent to assess and/or starts evaluations

If no new testing is needed, scores will be pulled forward. Registration packet must be completed, and eligibility meeting scheduled.

If new testing is needed registration packet must be completed, assessments and possible evaluations should be discussed with service providers. Signed referral and consent form.

## Child Age: 3rd Birthday

If eligibility criteria **are** met, team members must hold an eligibility meeting, and an IEP will be created and ready to implement by the child's 3rd birthday

If eligibility criteria are **not** met, team members must hold a meeting to discuss eligibility.

- ★ If the family is not interested in the program, basic information must be entered into powerschool. A written notice must be completed. The school secretary must be notified, and documents need to be sent to the sped department via district mail.

# AM DAILY SCHEDULE

8:30-8:40	Arrival time/ Toys - Fine motor toys and puzzles - Check backpacks
8:40-9:00	Circle time (Academics) -Interactive songs, calendar, weather, jobs, assign centers
9:00-9:30	Centers - art, writing, math, pretend play w/ timer
9:30-9:50	Breakfast - Wait until everyone is done
9:55-10:15	Circle time (Social Emotional) - Social story, social activities
10:15-10:50	Recess
10:50-11:00	Clean up, water, backpacks, line-up
	Kids line- up - Bus line - Pick-up line

# PM DAILY SCHEDULE

12:00-12:10	Arrival time/ Toys - Fine motor toys and puzzles - Check backpacks
12:10-12:30	Circle time (Academics) -Interactive songs, calendar, weather, jobs, assign centers
12:30-12:50	Lunch - Wait until everyone is done
12:55-1:15	Circle time (Social Emotional) - Social story, social activities
1:15-2:00	Centers - art, writing, math, pretend play w/ timer
2:00-2:40	Recess
2:40-2:50	Snack
2:50-3:00	Clean up, backpacks, line up
	Kids line- up - Bus line - Pick-up line

## Daily

- Take off chairs from tables
- Take out a few fine motor toys, and puzzles for arrival
- Get supplies ready for circle time and centers
- Have videos and songs ready for circle time
- Get students of the bus
- Check backpacks
- Assist with toileting needs
- Help guide children through transitions
- Assist with and during activities
- Assist with meal times
- Make sure that any projects or paperwork goes in backpacks at the end of the day
- Help get students on the bus
- Wipe down tables, sweep, and open classroom window

## Friday's

- Sanitize toys
- Make needed copies
- Prep lesson materials
- Make sure every child has a picture and name card
- Check snack cabinet
- Check cubbies for diapers, wipes and extra clothes

## Monthly

- Trade out new month activities
- Trade out toys