



**Rhode Island  
Department  
of Education**



# **Rhode Island Department of Education Evidence Based Early Childhood Best Practices Toolkit**

**Guidance Document 4: Kindergarten Transition (Sec. 1115)**

School readiness is a multidimensional concept. Children who enter school with the essential knowledge and skills are more likely to experience smoother transitions into kindergarten, better academic success, stronger social and emotional skills, and attain higher levels of education. As adults, these children are more likely to graduate from college, earn higher wages, secure stable employment as adults, and are less likely to engage in crimes and other risky behavior. Researchers have found distinguishable differences in children's readiness based on a variety of factors including poverty status, gender, by parent's education level, home language, age and race (Child Trends, 2015). One factor, which makes a demonstrated impact on children's school readiness, is their participation in high quality early learning programs, which is why the Rhode Island has invested in a model, which supports inclusion, diversity, and high quality.

According to the Every Student Succeeds Act, Title 1 schools operating as "targeted" programs, must describe how eligible students will be services, which may include kindergarten transition strategies. Targeted program funds may be used to deliver early learning services to Title I eligible students. Such programs must determine which students will be served, including describing how the program will be coordinated with the regular education program. This description may include services to assist preschool children in the transition from early childhood education programs to elementary school (Sec. 1115) (First Five Years Fund, 2016).

### **Kindergarten Readiness Definition**

In Rhode Island, expectations for what children should know, understand and be able to do at 60 months when they transition into Kindergarten, are defined in the [Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards \(RIELDS\)](#). The RIELDS outline the nine key knowledge and skill areas (Domains), as well as the specific Learning Goals for children at the end of Pre-K. The RIELDS, are aligned with the Rhode Island adopted Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts/Literacy & Mathematics and the Next Generation Science Standards. For children who are English Language Learners, schools may also use the [Rhode Island Regulations Governing the Education of English Language Learners at Kindergarten](#) entry.

RIDE believes that although kindergarten readiness is a goal for all children, it is the schools that must be ready to receive all children. As a result, the only

requirement to participating in kindergarten is that children must be 5 on or before September 1st.

## **Kindergarten Transition Areas**

Any successful kindergarten transition must take into consideration the children, the families and professionals. This guidance will outline requirements, strategies and resources, which programs should use. It is important that all early learning programs have a plan for how they support kindergarten transitions. As a result, we have organized this guidance to reflect the opportunities and strategies for all involved- professionals, families and children.

### Professionals

It is important for professionals who are currently working with children to prepare information about their individual students and to share it with the schools and/or teachers if known, where they will attend kindergarten.

Teachers and Administrators are encouraged to find out from families where they plan on enrolling their children, as well as to develop relationships with these schools. Professionals should maintain open lines of communication, and whenever possible collaborate. One opportunity for collaboration is related to data sharing. Programs should prepare information on children's progress as captured within their formative assessment system.

When children have IEP's, some of this information may be conveyed during an IEP meeting. It is important that Preschool/Pre-K teachers participate in all special education meetings and transition meetings prior to the kindergarten transition.

Programs May:

- Provide families with Kindergarten enrollment dates and policies for their respective district, charter or private schools, depending on where the child will be transitioning. (Spring)
- Complete the last Checkpoint in the programs formative assessment tool (Teaching Strategies Gold, High Scope COR etc.) for each child and provide families with a copy of their child's data and/or portfolio that they can share with the district/school. (Spring)

- Program staff may obtain parental consent to share formative assessment data directly with school district representatives for their child's file. (Spring)
- The Education Coordinator/Administrator may schedule a meeting with the school principal or Early Childhood Coordinator from the school department, charter school or private school. The principal or Early Childhood Coordinator may invite additional school personnel, as they deem appropriate (Ex. English Learner Coordinator or Director when children who are young ELs are transitioning), to discuss the specific children who will be transitioning to the school. At the meeting, staff may share data/information with the public school representatives about each child related to the RIELDS domains, as well as other strengths or concerns expressed by the family that may affect the child's transition into kindergarten. (Spring)

### Families

Professionals have the ability to share family friendly information with families, which can support both their understanding of their child's development at the end of Pre-K, as well as, to support ongoing summer learning opportunities and preparation. Planning for transitions cooperatively with families is especially important for children with special needs. Transition activities should be individualized based on children's needs.

