

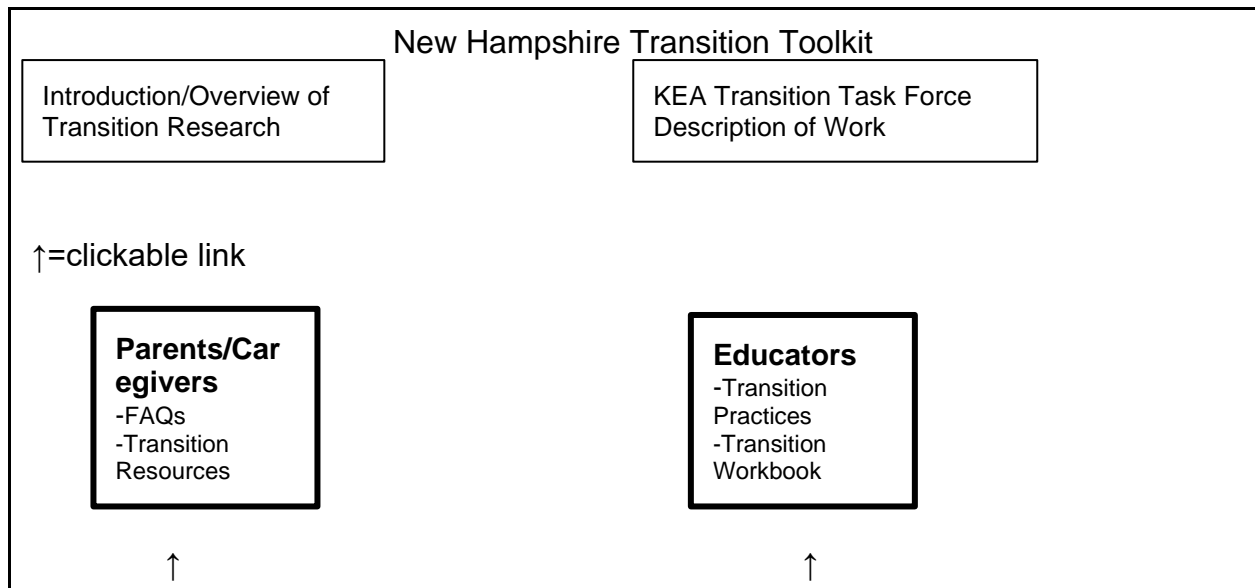
Kindergarten Transition Toolkit Outline

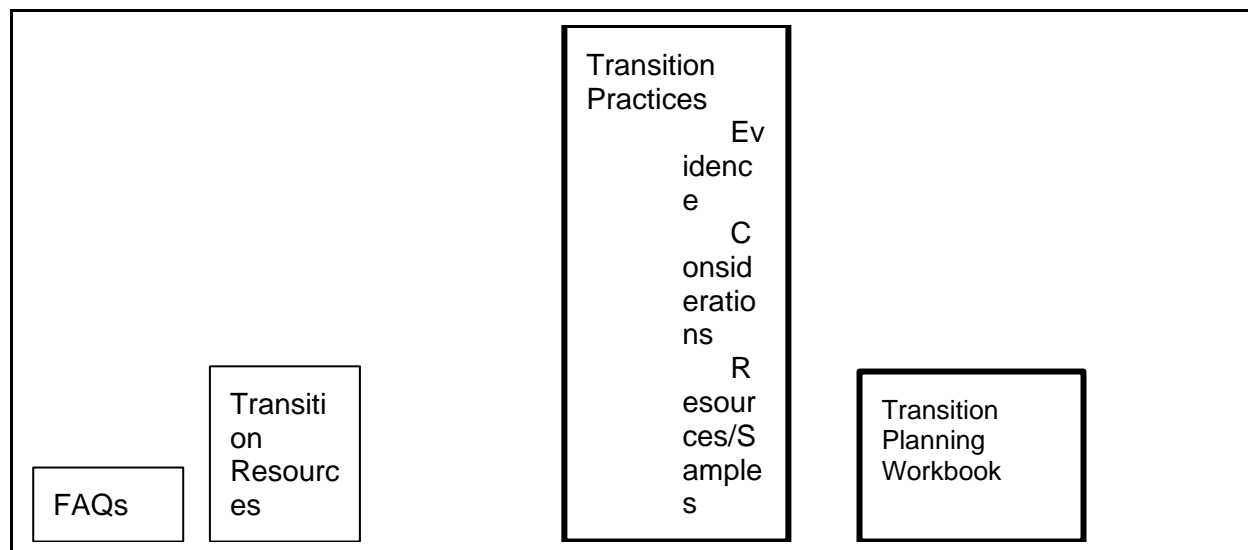
- Introduction
 - Brief summary of research
 - Outline of work done by KTEA Task Force
 - Explanation of evidence-informed research
- Transition Planning Workbook
 - Document for schools/districts to fill out to plan and evaluate the transition process in their community, including outlining stakeholders involved, practices implemented, time frame, setting goals
- Transition Practices
 - Each Transition practice with definition, suggested time frame, related research, considerations, and resources/samples
- Family Resources
 - Kindergarten Questions Overview
 - Websites for Resources

Best example of a state Kindergarten Transition Toolkit reviewed:

[Transitioning into Kindergarten | Department of Education \(maine.gov\)](#)

Sketch of New Hampshire Kindergarten Transition Toolkit:





Introduction: the Importance of Kindergarten Transition Practices

The transition to kindergarten is a significant milestone for children and families, one that has been categorized as a major life transition (Ramey & Ramey, 2010; Rosenkoetter et al., 2009). For families who have been caring for their children and supporting their development, it may very well be the first time that they share the responsibility for their children’s care and development with other adults (Pianta, Rimm-Kaufman, et al., 1999). Children’s success in adjusting to school during this time period is important as many studies have shown that children’s early schooling experiences impact later school and life outcomes (Alexander & Entwisle, 1988; 3 Alexander et al., 1993; Barnett, 2008; Campbell et al., 2014; Chetty et al., 2011; Claessens & Engel, 2013; Ensminger & Slusarcick, 1992; Entwisle & Hayduck, 1988; Gutman et al., 2003; Watts et al., 2015).

