SPACE COAST EARLY STEPS (ES)/LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA) OF BREVARD COUNTY INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Interagency Agreement is to implement procedures to ensure a smooth transition for children and their families leaving the Part C services of Space Coast Early Steps (ES) and moving into Part B services of the Local Education Agency (LEA) of Brevard County.

The procedures set forth in this agreement are intended to facilitate the following:

1. Compliance with federal and state regulations between agencies
2. Communication and collaboration between agencies in order to avoid duplication and gaps in services
3. Ensure a smooth, seamless, family-centered transition by age three
4. Involvement of the child’s family in planning transition from Part C to Part B
5. Ensuring timely referrals of children to Part B services

II. Participating Agencies

This Interagency Agreement is between Space Coast Early Steps and the Brevard Public Schools (BPS). Space Coast Early Steps is the lead agency in Brevard County responsible for implementing Part C, a federal and state funded program serving developmentally delayed children from birth to age three. The Brevard Public Schools is the Local Education Agency responsible for implementing Part B, a federally funded program for the education of students with disabilities from age three to twenty-one.

III. Authority

The agreement between Space Coast Early Steps and the Brevard Public Schools is authorized by federal and state regulations, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Public Law 99-457 and Chapter 393, Florida Statutes, respectively. These laws mandate minimum requirements for facilitating the transition of children served in the Part C program into the Part B program.

IV. Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this Interagency Agreement, the following terms will be used:

1. **Children’s Registry and Information System (CHRIS)** is the statewide tracking system for pre-kindergarten students with disabilities.

2. **Exceptional Student Education (ESE)** refers to the district level department of the Local Education Agency that provides special programs and related services to students who meet
eligibility criteria and need educational support within the public school system in order to benefit from educational instruction.

3. **Family** includes parents or guardians, siblings, grandparents, caregivers and other persons designated as family members by parents or guardians.

4. **Family Service Coordinator (FSC)** is a case manager available to the family to help coordinate resources and ensure prompt and efficient services to the child and family participating in Part C.

5. **Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resource System (FDLRS)/Child Find** is a resource, referral and screening agency for children birth to age twenty-one who may be eligible for Exceptional Student Education services.

6. **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** is a written plan that describes the special, individual learning needs of a student with disabilities and the exceptional student education programs and services which will be provided to that student. The IEP is the authorizing document for services provided through Part B.

7. **Individual Family Support Plan (IFSP)** is a written plan developed through a family-centered planning process which identifies the specific concerns, priorities and resources of the family as they relate to the child’s development, and coordinates the services required to meet the needs of the child within the context of the family. The IFSP is the authorizing document for services provided through Part C.

8. **Individual Family Support Plan Team** is a multidisciplinary team comprised of family and professionals involved in the evaluation and/or intervention of a Part C child. The team provides input needed to develop and implement the Individual Family Support Plan.

9. **Notification process** informs school districts that a child living in their district is receiving services from Early Steps. Notification is an important part of the Child Find process and is required under the IDEA. It helps school districts plan for children who may need preschool special education at age three.

10. **Part B** is the section of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that provides Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) to students with disabilities from age three to twenty-one. The Local Education Agency may also provide services under this section to infants and toddlers with disabilities. Eligibility criteria are mandated through federal and state regulations, and services are funded with public monies.

11. **Part C** is the section of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that mandates a comprehensive, coordinated multidisciplinary system of early intervention services for infants and toddlers from birth to age three with developmental delays and established conditions.

12. **Receiving Agency** is the agency to which the child will be transitioning.

13. **Referral Packet** is a packet of information that includes demographic, consent and diagnostic information that is provided to the receiving agency to prepare for the transition of services.
14. **Sending Agency** is the agency currently serving the child and family.

15. **Service Provider Agency** is an agency currently providing required services to a Part C child.

16. **Target Population** refers to children from birth to age five with special developmental and educational needs.

17. **Transition Conference** is a meeting required by federal and state regulations and policies that must be conducted at least 90 days prior to the child’s third birthday or, with the consent of all parties, up to nine months prior to the child’s third birthday.

18. **Transition Information Packet** refers to a packet of resource information to assist families in decision-making as their child goes through the transition of exiting the Part C system.

19. **Transition** is the process supported by collaboration between agencies to provide a continuum of services to assure a smooth movement from one program to another.

