



## Teachers' Corner

### Real-World Skills Instruction: A Preview to Prism 9



**Melissa N. Savage and Teresa Taber Doughty**  
*Purdue University*

**Emily C. Bouck**  
*Michigan State University*

Increasing numbers of students with developmental disabilities are receiving access to the general education curriculum, which in turn is generating questions about these students' ability to acquire real-world skills when served in a general education setting. Although inclusion offers many benefits, including accessing content-area curriculum and developing relationships with peers, the need to teach relevant real-world (i.e., functional) skills to students with developmental disabilities remains (Ayres, Lowrey, Douglas, & Sievers, 2011). In a real-world instructional approach or curriculum, skills include those related to domestic, vocational, community, and recreation/leisure domains as well as self-determination (Bouck, Taber-Doughty, & Savage, in press). Unfortunately, researchers have found that little time is spent on meaningful everyday skills instruction when general education academic content is prioritized (e.g., Collins, Hager, & Galloway, 2011). A new DADD Prism Series book that will be released in 2015, *Footsteps Toward the Future: Implementing a Real-World Curriculum for Students With Developmental Disabilities*, focuses on strategies for embedding or implementing a real-world curriculum across all environments for students with intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, or other developmental disabilities. In this article, we offer a glimpse into this work by discussing decision-making in relation to the curriculum, as well as strategies and examples for incorporating real-world skills learning into a variety of school and community contexts.

## Curriculum Decision-Making

Although academic and real-world curricula should not be mutually exclusive, debate continues regarding which curriculum should be prioritized for students with disabilities (Ayres et al., 2011; Courtade, Spooner, Browder, & Jimenez, 2012). When making curriculum decisions, educators should take into account student preferences, as well as quality-of-life outcomes for individual students (Hunt, McDonnell, & Crocket, 2012). Other factors that affect curriculum decision-making include policies (e.g., federal, state, district), school factors (e.g., geographic location), community factors (e.g., resources, opportunities), curricular materials, teacher factors (e.g., knowledge about a curriculum), and family preferences (Hunt et al., 2012). Choosing where to implement a student's curriculum and how to teach it are also important considerations.

### *Real-World Skills in General Education*

The general education classroom is the appropriate setting for meeting the educational needs of many students with a disability. Both general and special educators can collaborate to create a curricular approach that is academically challenging as well as inclusive of relevant real-world skills learning based on each student's needs. The appropriate balance of academic and real-world instruction requires educators to

1. examine appropriate content standards,
2. identify grade- and age-appropriate academic skills,
3. translate traditional academic skills into their real-world equivalents,
4. determine how additional instruction on real-world skills will occur,
5. deliver instruction, and
6. measure student learning within the general education setting (McLaughlin, 2012).

For example, when developing materials for a physical science lesson, educators can examine the Next Generation Science Standards (Achieve, 2015). One standard for secondary students (Grades 9–12) covers matter, energy, and organizations in living systems. Educators can then translate this to real-world equivalents—such as hygiene skills and applying sunscreen—and deliver instruction through lessons focused on ultraviolet rays to teach students about sunscreen and its effectiveness (Miller, 2012). Student learning can be

*(continued on page 7)*

## President's Message

Diane Zager



Welcome to 2015! As we enter the New Year, I'm delighted to be DADD's president and very much look forward to serving our membership and working with the dedicated and committed Board of Directors. This is a great time to be involved with DADD. My predecessor, **Amanda Boutot**, along with our executive director, **Teresa Taber Doughty**, paved the way for an excellent year ahead by guiding the board in 2014 in accomplishing several exciting achievements, such as updating the roles and responsibilities of the Executive Committee and streamlining the Board of Directors by reducing the regional representatives to two at-large representatives and a Canadian member. This change will permit more flexibility in tasks to be performed by board members. We'll be able to utilize board members' talents more efficaciously, reduce funds for board support, and most important, enhance board member roles by enabling them to better serve the "at-large" membership in lieu of the prior geographical focus for regional representatives.

This past year we had two spectacular conferences! Both the CEC Convention in Philadelphia last April and the DADD Conference in Clearwater in January were informative and stimulating, with dynamic presentations and strong attendance. We have an excellent program for the national conference in San Diego, to be held April 8–11, 2015. Of special note will be this year's DADD Showcase, *Intellectual Disabilities: Connecting a Retrospective to Current and Future Practice*, featuring **Tom Smith, Jim Patton, J. David Smith, Bob Stodden, and Michael Wehmeyer**. **Cindy Perras**, DADD's conference coordinator, has worked tirelessly to plan outstanding conferences for us, and this year's meetings promise to continue our successful track record of bringing our members exciting speakers and rewarding networking opportunities.

