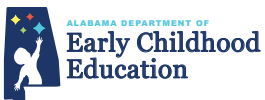


Alabama Transition to Kindergarten Toolkit



This project was made possible by grant number 90TP0065. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

David Jacobson and the Education Development Center (EDC) have supported Alabama's First 10 initiative and the development of this Transition to Kindergarten Toolkit. The First 10 state team included the departments of Early Childhood Education, Education, Rehabilitation Services (Early Intervention), Human Resources, Medicaid, Mental Health, and Public Health as well as representatives from the Early Childhood Advisory Council, Governor's Cabinet, and Alabama Partnership for Children.

Alabama thanks the Rhode Island Department of Education for inspiring the basic idea of this toolkit.

Alabama First 10 State Team Representatives

Jeannie	Allen	Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education, P-3 Learning Initiative
Stephanie	Azar	Alabama Medicaid Agency, Commissioner
Sharon	Beech	Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, Early Intervention
Calvin	Binion	Alabama Medicaid Agency
Trellis	Calloway, Ph.D.	Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education, Head Start Collaboration Office
Jennifer	Connell	Alabama Department of Human Resources
Barbara	Cooper, Ph.D.	Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education, Secretary
Elisabeth	Davis, PhD	Alabama State Department of Education
Jamey	Durham	Alabama Department of Public Health
Stephanie	Frucci	Alabama State Department of Education
Liletta	Jenkins	Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education, Children's Policy Councils
Nickey	Johnson, Ph.D.	Alabama State Department of Education
Candice	Keller	Alabama Department of Human Resources
Tammy	Major	Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention
April	Mullins	Alabama Department of Public Health
Nichelle	Nix	Governor's Office of Minority Affairs
Gail	Piggott	Alabama Partnership for Children, Director
Tracy	Plummer	Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention
Dallas	Rabig	Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education, First 5 Alabama
Karen	Rutledge-Bell	Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Reading Initiative
Bonnie	Short	Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Reading Initiative
Tara	Skiles	Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education, Professional Development
Johnece	Smith	Alabama Department of Mental Health
Pamela	Truelove-Walker, EdD	Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education, Senior Director
Dianna	Tullier	Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education, Senior Director
Tammy	Walker	Alabama Partnership for Children
Kathy	Wilkins	Alabama State Department of Education
Joy	Winchester	Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education, Office of Early Childhood Development

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SECTION 1

Introductory Letter from Alabama State Agency Leaders



STATE OF ALABAMA

July 1, 2021

Dear Alabama Educators and Caregivers,

As the leaders of the Alabama agencies charged with supporting children and families, we are pleased to share this Transition to Kindergarten Toolkit created by stakeholders and educators.

The research is clear: Communities have a great opportunity to improve children's success in school by focusing on school readiness and the transition to kindergarten. This opportunity requires that schools and community organizations come together to coordinate programs and services and jointly support children and families.

Our agencies are walking the talk at the state level by establishing cross-agency teams to improve the efficacy of our policies and the coordination of our programs. Through these teams, we are working hard to support the critically important efforts underway in communities across the state to improve programs and services for young children and their families.

Many communities have begun the important work of establishing local collaborations to advance school readiness and improve the transition to kindergarten. We strongly recommend that every Alabama community build on this work, form a transition to kindergarten team, and create and implement a comprehensive transition to kindergarten plan. This work begins by building trusting relationships with families and putting children's developmental needs at the center of our work. Elementary schools, Head Start programs, pre-kindergarten programs, childcare, and libraries collaborate to ensure service continuity and alignment and provide comprehensive support for children and families.

We are providing this toolkit, full of excellent resources, as your guide to a successful transition to kindergarten planning. We recommend that you begin with the next document in the toolkit, *Enhancing School Readiness and the Transition to Kindergarten Alabama*. This anchor document outlines the rationale for expanding our efforts to improve transition practices, our understanding of school readiness, our guiding principles, and a practical framework to guide the work of local transition to kindergarten teams.

Schools and communities have an opportunity to make a crucial impact in the lives of children and families by collaborating on early childhood and the early years of elementary school. Our agencies look forward to working together with communities throughout the state to best serve our children and families.

Sincerely,

Dr. Barbara J. Cooper, Secretary
Alabama Department of Early Childhood
Education

Dr. Eric G. Mackey, Superintendent
Alabama Department of Education

Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw, Commissioner
Department of Rehabilitation Services

Nancy Buckner, Commissioner
Department of Human Resources

Sallye Longshore, Director
Alabama Department of Child Abuse and
Neglect Prevention

Stephanie Azar, Commissioner
Alabama Medicaid Agency

Kimberly Boswell, Commissioner
Alabama Department of Mental Health

Dr. Scott Harris, State Health Officer
Alabama Department of Public Health

SECTION 2

Enhancing School Readiness and the Transition to Kindergarten in Alabama



Enhancing School Readiness and the Transition to Kindergarten in Alabama

The transition to kindergarten is an important developmental milestone for children and their families. It is an exciting and sometimes challenging experience in the life of families and a juncture around which schools and programs should collaborate to promote readiness, alignment, and school success.

Transitions require that children and families make some significant adjustments—psychologically, socially, and academically. Early childhood providers, schools, and community agencies should work together to ease these challenges and create seamless kindergarten transitions by sharing information with families, helping them build relationships of support throughout the transition, and aligning the experiences children and families have before and after the transition. In doing so, communities promote continuity for children and families and ensure that school gets off to a good start. Communities do this work by forming teams to develop and collaboratively implement transition plans. As they carry out their plans, they reinforce an ongoing cycle of collaboration to improve quality, coordination, and alignment in service of children and families.

Alabama state agencies that serve children and families came together during the 2020–2021 academic year in a [First 10](#) state team. The goal of the First 10 team was to ensure that priority coordination issues affecting children and families were addressed

through inter-agency collaboration. As part of its charge, the First 10 team informed the development of this Transition to Kindergarten Toolkit. This overview document outlines Alabama’s priorities, guiding principles, transition to kindergarten framework, and a recommended process to guide the work of community transition teams.

The Research Case for Investing in the Transition to Kindergarten

- » Kindergarten teachers report that almost 50% of children have difficulty adjusting to kindergarten.¹
- » Many communities do not have transition to kindergarten plans, and those that do often focus on low-intensity, more superficial activities.²
- » The more transition activities prekindergarten teachers implement, the better prepared children are at the beginning of kindergarten.³
- » The more transition activities kindergarten teachers implement, the higher student achievement by the end of kindergarten.⁴
- » Transition benefits are strongest for children in low- and middle-income families.⁵

Alabama's Transition to Kindergarten Priorities

Over the past year, the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE) and the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) have worked with their agency partners to review the current state of the transition to kindergarten in the state. As part of this process state leaders have consulted extensively with a wide variety of stakeholders through focus groups, surveys, and interviews.

Capturing a common theme of the feedback the state team received, one participant described the transition to kindergarten as an enormous opportunity--as yet not fully realized. As children move from home to early childhood settings such as family childcare or center-based care and then to elementary school, they encounter increasingly larger, more complex environments. As they do this they learn more and more about the larger world. To best take advantage of this opportunity, "everyone needs to come together to make this possible for the children. We have to figure out how to best help the families."

Children are better served when early childhood providers and schools extend outreach to families, build relationships and trust with them, and connect them to health and social services. Principals need support in becoming more familiar with all the settings in their catchment areas that send children to their schools: homes, family childcare providers, community-based preschools, and Head Start programs. Further, the family-serving organizations in a community need a better understanding of the services available in their community so that they can better match services to the needs of families whether or not children have had formal early childhood learning experiences.

The consensus among all of the stakeholders consulted was that the state needs to support communities in "bridging," "connecting," and "meshing" the work of early childhood providers

and elementary schools. In doing so communities can counter what is often a fundamental lack of understanding between the two sectors.

Improving the transition to kindergarten also requires that early childhood programs and elementary schools work together to coordinate information-sharing and align experiences so that each year builds on the learning and care of the previous year and prepares students for the next. Alabama's new kindergarten entry assessment—[AlaKiDs](#)—provides an opportunity to share data across settings to improve alignment.

Schools and early childhood providers can deepen alignment further by promoting better understanding of effective, developmentally appropriate practice throughout the early childhood—elementary school continuum, taking advantage of how children learn best. Collaborative activities such as cross-walking standards, visiting each other's classrooms, and participating in joint professional learning on social-emotional learning, early literacy, and/or early math are particularly valuable in aligning experiences across early childhood and elementary school settings. Through these activities, early childhood programs and elementary schools can build what one stakeholder called, "a cohesive system of respect."

School Readiness: Alabama's Definition and Guiding Principles

Based on these priorities, research on the transition to kindergarten, and best practices, Alabama's state First 10 team has adopted the following widely-used⁶ understanding of school readiness:

Readiness includes ready children, ready families, ready early care and education providers, ready schools, and ready communities. The goal is that children are ready for school, families are ready to support children's learning, schools and early care and education providers are ready for children, and communities are ready to support the care and learning of *all* children.

WHAT IS SCHOOL READINESS?

“School readiness involves more than just children. School readiness, in the broadest sense, is about children, families, early environments, schools, and communities. Children are not innately ‘ready’ or ‘not ready’ for school. Their skills and development are strongly influenced by their families and through their interactions with other people and environments before coming to school.”⁸

Guiding Principles

Consistent with this understanding of readiness, Alabama’s state First 10 Team has adopted the following as guiding principles for the state’s transition to kindergarten work:

- » Place children’s developmental needs at the center
- » Form close and respectful partnerships with families, building on their strengths to support them in their important roles
- » Focus on equity, cultural responsiveness, and attentiveness to diverse needs in service design and delivery
- » Ensure continuity and alignment across early childhood programs, elementary schools, and health and social service agencies
- » Promote collaboration to improve outcomes for children and families

Four Key Connections: A Transition to Kindergarten Framework

There are four key types of connections that facilitate the transition to kindergarten, and together they constitute an effective framework for planning transition activities.

1. **Program–School Connections:** To align practices, environments, and information between settings.
2. **Child–School Connections:** To provide children with familiar, stable relationships and classroom experiences.

3. **Family–School Connections:** To foster family collaboration and engagement with the school.
4. **Community–School Connections:** To create a network of understanding and support around kindergarten transition.⁷

See the [Transition Activity Ideas by Connection](#) for examples of each type of connection.

These four connections are described and illustrated in a useful document included in this toolkit. This document was published by the National Center for Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning:

- » [Collaborations, Connections, and Six Steps to Success](#)

The overview you are currently reading and *Collaborations, Connections, and Six Steps to Success* together serve as the anchor documents for Alabama’s Transition to Kindergarten Toolkit. Community transition teams may want to begin their work by reading and discussing these two resources.

Developing a Community Plan: A Six-Step Planning Process

Drawing on the process outlined in *Collaborations, Connections, and Six Steps to Success*, Alabama’s state First 10 team recommends that your community transition team follow the following steps as it develops its transition plan.

Step 1:

Assess and inform your partners—Identify transition team members and designate leaders.

- » Create a cross-sector transition team that includes *at least* one Head Start and/or preschool teacher, one kindergarten teacher, one Head Start and/or community-based preschool director, and one school or district leader. Consider including community members, such as a library or parent representative, as well.
- » Begin by reading the current document as a team as well as these other short resources:
 - [Transition to Kindergarten: Why It Matters and How to Promote Success](#)
 - [Collaborations, Connections, and Six Steps to Success](#)
 - [Integrating Attendance into the Transition to Kindergarten](#)
- » Discuss whether your team is missing any key stakeholders. Should you invite any additional community-based preschools to join the team at this time? At a later date? Are there key stakeholders who are not able to join the team but who should receive periodic updates as the process develops (e.g., district leaders, principals, preschool directors, PTO members, and/or library representatives)?

Step 2

Identify initial goals.

- » Based on your knowledge of your community and the readings, what are your initial goals? Treat this as a first pass and be very open to revising them after you assess your needs and the transitions work currently underway in your community.

Step 3

Assess what current transition activities are being practiced in your community for each type of connection.

- » Review the four types of transition connections as described in the *Collaborations, Connections, and Six Steps to Success* article.
- » Draw the Step 3 grid in the [Planning Template](#) on a sheet of chart paper. Brainstorm work currently underway on sticky notes and place them in the appropriate cells. Delete redundancies. Where do you see strengths? Gaps?

Step 4

Identify data or evidence you have that practices are or are not working.

- » This is an important step. Be sure to read the guidance on pages 5 and 6 of *Collaborations, Connections, and Six Steps to Success*.
- » Identify what data you currently have and what data you can collect to inform your work. Should you conduct focus groups or interviews with Head Start, community-based preschool, and kindergarten teachers? Surveys? Is there any other assessment information that would be informative?
- » You may want to spend a few weeks gathering data and then reconvene to analyze it. Then complete the Evaluation column in the grid.

Step 5

Plan and prioritize: Reevaluate goals or create new ones and plan steps to take.

- » See a starter list of possible transition activities organized by type of connection in [Section 4](#) below. Treat these as food for thought to inspire strategies to meet your needs. This is not an exhaustive list.
- » Discuss the family engagement and attendance resources found in [Section 8](#) and [9](#). Do they suggest strategies that would meet needs in your communities? Review, discuss, and share the other resources in this toolkit, including those

under **Community Collaboration around the Transition to Kindergarten** and **Essential Alabama Transition to Kindergarten Resources**.

How can these resources support your community's work?

- » **School—Program connections are crucially important but are often overlooked due to our natural focus on Child—School and Family—School connections.** Make sure your plan includes significant collaboration between educators and deepen these relationships and alignment activities over time. **Conducting cross-walks of standards, visiting classrooms, and joint professional development are great ways to start.**

- » Organize the transition activities you would like to implement by type of connection.

Step 6

Implement and evaluate the transition plan.

- » Meet regularly to improve implementation. What's working well? What challenges are emerging? How can you address them? What feedback are you hearing from teachers? Families?
- » Plan times to do more formal evaluation activities, including interviews, focus groups, and surveys.
- » Re-assess and update your plan. Make it a living document that you review at every meeting.

Endnotes

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- 6 For example, see [The Head Start Approach to School Readiness](#).
- 7 National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning, *Transition to Kindergarten: Collaborations, Connections, and Six Steps to Success*, National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning (2020), <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/ttk-collab-connect-6-steps-success.pdf>.
- 8 Kelly L. Maxwell and Richard M. Clifford, "School Readiness Assessment," *YC Young Children* 59, no. 1 (Jan 2004 2016-09-17 2004), <https://search.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/school-readiness-assessment/docview/197688268/se-2?accountid=44866>.