The literature reflects that a “one size fits all” approach to kindergarten transition tends to be used by schools; the most common practices are those that are generic, low intensity (e.g. open house, welcome letter), and geared toward the whole group (Welchons & McIntyre, 2015; Quintero & McIntyre, 2011; Early et al., 2001). Family perspectives on kindergarten transition reveal that there is variation in families’ experiences, needs, and involvement related to the transition process (Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 1999; McIntyre et al., 4 2007; McIntyre et al., 2010; Wildenger & McIntyre, 2011; Malsch et al., 2011; Miller, 2015). The transition to kindergarten can be a stressful time for some families and children; studies have found that there are physiological stress responses for some parents (DeCaro & Worthman, 2011) and most children (Parent et al., 2019) following kindergarten entry. In fact, kindergarten teachers report that almost half of children experience some problems during the transition process or have difficult transitions (Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2000). Another key idea is that families want to be involved in the transition process as research has found that families want more

information about kindergarten transition (McIntyre et al., 2007). Thus, it is important for schools to reflect upon the transition practices they offer to families and children and assess whether the practices meet the needs of their community. As one New Hampshire kindergarten parent put it, “I think it’s more of that, instead of a one size fits all, more of like these are five options to you, but what is it that you need? Because not everybody’s the same.”

Kindergarten Entry Assessment and Transition Task Force

A Needs Assessment completed as part of the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG 0-5) Implementation Grant revealed that NH needs to improve the Kindergarten entry process and strengthen the pre-Kindergarten entry connection with families and local child care/early learning programs. To address this need, a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) and Transition Task Force was formed and met on a monthly basis between December 2020 through December 2021. The Task Force was comprised of parents, private early childhood programs, Head Start, public school program teachers and administrators, family organizations, and policymakers. The Task Force reviewed research on transition practices presented by Abt Associates and thoroughly discussed nine practices for before kindergarten entry. The Task Force agreed that each practice is valuable and that schools should select which practices best meet the needs of their children, families, teachers, and community. The Task Force recommends that schools select the practices to implement rather than individual teachers so that children and families receive a similar transition experience regardless of class placement.

The Task Force identified three categories of transition practices:

1. **Practices that promote relationships with children and families**, which set the stage for family partnerships and are at the core of successful transitions (Readiness Camps, Family Visits/“Meet and Greet”, Orientation, Completing Surveys, and Home Visits).
2. **Practices that build relationships with Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs** to benefit children through strengths-based approaches that facilitate a strong start in kindergarten (Classroom Observations, Transferring Children’s Records, Supporting Kindergarten Enrollment).

3. **Timely, ongoing practice** that occurs early in the teacher and parents/caregivers relationship and can continue throughout the kindergarten year (Sharing Information).

Evidence-Informed Practices

Despite decades of research on kindergarten transition, there are few studies that have investigated the outcomes of specific kindergarten transition practices. Only one study of a kindergarten transition practice has used an experimental design (Berlin, Dunning, & Dodge, 2011). Most studies of kindergarten transition practices have been descriptive or correlational. Thus, the evidence presented for the transition practices outlined in this toolkit is considered evidence-informed rather than evidence-based.

Transition Practice: Kindergarten Readiness Camps

Definition: Kindergarten readiness camps provide incoming kindergarten students with the opportunity to experience routines and activities targeting academic and social-emotional skills within kindergarten classrooms in the elementary school they will be attending over the course of several days the summer before they begin kindergarten. These programs may be targeted to students who did not participate in a formal preschool experience. This practice promotes relationships with children and families.

Suggested Time Frame: Summer before kindergarten entry

Evidence:

- Research and program evaluations have found that participating in kindergarten readiness camps is associated with gains in ratings of students' skills or scores using pre and post intervention data following kindergarten readiness camps, to include:
 - language and literacy, math and social-emotional composite scores (Khan et al., 2017)
 - attention and basic reading skills for all children who participated and language and literacy skills for Spanish-speaking children (UNC Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, 2017)
 - emotional knowledge, patterning, and alphabet knowledge following participation in virtual kindergarten readiness programming in the form of home learning activities, virtual 30 minute lessons with a teacher once or

twice weekly, and weekly teacher-caregiver virtual meetings (Dore et al., 2021)