A bonus for DADD members is the excellent publications received by all members, including *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, edited by **Stanley Zucker**; *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, edited by **Alisa Lowrey** and **Kevin Ayres**, and *DADD Express*, edited by **Ginevra Courtade**. These internationally recognized publications provide research-based information to help us stay abreast of developments in the fields of autism and intellectual disabilities, covering effective strategies that help to inform our practice. Thanks to **Michael Wehmeyer**, our publications chair, and the editors who generously commit their time to the advancement of knowledge, DADD is a leader in the dissemination of information on evidence-based practices.

These conferences and publications comprise perhaps the most visible portions of your membership benefits. But behind

the scenes there's a lot happening. **Emily Bouck** chairs the Communications Committee and maintains our website communications. **Gardner Umbarger** heads the Finance Committee as treasurer of DADD. **Dagny Fidler**, the DADD secretary, prepares copious meeting minutes and maintains the archives. The Critical Issues Committee, Membership Committee, Diversity Committee, and Awards Committee meet at least twice a year to fulfill their designated responsibilities. Then there are the CEC Representative Assembly, CEC Program Advisory Committee, Interdivisional Caucus, and CEC committees in which several board members actively participate.

I'd like to welcome our new vice-president, **Elizabeth West**, and our new student representative, **Jenny Root**. Congratulations also to **Beth Kavanaugh** for her well-earned re-election to the board as our Canadian Member. Finally, President-Elect **David Cihak** has worked by my side throughout the past year, going far beyond his required role to plan conferences and serve on CEC committees as a stalwart supporter of the DADD Board and membership.

With my warmest wishes for a wonderful year ahead, I look forward to seeing you in San Diego.

## Editor's Note

Ginevra Courtade



Included in this issue are updates from many of our committees, including Membership, Publications, and Diversity. If you are interested in joining any committee, please see the Join a Committee section and email the chair of the committee you would like to join!

Do you have a great idea for teachers in the field? Every issue of *DADD Express* includes a Teachers' Corner article. If you would like to contribute information that would be beneficial to teachers, please contact me with ideas or questions ([g.courtade@louisville.edu](mailto:g.courtade@louisville.edu)). We are also looking forward to more submissions for our Evidence-based Practices and Law Briefs sections.

Thank you to those that attended and presented at the annual conference in Clearwater in January. Look for highlights and photos from the conference in the Summer 2015 edition of the newsletter. Happy Spring!



## Law Brief

# Understanding Part C for Families and Their Children with Autism and Developmental Disabilities



**Angi Stone-MacDonald**  
*University Massachusetts, Boston*

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) is divided into four parts. Each section specifies different aspects of education and services for children and youth with disabilities that should be covered in federal regulations (2004). Part C is the section of the law that specifically discusses the system for providing early intervention services to children from birth through age 2 years with suspected disabilities, diagnosed disabilities, or delays, and their families; that is, Part C services are available until the child's third birthday.

### Part C/Early Intervention Services

Part C provides guidance to states as to how to run their early intervention programs (IDEA, 2004). In the field of early intervention and early childhood education, the terms *Part C* and *early intervention (EI) services* are sometimes used interchangeably. Key tenets for the Part C programs are family-centeredness and a focus on the strengths and needs of both the child and the family.

While some states have provided services through public and private programs for families and their children from birth to age 3 years with disabilities, the Part C section that was officially added to IDEA in 1986 entitles all children and families who qualify access to EI services. The most recent regulations for Part C programs were issued in 2011. Part C is voluntary, so states do not have to provide an early intervention system, but all currently do. There is great variability in what services are offered in different states and how those services are delivered, but typically, children with disabilities receive home visits from specialists and therapists to work on skills needed to support their development and to help parents learn strategies to encourage their child's development in between visits. EI is provided to families at little or no cost to them and is free for families below the poverty line. Although services can be obtained for free, EI programs bill insurance first for these services, before using state and federal funds to cover the costs. The billing procedures can be complicated to work through for families and agencies.