Developing a Transition to Kindergarten Plan

SECTION 3

Transition to Kindergarten: Collaboration, Connections, and Six Steps to Success

This document outlines a step-by-step approach to build, implement, and evaluate a kindergarten transition plan, and includes sections on:

- The importance of kindergarten transition, forming a transition team, and fostering four types of connections
- Six steps to transition planning
- Successful stories of kindergarten transition
- Resources

The ideas presented here are largely based on the book *Successful Kindergarten Transition: Your Guide to Connecting Children, Families, and Schools*, by Pianta and Kraft-Sayre, at the University of Virginia's Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning. The ideas in this document are appropriate for every young child, including those with disabilities and other special needs.¹

Section 1:

The importance of kindergarten transition, forming a transition team, and fostering four types of connections

Transition Experience Matters

The transition from early learning settings to kindergarten is an important event in children's lives and can be challenging for those who are not prepared for the adjustment. Multiple large-scale research studies, including those by Schulting, Malone & Dodge, 2005; and LoCasale-Crouch, Mashburn, Downer & Pianta, 2008, have found that more transition activities provided to children and families (such as visiting the new setting, or forming a relationship with a new teacher before schools starts) are associated with the following gains in kindergarten:

- Higher ratings of social emotional competence and reduced stress at the beginning of the school year
- Improved academic growth in kindergarten and increased family involvement over the year

- Stronger benefits for children living in poverty
- Additionally, research suggests that when children experience discontinuities between early learning program and kindergarten, they may be at greater risk for academic failure and social adjustment problems (Conyer, Reynolds, & Ou, 2003). Therefore, building and implementing a plan for seamless transition from the early learning environment to kindergarten can make a significant difference for children's on-going school success.

A Collaborative Framework

A collaborative approach to the transition to kindergarten recognizes that children, families, schools, programs, peers, and communities are all interconnected throughout the transition process. A collaborative framework considers the contexts and people that interact as the child transitions from an early learning program or home setting to kindergarten. The figure below illustrates the idea of a child surrounded by a web of supportive relationships during this transition. It shows that positive, high-quality relationships among educators, peers, and families are especially important during transitions. These relationships can serve both as bridges from early care and education (ECE)² to kindergarten and as resources to help children and their families during the period of adjustment.

Early Experiences → Kindergarten



Figure adapted from Rimm-Kaufmann & Pianta (2000)

¹ The Education Development Center (EDC) has made minor adjustments to this document with permission of the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning.

² ECE includes Head Start programs, state-funded prekindergarten programs, community-based preschools, and family childcare providers.

Four Types of Connections that Support the Transition to Kindergarten

To plan successful transition experiences for children, it is important for educators to understand the different types of connections that facilitate effective transitions, and the goals associated with each. We discuss the four key connections below, along with a short explanation of each.

1. *Child–School Connections*

There are two goals for this connection. The first is to increase children’s familiarity with the kindergarten setting, including the classroom, school environment, and their new educators. The second is to increase the educators’ familiarity with individual children. Some of the ways to foster child–school connections are to:

- Establish relationships between children enrolled in ECE and kindergarten educators. This can be done through visits to a kindergarten classroom during the year or through visits from a kindergarten teacher to the ECE environment. The visits will give children a sense of what a kindergarten teacher and classroom are like.
- Use school-wide activities, such as a spring fair or an informal summer playground time (e.g., a theme event such as “Popsicles in the Park”) where children can meet and visit with their future peers and educators. Explore other activities, such as allowing children to experience their first school bus ride, to connect children to their new school.
- Have children practice kindergarten routines. For example, children can sing songs that are typically sung in kindergarten or practice using lunch trays like those that will be used in their new school.
- Familiarize children with kindergarten through conversations and stories. Educators may read books that talk about kindergarten during story time (see the Resources section for a list of suggested books). Additionally, educators can facilitate discussions with children about what they think kindergarten will be like, what kinds of worries they have about the transition, and how they can address those worries.

2. *Family–School Connections*

The goal of this connection is to increase family collaboration and engagement with the school during the transition process. Having a strong family relationship with the school can yield positive long-term outcomes for children (Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 2000). This goal can be accomplished by the following suggested practices:

- Have the teacher or transition coordinator contact the family before the start of kindergarten as well as after school begins. Contact before school begins can make families more comfortable with the elementary school, and therefore, more likely to become involved in their children’s education. During this contact, information can be mutually shared. For example, families can share valuable information about their children’s home lives and educators can provide families with useful information about kindergarten expectations. Home visits are ideal for establishing these initial relationships with families.
- Involve families in the transition process by connecting them to community resources, such as physician’s offices, behavioral consultants, and after-school programs.
- Conduct sessions for families about the kindergarten transition during elementary school orientation or an open house. Before the start of kindergarten, a group meeting can be held for families in the kindergarten classroom. Educators can address the expectations for kindergarten and provide a tour of the school.
- In the spring, provide newsletters and resource materials, in families’ home language(s), that have information about the transition to kindergarten. These materials can include springtime preparation for the transition, information on parent responsibilities, and summer transition packets. Give special attention to efforts aimed at reaching families who may not have the time or resources to attend open houses or fully understand information sent home about transition.
- Support families to participate in transition events by offering child care and transportation during events; childcare and transportation for school events, such as open houses. Also provide information to parents in their native language, or make home visits to those families who are unable to travel to the school.
- Give families of dual language learners information about their rights to have school documents, registration forms, and other important resources provided to them in their

native languages. Direct families to additional resources, such as interpreters, when needed.

- Ensure that families of children with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) are informed about how their child's special education and related services will continue in kindergarten.

3. Program–School Connections

The goal of this connection is to support the transition between early learning and kindergarten settings. Program and school leaders may facilitate the Program–School Connections connection by:

- Collaborating over placement, screening, and registration practices between the early learning program and kindergarten (Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 2000).
- Aligning classroom practices by having the ECE provider, kindergarten educator, and transition coordinator meet and discuss their programs and familiarize one another with classroom practices and routines, using tools such as the Transition to Kindergarten Educator Calendars. Some kindergarten routines, such as having lunch in a cafeteria or riding a school bus, may be incorporated into the ECE day to help children prepare for their upcoming kindergarten experience.
- Encouraging kindergarten programs to identify and communicate clear expectations for children's performance and then working together with ECE providers to ensure children have the opportunity to be taught the skills required to meet these expectations.

4. Community–School Connections

The goal of this connection is to support continuity in the transition process by using resources within the community. These resources may include community organizations, houses of worship, physicians' offices, and cultural organizations—essentially anyone in the community who works with young children and their families. These organizations can play a vital role in the transition process, especially in certain communities where families are hard to reach or are disconnected from the school environment. Schools can use these organizations to reach out to families and help them prepare their children for kindergarten.

Community connections help ensure continuity for children and help provide cohesion to the services offered to

children during the ECE and kindergarten years. Here are some ways to foster community-school connections:

- Ask community organizations, pediatricians' offices, and libraries to display or distribute brochures, videos, and home activity calendars to children and families. Also collaborate with community agencies that work with families (e.g., housing authority, social service agencies, etc.) to distribute information.
- Coordinate with local shops and restaurants that provide delivery (e.g., pizza restaurants) to deliver information about kindergarten registration to communities that might be difficult to reach by other methods.

Section 2:

Six Steps to Transition Planning

In this section we present six steps to successful kindergarten transition planning, along with tools and tips to help facilitate the planning and implementation process.



Step 1: Assess your partnerships, identify transition team members, and designate transition leaders.

Creating connections to facilitate a successful transition to kindergarten requires focused effort and leadership. Transition work is most effective when strong relationships and valuable partnerships linking children, families, schools, early childhood programs, and the community are established before kindergarten starts. Successful transition teams typically have these essential elements:

- Leadership and support from elementary school leaders.
- Commitment to shared goals by all stakeholders.
- Active engagement of early learning programs.
- Shared understanding of the importance of quality early learning experiences.
- Connection with families.
- Ready access to community resources and support.
- Inclusion of specialists who support children with disabilities who are transitioning to kindergarten.

- Involvement of individuals with expertise in supporting children who are dual language learners and their families.

The transition team should include individuals with knowledge of children’s home language(s) and dual language learning support services, as well as individuals who provide services for children with IEPs. Experts in these areas can provide valuable insights and guidance to ensure the needs of these populations are met.

The ultimate goal of this step is to identify the key members and the leader(s) of your transition team. It is important to keep in mind that the leader needs to have the ability to direct resources, to focus attention, and to provide organizational leadership in ways that can facilitate the development of effective transition practices for children and families. Leaders should be able to control the allocation of resources and formation of policy that can shape transition planning and make it a priority for the community. Leaders should also have the ability and power to engage educators, families, and communities in partnerships that build programs to help children experience a seamless kindergarten transition.

This team has crucial roles and responsibilities in planning for the transition, including:

- Identifying community-wide transition needs for parents, children, schools, and preschools.
- Identifying current transition practices and resources in the community.
- Providing support for the development of transition policies and practices.
- Facilitating coordination and organization across various agencies.
- Including early childhood and kindergarten educators in transition planning efforts.
- Meeting regularly to communicate about transition planning and carry out the subsequent steps to be covered.



Step 2: Identify goals.

Once the transition team has been formed, it is essential that all members understand the scope of the work. To do so, the team needs to establish a common vision of what the transition to kindergarten should

Creating connections to facilitate a successful transition to kindergarten requires focused effort and leadership.

look like and use this vision to set goals. It is important to identify the goals for your team because without them, your team may have difficulty determining what course of action is best for children and families.

Here are some guidelines for creating transition goals:

- *Set broad goals at first:* Broad goals are meant to create a long-term vision for your transition team (e.g., “To enhance children’s school readiness” or “To foster the child-school connection”). These goals will also help your team decide how you want to focus your resources and spend your time, and they will help to focus your more specific goals later on in the process.
- *Set measurable goals:* When setting up transition goals, your team should set goals that include benchmarks that can be used to measure the degree of success you are achieving. This will help you determine whether particular transition practices should be continued.
- *Set attainable goals:* The goals must be realistic and achievable for your transition team.
- *Set time-bound goals:* There should be a deadline for every goal.



3

Step 3: Assess what current transition activities are being practiced in your community for each type of connection.

After identifying who will be on your transition team and setting initial goals, team members should come together as a group and identify what current transition activities are being practiced in your community for each of the four types of connections addressed in Section 1. For each connection (e.g., child–school, family–school, etc.), your team should consider what has already been done to foster:

- Sharing information
- Building relational support
- Aligning settings

This planning step will allow the transition team to focus on the area that needs the most attention (i.e., connections that are currently either not practiced or are occurring less frequently). In addition to assessing current transition activities, it is important to identify any specific resources that support these connections.



4

Step 4: Identify data or evidence you have that practices are or are not working.

The goal of this step is for the team to create a data collection process, or use data you already have, to identify evidence of whether current practices are working. This is a crucial step mainly because your team will use these data to evaluate transition activities and revise future transition plans. Depending on your team's goals, there are several types of data you could use to obtain evidence. Each of these types of data serves a different purpose, and the type you use should be chosen to fit your program's needs. These include:

- Informal observation
- Interviews
- Surveys
- Rating scales

If your team does not already have a formal data collection system in place, it is appropriate to use informal observations based on your transition team's prior experiences. For example, let's say that you have hosted a kindergarten orientation night at your school for the past four years, but last year you posted fliers in public places, such as libraries and physicians' offices, in addition to sending information home with children. You may have noticed that last year's attendance at your orientation was noticeably higher than it had been in the past. Although these are not formal data, informal observation suggests that perhaps the practice of distributing information out in the community further promoted the school's kindergarten orientation event.

For planning purposes, you may consider more formal data collection, such as using interviews. For example, if one of your goals is to foster the family–school connection, your team may use parent interviews to evaluate the quality of this connection. These interviews serve the dual purpose of engaging families in a relationship with schools and gathering information about family experiences in schools and at home. Interviews could focus on parents' descriptions of their children's school experiences, children's behavior, routines in preparing for school, family relationships with schools, and peer contact outside of school. These interviews provide a window into parents' perceptions about their roles in supporting the transition and other school activities. With these interviews, school staff typically find it helpful to gather the information and then talk to the parents about their responses.

Another example of data collection is to use surveys. If one of your team's goals is to foster the program–school connection, these surveys could be designed to identify team members' experiences with various program–school transition activities. ECE and kindergarten educators, leaders, and transition coordinators would respond to questions concerning the use of specific program–school transition activities, how helpful those activities are, and barriers to those transition practices. These questionnaires can provide information that will inform transition planning.



5

Step 5: Plan and prioritize: Reevaluate goals or create new ones and plan steps to take.

This step of transition planning is perhaps the most involved, and therefore, may require the most time in the planning process. Step 5 is complex because there are several aspects that should be considered, such as the need to (a) reevaluate goals, (b) anticipate barriers, (c) create a timeline, and (d) assign roles to appropriate individuals.

(a) Reevaluate goals—Based on information gathered in Step 3, you may have found connections that need more attention than others. This information, along with data gathered in Step 4, may prompt you to reevaluate or refine the broad goals you set in Step 2 into more specific goals. When reevaluating your goals, you may consider the individual needs of your region or school system and set those goals accordingly. For example, you may find from Steps 3 and 4 that the area that needing the most attention is the family–school connection. Therefore, your team could then set specific goals, such as, “To increase family engagement during the kindergarten registration period.”

(b) Anticipate barriers—Once the transition team has come up with its goals and planned the next action steps, the team can begin to identifying potential barriers to implementing effective transition practices. Some commonly reported barriers are: educators’ summer work not supported by salary; transition plans not available; home visits can be dangerous; and parents aren’t bringing their children for registration or open houses. The transition team should work to identify barriers that are specific to its community and then work to brainstorm ways around those barriers. For example, there could be factors that may bar parents from being active participants in the transition process, such as having a work schedule that interferes with transition activities or a lack of transportation. Or they may simply just feel uncomfortable at school. By considering such factors during the planning process, the transition team will be better equipped to develop creative solutions that encourage more engagement. One of the ways to get ideas may be to ask some parents, who are involved in their children’s schooling, what enables them to participate. Organizers may also consider offering multiple events at different times to accommodate various work schedules, provide transportation to events, or visit families at home where they feel more comfortable.

For planning purposes,
you may consider
more formal data
collection, such as
using interviews.

Other factors may present barriers for educators. For example, many important and valuable transition activities would ideally be conducted in the evening or during the summer. Staging activities during these times infringes on educators’ vacation and non-salaried time; therefore, most kindergarten educators identify lack of pay as the most important consideration as to why they are reluctant to participate. The transition team may need to consider alternate ways of funding educators for this involvement or provide incentives to encourage educator involvement during the transition process.