- positive social skills (self-control, engagement, empathy, responsibility, assertion, cooperation, and communication) (SIUE East St. Louis Center, 2017)
- self-regulation, math, and literacy skills in comparison to an independent longitudinal sample followed by a greater than expected fourth-month period of growth into the fall of kindergarten (Duncan, Schmitt, Burke, & McClelland, 2018)
- social-emotional learning - transition to the social aspect of school for females and ease in adjusting to kindergarten routines for children who had the same teacher for both the readiness camp program and kindergarten (Berlin, Dunning, & Dodge, 2011).
- Only one camp to date has used an experimental design (Berlin, Dunning, & Dodge, 2011)
- Using teacher/family surveys and school staff discussion groups, findings from a qualitative study based on two years/cohorts of a summer kindergarten readiness program serving 715 children include:
 - increased social/emotional readiness and self-regulation skills needed for school
 - decreased anxiety about the transition to school for both children and families
 - children who attended the program became leaders and role models for other children who did not attend when kindergarten began due to their familiarity with school and its routines/procedures
 - an increase in the amount of instructional time at the beginning of the school year due to less time spent on teaching children about routines and procedures of school reported by kindergarten teachers
 - families reported feeling a sense of connection to school as an impact of the program (Griebing & Gilbert, 2020)
- Evidence thus far is based on 3-4 week programs, including full day and half day (ranging from 3 to 5.25 hours). These programs involved multiple stakeholders, such as school districts, universities, community organizing groups, Head Start, and/or charitable organizations (e.g. United Way).
- To date no evidence exists for kindergarten readiness camps for a shorter duration, such as one week.

Considerations:

What funding streams could be utilized to provide financial support for costs associated with kindergarten readiness camps (e.g. Title One, Summer Meals Program)? Teachers

will need to be paid to run this program during the summer as well as have time to plan the program (e.g. identify outcomes, develop curriculum/activities).

What community organizations can be utilized to help spread awareness of kindergarten readiness camps?

What recruitment strategies can be utilized to reach families whose children have not attended an early childhood setting prior to kindergarten entry?

What services could be provided to remove barriers to participation for vulnerable populations (e.g. transportation, free meals)? Students with special needs will need their support services.

This type of program is particularly suitable for students who did not have a formal preschool experience.

Most programs included some form of family engagement (e.g. inviting families in for lunch, providing families with a Transition kit or home learning activities, newsletter about what children were learning in camp, weekly meeting/chats about specific topics or resources, and/or home visits).

Daily activities for many of the programs include whole group and small group activities, literacy, math, motor skills, social-emotional skills, building positive relationships with adults in the school setting, and learning school routines (lining up, raising a hand before talking, waiting for a turn).

New Hampshire Spotlight: Kindergarten Readiness Camp

East Rochester Kindergarten Readiness Camp

Teacher Perspective:

Kinder Camp is a five day program, from 8:30-11:30 and is scheduled two/three weeks prior to the start of the school year. This is a Title 1 funded program designed to give kindergarten and first grade students a jumpstart to their upcoming school year.

Last year, students were provided breakfast and lunch as they had been throughout the school year. We split the group of students up and gave them each a homeroom to start the day, then we would rotate the students through each of the rooms. We had a group that focused on early literacy skills, math skills, fine motor skills, and our speech path. worked on communication skills. The activities completed in each of the groups were hands-on and game/play-based. All students would rotate through the four groups each day. We also scheduled a daily recess break where all of the students in Kinder Camp were regrouped together to play!

My focus as a K teacher was to provide as much exposure to the "life of a kindergartener" as I could to prepare the students for the year to come. I was able to

get to know the students and their abilities rather quickly that week which then helped for an easier transition at the start of school. Many of the students talked about Kinder Camp well into the school year. I think the camp helped boost student confidence and eased anxiety as it was held on a smaller scale with fewer students and expectations than a normal school year. Kinder Camp also seemed to help ease some of the anxiety parents may have had about sending their kindergarteners to school.

Parent Perspective:

Jovie attended kindergarten camp at East Rochester Elementary one week this past summer (5 consecutive days) from 8:30-11:30. The staff included one kindergarten teacher (who is now her teacher), the occupational therapist and a math teacher. They ran centers in 3 different classrooms, met some peers, had school provided breakfast and snacks, learned where and how to use the bathrooms and used the playground daily. This was the first time Jovie had been in ERS, since she is our oldest child. She became familiar with the school building, classroom, staff, some peers (she didn't know anyone since she attended daycare in a different town), where the bathrooms were, where pickup/dropoff is and how centers run. She was excited to attend each day and was less anxious about starting kindergarten in the fall. She still talks about kindergarten camp. We were excited that the teacher (Ms. Wood) who worked the kindergarten camp became her classroom teacher this year. What surprised me was how helpful it was for me as a parent. Even being a first grade teacher and former kindergarten teacher, I was nervous about starting kindergarten too! After the week, I too felt comfortable with the routines and the school and had a really good feeling and impression about ERS. - Corie, Rochester

Resources:

East Rochester Schedule for 2022 Kid Camp

August 15-19th

Monday-Friday 8:30-11:30

Daily Schedule:

8:30-8:40 Student Arrival/ Breakfast

8:45-9:15 Group 1

9:15-9:45 Group 2

9:45-10:15 Group 3

10:15-10:30 Snack/ Recess

10:30-11:00 Group 4

11:00-11:30 Group 5

11:30 Dismissal

Students will meet in two classrooms for attendance and breakfast. Breakfast is provided to all students attending. Students will then be split into groups and rotate through the five teachers,

following the same rotation every day. Students will regroup together for a snack/recess break. Each teacher has planned their own activities for their rotations. The activities that have been planned are based around early literacy skills, math skills, fine and gross motor skills, communication skills, and building relationships. Most of the activities are game based and engaging for all students. Students will also receive a free lunch everyday.

