

## Case Study #2:

Mariluz receives home based services through her school district's early intervention program. Her family has been involved since she was very young because Mariluz was diagnosed with Down's Syndrome. The IFSP services consist of weekly home visits with a Spanish interpreter from the school district and an early childhood special education (ECSE) teacher. The interpreter and the teacher partner with Mariluz's family to address her IFSP outcomes by using and enhancing her natural learning opportunities, mostly in the home. The family is working on helping Mariluz to: use signs to express her wants/needs, learn how to follow directions, and become more independent with eating and dressing. A speech language pathologist comes with the interpreter and the teacher on a monthly basis, with the services coordinator making at least monthly contacts as well

Since Mariluz will turn 3 in April, her mother, Corazon, is beginning to worry about how Mariluz, who is an only child, will adjust to attending a preschool setting. Her local school district does not have their own preschool but there are 2 community preschools, Little Paws and ABC Kids. One of Corazon's concerns is that Mariluz, who spends all her time at home with her parents, will not know how to interact with other children. Corazon is also concerned about how Mariluz will react to following a structured preschool routine because her only consistent environment has been the family home. Mariluz has also never been with adults other than her parents and her extended family and Corazon wonders how she will react to the new teachers.

During her December home visit, Corazon expresses her concerns to the early childhood special education teacher. Corazon does want Mariluz to go to preschool, but she has many questions. The teacher knows that the school principal is trying to plan for Mariluz's attendance in a preschool setting, but he has not yet met the family.

What needs to happen next? What decisions does the family need to be considering, and what activities and steps are needed? What involvement should the school district have? When does the transition planning begin and what activities are needed? In addition, what opportunities should be considered for Mariluz prior to making the transition into a preschool setting, particularly given Corazon's concerns?

## **Possible responses for case study #2:**

Transition planning must begin no later than 90 days prior to the child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday, therefore the transition conference must be held no later than January, prior to Mariluz's April birthday. The family would have the option to remain on an IFSP until August 31<sup>st</sup> and so the services coordinator needs to have conversations with the family about: the differences between the early intervention and Part B services, continuous and extended year services, the preschool options available, and what they feel they might envision themselves doing in terms of coordinating services more independently. All of this as well as other required steps/activities must be documented on the transition plan.

Since Corazon is interested in Mariluz attending preschool but also has many questions, the services coordinator and the ECSE teacher will want to help Corazon set up some visits to the preschool, with and/or without Mariluz, as well as facilitating conversations with the preschool teachers at the two sites about how they each prepare for and ensures the participation of young children who have not had prior experiences with and in groups of children. If possible, the preschool teacher could also make visits to the home, so that she can meet Corazon and Mariluz in their home environment.

The services coordinator and the ECSE teacher may also want to encourage and assist Corazon to consider other opportunities within the community which might be available for young children of Mariluz's age such as going to the park, mother's groups, play groups, etc. to see how Mariluz responds and help with what might be needed.

Finally, the school's principal, who represents the school district should be made aware of the situation and possibly give Corazon the opportunity to meet him so she can share information about Mariluz when she feels it's appropriate. Transportation will be another topic to be discussed.

All of these activities and steps should be documented in the IFSP transition plan as they occur, with the first steps of considering the option of remaining on the IFSP (and thus in Part C services) discussed and articulated at, or prior to the January transition conference.