(c) Create a timeline—Once your team has identified barriers and solutions to them, it is important to outline a timeline for implementing the transition activities you have chosen. For example, a transition activity, such as organizing a kindergarten camp, should occur during the summer before kindergarten, whereas an activity such as coordination between ECE and kindergarten educators over curricula and routines, should be an ongoing process throughout the school year.

(d) Assign roles—Once you have a transition plan laid out, your team should identify who needs to be involved in each activity and assign roles to them accordingly. For example, it may be necessary for your school to do fundraising to set up a kindergarten camp. This may require the office staff to mail out fliers about a fundraising event, someone else to secure a location, and additional people to handle catering, entertainment, etc.



Step 6: Implement and evaluate the transition plan.

Once transition activities and the timeline for these activities are established, the implementation

process can proceed. Transition teams should review the planned activities and timelines, and then implement practices as scheduled. Ongoing and regular meetings of the collaborators may be necessary to ensure smooth and timely implementation.

After the transition activities are implemented, it is important to evaluate their effectiveness. This will help you continue supporting high-quality transitions for children and families. It will also provide an opportunity to reflect on your transition practices. During an evaluation process, the transition teams will assess, the activities they used, identify needs that were not met, highlight the strategies that worked well, and revise future transition plans accordingly. Evaluation is necessary because some strategies may work well with some families but may be less effective with others; therefore, an analysis of what works and what does not can help improve the transition process.

It is also important to note that transition planning is a dynamic process in which your team will need to constantly re-assess goals, modify plans and, when necessary, re-assess goals again. It is an ongoing process in which there will be times when your team will go back and forth between the steps before you can eventually move forward with implementation.

Section 3: **Successful Stories of Kindergarten Transition**

Northview Elementary (Pennsylvania)

Northview Elementary is an urban preschool to grade 5 public school in Pittsburgh serving diverse children from low-income families. In one school year, less than 25 percent of the anticipated kindergarten class was present on the first day of school. After experiencing such low turnout of kindergarteners in the fall of 2007, school and community leaders met early in the 2007-08 school year to propose forming a Kindergarten Transition Team to address the problem. The team consisted of:

1. The Northview vice-principal
2. The director of the community Family Support Center
3. Two staff members from the Office of Child Development
4. Head Start and other ECE, health, and social service providers.
5. Parents of future kindergarteners

The Northview Kindergarten Transition Team then proceeded to create an action plan to address children's transition to kindergarten. The following is a sample of the team's plan. It set forth to:

1. Review data on enrollment and transitions and develop new goals.
2. Examine and improve the atmosphere and environment of the school to make the school parent-friendly.
3. Review and revise timelines and registration practices.
4. Develop and implement strategies for door-to-door outreach to hundreds of homes, in order to find and engage all potential students and their families.
5. Implement several family transition events prior to the first day of school.

An example of one innovation was engaging a pizza shop to help spread kindergarten registration information by delivering the information, along with their pizzas, in an isolated housing community. As enrollment numbers increased, parents responded that the advertisements on pizza boxes were the main reason they were aware of registration dates. In addition to using community resources, many children participated in breakfasts, a hair-braiding day, and several other transition events that occurred prior to the start of school. These opportunities allowed families and educators to meet at an informal setting and, therefore, helped to foster the family-school connection.

The following school year, Northview saw 100 percent of its anticipated new class on the first day of school. This school's success demonstrates the kind of outcomes that are possible when parents, schools, and communities work together to create a smooth transition into kindergarten (Smythe-Leistico, 2012).

Smart Beginnings (Virginia)

In central Virginia, one community was able to make a sizable impact on children's transition experiences with a low-cost investment that fostered collaborations



between early education providers. A local coalition called Smart Beginnings, which works to create quality care and educational experiences for young children, brought together educators from kindergarten, preschool, and Head Start programs. These educators began to meet four times a year, focusing on aligning experiences for children that would ease their transition from preschool into kindergarten. The educators discussed academic expectations for kindergarten and how Head Start and early childhood educators could best prepare students for the kindergarten classroom. They addressed such issues as the development of fine motor skills, to prepare children for the emphasis on handwriting in kindergarten, and even talked about simpler matters that can confuse children, such as how bathroom signs may look different between preschool programs and elementary schools. The educators also discussed transition practices that might be helpful for children and families who are going through this setting change. These types of conversations helped early childhood educators prepare children for the transition to kindergarten.

The quarterly meetings produced several positive outcomes. One outcome was increased participation in transition opportunities, such as kindergarten camp, which had children, families, and educators reporting that they felt more prepared for the upcoming kindergarten year. Early childhood educators also reported being satisfied with their quarterly meetings because they felt that their knowledge of children and families was valued. Additionally, kindergarten educators felt that children were entering school more socially and academically prepared. Another outcome of these meetings was an increased awareness of the community need for more physical space for Head Start/preschool children, a proposal that is now being considered by a local elementary school.

This case study is an excellent example of the fiscal payoff of transition planning. With minimal costs to schools, educators meeting just four times a year were able to make an impact on children's transitions that likely provided more valuable learning time at the beginning of their kindergarten year. In other words, many more children came to school ready to learn instead of being unduly preoccupied by the shock of adjusting to new and foreign environments.

Section 4:



Resources

Conyer, L. M., Reymonds, A. J., & Ou, S. R. (2003). The effect of early childhood intervention on subsequent special education services: Findings from the Chicago child-parent centers. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 25*(1), 75-95.

Kagan, S. L., & Tarrant, K. (2010). *Transitions for young children*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.

Kraft-Sayer, M., & Pianta, R. C. (2000). *Successful kindergarten transition: Your guide to connecting children, families, & schools*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.

LoCasale-Crouch, J., Mashburn, A. J., Downer, J. T., & Pianta, R. C. (2008). Pre-kindergarten educators' use of transition practices and children's adjustment to kindergarten. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 23*, 124-139.

National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement, & National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning. (2013). *Family engagement in transitions: Transition to kindergarten*.

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Rimm-Kauffman, S., & Pianta, R. C. (2000). An ecological perspective on transition to kindergarten. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 21*, 491-511.

Schulting, A. B., Malone, P. S., & Dodge, K. A. (2005). The effect of school-based kindergarten transition policies and practices on child academic outcomes. *Developmental Psychology, 41*(6), 860-871.

Smythe-Leistico, K. (2012). A new approach to transitions: Welcoming families and their ideas into kindergarten early learning setting. *Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE) Newsletter, 4*(1).



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Winter 2020 (Updated September, 2021).

SECTION 4

Transition Activity Ideas by Connection

Transition Activity Ideas by Connection

Type of connection	Transition activity
Child–School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a connection between preschool children and kindergarten teachers. • Create a connection between children and the kindergarten using school functions. • Have children practice kindergarten rituals in preschool. • Incorporate preschool activities into the kindergarten year. • Encourage preschool teachers to stay in contact with their former students. • Encourage kindergarten support staff to visit preschool children. • Conduct Spring kindergarten orientation for preschool children. • Establish peer connections within the preschool class. • Establish connections among preschool peers who will be in the same kindergarten. • Establish preschool peer connections with kindergarten peers.
Family–School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact families during the first few days of preschool and kindergarten. • Assess family strengths and needs. • Maintain periodic contact with families. • Connect families to community resources. • Encourage family participation in home learning activities. • Encourage family participation in the classroom and at school events. • Conduct regular family meetings. • Conduct family meetings about transition issues. • Provide opportunities for parents to engage in planning activities, offer input and feedback, and lead activities when appropriate. • Share information about individual children with families, preschool teachers, and kindergarten teachers. • Use newsletters and resource materials. • Send letters home. • Set-up two-way communication. • Conduct Spring orientation about kindergarten for preschool families. • Conduct individual meetings between teachers and families. • Conduct parent orientation at the beginning of the year at preschools and kindergartens.
Program–School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster inter-school collaboration about programs and classroom practices. • Conduct visits: Preschool teachers visit kindergarten classrooms and kindergarten teachers visit preschool classrooms. • Communicate about curriculum (preschool and kindergarten personnel). • Connect about a specific child (preschool and kindergarten teachers). • Share written records. • Align curriculum. • Align early learning standards.
School–Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build useful policies related to the kindergarten transition. • Identify and communicate community expectations for children. • Establish policy coordination through inter-agency connections.

SECTION 5

Transition to Kindergarten Planning Template

Transition to Kindergarten Planning Guide

Step 1: Assess your partnership—Identify committee team members and their affiliations. Designate a leader.

Committee Members	Affiliation
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.

Designated Leader:	
Who else should be on your team? Which other organizations or programs should be represented?	

Transition to Kindergarten Planning Guide

Step 2: Identify big picture goals—Fill in tentative goals for your Transition plan. What outcomes would you like to achieve in the future? Revise as plan develops.

Goals
1.
2.
3.
4.

Transition to Kindergarten Planning Guide

Step 3: Assess work currently underway—Complete the first three columns of the matrix with existing programs and services in your community.¹

Step 4: Identify data on current practices—Complete the last column of the matrix with evidence you have that practices are or are not working. *Optional: Copy matrix onto chart paper and brainstorm using sticky notes.*

Type of Connection	Sharing Information	Building Relational Supports	Fostering Alignment Between Settings	Gaps and Needs
Child-School				
Family-School				
Program-School				
School-Community				

¹ This planning guide, and this page in particular, has been adapted from [this template](#), published by the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning

Transition to Kindergarten Planning Guide

Step 5: Plan and prioritize—Reevaluate your goals, create new ones if necessary, and plan steps to take. Complete the planner below.

Revised/refined goals (if necessary):
1.
2.
3.
4.

Transition to Kindergarten Planning Guide

Child-School Connections				
Activities	Who Will Lead?	Timeline	Notes/Resources Needed	Evidence of Impact

Transition to Kindergarten Planning Guide

Family-School Connections				
Activities	Who Will Lead?	Timeline	Notes/Resources Needed	Evidence of Impact

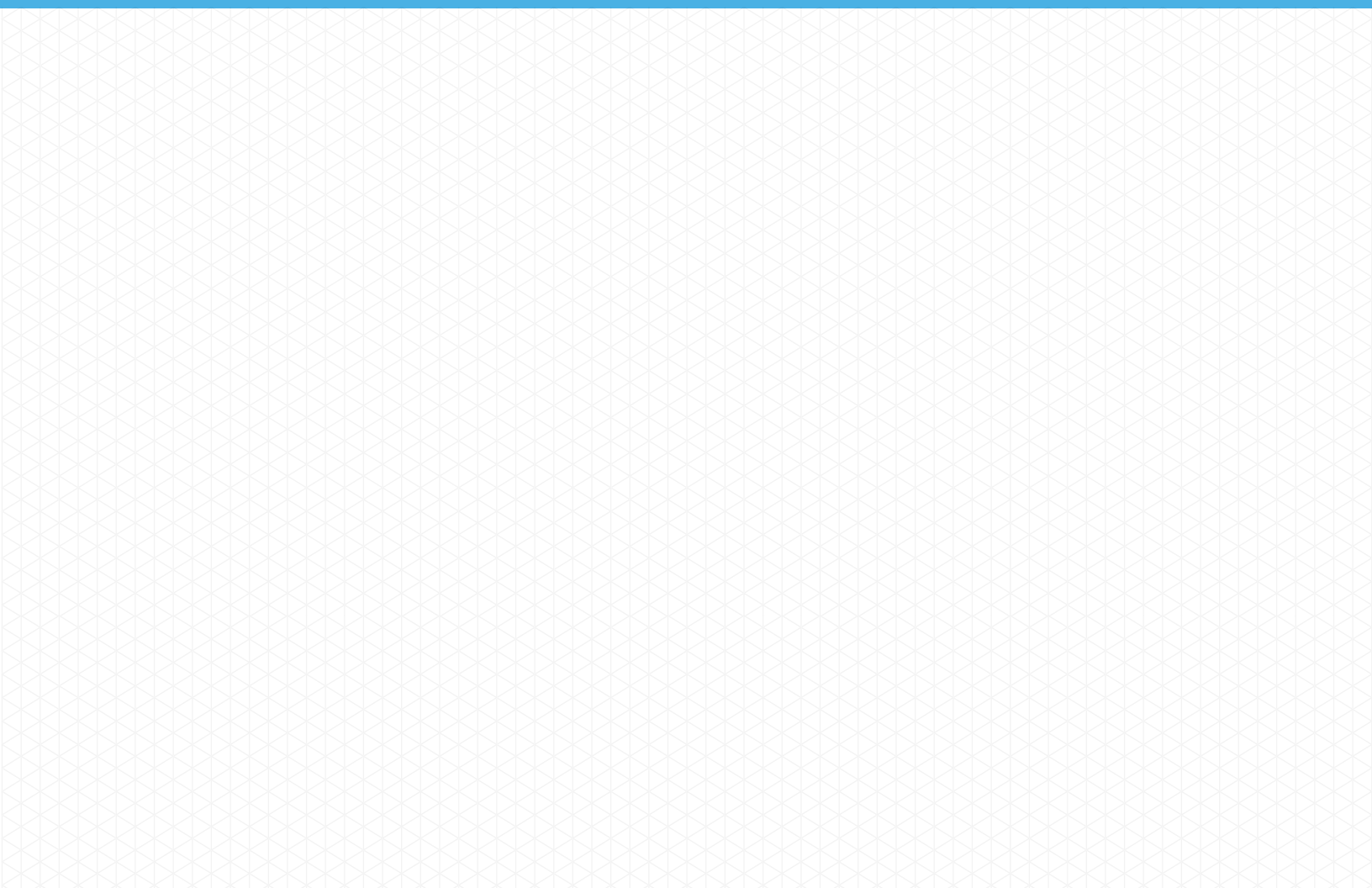
Transition to Kindergarten Planning Guide

Program-School Connections				
Activities	Who Will Lead?	Timeline	Notes/Resources Needed	Evidence of Impact

Transition to Kindergarten Planning Guide

Community-School Connections				
Activities	Who Will Lead?	Timeline	Notes/Resources Needed	Evidence of Impact

Community Collaboration around the Transition to Kindergarten



SECTION 6

Four Strategies for Getting the First 10 Years of a Child's Life Right (*Education Week*)

February 04, 2020

STUDENT WELL-BEING OPINION

Four Strategies for Getting the First 10 Years of a Child's Life Right

David Jacobson

David Jacobson is a principal technical adviser at Education Development Center in Boston and the author of the 2019 report "[All Children Learn and Thrive: Building First 10 Schools and Communities.](#)"

Two divides thwart the best efforts of American educators to improve outcomes for low-income children and their families.

The first is the gap between early-childhood and K-12 education. The second is between K-12 education and health and social services. Typically these institutions operate in silos. Yet decades of research confirm that to best learn and thrive, children need early-childhood and elementary education to be aligned so that each year builds upon the last, and they need health and social services to be coordinated to maximize their positive impact.

