

## **Promising Practices for Early Supports and Services Parents Regarding Early Childhood Transitions<sup>1</sup>**

*Stay involved in the transition process.* Many questions and options will need to be discussed and decided upon during this period of time and it is important that parents remain involved throughout the entire process and afterwards

*Be prepared to participate in meetings before you get there.* Discuss with your partner what is most important to you. Make a written list of your questions. Bring someone with you to the meeting to take notes. It is hard to take notes and participate fully at the same time.

*You know your child better than anyone else.* Follow your instincts when making important decisions, more often than not you will be right.

*If you are given unexpected options, ask questions.* Make sure you understand any implications for needed services.

*If you don't feel comfortable making a decision, don't do it.* You have the right to take information home to think about or to discuss with people in your personal support system. It is important, however, to let the school district know of any problems or concerns as soon as possible, as not making an important decision could delay services to your child.

*Know what the rules are, and make sure you understand them.* It is important to be aware of the rules regarding both early supports and services as well as the rules regarding special education preschool.

*Research your options.* It is important to understand your rights, as well as what the schools must do and what they do not have to do. This will help you to have a better understanding of what options may reasonably be expected to be available for your child.

*Use local support groups to help you – you do not have to go through this process alone.* The Family Support Program and Early Supports and Services providers should be able to help you locate local support groups.

*Use available resources.* Resources available to all families include:

Parent Information Center – advocacy and information

Family Support Program – advocacy and referral to other community services

Parent Mentoring – asked to be connected with another parent who has recently completed the transition process.

‘Change Is In the Air’ brochure – available through your service coordinator, this brochure provides useful information about the transition process.

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<sup>1</sup> Promising practices were identified during the 2002 NH Family Support Conference workshop: ‘Is There A Black Hole After Early Supports And Services...Or Not!!!’, Grand Summit Hotel, Bartlett, NH. Workshop co-presenters: Leela Guild, parent; Tina Macleod, parent; Audrey Epstein, ESS provider, Children Unlimited, Conway; and Carolyn Stiles, Director, NH Family-Centered Early Supports and Services program, Concord.