In each state, responsibility for the EI program is assigned to a lead agency, usually a Department of Health, Education, or Human Services (Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, 2014). The lead agency sets the eligibility criteria and decides whether to include children *at risk* for delays or disabilities,

or only children with an actual diagnosis. As of 2006, eight states or territories provided services to at-risk children under age 3 (Shackelford, 2006). Each state is also required to convene a State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC), an advisory group to guide the lead agency. The SICC is composed of people from different state agencies that work with children and families, Part C personnel, and parents of children who receive or have received Part C services.

Educational specialists and therapists deliver EI. Depending on the state, families can work with an agency or with individuals who are contracted to work in the EI system. Each state has a system to ensure that these professionals are qualified and maintain certification as required by the law.

Children with genetic disorders or developmental disabilities that are present at birth are eligible from birth for EI services to support their growth and development. EI services also assist the family in obtaining resources and supports they need as a unit.

### Components of the Part C System

#### Child Find

Because Part C systems are required to serve all eligible children, each state has a system for finding these children and their families and evaluating them regarding eligibility for services. State Part C systems work with agencies and groups in the state that promote the well-being of families and children—homeless families, low-income families, and immigrant families—to find as many eligible children as possible, particularly traditionally underserved groups. Often, children with developmental disabilities identifiable at birth are referred to their local EI program through a hospital or pediatrician. Children with autism are often referred to EI based on concerns of the parent or pediatrician before the formal diagnosis of autism is made. Children with autism can be served under the category of developmental delay until a formal diagnosis is made.

#### Eligibility

States *must provide* services to any child “under 3 years of age who needs early intervention services” (IDEA 2004, §632(5)(A)) because the child has a developmental delay in one or more domains or a diagnosed disability that may result in a delay.

#### IFSP

For children who qualify, an Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP) is written by the family and EI staff. In EI, services

*(continued on page 8)*

## Executive Director's Corner



**Teresa Taber Doughty**  
Executive Director

and

**Gardner Umbarger**  
Treasurer



As new members, we often wondered about the benefits of our membership and what happened with the revenue generated. As we begin a new year, we thought we'd take this opportunity to discuss what it means to be a DADD member, the activities and opportunities in which members might participate annually, how the DADD Board of Directors works, as well as how we generate revenue and determine expenditures to support the division's work.

First, DADD members experience multiple benefits! Probably the most cited benefits are the receipt of two outstanding professional journals and the *DADD Express* newsletter. Both *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities* (ETADD) and *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities* are peer-reviewed journals with impact factors of 1.0 and 1.065, respectively. Our newsletter features not only the work of board members but also important and innovative practices directly from the classroom. In each issue we highlight the Teachers' Corner, which provides strategies for working with students with developmental disabilities and autism. We also offer Law Briefs and articles about evidence-based practices. Information sharing related to legislation or member happenings is directly communicated via Facebook, Twitter, and our DADD website. All members have an opportunity to directly participate on division committees and at our annual conference held in January each year. Finally, members may nominate and receive awards from DADD for their amazing work in professional service, research, and innovative teaching practices.

The DADD Board of Directors consists of volunteer professionals who are dedicated to providing information to our members, impacting policy at the federal level, advocating for members and individuals with ASD and DD, offering conferences for professional development, and providing resources for states with DADD subdivisions. We are also committed to addressing the critical issues of the field and writing and disseminating policy and research-based studies that influence the field. The Board of Directors works year-round to provide leadership and resources to our members while continually advocating for our field.

The Board is composed of four individuals in the presidential sequence; the treasurer; secretary; two at-large members; the Canadian and student representatives; and the conference, communication, and publication chairs. The board appoints both the Executive Director and ETADD editor. Board mem-

bers are responsible for all administrative decisions, leading committees, planning conferences, and preparing our publications. In addition to maintaining their full-time jobs in special education, they do an amazing job serving our division throughout the year. This group meets at the annual DADD conference as well as the CEC national conference to officially conduct the business of the division. There are often several decisions that need to be made throughout the year, so board members frequently meet electronically to discuss issues and recommend solutions or action steps. Overall, a busy and dedicated team of professionals serves on our board.

The division has four major sources of income. The two largest sources are membership dues and subscriptions to our journal *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities* (ETADD). These are income sources that vary from year to year. We have been fortunate over the past decade to subsidize these revenue sources with (a) proceeds from our division conferences that we moved to an annual basis and (b) revenue from publications created by members and sold through various markets. Over the past few tax-reporting years, this has amounted to approximately \$230,000 a year.