V. **Working Procedures and Timelines**

A. **Notification**

1. CHRIS - Space Coast Early Steps will notify FDLRS of all children upon determination of eligibility for Part C to be entered into CHRIS. Brevard County’s FDLRS and CHRIS will communicate this information to the LEA.

2. Parents may opt out of notification to LEA.

B. **Transition Planning ~ 24-36 months**

24-29 months of age:
1. The service provider agency and/or FSC should start an ongoing dialogue with the family about the remaining period of service and begin preparing the family to plan for their child’s aging out of Part C services.

2. The FSC will provide a Transition Booklet (Fish Book) to each eligible child’s family during the IFSP meeting after the child turns 2, or upon eligibility determination if said occurs on/after age 2. This booklet includes questions family members have frequently asked about transition. It also includes descriptions of many statewide programs that may be available in your own community.

3. Early Steps will provide BPS documentation of functional vision and functional hearing, OAE, or formal audiological. If a formal vision and/or audiological evaluation have been completed by a specialist, Early Steps will defer vision and/or hearing screenings to those reports.
• Functional vision and hearing screens must be within two years – a pass in one ear is sufficient for developmental testing

27-31½ months of age:
1. An IFSP Transition Conference will be held. The FSC as specified in the Individual Family Support Plan is responsible for scheduling the meeting with the family, notifying members of the IFSP team, and ensuring participation of the necessary individuals. The LEA and ES must be represented at the Transition Conference unless opposed by the parent. Prior written notice will be sent to all IFSP team members.

2. An Authorization for Release and Exchange of Information to Brevard Public Schools, and ES Consent for Evaluation will be signed by the family. The IFSP team’s recommendations including the family’s input are documented on the IFSP Form I. (Transition Page).

3. During the Transition Conference, the eligibility evaluation process and service continuum are explained to the family. A review of the referral packet is completed to determine the need for additional information. The IFSP Form I is updated to document any additional steps needed to complete transition. Signatures of participants must be obtained. The need for further evaluations for the purpose of Part B eligibility will be determined during the Transition Conference. Informed Notice and Consent for Re-evaluation (B12d) for those children already eligible for BPS will be completed by LEA.

4. The FSC will submit a referral packet to the Transition Staffing Specialist at the Transition Conference, or no more than 2 working days thereafter. The packet will contain the most recent evaluations, the current IFSP, the Pre-K referral forms, the transition tracking form, and applicable audiogram (for children referred for Deaf/Hard of Hearing services), Medical Eye Report (K1) for children who are visually impaired; Physician’s Statement of Physical Impairment (G2) (for children who are physically impaired); Physician’s Referral for Educationally Relevant Physical Therapy Form (G3) (required prior to staffing for PT only); School Physical/Occupational Therapy Referral Form (G4)(for children who are being referred for OT or PT evaluation); for children referred for OT and/or PT the Pre-K Checklist of Educational Concerns (G7) is to be completed by people who know the child. All collateral pieces are required to be submitted to BPS by 33 months of age.

30 months plus 1 day - 34.5 months of age:
1. Transition evaluations will be completed for all children referred between 30 months plus 1 day to 34.5 months of age. All children being tested in a Transition evaluation must have a new “Permission to Evaluate and Treat” form signed by the parent/legal guardian and a new BDI 2 protocol completed. If a child is currently open to Part C they should not be evaluated through a Transition evaluation.

2. The transition team will consist of an ITDS/psychologist from ES and a speech-language pathologist from BPS at a minimum. As needed an occupational therapist is also a part of this team from BPS. This evaluation will serve as entrance into both the BPS and ES system. The speech-language pathologist from the school board will serve as the LEA and complete the Transition Conference during the evaluation.

3. BPS speech-language pathologist and occupational therapist will complete all the school board forms to include: Authorization for Release and Exchange of Information (Release 1),
Pre-K referral (Page 1 and 2), S/L-Speech and/or S/L-Language evaluation summary form, Plan of Care, all G forms listed above, and other referral forms as needed.

4. The referral packet will go to the Transition Staffing Specialist within two working days of the Transition Evaluation.

5. Updated evaluations by Early Steps providers must be completed by 32 months and submitted to LEA by 33 months. If not submitted by 33 months, BPS is responsible to complete testing.

6. For children with no hearing or vision documentation or who do not pass vision/hearing screenings, BPS will test as if the child is visually or hearing impaired. A second developmental measure via parent interview will be administered in addition to the BDI 2.