Over the past decade, I've had the opportunity to research and work with communities that are attempting to bridge these divides. I recently completed a two-year study, funded by the Heising-Simons Foundation, of school and community partnerships across the country that are at the forefront of [building more coherent and integrated local systems of care and learning](#). I visited these communities and interviewed superintendents, principals, preschool directors, community leaders, and many preschool and elementary school teachers. Despite working independently, these communities have diagnosed similar challenges to improving supports for children



and families. In response, they are converging on a common set of innovative structures and strategies.

These partnerships are motivated by a commitment to educational equity and the goal that all children learn and thrive. They are focused on improving children's experiences during the first decade of their lives, and thus I refer to them as "First 10" schools and communities. In some cases, First 10 partnerships encompass an entire district or a large zone within a district and support all the elementary schools, Head

Start programs, community-based preschools, and child- and family-serving organizations within this geographic area. In others, a single elementary school will serve as a hub to provide resources to children ages 0-4 and their families, while also collaborating with nearby early-childhood programs. Either way, successful First 10 schools and communities take four important steps in their efforts to improve outcomes for children and families that together provide a roadmap for other communities:

1. Support professional collaboration to improve teaching and learning. The first role of First 10 schools and communities is to bring educators together for professional learning. The city of Normal, Ill., for example, began with joint professional development for kindergarten and prekindergarten teachers, which led to cross-grade classroom visits and ultimately reciprocal improvements in each grade. The prekindergarten teachers deepened their efforts on concept development and developed longer thematic investigations while kindergarten teachers piloted a daily block of structured play. Cambridge, Mass., which is home both to well-known universities and to a large low-income population, has developed a comprehensive quality-improvement initiative in which groups of community-based preschools and groups of family childcare providers form communities of practice that are supported with mentoring, coaching, and professional development.

2. Coordinate comprehensive services. In addition to improving the quality of children's learning experiences, First 10 schools and communities create systems and processes to better coordinate health and social services. In Cincinnati; Multnomah County, Ore., and the metro area of Omaha, Neb., for instance, elementary schools deploy early-childhood coordinators to engage and support families years before their children enter kindergarten. Often these coordinators facilitate play-and-learn groups for parents and children and connect families to health and social services, all the while building relationships and trust. Communities also work to improve resource and referral and case-management systems and to coordinate home-visiting programs to ensure the greatest impact for those most in need.

3. Promote culturally responsive partnerships with families. First 10 initiatives deepen family engagement by creating structures and opportunities for family

leadership and input, which in turn help to ensure that these initiatives are responsive to the needs and priorities of different cultural groups. In a pilot project in 10 schools in Multnomah County, families play an active role in designing weekly school-based play and learn groups, half of which are carried out in languages other than English or are created for culturally specific groups. The county has also cultivated a network of community agencies with deep cultural and linguistic expertise to engage and support families in the area.

4. Provide strategic leadership and ongoing assessment. First 10 schools and communities are new cross-sectoral arrangements that require new leadership structures to implement strategies effectively. For example, Cambridge's community-wide partnership is overseen by a steering committee and three subcommittees on access and quality, health, and family engagement and partnership. First 10 initiatives also organize and communicate their work through focused implementation plans and projected outcome indicators, which they use to monitor progress and adjust strategies to achieve their goals.

These comprehensive First 10 approaches require a fundamental shift in thinking. This new mindset begins by thinking of the first 10 years as a continuum of high-quality experiences that should be coordinated, aligned, and focused on equity. As they translate this shift into action, leaders restructure and reconceptualize the relationships among elementary schools, early-childhood programs, community agencies, and families with young children.

Bringing First 10 schools and communities to scale will require building on the work of leading-edge communities in an ongoing process of adaptation, innovation, assessment, and continuous improvement. Many First 10 communities are beginning to learn from each other in an [informal community of practice](#). States and national funders can support this work by developing grant programs, providing technical assistance, and sponsoring learning networks to encourage exchange. These investments have great potential as First 10 schools and communities are among the most powerful strategies we have to bridge vexing divides, address yawning achievement gaps, ensure educational equity, and raise achievement for low-income children.

SECTION 7

Transition to Kindergarten: Why It Matters and How to Promote Success



Transition to Kindergarten

A Brief: Why It Matters
and How to Promote
Success



WINTER 2020



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The transition to kindergarten is a time that presents changing demands, expectations, and supports for children and their families. When children experience discontinuities between early learning settings and kindergarten, they may be at greater risk for academic failure and social adjustment problems. Thus, building and implementing a seamless kindergarten transition can make a significant difference for children's on-going school success.

Why

Is a Quality Transition Important?

Multiple large-scale research studies have found that transition activities for children and families are associated with these gains in kindergarten: ^{i,ii,iii,iv,v,vi,vii}

- Reduced stress and higher ratings of social emotional competence at the beginning of the school year
- Improved academic growth and increased family involvement over the year
- Stronger benefits for children experiencing in poverty

How

Do We Improve Children's Transition?

Site leaders can use these key principles: ^{viii}

- Approach transition collaboratively, and include the diverse perspectives of learners and their families
- Involve all key stakeholders in the process, including families, educators, leaders, members of children's cultural and linguistic communities, and individuals representing children with disabilities
- Align children's experiences across systems in early learning settings and kindergarten classrooms

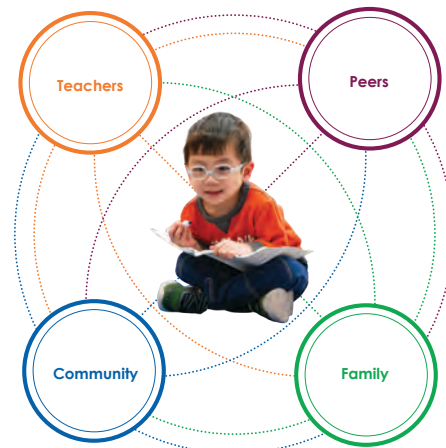
What

Does a Quality Transition Involve?

Evidence from research and the field suggests these key elements:

- Positive relationships between families, programs, and schools
- A transition team of Head Start and kindergarten leaders and educators, language learning specialists, therapists who work with children in the program, families, and related community representatives
- Assessments, learning standards, and curriculum that align between early learning settings and kindergarten
- Joint professional development between early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers
- Information and communication that is shared with parents and the community at large

Early Experiences —————> Kindergarten



(Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000)



Using a Collaborative Approach

Successful kindergarten transitions are a result of supportive relationships that are focused on children's development—the relationships between schools, programs, families, and educators in both early learning and kindergarten settings.^{ix}

The child, family, school, program, peer, and community factors are interconnected^x and they are all influential in helping a child prepare for, and be successful in, school. Effective transition practices involve reaching out to families and influential community members, with a strong sense of purpose, prior to the time a child actually moves into a new classroom.^{xi}

Involving All Key Stakeholders

Children benefit most when all parties involved in the process work together to support the transition. For example, improved kindergarten readiness^{xii,xiii} is associated with early childhood educators who communicate with kindergarten teachers about curricula, children's development, and children's educational needs. Also, when families participate in more transition experiences, their school involvement is higher over the kindergarten year, and this is a key indicator of children's long-term social and academic success.^{xiv,xv,xvi,xvii}

Helpful Resources

Articles

Ferguson, C., & Wood, L. (2005). *Easing the transition from preK to kindergarten: What schools and families can do to address child readiness*. Austin, TX: National Center for Family and Community Connections and Schools. <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/rb/rb6-readiness.pdf>

Patton, C., & Wang, J. (2012). Ready for success: Creating collaborative and thoughtful transitions into kindergarten. *Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE) Newsletter*, 4(1). <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/Documents/readyforsuccess.pdf>

Books

Pianta, R. C., & Kraft-Sayre, M. (2003). *Successful kindergarten transition: Your guide to connecting children, families, and schools*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.

Sullivan-Dudzic, L., Gearns, D. K., & Leavell, K. (2010). *Making a difference: 10 essential steps to building a preK-3 system*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

“ Making time to sit down with everyone at the table has made all the difference for our kids. They are coming to school ready to learn ... ”

Why

Kindergarten Teacher

Aligning Children's Experiences Across Systems

Aligned early childhood education and kindergarten experiences allow children to build on what they have learned and be prepared for what they will be learning next.^{xviii} The longer children are involved in a consistent and stable learning environment, including curricula and support services that are aligned, the more they benefit cognitively, academically, and socially.^{xix}

Practical Guides

Bowman, B. T., & Cottone, P. A. (2005). *Transition: Change with continuity: A handbook for teachers*. Chicago Public Schools Office of Early Childhood Education.

National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement & National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning. (2013). *Family engagement in transitions: Transition to kindergarten*. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/rtp-transition-to-kindergarten.pdf>

University of Pittsburgh, Office of Child Development. (2012). *Ready Freddy: Pathways to Kindergarten Success*. <http://www.readyfreddy.org/>

Online Videos

Capistrano Unified School District. *From kindergartener to kindergartener: "What's important for you to know."* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMf1mveot3I>

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SECTION 8

Family Engagement in the Transition to Kindergarten



Family Engagement in Transitions: Transition to Kindergarten

The National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (NCPFCE) has created a Research to Practice Series on the Family Engagement Outcomes of the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework. One in the series, this resource addresses the “Family Engagement in Transitions” Outcome: “Parents and families encourage and advocate for their child’s learning and development as they transition to new learning environments,” and focuses on the transition to kindergarten.

This resource presents a summary of selected research, promising practices, and program strategies intended to be useful for Head Start, Early Head Start, and other early childhood programs.

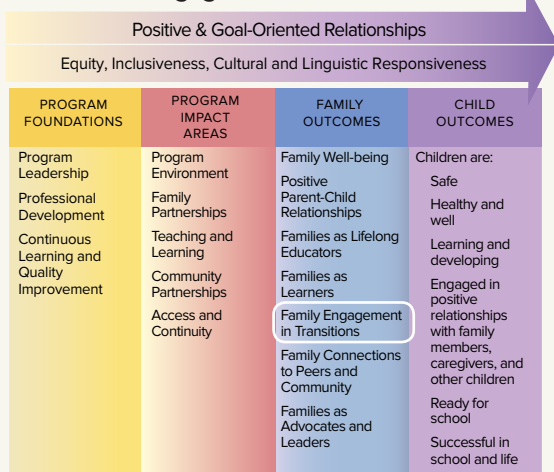
Introduction

Children experience many big and small transitions in their early years. Small transitions may include moving from playtime to cleanup, from hand washing to snack time, or from playing outdoors to coming back into the classroom. Big transitions might include moving from home to Early Head Start or Head Start, from being an only child to becoming a big brother or sister, or leaving Head Start to go to kindergarten. Of all of these transitions, the transition to kindergarten is one of the biggest. This is a major event in the lives of children and families, and a pivotal point for establishing the kinds of practices that can help sustain gains children have made in their early learning settings.

The transition to kindergarten can be a time of great excitement and joy for everyone involved. For children, it is an opportunity to learn new things, master new skills, and proudly declare, “I’m going to kindergarten.”¹ For families, it can bring a sense of delight as their children reach another milestone. For Head Start and other preschool educators, it is a time to reflect on the progress the children have made.

This transition can also be a time of uncertainty and concern about the unknown. For children, it may involve a loss of friends and teachers who have worked to win a place in their hearts. At the same time, transition involves a separation from a safe, familiar, and loving setting.

Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework



The Head Start PFCE Framework is an organizational guide for collaboration among families and Head Start and Early Head Start programs, staff, and community service providers to promote positive, enduring outcomes for children and families.

¹ For more resources on the child perspective, read “Transitions from the Children’s Perspective” on the Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC); and Dockett & Perry, 1999; 2003 (see full citation at the end of this document).



These changes affect many parents too. They face the realization that their babies are quickly growing up, and a sense that their children's dependency on them is fading. Some wonder, "Are they ready? Am I ready?" Many parents who have played a leadership role in their child's program might also wonder if the new setting will engage them in a similar way.

Preschool educators may experience a feeling of sadness at saying goodbye to children they have worked with for several years and worry what the next year will bring. For kindergarten teachers, it is a time to wonder, "Will my new group of children be ready, willing, and excited about working with each other and with me?" For community providers, particularly those in health services, it is a time to prepare their facilities and staff. In many states, there are appointments for health physicals and immunizations required for public school enrollment.



The Importance of Smooth, Successful Transitions: What We Know

Parent participation in transition activities prior to the new school year is strongly associated with children's self-confidence, liking of school, and overall happiness in kindergarten (Hubbell, Plantz, Condelli, & Barrett, 1987). When the transition to kindergarten includes opportunities for children and their families to learn about the new setting, build relationships, and experience continuity in curriculum, assessments, and relationship quality across their changing settings, children show greater school readiness (Hubbell et al., 1987; LoCasale-Crouch, Mashburn, Downer, & Pianta, 2008), reduced stress at the beginning of school (Hubbell et al., 1987) and stronger academic growth over the kindergarten year (Ahtola et al., 2011; Schulting, Malone, & Dodge, 2005).

When early childhood education (ECE) programs and schools actively engage families in their child's transition to kindergarten, and when they are responsive to families' efforts to participate in these transitions, families show increased involvement during the kindergarten year (Schulting et al., 2005). This is particularly important given that family involvement in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten relates to better social skills (Powell, Son, File, & San Juan, 2010), higher academic performance in math and language literacy in kindergarten, and higher achievement through high school (Barnard, 2004; McWayne, Hampton, Fantuzzo, Cohen, & Sekino, 2004; Rimm-Kaufman, Pianta, Cox, & Bradley, 2003). In short, when children experience more stability in their early school settings and in the relationships with the adults in these settings, they perform better socially and academically (Curby, Rimm-Kaufman, & Ponitz, 2009; Tran & Winsler, 2011) during their kindergarten year and beyond.

In order for children to feel safe and secure in their new learning environments, they need guidance, assurance, and as much continuity in expectations and experiences as possible (Pianta, Cox, Taylor, & Early, 1999). Parents need the same thing. As one Head Start mother shared with us, "I don't think there is a very good transition of parents...it is a huge shock for parents who were in this warm, welcoming, all-encompassing coverage of a Head Start program... then you go to the public school system and it's like culture shock." Programs can set the stage for how families will handle their children's future educational experiences and transitions (to first grade, to middle school, to high school, etc.) by engaging them in this transition from Head Start to kindergarten. Staff can share all of the information families will need and support their skills as advocates by being responsive to their concerns.