Summer Success Program Sample Schedule

Appendices

Sample Daily Schedule

Summer Success' daily schedule is designed to provide children with a balance of large group, small group free-choice activity sessions. This balance between large group, small group, and free-choice activity sessions is included intentionally in order to represent a "camp-based environment," while still maintaining realistic expectations for transition to the kindergarten classroom. The Sample Daily Schedule below illustrates how large group, small group and free-choice activity formats could be distributed during the programmatic day, and includes optional auxiliary activities, such as field trips and glass art. This sample daily schedule may be adjusted to suit the needs and resources of specific program.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30-9:00	Drop-off & Breakfast	Drop-off & Breakfast	Drop-off & Breakfast	Drop-off & Breakfast	Drop-off & Breakfast
9:00-9:30	Gym Class	Playground	Gym Class	Playground	Gym Class
9:30-10:00	Music and Movement	Music and Movement	Music and Movement	Music and Movement	Music and Movement
10:00-10:15	Book Reading	Book Reading	Book Reading	Book Reading	Book Reading
10:15-10:30	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting
10:30-11:15	Table Choices	Table Choices	Table Choices	Table Choices	Table Choices
11:15-12:00	Free Choices	Free Choices	Free Choices	Free Choices	Free Choices
12:00-12:20	Music & Transition	Music & Transition	Music & Transition	Music & Transition	Music & Transition
12:20-12:50	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:50-1:05	Afternoon Book Reading	Afternoon Book Reading	Afternoon Book Reading	Afternoon Book Reading	Afternoon Book Reading
1:05-1:45	Free Choice	Free Choice	Free Choice	Free Choice	Free Choice
1:45-2:00	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
2:00-2:30	Playground/ Pick-up	Playground/ Pick-up	Playground/ Pick-up	Playground/ Pick-up	Playground/ Pick-up

Retrieved from: [SS_2019_Final.pdf \(osu.edu\)](#)

Transition Practice: Family Visits “Meet and Greet”

Definition: Kindergarten teachers host classroom visits so children and families/caregivers can explore the classroom space and meet the teacher prior to the beginning of the school year. This practice promotes relationships with children and families.

Suggested Time Frame: Late Spring/Summer prior to kindergarten entry

Evidence:

- Using data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–1999 (ECLS-K; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2001), Schulting et al. found that the transition practice of parents and children visiting the kindergarten classroom prior to the beginning of the school year significantly predicted improvement in academic achievement. They also found the impact of transition practices was greatest for children from low-income backgrounds (Schulting et al., 2005).
- Data did not include specifics about the nature of classroom visits (e.g. duration, timing prior to school year, demographic details about families and children that participated, specific details about structure of the classroom visits).

Considerations:

Timing family visits after class lists are complete and classroom are cleaned during the summer so that families and children can see the classroom and meet their assigned teacher before school begins

Schedule family visits so that there is sufficient time before school starts to ensure family questions can be answered before school begins (try not to have these visits the day or night before the first day of school).

Teachers would need to be paid if this practice occurs outside their contract hours, including time it takes to prepare materials for children, schedule family visits, and send out invitations.

It may be helpful to provide teachers with tips for breaking the ice and prepare general talking points and questions for the family.

Consider offering different times for family visits so that working families can attend at the time that best fits with their work schedule.

Decide whether to have individual appointments, small groups, or invite everyone at the same time.

The primary intent of this practice is to communicate and begin to form a relationship with children and families; clearly convey to families the expectation that this is a social event rather than about the curriculum.

What barriers to participation in this type of practice might exist for families within your community?

Family Perspective:

"My daughter said, 'I am so excited about going, but I'm afraid.' It was so beneficial for her to get an idea of what the room looked like." **Mother of a five-year-old**

Examples



Kindergarten Day!

Please join us for a special day that is all about our newest students at the Gonic School. Your child will participate in activities, take a tour of the school, have a snack and have time to meet the teachers and other adults who work with kindergarten students.

The transition to kindergarten can sometimes be challenging for our young students. The goal of this day is to help ease anxiety with this transition and introduce or build on skills. Students will be able to learn the kindergarten routine as well as get to explore math and reading centers.

Date: Wednesday, August 18th

Time: 11:00am - 12:00pm

Where: Gonic Elementary School

Any questions, please contact the school at 332-6487 or oakman.m@sau54.org

We look forward to meeting you!!

Transition Practice: Orientation

Definition: Schools and kindergarten teachers host orientation sessions allowing families the opportunity to visit the school and classroom and learn more about the kindergarten program and what to expect as their child enters kindergarten. This practice promotes relationships with children and families.

Suggested Time Frame: Spring/Summer prior to kindergarten entry

Evidence:

- Cook & Coley (2017) found that holding orientations as a transition practice was associated with increases in children’s math and reading scores.
- This study used data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort (ECLS-B), a longitudinal study following a nationally representative sample of approximately 10,700 children from infancy through kindergarten entry.
- Note the statistical models used were correlational.
- The ECLS-B data did not include specific information about the orientation sessions (e.g. topics discussed, when the orientation events were held, demographic information about the families that participated).