As a result, programs may:

- Use formative assessment information to inform parent meetings and discussions with families. (Spring)
- Teachers and Education Coordinators may share with the family opportunities for them to support their children's learning over the summer, as well as community engagement opportunities. These resources may include but are not limited to: Fun [Family Activity Cards](#), [Providence Public Library Family Bags](#), [Providence Talks](#), and the [Providence Children's Museums RIELDS resources](#). (Spring)

### Children

By participating in a high quality early learning program, children are already on the pathway to being ready for kindergarten. Throughout the school year,

teachers closely support children's learning and development, engaging in child assessment practices to help ensure children are meeting benchmarks.

It is important that children are emotionally prepared for kindergarten. Teachers should have discussions with them about their new school and upcoming transition, read books about kindergarten, and discuss children's questions in a developmentally appropriate manner. These discussions and learning opportunities should be embedded throughout the curriculum and school day, and should serve to support children feeling confident and competent in the approaching change.

For children with special needs, transitions can be especially difficult so it is important that transition activities are individualized and carefully implemented.

### **Kindergarten Transition Plans**

Programs should have established Kindergarten Transition Plans, which should speak to the three areas mentioned above: professionals, families and children. These plans should include the policies and procedures for obtaining parental consent around data sharing, and for how transitions are supported. It should also include any additional strategies, such as those listed below, which the programs currently use as a part of their kindergarten transitions.

### **Optional Strategies**

School bus tours

Kindergarten Fairs

Visits to their new kindergarten classrooms

Visits from their kindergarten teachers to the child's Pre-K class

Host a parent and school night where families, existing program staff and staff from the public school can connect

Former "graduates" visit the class to share their transition experience

Home visits to discuss Kindergarten transition

### **Resources**

Below, are a list of additional resources and helpful links to help inform your programs system of supporting children's transitions from Pre-K to K.

Regional Education Laboratory on Kindergarten Readiness:  
<http://relnw.educationnorthwest.org/events/effective-components-successful-early-learning-kindergarten-transitions>

Harvard Family Research Project <http://hfrp.org/family-involvement/projects/family-engagement-in-the-transition-to-school>

National Education Association: A Successful Transition to Kindergarten  
<http://www.nea.org/home/59881.htm>

Harvard University- 12 ways to help a child make the transition to kindergarten  
<http://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/12-ways-to-help-a-child-make-the-transition-to-kindergarten-201308166611>

National Early Childhood Transition Center  
<http://www.hdi.uky.edu/nectc/NECTC/practicerearch.aspx>

U.S. Department of Education. What about Kindergarten?  
[https://www2.ed.gov/parents/earlychild/ready/preschool/part\\_pg9.html#p9](https://www2.ed.gov/parents/earlychild/ready/preschool/part_pg9.html#p9)

Child Trends (2001). School Readiness: Helping Communities Get Children Ready for School and Schools Ready for Children. <http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/schoolreadiness.pdf>

Fact Sheet, Information for Limited English Proficient Parents and for Schools and School Districts that Communicate with Them  
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-factsheet-lep-parents-201501.pdf>

## **References**

Child Trends Data Bank (2015). Early School Readiness: Indicators for Children and Youth. Retrieved from [http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/07\\_School\\_Readiness.pdf](http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/07_School_Readiness.pdf)

First Five Years Fund (2016). Summary and Analysis of the Early Learning Provisions of the Every Student Succeeds Act. Retrieved from [http://ffyf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ESSA\\_ECE\\_ProvisionsNarrativeSummaryAnalysis\\_020316.pdf](http://ffyf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ESSA_ECE_ProvisionsNarrativeSummaryAnalysis_020316.pdf)

\* This document has been adapted from a State Pre-K Policies Guidance document for broader use among the field, and for non-State Pre-K grantees. Strong Kindergarten Transitions are a requirement under Federal ESSA/Title Guidelines.