Transition practices need to be effective to make a difference. Effective transition practices are activities that teachers, families, and community members can use to create supports and foster familiarity across early childhood settings and kindergarten (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2008). These practices should be initiated early—prior to kindergarten—and should be tailored to the cultural, linguistic, and learning needs of individual children and families. They should also ensure that standards, curriculum, support services, and assessments for Head Start and kindergarten are carefully aligned (Bohan-Baker & Little, 2002; Kagan & Neuman, 1998; Patton & Wang, 2012; Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 2003). Head Start and other ECE programs can share these tasks with families, elementary schools, and other community partners. Collaboration and communication among everyone involved is the most important part of achieving successful and seamless transitions.

Promising Practices

In the following sections, we highlight examples of promising practices that Head Start and other ECE staff are using to engage families across learning settings to help support children as they transition to kindergarten. To learn about these practices, we talked to parents, administrators (associate and executive directors), healthcare staff, family development managers, and educators from a variety of settings. These settings included a health clinic, Head Start programs, and other parenting and early education programs from across the United States.

For each PFCE Framework Element described below, we provide examples of programs and promising practices. However, each program integrates multiple Framework Elements, making connections that increase the level of engagement and success.

Program Leadership: Using transition plans to create a shared vision

Head Start and school leaders share responsibility for ensuring successful transitions. Teachers have noted that a lack of guidance and support from leadership, including the absence of a district-wide plan, are major barriers to putting good transition practices into action (Pianta et al., 1999). One solution is the transition plan. Transition plans typically include a list of team members and their responsibilities; goals for students, families and staff; and steps to reach those goals. The best transition plans include the ideas of diverse groups of administrators and teachers from Head Start and kindergarten, parents, and community members. When members represent the different educational, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds of children and families in the community, transition plans, forms, and activities are meaningful and understandable to everyone.

Transition plans promote collaboration. They include regular opportunities for joint training for early childhood and elementary school teachers. One kindergarten teacher reflected on her experience of bringing everyone together to form a transition team and plan. She said, "Making time to sit down with everyone at the table has made all the difference for our kids. They are coming to school ready to learn."

The Orange, New Jersey Public School District transition plan, for example, has a process for collaborating across pre-kindergarten programs and elementary schools (from kindergarten through third grade). Their plan includes ways to share information about individual children with their future teacher and ways to align the early learning curriculum with kindergarten and elementary curricula.

Continuous Improvement: Improving information-sharing practices within and across settings

Programs can use survey data, focus groups, and information gained from informal conversations with families, staff, and children about what worked and what didn't. This will help programs make ongoing improvements to existing transition practices (Smythe-Leistico et al., 2012). For example, a private non-profit that provides Head Start and Early Head Start and health and dental services to families in Rhode Island used input from families to improve their practices. They learned that parents wanted to be more involved in the sharing of child-level information with elementary schools. In previous years, staff informed parents about the information they were planning to share with the public school and asked parents to sign off on the release of information. In response to family feedback, the program decided to make a change during the 2011-2012 school year. The process became more of a conversation between the parents and the teacher. The release form was updated to include a section that asks parents, "What do you want the public school to know about your child?"

A New Jersey school district regularly strengthens a particular information-sharing practice. Each child in the district has a portfolio that is updated throughout the preschool year. It includes assessments, anecdotes, and examples of the student's work. Preschool and kindergarten teachers co-create the checklist of items to be included in each child's portfolio. Prior to the start of the school year, portfolios are hand-delivered to kindergarten teachers who use these packets to learn about their new students and inform their instruction. In the first month of school, preschool staff follow up with kindergarten teachers to discuss the quality of the portfolios and ideas for improvement.

Professional Development: Training staff to work with families and community partners

Teachers who have had specialized training in transitions report using more of all types of transition practices (Early, Pianta, Taylor, & Cox, 2001). Staff training may be one way to expand the range of transition practices that staff are ready to use. For its transition to kindergarten model, called *Ready Freddy*, the University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development trains elementary school staff on how to create a friendlier environment for families and collaborate with external community partners to help with door-to-door outreach and marketing related to kindergarten registration. They also use feedback and modeling to help *Kindergarten Club* (a summer club for at-risk children and families) staff, who are anxious about leading discussions with parents, speak to parents with confidence (Smythe-Leistico et al., 2012).

**Family Partnerships:
Empowering families to advocate for their child during the transition process**

Parents and teachers have to work together to meet the diverse learning needs of children. For children who need extra support, families can work with programs to understand their rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and know about their school's compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Their children should continue receiving services begun in the preschool years that are still necessary in kindergarten. Programs can help families of dual language learners learn about their rights. Programs can also provide relevant information in the preferred languages of families, as well as English. All families need to feel empowered to exercise these rights and to seek out the community resources they need to do so (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Knowing these rights and successfully advocating for them in a new school can be difficult. Strong staff-family partnerships can help.

**Teaching and Learning:
Sharing child assessment data to engage families in children's development**

Early childhood programs can begin preparing families for the transition to kindergarten as soon as a child enrolls in the program. For example, they can respond to families' interests and concerns by sharing child assessment results with families in ways that are clear to them. Through this process, programs help families feel comfortable looking at, understanding, and talking about data (Weiss, Lopez, & Stark, 2011).

Project EAGLE Community Programs of the University of Kansas Medical Center, for example, use routine screenings, such as the Early Communication Indicator, to assess children's short-term learning. Staff plot the findings and create graphs that reflect children's growth and their use of multiple words. By sharing these graphs and having conversations about them with families, staff provide families with information to answer important questions: "Is my child developing normally?" and "What can I do to help him become more ready for school?" (National Family, School, and Community Engagement Working Group,

Lopez, Rosenberg, & Westmoreland, 2010). With the help of teachers, families can use the information about their children to take additional action to support their learning.

Strong partnerships between families, programs, and schools lead to greater success for children. For more information on how one Head Start program in Laguna, New Mexico prepares children and families for the transition to kindergarten see the Best Practices in Family and Community Engagement Video Series on the Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC).

**Community Partnerships:
Offering comprehensive services through back-to-school fairs**

Interagency collaboration has been found to have a positive effect on school readiness because of the increase in resources and professional knowledge that it brings (Selden, Sowa, & Sandfort, 2006). For a more effective approach to transitions, Head Start partnerships can extend beyond families and elementary schools to other community partners. Specifically, Head Start programs and staff can look for ways to partner with health, mental health, food and nutrition providers, and out-of-school organizations.

In Loudoun County, Virginia, for example, the Loudoun Community Health Center, the Junior League of Northern Virginia (JLNV) (an organization of female volunteers), and the Loudoun County Public Schools Head Start Program partner each summer to sponsor a Back-to-School Health Fair. Doctors, nurses, and clinic staff volunteer their time and services to provide free physical exams and immunizations required for kindergarten entry. JLNV volunteers provide each child with a backpack filled with supplies (donated by JLNV members, and local and national businesses) that are on the county's kindergarten school supply list.



Conclusion: Bringing It All Together

All Head Start Programs are committed to positive family and child outcomes, but programs can differ in many ways. Programs have families with diverse needs, different relationships with local schools and community programs, and a range of available resources. Some local schools are close distances to Head Start programs while others are difficult to reach. And Head Start programs enroll children with different temperaments, personalities, and backgrounds. All programs, however, can help promote successful transitions by exercising proactive leadership, demonstrating a commitment to continuously improve transition processes, and engaging in community collaboration. Head Start and other preschool programs and schools can help families understand new administrative processes, and they can support families' emotional experiences during the transition to kindergarten. Programs can also foster family partnerships that engage families in transition-related activities that reinforce parents' roles as teachers, learners, and advocates. These practices can help programs support children and families as they face the challenges of transitioning to kindergarten. Support from programs and schools can help families overcome their concerns about the upcoming transitions, and enjoy the excitement of the changes and opportunities ahead.

As programs, families, and communities work together toward the goal of engaging families in transitions, they are better equipped with information and skills to help children successfully move to new learning settings.

What Can Programs Do?

Form a Transition Team. Establish a collaborative team of parents, teachers, administrators, and community staff whose members are directly affected by the transition. Include team members that represent the different educational, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds of your community to help develop forms and activities that are accessible to everyone.

Train Staff to Work with Families through Transitions. Offer professional development programs for your staff and encourage your partner elementary schools to do the same. Try scheduling joint training or home visits that bring early childhood and elementary school staff together.

Assemble a Kindergarten Transition Panel and Host a Panel Discussion Session with Families. Convene a panel of experts who can address the specific strengths and needs of your program and community. Panelists can include parents of current or former kindergarten students, teachers from schools and ECE programs (including Head Start), administrators, and representatives from programs that support the unique needs of families (e.g. early intervention for children with special needs).

Help Families Learn How to Advocate for their Children and Access the Appropriate Resources. Provide information to families about how to access extra support for themselves and their children once they reach kindergarten. Offer opportunities for families to share their children's strengths and challenges with their new school.



Develop Systems for Sharing Information. Collaborate with your partner elementary schools and families to determine what types of information should be shared.

Develop Community Partnerships to Address Children's Needs for Transitions. Work with partners in your community who can help ensure that children's physical, mental, and emotional health needs are met as they transition to kindergarten. These partnerships can and should be mutually beneficial. For example, during transition events, partners from "out-of-school time" organizations can talk to families about the importance of engaging children beyond the school day and use the opportunity to enroll students in their programs. Similarly, libraries can use the partnership as a new avenue to help families learn about their community's educational programs.

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Acknowledgements:

This document was prepared under Grant #90HC0003 and #90HC0002 for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, by the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (NCPFCE) and the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning (NCQTL) and has been modified with funds from Grant #90HC0014 for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, and Office of Child Care by the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. We are grateful to our colleagues and the families in the Head Start and Early Head Start community for their contributions to this resource. It may be duplicated for noncommercial uses without permission.

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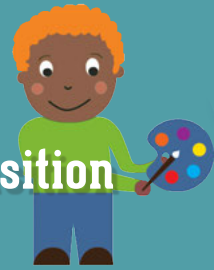
SECTION 9

Integrating Attendance into the Transition to Kindergarten



EARLY MATTERS

Integrating Attendance Into Kindergarten Transition



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February 2019

What Is the Transition to Kindergarten?

The transition into kindergarten, whether from a preschool or from home, represents an important milestone in a family's life. As children move into elementary school, there is a unique opportunity for schools to establish positive relationships with families and to encourage the development of habits that promote long-term success in school. A growing number of schools, preschools, districts, and communities now offer supports and programs to help families and children navigate this new experience.

Quality transition programming can be especially important for vulnerable populations such as families with children with special needs or those who speak a language other than English. Other vulnerable groups include families from a community with a history of negative experiences with educational institutions or those who are struggling with barriers related to poverty.

Why Address Attendance During Kindergarten Transition?

Helping families overcome challenges to getting to preschool or school and nurturing a habit of consistent on-time attendance is an often overlooked element of supporting a smooth transition to kindergarten. Research shows that students who miss 10 percent or more of the school year (just 2 days each month) in the very early years are at risk of falling behind in reading and math by third grade.

Unfortunately kindergarten is typically the grade with the highest levels of chronic absence in elementary school. Kindergarten chronic absence is a warning sign that families don't have the supports they need to overcome barriers to attendance prior to and during kindergarten. This is most often true for vulnerable populations that lack the resources to make up for lost learning time.

Public policies now require attention to reducing chronic absence, defined as missing 10 percent or more of school or preschool for any reason - including excused and unexcused absences and suspensions. The Head Start Performance standards require programs to monitor and address the needs of students who miss 10 percent or more of the program. The federal Every Student Succeeds Act requires all states to include chronic absence in publicly available school report cards. And in 36 states and the District of Columbia, chronic absence is a school accountability metric starting in kindergarten.



Who Can Make a Difference?

Principals and preschool directors are the critical leaders at the site level, creating the environment and the strategies that encourage families to make sure their children go to school every day and are on time. Site leaders are pivotal to ensuring every employee in the building – from bus drivers, office staff and cafeteria workers to teachers, social workers and health professionals – helps establish a positive, welcoming climate that motivates and supports consistent on-time attendance. The resources within this toolkit provide a “how-to” for integrating attention to attendance into key practices designed to smooth the transition to kindergarten.

District administrators, public agency and non-profit leaders, policy makers, funders and other influential stakeholders can use this toolkit to recognize how they can individually and collectively support implementation of the recommended practices. Attendance is more likely to be integrated into kindergarten transition practices when access to data, community-wide campaigns, professional development and funding are available.

What is in this Toolkit?

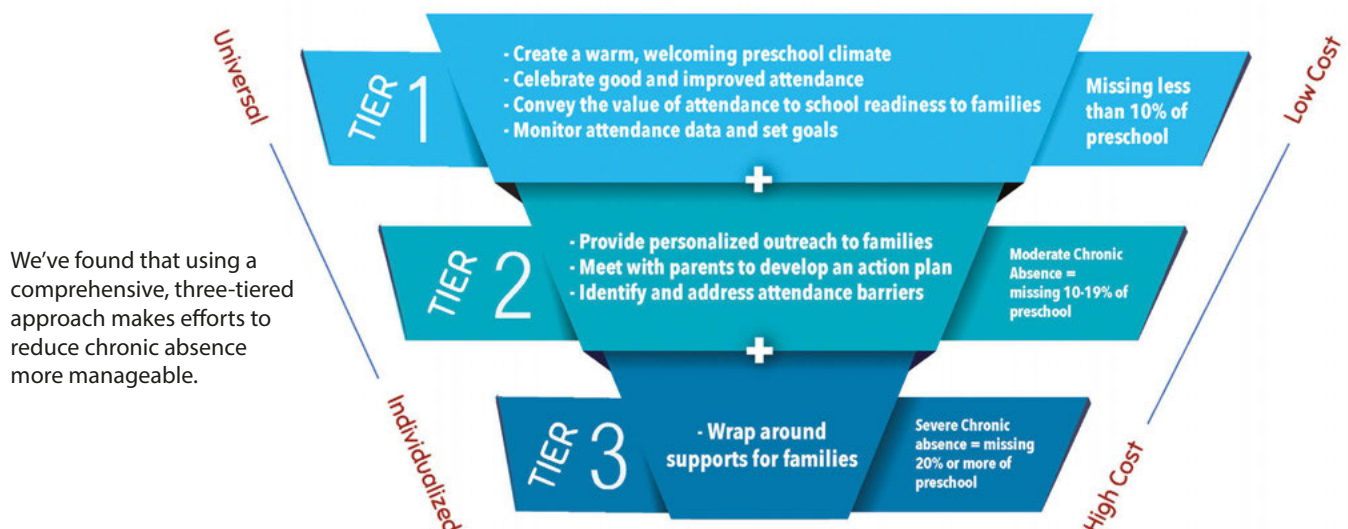


Early Matters offers ideas, resources and inspiring examples for schools, preschools and districts to help incorporate attention to attendance into practices for improving the transition to kindergarten at the site level. A separate set of practices are offered for districts and community partners to reinforce and encourage such practices through system level supports. Inspiring examples from sites and districts around the country show how integrating attendance awareness and positive attendance habits into transition practices can strengthen the impact of high quality programming and improve the likelihood that all children, including our most vulnerable students, can reach their full potential.