Considerations:

Orientation sessions typically include the following topics: introduction to school staff, school procedures (attendance, arrival/dismissal, health policies, curriculum, school meals program), daily schedule, school hours, before/after school care, PTO/PTA/PTSA information, and how families can help prepare their children for entering kindergarten. What information will be shared at kindergarten orientation at your school? Think about this as you schedule the orientation events. If orientation events are held close to the start of school and some of the information covered may be beneficial to receive earlier (e.g. building routines at home to prepare for kindergarten such as earlier bedtimes or childcare options for before/after school), perhaps orientation events could be held earlier in the transition process. Alternatively, are there other ways that families can access important information earlier?

Teachers will need to be paid for hosting or participating in orientation sessions if it falls outside of their contract. Teachers need time to plan the desired outcomes of what parents/caregivers need to know about the school day and the curriculum.

When scheduling orientation sessions, consider what time of day would allow all families to participate in order to provide equitable access to orientation events.

What barriers might exist within your community for families to participate in orientation sessions?

Orientation sessions can be paired with another transition practice (e.g. children visiting the classroom and/or kindergarten screenings) so that both children and families come to school at the same time.

Some districts in NH have made kindergarten orientation videos/slideshows that are posted on their websites.

Orientation sessions could be enhanced by creating a “buddy system” where parents from another grade volunteer to work with new families.

NH Family Perspective: *“I was impressed by the teacher's preparation. He had handouts about the daily schedule and the topics my daughter would be learning.”*
 Mother of six-year-old

Resources:

Sample Outline for Orientation

1. Staff Introductions
2. Kindergarten Curriculum
3. Kindergarten Schedule
4. School Policies, e.g. Attendance and Health
5. Communication - ways to communicate with the kindergarten teacher and opportunities to be involved in the school, such as a parent teacher organization
6. Arrival/Dismissal Procedures
7. Logistical Information (e.g. bus transportation, school lunch program)
8. Classroom Assignments - when families will hear who their child's teacher is and what they might expect to receive from the teacher (e.g. welcome letter)
9. Time for Questions & Answers

Transition Practice: Completing Surveys

Definition: Schools ask families to complete surveys on their child. The surveys may include information about the child's educational background, family culture, strengths, and areas of concern where support may be needed. This practice promotes relationships with children and families.

Suggested Time Frame: Winter/Spring during kindergarten enrollment or late spring/summer

Evidence: No evidence to date connecting this practice with outcomes. However, the Task Force selected this practice as it communicates to families that their voice and knowledge of their children is welcomed and valued as part of the transition process,

creating a positive first impression, which helps build relationships between families and teachers.

Considerations:

Typically surveys are sent out by kindergarten teachers with a welcome letter once class placements have been made. Welcome letters tell the children something about their new teacher, some teachers include a photo. Consider whether sending out surveys earlier in the process might help address family concerns or target students who may need more individualized transition support.

Teachers need time to compose a welcome letter and survey questions along with access to required contact information for parents/caregivers.

If creating their own survey, teachers should consider designing questions about information relevant to the child that can help build a relationship with the teacher.

Family literacy levels, language preference, and comfort in providing personal information should also be considered in designing survey questions.

Different options can be provided for survey delivery (electronic, paper, conservation). Surveys can be distributed during other transition events, such as Orientation or Meet and Greet. Phone calls can be used to follow up if surveys are not returned.

Resources:

Surveys

Parent/Student Survey from ACS

<http://www.readyfreddy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/abcsofmychild.pdf>

[WaKids Introducing Me! \(www.k12.wa.us\)](http://www.k12.wa.us)

[Family Connection | OSPI \(www.k12.wa.us\)](http://www.k12.wa.us)

Transition Practice: Home Visits

Definition: Kindergarten teachers visit children's homes or other natural settings (e.g. park) to meet them and their family prior to kindergarten entry or during the beginning of the school year. This practice promotes relationships with children and families.

Suggested Time Frame: Late spring/summer or during the first month of the school year

Evidence:

- Using a randomized controlled trial including 44 kindergarten teachers from 19 schools and 928 children and their families from Durham, North Carolina to test a novel intervention program, Kindergarten Home Visit Project, which required

teachers to complete a 30 minute home visit before October 1, 2006, Schulting (2009) found that participating in the home visit intervention was associated with the following outcomes:

- increased warmth in the relationship between teachers and children
- improved academic work habits for children during kindergarten
- improved academic achievement, academic motivation, academic work habits, social skills, and conduct for girls as reported by teachers at the end of kindergarten
- higher academic motivation and better academic work habits for children from non-English speaking homes in the home visit group compared to the control students at the end of kindergarten
- language barrier had less of a negative effect on home-school collaboration as reported by teachers and non-English speaking parents in the home visit group compared to the control group participants.
- Though not specific to kindergarten transition, other evidence points to home visits as a promising practice to build relationships with children and families:
 - After engaging in home visits with 363 families prior to the start of the school year, 26 K-2 teachers in a rural district perceived that home visits result in more positive relationships with children and their families, including that the visits lead to improved communication with families, a better understanding of the child, and a better understanding of the impact of the child's home environment as it relates to school performance (Meyer & Mann, 2006).
 - A follow-up study (Meyer, Mann, & Becker, 2011) of 29 K-2 teachers implementing home visits prior to the school year found that teachers continued to perceive home visits as contributing to beneficial relationships and better communication with parents, a better understanding of the impact of the child's home environment as it relates to school performance, and a better understanding the child's behavior in school. Also, teachers perceived a connection between the home visits and variables related to school success, such as student attendance, classroom behavior, and academic performance.
 - These studies took place in a rural school district in a Midwestern state.

Considerations:

What type of training might kindergarten teachers need prior to implementing home visits? Training and resources are available on interviewing techniques.