7. For children who have been referred to Early Steps and have not had their Part C eligibility determined by 34.5 months of age, an ES Initial Referral form will be sent directly to Child Find.

**Additional Referral Procedures:**

1. Early Steps will route all referral packets to the BPS Transition Staffing Specialist who will forward them to Child Find.

2. Child Find staff will forward the referral packet information to the appropriate area office.

3. The respective Pre-K Assessment Team members review referral packet information, any additional testing is scheduled, and the results of the review/testing are forwarded to the designated Staffing Specialist.

4. The BPS Pre-K assessment teams enter the BDI 2 data into the Data Manager and provide the score summary to ES for Part C Exit data.

5. The Staffing Specialist schedules a meeting to determine eligibility for ESE services prior to the child’s third birthday. The IEP **MUST** be completed by the child’s third birthday. The FSC and family will receive prior written notice. The Staffing Specialist provides a copy of the eligibility and/or IEP to the FSC and Child Find staff.

6. Child Find staff updates CHRIS to track the number of children who have completed transition and are eligible for ESE services. FSC will update the CHRIS notification form with reason for and date of closure and send to Child Find.

7. The Battelle Developmental Inventory 2 (BDI 2) will be administered by ES for both Entry/Exit for children that do not enter BPS. BPS will complete the Entry for BPS and Exit from ES. BPS will provide ES with the Score Summary Report for their Exit information. This test is also used for eligibility purposes for BPS.

8. If after BPS reviews current therapy reports/evaluations from ES and determines the child is ineligible, BPS will return original BDI 2 record forms to ES. ES will conduct the Part C BDI 2 Exit testing.
C. **Summer Birthdays**

Children turning three after the completion of the regular school year will be considered for Extended School Year ESE services. Students may start during the month of June for the extended school year or an agreement for continued ES services may be decided upon on a case by case basis. Placement considerations will include such things as extended school year, input from the family and natural breaks during the school year.

VI. **Implementation**

Education and training on the content of this agreement will be provided to the direct service staff of Space Coast Early Steps, the Brevard Public Schools Pre-k Assessment Teams, Staffing Specialists, and Child Find. A copy of this agreement will be shared with all Part C Service Provider Agencies and appropriate ESE Staff.

Written materials on the transition process will be provided and explained to families.

VII. **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The effectiveness of the implementation of this interagency agreement will be evaluated at least annually. The evaluation will consist of a meeting that includes, at a minimum, representatives from Space Coast Early Steps, the Brevard Public Schools, Child Find and a parent of a child who has recently been through the process.

VIII. **Dispute Resolution Process**

In advance of any conflicts that may arise as a result of the implementation of this agreement, the signing agencies agree that the first obligation for a timely resolution of the disagreement rests with those staff members who are directly affected by it. Therefore, in the interest of providing uninterrupted services to children and their families and in the spirit of cooperation, the parties who disagree will work to resolve the issue(s) utilizing the following procedures:

1. Staff from the grieving agency will write a letter in which the problem is identified and a corrective action plan is offered and sent to the other party.

2. Within five working days of receiving the grievance, staff from the receiving agency’s suggested solution is either accepted or amended, or an alternate suggestion is put forth.

3. If this is unsuccessful, both parties will agree to abide by the mediation of an impartial arbitrator selected by Early Steps. Referrals to this body will be made only after all of the above procedures have been exhausted.

4. Upon resolution of the conflict, a joint communication-of-solution will be developed by the respective agency heads.
IX. Duration

This agreement shall be valid from *March 1, 2010* or on the date of signature, whichever is later, and will remain in effect until terminated in writing. The agreement may be amended upon signature of all parties.

X. Signatures

The foregoing Interagency Agreement has been reviewed and approved by the parties listed below:

1. Space Coast Early Steps:
   
   Signature: _____________________________ Date: ______________
   
   Althea Puzio
   Program Director

2. Brevard Public Schools ESE Program Support:
   
   Signature: _____________________________ Date: ______________
   
   Sue Carver
   Acting Director

3. Florida Diagnostic Learning Resource Center:
   
   Signature: _____________________________ Date: ______________
   
   Sharon Tolson
   Director

4. Brevard County School Board:
   
   Signature: _____________________________ Date: ______________
   
   Dr. Brian Bingelli
   Superintendent

   Signature: _____________________________ Date: ______________
   
   Amy Kneessy
   Chairperson