While this might seem like a great deal of money, these revenues support the benefits and essential services provided to members. The subscription to ETADD that all members receive costs upwards to \$80,000 a year to produce, which is offset by the subscriptions we receive. However, the cost offset has been decreasing over the years and will ultimately require greater subsidies from your dues. Your membership dues directly fund your subscription to *Focus on Autism and Developmental Disabilities* (which includes *DADD Express*), which cost us approximately \$37,500 per year. Our annual conference generates additional revenue, but it also costs us considerable money to rent meeting space, pay for speakers, print promotional materials, and provide food and hospitality for attendees. It is important to know that while we make some money, our conference revenues and expenses are fluid and vary from year to year.

One large expense that requires special mention is associated with board travel support. During my time as treasurer we have decreased the number of persons directly subsidized and moved our mid-year board meeting to coincide with our annual conference in an attempt to keep expenses reasonable. Almost all Board members serve with no other compensation, and they often are required to absorb additional attendance costs at their own expense. The Board of Directors is very aware of the expenses associated with Board-related travel, actively encouraging Board members to seek out the least expensive travel and lodging options, when available, and holding reimbursement rates steady even as expenses go up. What is important to know is Board members do much of the "dirty work" in the background that keeps the division running, from membership, to awards, to conference planning, to creating publications that bring us income. They are very much a "value added" to the membership of the division.

## Publications Committee Report

Michael Wehmeyer  
Chairperson



### New Prism Series Volume Available!

The DADD Board of Directors is pleased to announce that the 8th volume in the **Prism** series is now available for purchase through the CEC bookstore (<https://www.cec.sped.org/Publications>). This 8th volume in the Prism series, *Friendship 101: Helping Students Build Social Competence*, is co-edited by **Juliet E. Hart Barnett** and **Kelly J. Whalon**.

This latest release in the **Prism** series focuses on building social competence, friendship making, and recreation and leisure skills among students with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities. Chapters in this research-based, user-friendly guide address the needs of students in different developmental periods (from pre-K through young adulthood), providing teachers, parents, and teacher educators with tools and strategies for enhancing the social skills development of these children and youth. Presented through an ecological perspective, these chapters emphasize building social competence within and across school, home, and community contexts.

The **Prism** series is intended to provide practical and issues-oriented information related to serving children and youth with autism, intellectual disability, and related developmental disabilities. In addition to Prism 8, look for the following books in the **Prism** series: *A Guide to Teaching Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders*, edited by **Darlene E. Perner** and **Monica E. Delano**, and *Social Skills for Students with Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, available in both elementary and secondary versions, and authored by **Laurence Sargent**, **Darlene Perner**, **Mark Fesgen**, and **Toni Cook**.

## Communications Committee News

Emily Bouck  
Chairperson

DADD members, please remember that our new website (<http://daddcec.org>) allows members to log in to access members-only materials (e.g., the ETADD journal). Be sure to visit our website for important information about conferences and other division activities. We also encourage DADD members to find us on **Facebook** (search for *Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities*). DADD is on **Twitter** (follow **DADD\_CEC**). If members have suggestions for other materials for the website or ways we can better communicate with the you, please contact me ([ecb@msu.edu](mailto:ecb@msu.edu)).

## Diversity Committee News



Debra Cote  
and  
Elizabeth West  
Co-Chairs



The CEC DADD Diversity Committee solicits your input as the committee members address the diversity goals in the Strategic Plan. The committee members are engaged in activities related to developing a process to ensure diversity issues are addressed so as to represent diverse groups and the diverse needs of individuals with intellectual disability, autism, and other developmental disabilities.

If you are interested in participating in the work of the Diversity Committee, send an email to either of the co-chairs ([dcote@fullerton.edu](mailto:dcote@fullerton.edu) or [eawest@uw.edu](mailto:eawest@uw.edu)). We hope to see you in April at the CEC Convention in San Diego, California.

## Membership & Unit Development Committee News

Angi Stone-MacDonald  
Chairperson

We are now several months into the new membership structure from CEC, and some of you may see some similarities and differences in what you are receiving or the benefits of your membership based on your membership level. I would love to hear your thoughts on what benefits you are enjoying and what benefits you do not really use. I would also be interested in whether there are specific division benefits you like that we can highlight or support. We want this membership in both CEC and DADD to be beneficial to you and to help you learn and grow as a professional. Please share your thoughts by emailing me ([angela.stone@umb.edu](mailto:angela.stone@umb.edu)). You can also add your comments on Facebook or Twitter.