Site Level Practices

Schools, preschool and districts can integrate attendance into these five site level practices that support the transition to kindergarten.

- 1. Address Attendance During Transition Activities.** Research consistently shows positive results when educators address transition with intentionality. Orienting children to kindergarten should begin during the preschool year. Transition activities that include a strong emphasis on attendance help parents and children connect attendance with academic success.
- 2. Discuss Attendance When Welcoming New Families.** Family-teacher and teacher-child relationships are the bedrock of enthusiasm for attending school and learning. Relationship building is a one-on-one effort that takes patience and persistence. Outreach can range from a personal call home before school starts to a comprehensive year-long home visiting program. The more personal and warm the contact is, the more effective it is likely to be.
- 3. Equip Families to Connect Attendance and Educational Success.** Children whose families hold high expectations, set goals, monitor progress and actively assist with learning at home are most likely to do well in school. Schools, preschools and communities can provide parents with a variety of opportunities to learn about how to support their children's education. Integrating attention to attendance into these efforts is essential.
- 4. Use Attendance to Nurture a Strong School Community.** Community and family engagement is critical to establishing a warm, positive climate that motivates daily attendance for all children. The transition to kindergarten offers educators a critical opportunity for helping incoming families meet others and know that they are valued members of their new school community.
- 5. Offer Supports to Reduce Health Related Absences.** Research finds that preschool families report that over 60 percent of their children's absences are health-related. During the transition to kindergarten, preschools and schools are in a unique position to provide students and their families with information and access to services that help children stay healthy throughout the year. These efforts are even stronger when schools and early education programs partner with health providers in the community and leverage health resources already available in school or districts.



District and Community Supports

Whether or not preschools and schools integrate attendance into the site level practices is heavily influenced by whether districts and other key community partners work together to put in place systems to support adoption of good practice at scale. These supports create a foundation for infusing attendance into kindergarten transition efforts. What can districts and community partners do?



- 1. Engage Community Stakeholders in Promoting Attendance.** Districts play an essential role in setting the context for individual schools and preschools to improve their transition practice. The district, ideally in partnership with another public agency or prominent community leader, can convene stakeholders from local government, business, civic, social services and education sectors. Together they can discuss why attendance, starting in preschool and kindergarten, matters for long-term academic success and identify how they can work together to promote attendance.
- 2. Organize Attendance Campaigns that Reach Families with Young Children.** Families want their children to do well in school. But in the early school years, most families are still just learning that chronic absence, or missing just 2 days each month, starting in preschool and kindergarten, can result in young children falling behind. Community-wide messaging campaigns make it easy to share this important information with families and for families to hear reinforcing messages everywhere they go.
- 3. Monitor, Analyze and Review Chronic Absence Data.** Building capacity to monitor, analyze and review chronic absence data is essential to improving attendance. Children are at risk of chronic absence if they were chronically absent the prior year of school or preschool, or if they miss 10 percent of the school year in the first month. This toolkit provides ideas and resources to generate and share meaningful reports on chronic absence based on the attendance data they collected in schools and preschools every day.
- 4. Provide Joint Professional Development on Chronic Absence.** Too often administrators and educators are not aware that chronic absence is a challenge facing their schools or preschools, and they aren't familiar with effective strategies for improving attendance. Efforts to reduce chronic absence require schools and preschools to adopt a comprehensive, tiered approach. Key concepts, ideas and resources included in this toolkit can be integrated into existing professional development, or used to design professional development opportunities to equip educators to address chronic early absences.

Roadmap: What to Do When

Spring



Welcome starts with registration!

Site-based opportunities

- Incorporate attendance messages into registration materials
- Include attendance awareness in open house activities
- Provide friendly health-related materials to parents
- Give children playful, hands-on attendance materials

System-level supports

- Convene elementary and preschool leadership to focus on kindergarten attendance
- Plan a community-wide attendance messaging campaign for families with young children
- Enlist community partners to support the attendance work

Summer



Preparation intensifies

Site-based opportunities

- Discuss chronic absence prevention during staff orientation
- Create an attendance team
- Recruit volunteers to play a friendly attendance mascot
- Plan year-round calendar of attendance celebrations

System-level supports

- Offer transition program for students without preschool experience
- Include chronic absence prevention materials in professional development
- Develop recognition activities and incentive programs for improved attendance
- Participate in the Attendance Works national [Attendance Awareness Campaign](#)

Fall



Welcome activities abound

Site-based opportunities

- Send each kindergarten family a welcome letter
- Conduct relational home visits
- Integrate attendance into family orientation events
- Engage students in monitoring their own attendance
- Analyze first month's attendance data
- Launch recognition and incentive activities
- Plan special back-to-school event after winter break

System-level supports

- Sustain or expand attendance messaging
- Analyze chronic absence data
- Use data to identify patterns and develop solutions
- Plan additional professional development
- Work with community partners to provide incentives

Winter



A fresh opportunity to succeed!

Site-based opportunities

- Launch the new year with a day that children won't want to miss
- Create friendly attendance competition among classrooms
- Offer playful "make and take home" family attendance activities
- Use attendance data to solve problems with families
- Talk with families about improved attendance

System-level supports

- Reach out to preschools and community partners to plan next year's transition
- Gather site and community leadership to analyze progress
- Develop strategies and professional development that reflect data trends
- Expand public visibility of attendance



Attendance Works is a national organization dedicated to advancing student success and closing equity gaps. Its website offers materials, studies, and success stories about reducing chronic absence. Sign up to receive updates at: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/>

This document is just a summary, for the full toolkit with links to many more resources, visit: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/integrating-attendance-into-kindergarten-transition/>

Essential Alabama Transition to Kindergarten Resources

SECTION 10

Combining Funds to Support Prekindergarten Programs



COMBINING FUNDS

to Support Prekindergarten Programs

This document is designed to be a resource to Local Education Agencies (LEAs). Its purpose is to provide guidance on how LEAs can combine Local, State, and Federal fund sources to implement Pre-K Programs within their district. Funding sources such as Title I, Title V, First Class Pre-K, Head Start, and Special Education can be utilized to fund Pre-K Programs.

Braided Funding

Braided funding offers more opportunities for more children and their families to receive pre-kindergarten including the comprehensive services that define high-quality.

Braided funding occurs when funding sources are coordinated to support the total cost of services for individual children. Child care, Head Start and First Class Alabama funds, for example, may all be combined to support one child's pre-kindergarten experience.

"To simplify this concept, let's use the visual of a braid. If each funding stream is one rope in your braid, you initially have separate ropes. In order to meet the needs of your client and pay for a variety of services, you bring those ropes of funding together. However, your funders aren't interested in paying for all of the services your client needs, so when you are done providing services, you pull those funding ropes apart and report back to your clients in the services each funding stream independently paid for." (Spark Policy Institute: <http://sparkpolicy.com/?s=blending+and+braiding>)

The accountability for braided funding is more complicated and requires cost allocation or expenditure tracking to ensure there is no duplication of spending and that each of the funding sources is being charged its fair share of costs. When programs receive federal funds (even through the State's distribution or grant award), there is careful monitoring of funding expenditures to ensure that the funds are only paying for those things that are directly associated with the funding.

Examples of Braided Funding:

Shared Funding for One Child's Pre-K Experience in Child Care

First Class Pre-K pays for 6.5 hours/day of high-quality pre-kindergarten for 180 days/year. Childcare subsidy funds the remainder of the child's 10-hour-day and the additional 60 days she is in care.

Shared Funding to Meet First Class Quality Requirements

Child Care subsidy pays for the child's full day experience in the child care center. Additional funds from the state's Preschool Development Grant pay for the comprehensive services the child and family, as defined by the grant. These include family services and engagement, health and mental health services, substitute release time for teacher home visits, etc.

In these situations, fiscal managers must have a clear understanding of what each of the funding streams can pay for; care must be taken in the ways in which services are tracked; and cost allocations that document the correct usage of funding must be kept. In some cases, one type of funding may be able to pay for a specific service while another funding stream will not cover the same service.

What is the Difference Between Supplementing and Supplanting?

Supplementing is an efficient way of maximizing the impact of early childhood programs by combining or adding funds to support children and family services. The same funding or dollars are NOT used for the same service (often called double dipping).

Supplanting occurs when you reduce an investment from one funding stream and replace it with funding from another source. When additional funds are added, for example, to child care funds to expand a child's length of day or quality experience, they are supplementing the services what the child has currently been receiving.

In other words, funds may be used to build on or add to current programs or practices, but they may not be used to replace them.

What are Matching Funds?

Often states or local programs are required to include a "match" when they apply for a grant. This is a guarantee that the applicant will contribute a certain percent of the total amount on their own. For the federal Preschool Development Grants, states must contribute a match from their own state coffers to demonstrate their commitment to funding the program when the grant funds end. Head Start requires local programs to contribute a 10% match of their annual Federal award that can be cash or "in kind". In kind refers to contributions such as volunteer time or resource donations.

In some cases, local programs may be asked to contribute a specified portion of local match to help the state meet its total percentage requirement or other financial obligations. Alabama's early childhood programs that receive First Class Pre-K funds must contribute a 25% match that can be cash or in kind.

What are the Most Common Funding Sources that Could Combine with Child Care?

Funding Source	Who Administers	Child/Family Eligibility	How Can Funds Be Used	Cost for Families
First Class Alabama	Alabama Department of Early Education, Office of School Readiness	Application Process, random selection, open to all children, no income requirements	To provide high quality pre-kindergarten services	Varies for according to award type and child eligibility. See Appendix B
Preschool Development	Alabama Department of Office of School Readiness	Families must be at 200% or below Alabama	To add slots for eligible children by expanding First Class Alabama; 2) to make quality improvements to existing classrooms	No fees may be charged
Child Care Subsidy	Alabama State Department of Education Human Resources	Application process for families who are working or in school/training programs; waiting lists in some counties	To provide low and moderate-income families with equal access to affordable and quality child care services	Sliding fee scale from no payment to \$53/week for families
Title I, II, IV, V (ESSA)	Alabama State Department of Education and Local school districts	Children in identified schools with high percentage of low-income children	Varied opportunities, preschool programs, professional development, literacy, migrant, homeless, and family engagement	No fees for families
Head Start		Families must be at 100% or below federal poverty guidelines; 10% must be identified with special needs	To provide eligible children and families with a comprehensive early learning experience	No fees may be charged
Special Education, Part B 619	Alabama State Department of Education	Children three years old to kindergarten who are determined to be eligible for special education services under the Alabama Administrative Code	To provide identified children with services needed to support learning in the least restrictive environment	No fees may be charged
Nutrition Programs	Alabama State Department of Education	Three categories: free, reduced or paid	To provide reimbursements for meals provided during the program day	Additional charges for meals are allowed only for those eligible in First Class programs

What are Some Ways Funding Is Combined?

Funding Sources	Standards	Funding Coverage	Fees
Child Care and Head Start	Head Start Performance Standards and Child Care Licensing; whichever is more stringent	Head Start pays for Head Start half day or full day. Child Care pays for wrap-around the part of the day NOT covered by Head Start.	Tuition can be charged ONLY for the child care portion of the day
Child Care and First-Class Pre-K: Option 1	Child Care Licensing and State Pre-K Requirements; whichever is more stringent	State Pre-K pays for Pre-K day and year (typically 5-6 hours/180 days)	Tuition can be charged ONLY for the child care portion of the day and year
		Child Care pays for remainder of the day and year	
Child Care and First-Class Pre-K: Option 2	Child Care Licensing and State Pre-K Requirements; whichever is more stringent	Child Care fees (either subsidy or private pay) pay for children's tuition State Pre-K pays for supplementary high-quality costs such as teacher degrees, professional development, curricular materials	Tuition can be charged for appropriate families
Head Start and First-Class Pre-K: Option 1	Head Start Performance and State Pre-K Requirements; whichever is more stringent	State Pre-K pays for educational pre-k day and year (typically 5-6 hours/180 days) Head Start pays for comprehensive services for the Head Start-eligible children	No tuition charges for any child
Head Start and First-Class Pre-K (All children both Head Start and Pre-K eligible) Option 2	Head Start Performance and State Pre-K Requirements; whichever is more stringent	Head Start pays for its half or full day services. State Pre-K pays for the additional quality requirements such as teacher degree or professional development	No tuition charges for any child
Head Start and Special Education	Head Start Performance Standards, Child's IEP	Head Start for child's early childhood experience, special education funding for the services required to fulfill IEP	No tuition or service charges
Child Care and Special Education	Child Care licensing regulations, child's IEP	Child care subsidy or private tuition for child's early childhood experience, special education funding for the services required to fulfill IEP	Child care tuition; no charge for special education services

Funding Sources	Standards	Funding Coverage	Fees
First Class Pre-K and Special Education	First Class requirements, child's IEP	First Class Pre-K for child's early childhood experience, special education funding for the services required to fulfill IEP	No tuition or service charges for
Head Start, Child Care and Special Education Services	Head Start Performance Standards and Child Care licensing, child's IEP	Head Start for early childhood portion; child care tuition for wrap around services; special education funding for services required to fulfill IEP	No charge for Head Start; tuition charge for child care wraps around; no charge for special education
First Class Pre-K, Child Care and Special Education Services	First Class requirements, Child Care licensing, child's IEP	First Class funding for early childhood portion of day; child care tuition for wrap around; special education for the services required to fulfill IEP	No tuition or special education service charges
Food Programs and Child Care	Child Care Licensing	Food reimbursement supplements child care tuition	No charge for families
ESSA Funds (Title I) and Child Care	ESSA requirements and First-Class Pre-K	Child Care funds for early childhood portion of day; Title I fund professional development and supports for migrant. children	No charge for families

SECTION 11

Transition to Kindergarten for Students with Disabilities



Alabama State Department of Education
Special Education Services

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Tips for the Successful Transition of Preschool Students with Special Needs to Kindergarten

Planning ahead is key!

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Beginning kindergarten is an important life event.

- Preschoolers and parents can feel both excited and overwhelmed at the prospect of starting kindergarten.
- Preschool teachers want their students to be ready for kindergarten and want the upcoming school to know about their students.
- Kindergarten teachers want to know the students they will have to help them better prepare for the upcoming school year.

Tips for a smooth transition from preschool to kindergarten.