Are there local organizations (Early Head Start, public health agencies) that could partner with school districts to provide training?

What safety measures need to be considered to ensure the safety of teachers as they engage in home visits?

If a visit in the home is not possible, teachers can offer to meet families in a convenient community setting (e.g. park, coffee shop).

Scheduling home visits will need to consider the contractual hours of teachers. If home visits take place outside of those contractual hours or over the summer, teachers will need to be compensated for their time. Consider whether home visits could occur during early release days.

NH Family Perspective on Home Visits:

"I very much value the home visit and having one on one talk with the teacher, it is very important to me, and I think it should be the norm for all schools." - Head Start mother in NH

Anecdote on home visits in New Hampshire from KEA Transition Task Force:

"The kindergarten teachers in one of the districts my Head Start program works closely with loved the idea of home visits, after talking to our Head Start teachers about the practice, so they started doing home visits before the school year also. Then after hearing about the value of the kindergarten home visits, the first grade teachers started the practice as well."

Resources

Sample Questions:

Who are the important people in your child's life/Who lives at home with your child?

Can you please tell me what your main concerns for your child and family are as your child enters kindergarten? Of these concerns, which one is most important to you? What are skills you would like your child to work on in kindergarten?

What is your child's daily routine like (e.g. waking up, breakfast)? How does your child participate in daily routines? How much does your child do for him- or herself (e.g. getting dressed, brushing teeth)?

How does your child communicate with others?

How does your child get along with others as they go about their daily routines (e.g. self-regulation, cooperation, social skills)?

What are your hopes and dreams for your child this year?

You are your child's first teacher. What can you tell me that will help me to teach them best?

What questions do you have about our kindergarten program?

Do you have any special interests or skills you'd like to share with the class?

Guidelines and sample questions for a home visit
[Home Visitor's Online Handbook | ECLKC \(hhs.gov\)](#)

Transition Practice: Classroom Observations

Definition: Early childhood education providers observe kindergarten classrooms to understand the expectations for children as they enter kindergarten. Kindergarten teachers observe early care classrooms to learn more about incoming kindergarten students. This practice builds relationships with Early Childhood Education programs.

Evidence: No evidence to date connecting this practice with outcomes. However, the Task Force selected this practice as it builds relationships with community Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs to benefit the children as they transition to kindergarten.

Anecdote on classroom observations from the KEA Transition Task Force:

A child care director emphasized the importance of meeting together after the visit. "Sometimes a child might have a bad day, or a specific behavioral strategy is being used, and we need to explain the approach."

Considerations:

The purpose of classroom visits is for early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers to learn more about curriculum, classroom management, and recordkeeping by visiting each other's classrooms and observing the routines and structure of the day. If children are present when the observations occur, check to see if permission forms signed by families are required. Inform families that the children's teacher will remain in the classroom during the visit. For children whose parents/caregivers do not approve of visitor observations, alternative care would be needed for the child during the classroom observation.

Substitutes will be needed for early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers to visit each other's classrooms.

Consider the importance of having debriefing time allowing for clarification and processing after the observation so that early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers can discuss what was observed.

Resources:

Sample Questions

How do you communicate with parents/caregivers regularly (e.g. newsletter, calls, notes, app, face-to-face)? How do you build positive relationships with parents/caregivers?

What is the daily schedule in your classroom? How is the daily schedule presented to children visually?

How are social-emotional skills taught/modeled in your classroom?

What strategies do you teach to help children handle strong emotions (e.g. deep breathing)?

How do you help children recognize/label feelings? Are there any specific materials you use?

What strategies do you use to help children learn friendship skills?

How do you teach/model problem-solving in your classroom?

How is circle time structured in your classroom (length, types of activities, seating layout)?

What transition warnings do you use to transition to a new activity?

Tell me about the designated areas in your classroom. What does the space for large group activities look like? What kinds of learning centers are set up (e.g. dramatic play, art, blocks)? What does the calm down space look like in your classroom?

What kinds of age-appropriate materials do children use in your classroom (e.g. blocks)?

What are the positively stated rules in your classroom (e.g. gentle hands)?

Transition Practice: Children's Records

Definition: Early Childhood Education providers share children's records, including IEPs and assessments, with kindergarten teachers. This practice builds relationships with Early Childhood Education programs.

Suggested Time Frame: Winter/Spring prior to kindergarten entry

Evidence:

- Sharing written information (e.g. an education plan or growth portfolio) about the child from preschool to elementary school was one of the best predictors of academic development (Ahtola et al., 2011). Note this study took place in Finland

where preschools are directly linked to elementary schools, making it easier to facilitate transferring records.

- Additional research from the United States and Norway (both have educational systems in which preschool and elementary schools do not overlap) relates to information sharing, though it is not clear on the specific types of information shared, nor the mechanism for sharing it (in person, transmission of written records):
 - Research from the United States found that preschool teachers sharing information about specific children with kindergarten teachers was associated with teacher reports of better social and behavioral functioning among children in kindergarten (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2008). Note that this study asked about general transition practices used by teachers, not which specific practices were used for each child in the study.
 - Research from Norway found that information sharing between preschool teachers and elementary school teachers about specific children was found to predict greater child adjustment in the first weeks of school, which then was associated with significantly better academic skills and positive behaviors throughout the first year of school (Cook et al., 2017).