I would also like to remind you that one benefit of membership is the ability to participate and have your voice heard. You can do that at the upcoming CEC Annual Convention in San Diego by getting involved in division committee meetings and the general business meeting. We will also have student events and an event for new professionals—teachers and new faculty. Please check out the program and please join us!

## Students' Corner



**Leah Wood**  
California Polytechnic  
State University—  
San Luis Obispo



**Jenny Root**  
University of North  
Carolina at Charlotte

Meet Jenny Root. On January 1, 2015, Jenny began her 2-year term as the new Student Governor for DADD. Jenny is currently a second-year doctoral student at UNC Charlotte. She works with Diane Browder on several general curriculum access projects, and she is a graduate assistant for The Solutions Project, an IES grant dedicated to developing a word problem-solving curriculum for students with moderate and severe disabilities.

It has been a pleasure getting to know Jenny. She is an incredibly hard worker and one of the most on-the-ball doctoral students I have ever known. During my time as Student Governor, Jenny was an active, energetic student member of DADD, which makes this transition especially exciting; Jenny has helped develop many of our core goals and objectives, and she will be able to be a strong leader and voice for DADD student members.

We decided to interview Jenny as part of her transition to her new role. Here's what she had to say:

**Q:** Jenny, help us get to know you a little better beyond your vita. What are three things you can tell us about yourself—interests, hobbies, weird facts?

**A:** *As most doctoral students would probably agree, I haven't had a whole lot of time for outside interests and hobbies lately! However, I do absolutely love to travel and am a bit of a foodie. I have taken advantage of the different cities I have been able to go to for conferences to try new restaurants. I like just about every thing I try; usually the weirder the better to me! I also enjoy reading, and my favorite "outside the field" books are memoirs and biographies. Finally a weird fact—I have a phobia of bar soap.*

**Q:** You are, as we can all imagine, a very busy, over-worked doctoral student. Why then, did you apply to be the new Student Governor of DADD?

**A:** *I really believe in the value and power of professional organizations, and I think that by getting doctoral students invested in the organization and making them truly feel like members, the strength of the organization will grow.*

**Q:** Why have you chosen a career in special education?

**A:** *When I was in high school, a friend of our family had a young child with autism. Through interacting with that family over the span of a few years, I was able to see just how impactful special education teachers could be when they were well trained, listened to the family's concerns and goals, and coordinated services in a child-centered way. Unfortunately, I also saw what happened when those elements were removed. That experience made me want to be one of those teachers. While all teachers make a difference, teachers in the lives of students with ASD and other developmental disabilities make an impact that is felt by the family and often the community surrounding them. Once I began teaching and taking on leadership roles within my school and district, I knew that while I loved the classroom, what I really wanted to be was a teacher of teachers. From a different position, I could work with a greater number of teachers at the university level and at a national level through research to instill the use of evidence-based practices and person- and family-centered service within classrooms.*

**Q:** What are your research interests, in a nutshell?

**A:** *Overall, my research focuses on providing general curriculum access to students with ASD and other developmental disabilities through the use of technology, positive behavior support, and systematic instruction. My goal is to research methods of teaching skills beyond remembering and understanding that teach students critical thinking and problem-solving skills across content areas.*

Jenny, on behalf of all of the DADD members, welcome aboard. This is a really special opportunity to be an advocate for student members and the individuals with autism and developmental disabilities we all serve. Best of luck to you! Enjoy this time.

**Leah**

**DADD website:**  
<http://daddcec.org>

measured using a pretest–posttest evaluation or through event recording. In completing these steps, teachers increase the likelihood that students will acquire skills leading to greater real-world functioning.

### Real-World Skills in Other Settings

No matter where a student with a disability falls on the continuum of real-world and academic curricula, students can benefit from learning functional skills through natural contexts within school and community settings (McDonnell, 2010). Introducing and practicing real-world skills outside of the classroom can occur in numerous school settings, including

1. the cafeteria (e.g., waiting in line, making choices, cleaning up after the meal);
2. bathrooms (e.g., hand washing, locking the door for privacy);
3. playgrounds (e.g., turn-taking, conversational skills); and
4. hallways (e.g., learning a locker combination, keeping hands to themselves, getting to class on time).