- Designate at least one preschool staff member and at least one kindergarten staff member to be responsible for communicating with each other throughout the school year to keep everyone informed of **all** upcoming events, such as open houses, informational meetings, etc.
- Provide joint activities with kindergarten staff and preschoolers to help preschoolers feel more comfortable transitioning to kindergarten.
- Ensure kindergarten and preschool program staff are knowledgeable about their respective program policies and procedures to ensure that families receive clear and accurate information about the requirements for kindergarten enrollment. Determine in advance which teacher will relay this information to the parent in a timely manner.
- Facilitate collaboration between kindergarten and preschool teachers to discuss common issues and possible solutions. This will show families that teachers are working together to ensure all children learn and make progress toward achieving learning standards.

FOR PRESCHOOL STAFF:

- Collaborate with kindergarten staff to ensure that any needed assistive technology and/or supports are available to the student when he/she begins kindergarten (e.g., picture schedule, first/then or choice boards, adapted equipment).
- Schedule and hold Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings at the kindergarten with parent(s) and both preschool and kindergarten staff, to include a general education kindergarten teacher.
- Prepare a transition book and/or social story for the preschool student that includes photographs of the school, teachers, playground, lunchroom, and activities the student will encounter in kindergarten.
- Read and discuss books with the student regarding what to expect in kindergarten, including schedules, routines, activities, and general rules of the school. Include activities that are not the norm, such as fire drills, lockdown, and tornado drills.

FOR KINDERGARTEN STAFF:

Before the school year begins:

- Contact preschool teachers before summer break to share upcoming dates for and information on open house, the first day of school, supply lists, and/or any activities of interest to the parents of rising kindergarten students that may occur during the summer.
- Collaborate with preschool staff to determine which kindergarten teacher/classroom would best fit the needs of the student while adhering to the Least Restrictive Environment for that student, as determined by the IEP Team.
- Provide opportunities for parents to learn about kindergarten policies, visit the new classroom, and meet kindergarten and administrative staff.
- Explain to parents how the buses run, their approximate pickup and drop-off times, and what to do if their child will be absent from school. Having this in writing may be helpful to parents.
- Determine which start date would be most appropriate for the student, if the kindergarten has staggered start dates, through collaboration among parents, preschool staff, and kindergarten staff.

After the school year begins:

- Inform parents or guardians of opportunities to be involved in their child's kindergarten classroom and/or school.
- Follow up during the first few weeks of school with a phone call or email to kindergarten families. They may have questions or need additional support.

- Communicate with parents or guardians about how their child is progressing in the classroom, their child's strengths and needs, and how their child is adjusting to the kindergarten setting.

FOR PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN STAFF:

Support learning at home by suggesting some simple ideas for parents or guardians to promote learning at home:

- Encourage reading to their child every day.
- Provide supplies to parents or guardians to use with their child, such as crayons, markers, and paper. Show them examples of pictures they can make.
- Explain how the use of small manipulatives such as Legos and tearing strips of paper enhance the development and improvement of their child's grasp and fine motor coordination.
- Explain the importance of letting their child make small decisions and smart choices.
- Express the importance of eating healthy meals and having consistent early bedtimes.
- Explain the importance of talking positively to their child about a new school, a new class, or a new teacher. Encourage parents or guardians to refrain from talking negatively about the school, teacher, or another student in front of the child.
- Encourage parents to reinforce self-help skills such as zipping, fastening shoes, cleaning up toys, opening food and drink containers, carrying a tray, hand washing, and toileting skills.
- Remind parents to LIMIT SCREEN TIME! Per the Alabama State Department of Education Roadmap to Reopening Schools, the recommended amount of screen time for a young child is:
 - Pre K: a maximum of 60 minutes daily, and
 - Kindergarten: a maximum of 90 minutes daily.
- Provide resources and ideas for activities for parents and demonstrate how to use them. This may be as simple as preparing examples to help children identify shapes, colors, and count objects when shopping or looking for letters, shapes, and colors when driving.
- Avoid the assumption that any parent already knows how to interact with or teach their child.

FOR PARENTS:

Permission will be needed from the child's new school for the following activities:

- Consider visiting the kindergarten school while the other children are there. You may want to consider eating lunch or snacks in the lunchroom with the present kindergarten students.
- Attend activities at the kindergarten school such as open house, orientation, and book fairs.
- Schedule a visit with your child to the school during summer break when no other children are present. Include all areas of the school campus in the visit all areas of the school and campus.
- Schedule an individual meeting with your child and his/her kindergarten teacher in the classroom he/she will attend before school begins.

FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS:

If you suspect your child or student has a disability:

Ages 0-3: Contact Early Intervention at 1-800-543-8098. For additional information and frequently asked questions about Early Intervention, see: [ADRS | Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services](#).

Ages 3-21: Contact the school system for which the child is zoned, and let staff know that you have a student/child for whom you have concerns. You may also contact the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), Special Education Services, at 1-334-694-4782. For additional information, visit [Special Education Services \(alsde.edu\)](#).

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SECTION 12

Social-Emotional Learning, Mental Health, and the Transition to Kindergarten



Social Emotional Learning, Mental Health, and the Transition to Kindergarten

Mental health problems sometimes emerge in the early years of development. Without the appropriate support can lead to significant behavioral problems later in life. It is essential that mental health problems in young children are identified and treated within the context of their families, homes, and community environments, including in early care and education programs.

Families experience many developmental transitions with their children in the early years. Environmental and emotional transitions can present opportunities and challenges for both the child and the parent. A child's emotional dysregulation can be overwhelming for the adults that care for them leaving the caregiver unsure of how to best support the child's response to change. This can be even more challenging if the child has experienced trauma or has a social emotional developmental delay.

Examples Of Transitions

Home to Early Care

Early Care to Preschool

Preschool to Kindergarten

Kindergarten to Elementary School

Some programs have access to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) and other community mental health supports that serve the child and family. These early childhood professionals partner with families and programs to assist in determining what supports and strategies

could be effective in preparing for transitions. In an effort to promote seamless transition from one area of programming to another, it is crucial that best practice guidelines are available to assist in interagency collaboration.

Moving from one program to another is a big transition for anyone. Infants, toddlers, and young children depend on stable and predictable routines to feel safe and secure. Understanding a child's temperament or emerging mental health needs plays a role in reducing the stress brought on by big changes.

All transition plans should be reflective of child and family cultural expectations and experiences, strategies that have been successful in addressing challenging behaviors, and what skills the child and family are still working to improve.

Recommended Action Steps

» In areas of the state where IECMHC is available in early care, Head Start, and First Class PreK

Step 1: The IECMH Consultant will facilitate a meeting between early care/education staff and parent/guardian to establish where the child will attend Preschool/Kindergarten and the need for ongoing mental health support according to the desires of the family.

Step 2: Upon agreement from the parent/guardian, the IECMH Consultant will obtain written consent and signed release of information.

Step 3: The IECMH Consultant will schedule either a virtual or face-to-face meeting between the receiving program's mental health support representative and the parent/guardian. The Consultant will provide the mental health support representative with a completed mental health transition packet that includes the items mentioned above. This is considered a warm hand-off from one mental health professional to another as a courtesy and should take place in the presence of the parent/guardian.

Step 4: Prior to the end of the school year, the Consultant will share helpful information about the child's current situation, strategies to use over the summer for continued growth, expectations for child development and growth moving into the next stage of learning, etc.

Step 5: The IECMH Consultant will follow up with the parent/guardian six (6) months after the warm handoff to ensure the transition is complete.

» When the early care center does not have access to IECMHC

Step 1: The early care/education provider will obtain consent to provide the parent/guardian's contact information to Help Me Grow who can assist the family in navigating resources in their community.

Step 2: Once consent is obtained, the early care/education provider will refer the parent/guardian to Help Me Grow.

Step 3 (From early care to Preschool): The early care provider or Help Me Grow Care Coordinator will facilitate a meeting with the parent/guardian to establish where the child will attend Preschool/Kindergarten and the need for ongoing mental health/behavioral support according to the desires of the family.

Step 4: The early care/education provider will facilitate a meeting between the parent/guardian and the mental health representative of the receiving program. This could be the school counselor, the mental health service coordinator, or other mental health representative of that LEA.

» Kindergarten to First, Second, Third Grades

Step 1: The mental health service coordinator of the LEA will facilitate transition to and from each grade according to the organization's established transitions policy.

For more information on how your program can access information on mental health supports in your area, contact dallas.rabig@ece.alabama.gov

SECTION 13

Strategies to Serve All Children



STRATEGIES

to Serve All Children

Community transition to kindergarten teams serve all children and families in their communities. In addition to improving alignment and transitions for children coming from formal childcare and prekindergarten settings, transition teams support children who are cared for by family member, friend, and neighbor caregivers. Here are resources that can support all young children and their families.

Born Ready

[Born Ready](#) is an initiative from the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE) focused on raising awareness among Alabama parents of the importance of early brain development and high-quality early care and education. The mission of the ADECE is to inspire and support parents and caregivers, as well as to deliver cohesive, comprehensive systems of top-quality education and care so that all Alabama children thrive and learn. Born Ready is not only designed to inform parents; it will also empower them and give them access to the tools they need to be their children's first and best teachers.

Alabama Strengthening Families

[Strengthening Families](#) is a research-based, cost-effective strategy to increase family stability, enhance child development, and reduce child abuse and neglect. The Strengthening Families™ initiative is supported by a grant from the Alabama Department of Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention. It builds five

protective factors: 1) parental resilience, 2) social connections, 3) knowledge of parenting and child development, 4) concrete support in times of need, and 5) social and emotional competence of children. The goal is to fully engage early childhood providers across Alabama, as well as other service organizations, while impacting parents through our Strengthening Families Initiative efforts.

School-Connected Play and Learn Groups

In school-connected play and learn group sessions, caregivers and children ages 0-5 participate in developmentally-appropriate activities, including read-alouds, singing, movement, and art activities. Often caregivers will spend a portion of the play and learn sessions learning about child development while children engage in open play. Play and learn group facilitators build trust and relationships with the participants while helping families develop peer connections with each other and connecting families to community resources, including the library and health and social service agencies.

An explicit aim of school-connected play and learn groups is to break down barriers between families and their local elementary schools even before children enroll in kindergarten. Sometimes the sessions are held in schools; sometimes in nearby libraries or other facilities. Regardless, principals and kindergarten teachers can visit play and learn group sessions, read a story, affirm the value of the activities the families are engaging in, share information about kindergarten registration, and provide a warm early welcome to their schools. For more information on play and learn groups, see [this resource](#).

Summer Transition to Kindergarten Programs

Communities can also support children in transitioning to kindergarten, especially those who have not had formal experience in early childhood programs, by offering summer transition to kindergarten programs. These programs typically run from 2 to 6 weeks and include activities intended to introduce children to the routines, behaviors, and skills they will need in kindergarten. They also include significant family engagement components. For more information, see these resources:

[Moving into Kindergarten: Multnomah County, OR](#)

[The Results Are In: Kindergarten Transition Programs Work](#)

[Ready Freddy](#) and [Ready Freddy Kindergarten Clubs](#)

[Georgia's Summer Transition Program](#) and [Georgia's Operating Guidelines](#)

SECTION 14

**A Family Child
Care Resource**

Why Family Child Care?

National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) is the only national organization to offer accreditation solely for high-quality family child care homes in the U.S. According to data from NAFCC, “significant research shows that warm, loving, and home-like settings are natural environments for children during the early years. Family child care is the choice of many families because it provides safety and the comfort of home while offering a consistent caregiver/educator throughout the years.”

Bridge from Family Child Care Home to School

Transition practices are the bridge to help support all of the partners in the process (children/ families, kindergarten teachers, and community organizations) to develop relationships and plans that help children successfully move from the Family Child Care (FCC) educational setting to a traditional school setting.

The transition into Kindergarten is an important process for children and families, especially those who are coming from FCC home settings. The substantial change in the learning environment makes the connections between the FCC homes and the area schools critical. Community organizations can play a key role connecting the schools with the feeder FCC homes in their area by facilitating events for introductions and relationship building.

FAMILY CHILD CARE Providers in Alabama

300+ Licensed Family Homes

200+ Licensed Group Homes

90+ NAFCC Accredited Providers



A Family Child Care Resource



Early Head Start in FCC

“As of December 2017, the EHS-CC Partnership and Expansion Grants had preliminarily reported partnerships with 1,600+ child care centers and 1,070+ family child care homes. The state chose Auburn University to be the statewide hub for family child care partners. Auburn University worked directly with the providers to raise quality, implement comprehensive services and facilitate national accreditation.” HS/ ECLKC

"I'm excited about the community connections they are making. That's something that we haven't always seen, especially with family child care providers. But now...we're seeing that they're connecting to other community resources, connecting to some state resources, and being a voice for family child care in the state."

—Alabama Department of Human Resources, Child Care Division, Division [Head Start ECLKC Article](#)





Benchmark for Quality Family Child Care

As reported by NAFCC, “accreditation is an indicator that a family child care program offers safe, inviting spaces and warm, nurturing care complete with educational activities designed to meet the needs and interests of all children while promoting individual development. Nationally accredited homes meet higher standards in child care and set the [benchmark](#) for quality.”

FCC providers receive professional development training from organizations around the state including Alabama Department of Human Resources' Child Care Quality Enhancement agencies.

NAFCC Quality Standards

Accreditation offers national recognition to family child care programs meeting the highest standards for home-based early care and education. Helping parents recognize and choose high quality family child care, symbol of quality, honors diversity and reflects cultural competency. Accreditation allows providers the flexibility to implement standards through the lens of diversity and child-centered care. Accreditation encompasses a comprehensive set of standards broken down into [five core competencies](#) :

Relationships

The Environment

Learning Activities

Safety & Health

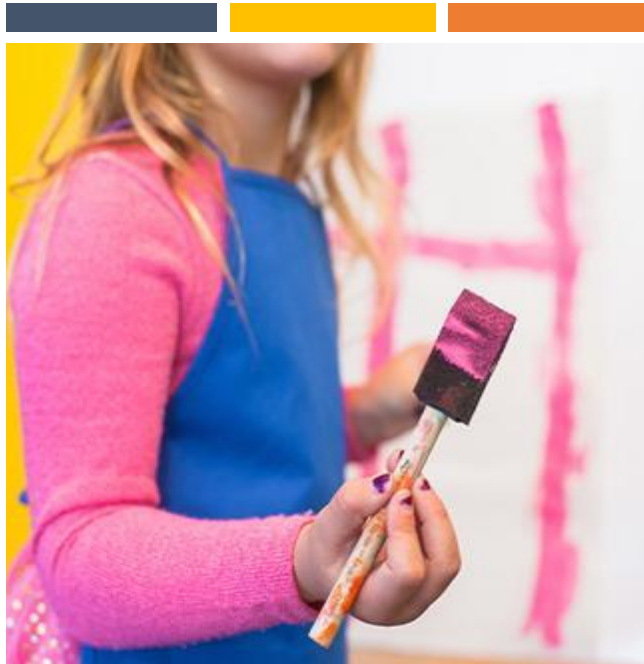
Professional & Business Practices

“I’m not a babysitter but I am child growth development specialist.”