Considerations:

What systems are in place in your school/district for the transferral of records from ECE programs? Who reviews the records? How is the information used to support incoming kindergarten students? Where are records stored? Who has access to records in order to ensure confidentiality?

For ECE providers: What systems are in place to share records with kindergarten teachers in your community? When are records typically transferred during the kindergarten transition process? Does this system include feedback to ensure that kindergarten teachers receive the records and how they use the records? Do you have family meetings to share standardized assessment data you will be sharing with children's kindergarten teachers? How do you help families understand the value of sharing records and obtain parental permission before sending the records?

Consider sharing documents electronically.

If Ages & Stages Questionnaire is used by your school/district, what is the purpose of this screening (for schools or for families)? Is there support for families in interpreting the results?

Some ECE programs have policies that prohibit sharing records, and schools should respectfully acknowledge that choice.

Anecdote on sharing records in New Hampshire from KEA Transition Task Force:

A child care center director sends records electronically to 6 school districts. She said, "One teacher, in particular, every year asks for the records and is eager to 'meet the child.' If we don't send them early enough, she'll email me saying 'We are waiting for the portfolios!'"

Examples of documents that are shared between ECE programs and schools:

Strength-based records from ECE program, such as portfolios

ECE Assessments

Special education documentation, such as IEPs

Transition Practice: Supporting Kindergarten Enrollment

Definition: ECE providers set up events or distribute information to families to support kindergarten enrollment. This practice builds relationships with Early Childhood Education programs.

Suggested Time Frame: Winter/spring before kindergarten entry, depending on when kindergarten enrollment opens in each community.

Evidence: No evidence to date connecting this practice with outcomes. However, Cook et al. (2019) in an interview study with Head Start Directors found that kindergarten registration emerged as an important theme though it was not directly addressed in the interview protocol. Head Start directors discussed how challenging kindergarten

registration could be for families and all shared varying ways they supported kindergarten registration from simply sharing registration information to directly assisting families with registration. The Task Force found this practice valuable as kindergarten registration allows families to receive timely information pertaining to kindergarten and kindergarten transition events.

Anecdote from KEA Transition Task Force:

“Every year, we host a kindergarten information night. We provide information to parents about where and when they can register their children for kindergarten. We even provide sample forms given to us by the public schools.” - NH Head Start Director

Considerations:

How and where is kindergarten registration advertised in your community?

Do kindergarten registration materials clearly indicate what documents are needed for kindergarten registration?

What factors are identified by families and school staff in your community as major barriers to on-time registration?

What supports exist in your community for families who need support with kindergarten registration?

How does your school registration process accommodate different languages spoken by families?

Which community partners can help disseminate information about early registration so that families can receive timely information about kindergarten and transition events?

Consider local agencies and organizations (e.g. WIC), physician practices, preschools, and childcare settings.

Schools can reach out to ECE programs in the winter/spring by providing posters advertising local schools' registration dates and times and supplying ECE programs with registration packets.

Consider whether your school district has a comprehensive system for registration that includes streamlining paperwork and using technology.

Registering a child for school can be daunting, especially if it is the family's first child in public school. Ensure that it is clear to families what documents are required for kindergarten registrations materials and who to contact in the school district if they need assistance with the forms or if there are community resources that assist families with gathering documents needed for registration.

Early registration helps schools manage decisions that have a fiscal impact, such as teacher assignments/ratios and buses

Resources:

[Kindergarten Information and Registration \(sau10.org\)](http://sau10.org)

Transition Practice: Sharing Information

Definition: Kindergarten teachers share information with parents and caregivers via phone, e-mail, mail, or school communication apps (e.g. ClassDojo) at the outset of the teacher and family partnership and throughout the kindergarten year. This is a timely, ongoing practice that occurs early in the teacher and parents/caregivers relationship and can continue throughout the kindergarten year.

Suggested Time Frame: Prior to the start of the school year and ongoing

Evidence: No evidence to date connecting this practice with outcomes. However, the Task Force selected this practice as it continues to foster relationships with families as a timely, ongoing practice that occurs throughout the kindergarten year.

Considerations:

Ask families about their preferences for receiving information. This could be done through the family survey.

The purpose of sharing information is for the kindergarten teacher to communicate updates on classroom activities and children's progress. Early feedback at the beginning of the kindergarten year helps reassure families that their child is adjusting to kindergarten. Ongoing communication throughout the year can address individualized support for children.

The frequency of sharing information depends on teacher time, the value of the content, and mode of delivery (e.g. newsletter v. post on a communication platform).

Teachers need to be intentional about reaching all families with sensitivity to literacy, language, and culture.

Schools might consider adopting a communication platform that all their teachers could use. Multiple communication platforms may confuse families with more than one child in the school. Ensure that teachers' contact information is easily accessible to families on the school web page.


Resources:

Welcome Letters

Full Day Kindergarten Important Information Resource

Newsletters

Sample Information Sharing using Class DOJO application

 **Mrs. Copp**
Mrs. Copp 21-22 • 3mo

The field trip is tomorrow! Please remember to pack your child a water bottle, snack, and have them wear comfortable walking shoes!

Lunch for tomorrow- If you picked lunch from home for tomorrow PLEASE remember to send one in!!

Kindergarten Field Day permission slip is going home this week, please sign and return! We are looking for donations for our Field Day event, sign up below!

