

How to Facilitate a Smooth Transition to Kindergarten

Multiple large-scale research studies have found that establishing transition activities for children and families are associated with reduced stress and higher social-emotional competence at the beginning of school year. Communities, schools and educators who follow the best practices outlined in this tip sheet can help their students grow academically and increase family involvement in a child's education.

How to achieve smooth transitions

Evidence points to these important factors:

- Positive relationships for children and families with their new elementary schools
- A transition team of preschool and kindergarten administrators and educators, families and community members
- Assessments, learning standards and curriculum that align between early childhood and kindergarten settings
- Joint professional development between early childhood and kindergarten educators
- Information and communication that is shared with families and the community at large

Use three core principles:

- Approach transition collaboratively
- Involve all key stakeholders in the process
- Align children's experiences between preschool and kindergarten settings

How to start: six steps to successful transition planning

1. Establish partnerships, identify transition team members and designate leaders.
2. Identify goals.
3. Assess current transition practices used in your community.
4. Identify the data or evidence you have for practices that are or are not working.
5. Plan and prioritize: reevaluate goals or create new ones and plan appropriate next steps.
6. Implement and evaluate your plan.

Additional strategies to support transitions

Connecting with Children and Families

- The children and families in your setting want to know—what will kindergarten be like? Introduce children to the kindergarten classroom, the school environment, the new routines and their new teacher.
- Involve families throughout the transition.

Connecting with Schools

- Collaborate with kindergarten and early education staff to identify goals for children. Share information about children’s progress and additional support services they may receive.
- Help kindergarten educators become familiar with incoming students, for example by planning events and opportunities for students to visit their new school (classroom visits, family events, etc.).
- Encourage alignment between the early learning setting and kindergarten—the environments, curricula, assessments and interactions.
- Be informed about school policies and procedures to help families understand decisions that may be made about placements and services for their child.

Connecting with Community

- Use resources within the community to support continuity in the transition process.



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