In the Words of FCC Providers

“I became accredited because I didn’t want to be the minimum standard. I’m not a babysitter but I am child growth development specialist. I wanted my parents to know I go above and beyond for my children, and being accredited shows just that.” – Arlene, FCC Provider

“I decided to become re-accredited as an ongoing commitment to professionalism and my children’s success. My moto is ‘a daycare of love and learning’ and I pride myself on that.” – Rickshel, FCC Provider



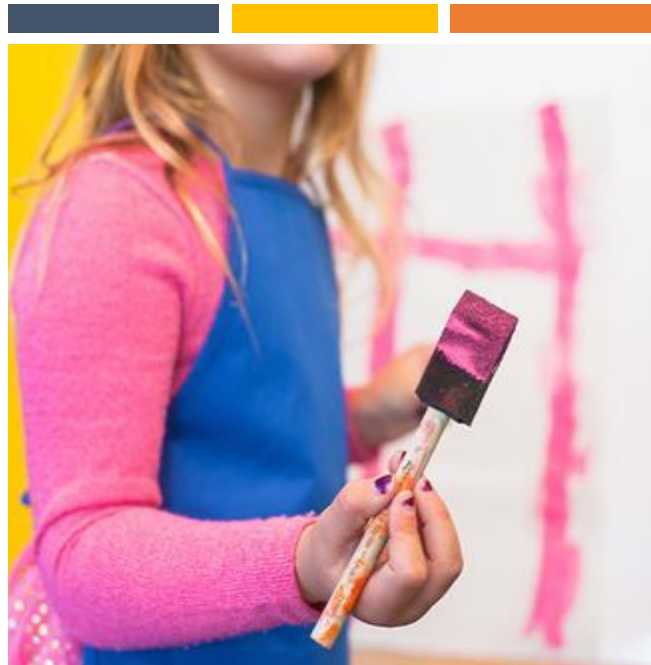


Diversity of Home-Based Care

“Home-based child care offers options to families seeking affordable, accessible care that fits their needs, whether the provider is someone they know or a provider committed to a long-term career in child care. Home-based care may be a child’s primary arrangement, or it may be a second arrangement that supplements center-based care.” – Child Trends.org



“As policymakers and early childhood education professionals seek opportunities to support the early childhood workforce, they should recognize the diversity of home-based child care and acknowledge its role in the lives of children, families, and providers.” – Child Trends.org



SECTION 15

Sample Transition to Kindergarten Child Information Forms

SASID No. _____

LASID No. _____

**Cambridge Public Schools Transition Form – Draft #11 – 2/24/16
for Children Entering Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten**

Child's Name: _____ Nickname: _____
As on Birth Certificate Last First Middle

Date of Birth: _____ Gender: _____

Ages of child's siblings: _____

Name of Center-Based Program: _____

Person completing this form/Relationship to child: (circle answer)
 Preschool teacher Family childcare provider Other: _____
 First name: _____ Last name: _____
 Best phone number: _____ Best email address: _____
 How long have you known this child: _____

Languages spoken at home:				
Languages child responds to:				
Languages child speaks:				

Is child comfortable expressing self in English with familiar adults? (Circle answer) Yes Developing No

Are translation services for family helpful /needed? (Circle answer) Yes No

Major Health Concerns (for example asthma, life threatening allergies):

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL & LIFE SKILLS	Rarely	With support	Sometimes	Most of the time	Not observed
Successfully transitions from parent/guardian					
Is able to transition from one activity to another					
Successfully transitions at the end of the day					
Is able to make choices					
Seeks help when appropriate					
Exhibits impulse control and self-regulation					
Follows routines/expectations					
Participates successfully in adult-directed activities					
Enters and engages successfully in child-directed activities					
Participates successfully in large group situations					
Participates successfully in small group situations					
Is able to share space/materials/conversation					
Can handle frustration and attempts to work through difficulties					
Attempts to solve conflicts with peers					

PHYSICAL & SELF HELP	Rarely	With support	Sometimes	Most of the time	Not observed
Able to open own food containers and feed self					
Able to dress self – put on own coat and backpack					
Able to toilet self					
Able to put on and take off own shoes					
Demonstrates range of fine motor tasks					
Demonstrates large motor coordination					
Comfortable with sensory activities (i.e., “messy” play)					
APPROACHES TO LEARNING & LANGUAGE					
Engages in conversation					
Follows verbal directions					
Easily understood					
Shows interest and curiosity as a learner					
Preferred learning style: (circle answer(s))	Visual	Movement	Listening		
Cognitive approaches to learning (circle answer(s))	Avoidant	Participative	Competitive		
Other Comments:	Collaborative	Dependent	Independent		
GENERAL					
Additional strengths, special interests, favorite activities:					
Effective strategies for supporting this child:					
Additional info for K Teachers:					

SERVICES CHILD IS/HAS BEEN RECEIVING	PROVIDER	TIMES PER WEEK/MONTH	LOCATION SERVICES PROVIDED
Speech Therapy			
Occupational Therapy (OT)			
Physical Therapy (PT)			
Behavioral			
Other			

Does the child have an Individual Education Plan (IEP)? (Circle answer) Yes No

INFORMATION RELEASE:

Parent/Guardian gives permission for this form to be shared with the Cambridge Public Schools.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed name: _____

Or the program has a signed release to share this form with the Cambridge Public Schools. Form is dated: _____

Parent/Guardian gives permission for the Cambridge Public Schools to contact this program/provider to discuss the child and for this program/provider to talk with the Cambridge Public Schools.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed name: _____

Or the program has a signed release to share this form with the Cambridge Public Schools. Form is dated: _____

Parents/guardians may add comments on a separate sheet of paper.

PROVIDER PROFILE: FOR CENTERS AND FAMILY CHILDCARE PROVIDERS

We suggest that the provider fill in this profile once and copy it. Copies could then be attached to the two-page Cambridge Public School Kindergarten Transition Form.

Program/Provider name:	
What type of provider are you? <i>(Please indicate whether you are a Center-based or Family-based provide)</i>	
Length of program's day: <i>(Please indicate in hours)</i>	
Group/class size: <i>(Please indicate the total number of children in this child's group or class)</i>	
Number of teachers/ educators on teaching team: <i>(Please indicate the total number of teachers this child interacts with throughout the day)</i>	
Sample Daily Schedule	
List screening tools you use <i>(Example: Ages and Stages Questionnaire)</i>	
List assessment tools you use <i>(Example: Teaching Strategies GOLD)</i>	

Is there anything else you would like to share with Cambridge Public Schools about your program? *(Examples could include your program focus -such as Reggio Emilia, or Montessori – or other distinctive aspects of your program.)*

Preschool Feedback: Kindergarten

First 10 of Lancaster County

Child's Name _____

Date of Birth _____

Person completing this form:

Preschool program name:

Thank you for completing this form. Your feedback is very important. The information provided will help us get to know the child and ensure that we are meeting all of the child's social and emotional needs.

Please rate the child's strengths in the following areas using Y (yes), N (not yet), or WH (with help).

Managing Emotions and Conflict

- Recognizes basic emotions in self and others
- Uses words to express feelings during conflict
- Stays calm and demonstrates flexibility when something does not go his/her way
- Moves forward with second attempt at solving a conflict
- Keeps hands and feet to him/herself

Other information that you feel is important:

Forming Relationships

- Understands and follows adult directions and prompts
- Respect toward others' belongings
- Demonstrates empathy/kindness
- Has awareness of others' feelings
- Can separate from familiar adults without difficulty

Other information that you feel is important:

Levels of Help/Support

- Demonstrates motivation in learning
- Attempts tasks independently
- Demonstrates confidence in own abilities
- Asks for help when needed
- Accepts help when offered
- Can remove self from distractions to complete a task
- Can transition from one activity to the next

Other information that you feel is important:

Communication/Interpersonal Skills

- Asks clarifying questions
- Responds to questions, staying on topic
- Communicates in full sentences.
- Speech is understood by most listeners
- Can solve common social problems (ex. Sharing, turn-taking)

Other information that you feel is important:

Play Skills

- ___ Plays cooperatively with others over an extended period of time
- ___ Engages in games with simple rules
- ___ Willingly explores new materials
- ___ Shares willingly
- ___ Can enter play with others appropriately

Other information that you feel is important:

Self-help Skills

- ___ Independent in toileting
- ___ Independent in
 - ___ Zippering
 - ___ Opening/closing buttons
 - ___ Opening/closing snaps
 - ___ Putting shoes on and off
 - ___ Putting coat on and off
 - ___ Dressing self
- ___ Understands basic safety and recognizes when situations are unsafe.

Other information that you feel is important:

The child has the following:

- Has/previously had IEP Yes No
- Behavioral Plan/services Yes No
- Specialized medical needs Yes No

Other information/comments:

The child is most successful when:

Any other information important for the Kindergarten teacher to know (ex. successful strategies, helpful hints, etc.).

Transition to Kindergarten Information Form

York County, Pennsylvania

Child's Name: _____ Date of Birth: ____/____/____
Last First Middle

Name of Program: _____ Phone: _____

Person completing this form: _____ Relationship: _____

Email: _____

Household (Siblings/Ages): _____

Languages spoken at home:				
Languages child responds to:				
Languages child speaks:				

Is child able to express self in English with familiar adults? (Circle answer) Yes Developing No

Does your child respond to their own name/nickname? (Circle Answer) Yes No

Name/nickname they respond to: _____

Are translation services for family helpful /needed? (Circle answer) Yes No

Please rate the child's data-supported outcomes in the following areas using Y (yes), N (not yet), or WH (with help).

Managing Emotions and Conflict

- Recognizes basic emotions in self and others
- Exhibits impulse control and self-regulation
- Demonstrates an understanding of problem solving strategies
- Keeps hands and feet to him/herself

Other information that you feel is important:

Forming Relationships

- Understands and follows adult directions and prompts
- Respect toward others & class materials.
- Demonstrates empathy/kindness
- Can separate from familiar adults without difficulty

Other information you feel is important:

Levels of Help/Support

- Demonstrates motivation in learning
- Attempts tasks independently
- Asks for help when needed
- Follows routines & expectations
- Can transition from one activity to the next with ease

Other information that you feel is important:

Communication/Interpersonal Skills

- Asks clarifying questions
- Follows verbal directions
- Speech is understood by most listeners
- Uses expressive language
- Uses words to express emotions

Other information that you feel is important:

Play Skills

- Plays cooperatively with others over an extended period of time
- Engages in games with simple rules
- Can enter & engage in play with others appropriately
- Participates successfully in large & Small groups
- Able to appropriately share materials and space with others

Other information that you feel is important:

Self-help Skills

- Independent in toileting
(If WH or NY – please explain below)
- Independent in dressing self (zippers, buttons, snaps, shoes, coat)
- Understands basic safety and recognizes when situations are unsafe.
- Demonstrates a range of fine motor skills
- Demonstrates a range of gross motor skills

Other information that you feel is important:

Fine Motor Skills

- Writes first name
- Writes last name
- Holds & Uses Scissors correctly
- Uses Writing Tools with appropriate grip

Notes:

IDENTIFIES UPPER AND LOWERCASE LETTERS

Upper Case Letters (*circle one*):

0 – 10

11 – 18

19 - 26

Lower Case Letters (*circle one*):

0 – 10

11 – 18

19 - 26

Letter Sounds (*circle one*):

0 – 10

11 – 18

19 - 26

Notes:

IDENTIFIES WRITTEN NUMBERS 1-10 - Mark a "+" for a correct response and a "-" for an incorrect response.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

ROTE COUNTING / 1:1 Correspondence

Highest # without support: _____ 1:1 Correspondence 1-10 (*Circle one*) Yes No

Other Academic Notes:

The child has the following:

- Has been Evaluated or Diagnosed _____ Yes _____ No _____ Monitor
With/For: _____
- Has/previously had IEP/IFSP/504 _____ Yes _____ No _____ Monitor
(Please circle all applicable)
- Behavioral Plan/Services _____ Yes _____ No _____ Monitor
- Specialized Medical Needs _____ Yes _____ No _____ Monitor
- Speech Therapy _____ Yes _____ No _____ Monitor
- Physical Therapy _____ Yes _____ No _____ Monitor
- Occupational Therapy _____ Yes _____ No _____ Monitor
- Counseling Services _____ Yes _____ No _____ Monitor
- Psychological Services _____ Yes _____ No _____ Monitor

Other information/comments:

Attendance: Please include a brief note about this child's attendance:

**Any other information important for the Kindergarten teacher to know
(ex. successful strategies, helpful hints, etc.)**

Transition to Kindergarten Information Release

Información sobre la transición al kínder

York County Pennsylvania

Parent/Guardian gives permission for this form to be completed and shared with

_____ (**Kindergarten Program**).

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed name: _____

Parent/Guardian gives permission for _____ (**Kindergarten Program**) to

contact _____ (**Preschool Provider**) to discuss this form.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed name: _____

SPANISH El padre/tutor da permiso para que este formulario sea completado y compartido con

_____ (**Programa de kínder**).

Firma: _____ Fecha: _____

Nombre impreso : _____

SPANISH El padre/tutor da permiso para _____ (**Programa de kínder**) a

que contacte _____ (**Proveedor de preescolar**) para hablar de este formulario

Firma : _____ Fecha : _____

Nombre impreso : _____

PROVIDER PROFILE: FOR CENTERS AND FAMILY CHILDCARE PROVIDERS

*The Childcare provider will fill in this profile **ONE** time and provide it to the school.*

Program/Provider Name:	
Program/Provider Address:	
Program/Provider Supervisor Name:	
Program/Provider Supervisor Contact Information: <i>(Email and phone number)</i>	
What Type Of Provider Are You? <i>(Please indicate whether you are a Center-based or Family-based provide)</i>	
Length Of Program's Day: <i>(Please indicate in hours)</i>	
Group/Class Size: <i>(Please indicate the total number of children in this child's group or class)</i>	
Number Of Teachers/Educators On Teaching Team: <i>(Please indicate the total number of teachers this child interacts with throughout the day)</i>	
Sample Daily Schedule <i>(Please use the back if you need more space, or attach copies)</i>	
List Screening & Assessment Tools You Use <i>(Example: Ages and Stages Questionnaire, Teaching Strategies Gold, Work Sampling)</i>	

Is there anything else you would like to share about your program with this Kindergarten Program?