Sign-Up for field day items- <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D48ACA72CA1FCC07-kindergarten>

♥ 3 likes 💬 1 comment 👁 14 views

Like Comment

 **Mrs. Copp**
Mrs. Copp 21-22 • 9mo



Pumpkin dissection and using our senses to investigate 🍷 part 1

♥ 3 likes 👁 15 views

Like Comment


 **Mrs. Copp**
Mrs. Copp 21-22 • 4mo




In Library, students planted and grew lettuce and beans. They were able to taste test the lettuce yesterday!

♥ 7 likes 👁 16 views

Like Comment

 **Mrs. Copp**
Mrs. Copp 21-22 • 4mo



Today was a very busy day in kindergarten!! We have started our unit on colonial times in America. Yesterday we discussed how life was different than it is today. Today we made bread and butter! A big thank you to Ms. Jami for helping us bake our bread!!!

♥ 5 likes 👁 15 views

Like Comment

Transition Resources for Educators/Schools

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/transitions/article/family-engagement-transition-kindergarten>

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/feb2014/transitions-kindergarten>

https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/PG_Trn_PreschoolSEtoKindergarten_prac_print_2017.pdf

<http://www.readyfreddy.org/>

<https://padlet.com/sarahhenry14/4cfy3uczqs9dbfr9>

Transition Resources for Families

The transition to kindergarten is an important milestone for children and families that can feel both exciting and overwhelming. Here are some answers to common questions families may have about the transition to kindergarten along with resources to help you prepare your child for going to kindergarten. Remember if you have specific questions or concerns about your child's transition, reach out to the school your child will be attending.

Frequently Asked Questions about Kindergarten

How can I find out which public school my child will attend?

If you live in a district with more than one elementary school, you can contact the superintendent's office (SAU) to find out which school your child will attend based on where you live.

When does kindergarten registration/screenings take place?

This varies by school district. Some districts begin kindergarten registration in the winter and others begin in the spring. School districts typically advertise kindergarten registration on their websites, through local newspapers, or through social media. Some school districts advertise kindergarten registration through local early childhood education providers or through other community organizations.

Kindergarten screenings vary by district. They may take place in the spring or summer before kindergarten or during the beginning of the school year. You can always reach out to the SAU office to find out when kindergarten registration/screenings take place.

What documents do I need to register my child for kindergarten?

You will need to provide the following documents:

- A copy of your child's official birth certificate from the town/city where your child was born
- Proof of residence, accepted documents typically include a copy of a lease with contact information for the landlord, utility bills (telephone, electric, cable), bank statement, or payroll check
- Immunization records
- Documentation of recent physical exam
- Legal/ Court paperwork, as applicable

Where can I find information about the kindergarten daily schedule/hours, a school calendar, and a class supply list?

Reach out to your child's school for this information. The school calendar is usually posted on the school or SAU website. Class supply lists vary by school; some schools provide all the supplies needed for kindergarten.

How do I find out information about the bus schedule or before/after school care options?

Contact your child's school or the SAU office to find out this information. Bus routes/schedules are typically posted on the school or district website and sometimes in local newspapers. If you need before/after school care options, spots in some programs may fill up quickly so be sure to reach out if you are not sure what before/after school care options exist within your community.

How will I be able to communicate with my child's teacher?

Teachers typically share information about the easiest way to contact them right before school begins. Most teachers communicate through email or communication apps and are willing to set up phone calls or virtual/in-person meetings. You can ask your child's teacher what is the best way to contact them.

How can I be involved in my child's school?

Schools often host family events throughout the school year and will send home notices or post information on their websites about these events. Schools usually have parent-teacher organizations (PTO/PTA) that are a good way for families to learn about the school and get involved with your child's school. Be sure to check your child's backpack for information throughout the school year.

What is a Kindergarten Entry Assessment?

Kindergarten entry assessments are evidence-based tools that are designed to measure children's skill and knowledge development across multiple domains when they begin kindergarten. Information from these assessments is used by teachers to plan learning activities and shared with families so they can understand their child's development.

What is a kindergarten screener?

Kindergarten screeners are a quick check of children's development across different domains. Screenings identify children's strengths and areas where children may need additional support. A common screener used is the Ages & Stages Questionnaires. These questionnaires check children's development in communication, social skills, motor skills, and problem-solving skills or social-emotional development. For more information on developmental screenings, see <https://www.nh-connections.org/families/helping-children-grow/>.

What is play-based learning in kindergarten?

New Hampshire has a law that was passed in 2018 stating that kindergarten instruction should follow a play-based model. This law was based on the understanding that the purpose of kindergarten is to socialize children and prepare them for formal education through exploration, movement, expression, and play. The law highlights the need to foster children's development and learning across domains, which includes physical, social, cognitive, and language, through play-based learning. Play-based learning is an instructional strategy to promote learning that includes movement, creative expression, exploration, socialization, and music and allows children to connect authentically with content as they co-construct their learning with teachers and peers. For more information on play-based learning in New Hampshire, see <https://www.education.nh.gov/who-we-are/deputy-commissioner/kindergarten-tool-kit> and <https://chhs.unh.edu/early-childhood/play-based-learning-coaching-teaching>

Resources

[Transitioning to Kindergarten | NAEYC](#)

[A Successful Kindergarten Transition - NEA Parents Resources | NEA](#)

[Selected Children's Books About Kindergarten | ECLKC \(hhs.gov\)](#)

[How to Get Your Child Ready for the First Day of Kindergarten | Johns Hopkins Medicine](#)

[Is Your Child Ready for Kindergarten? Prepare Them With These 20 Skills | Scholastic | Parents](#)