Community settings also offer natural opportunities to learn and practice real-world skills. *Vocational training sites* provide opportunities to use social skills during interactions with co-workers, academic skills when following printed work instructions, and general work adjustment behaviors when accepting feedback and correction. *General community sites* include banks, post offices, restaurants, and any other public setting and can involve skills such as communicating with others, using money, demonstrating appropriate grooming and hygiene, and following the social rules for those settings. The key to effective use of alternative instructional settings is ensuring student safety, having an instruction plan in place, and recording data on student learning and instruction effectiveness (Bouck et al., in press).

### Conclusion

Providing instruction that leads each student to achieving desired post-school outcomes is the ultimate goal of education. For educators who serve students with an intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, or developmental disability, providing effective instruction means examining *what*, *how*, and *where* instruction is provided. *What* to teach these students includes considering real-world skills beyond general content instruc-

tion. *How* to teach these students includes collaborative planning and coordination to implement real-world instruction. Finally, *where* to provide instruction should be determined based on the individual student's needs and learning style. As we advocate for inclusive classroom instruction for students with intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, or developmental disability, we also cannot forget their real-world skills needs. Real-world instructional skills are appropriate for all students and may be taught in inclusive, alternative school, and community settings.

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## Join a DADD Committee!

Please contact the chair of any committee you may be interested in joining. See the DADD website page for information about each committee: <http://daddcec.org/AboutUs/Committees.aspx>

### Awards

**Chair:** Dagny Fidler ([dagny@mchsi.com](mailto:dagny@mchsi.com))

### Communications

**Chair:** Emily Bouck ([ecb@msu.edu](mailto:ecb@msu.edu))

### Conference

**Co-Chairs:** Cindy Perras ([cindy.perras@cogeco.ca](mailto:cindy.perras@cogeco.ca))  
Dave Cihak ([dcihak@utk.edu](mailto:dcihak@utk.edu))

### Critical Issues/Legislative

**Chair:** Emily Bouck ([ecb@msu.edu](mailto:ecb@msu.edu))

### Diversity

**Co-Chairs:** Debra Cote ([dcote@fullerton.edu](mailto:dcote@fullerton.edu))  
Elizabeth West ([eawest@uw.edu](mailto:eawest@uw.edu))

### Finance

**Chair:** Gardner Umbarger ([gumbarger@svsu.edu](mailto:gumbarger@svsu.edu))

### Membership & Unit Development

**Chair:** Angi Stone-McDonald ([angela.stone@umb.edu](mailto:angela.stone@umb.edu))

### Nominations & Standards

**Chair:** Amanda Boutot ([eb15@txstate.edu](mailto:eb15@txstate.edu))

### Publications

**Chair:** Michael Wehmeyer ([wehmeyer@ku.edu](mailto:wehmeyer@ku.edu))

(*Law Brief*, continued from page 3)

are driven by family concerns and desired outcomes, so families have choices as to which outcomes they want to focus on and the services that they will participate in to reach those outcomes. Outcomes can also be family-focused and are not required to be child-centered. A service coordinator (like a case manager) is responsible for leading the team of interventionists in working with the family and providing any necessary services or referrals to community-based services to increase the family's capacity to support the child's growth and development. IFSPs must be reviewed every six months, and desired outcomes are updated and eligibility is assessed.

### Natural Environments

Within early intervention, services must take place in natural environments for young children. Because the most common natural environment for a child age birth to 2 years is the home, home visits are the core of EI. Children can participate in infant or toddler groups with and without parents/caregivers or EI visits in their childcare setting, while parents can attend parent groups. Children diagnosed with autism are eligible to receive specialty services to address specific needs based on their diagnosis. The provision of these services varies from state to state.

### Transition from Part C Programs

Finally, at least 90 days prior to a child turning 3 years old, the EI services coordinator will call at least one transition meeting to

discuss the plan to transition the child out of Part C and possibly into Part B (services for children ages 3–21 years; Shackelford, 2006). Children diagnosed with autism or other developmental disabilities will be eligible for services in the special education system under an IEP. The transition meeting will include the EI team, the family, members of the local educational agencies and/or possible schools where the child will go next, and childcare or other community partners who are part of the family's team. This group will write the child's first IEP and plan for how to best support the child and family in the transition from EI to public school or community services (PACER Center, 2010).

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