INTRODUCTION TO THE TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

David Jacobson and Zoe McGrath
EDC at a Glance

Advancing lasting solutions to improve education, promote health, and expand economic opportunity.

1958
Founded by MIT researchers

200+
projects managed annually by EDC

1,300 employees; 80 in Early Childhood and Elementary School Education and Care

GLOBAL REACH

80 countries
50 states in the U.S
Agenda

• Why focus on the Transition to Kindergarten?
• How to develop an effective, comprehensive approach
• Support for your community’s transition team
45% of U.S. children under 6 live in low-income families.

The full achievement gap is present when children enter kindergarten.
Barrier to Improvement:
FRAGMENTATION

- 0-5 / K-12
- Education / Health Social Services
- Public / Private
The Early Childhood—Elementary School Continuum

- Infant and Toddler Care
- Preschool
- Early Elementary
Community Schools and Comprehensive Services
The Early Childhood—Elementary School Continuum

- 10 years: Early Elementary
- 9 years: Preschool
- 8 years: Infant and Toddler Care
- 7 years
- 6 years
- 5 years
- 4 years
- 3 years
- 2 years
- 1 year
- 0 year
Supporting an Effective Transition to Kindergarten
How Successfully are Children Starting Kindergarten?

- Successful: 52%
- Some Problems: 32%
- Difficult: 16%

Disparities by Kindergarten

Percent of Kindergarteners Passing Proficiency Levels in Fall

- Recognizes letters
- Identifies beginning sounds of words
- Identifies primary colors
- Counts to 20

Low SES vs. High SES

Child Trends, 2010
Teachers say “half my class or more” exhibit these problems entering kindergarten:

- Difficulty following directions: 46%
- Lack of academic skills: 36%
- Difficulty working independently: 35%
- Difficulty working as part of a group: 31%
- Problems with social skills: 21%
- Difficulty communicating/language problems: 14%

Rimm-Kaufman, Pianta, & Cox, 2000
Early School Experiences Matter

Kindergarten teacher–child relationships predict:

• Academic and behavior outcomes through eighth grade, particularly for children with behavior problems in kindergarten.
Early School Experiences Matter

Kindergarten family involvement is associated with:

• More cooperative, self-controlled, and socially engaged children.

• Lower rates of high school dropout, increased on-time high school completion, and higher grade completed.

• Higher achievement in language and math, and higher ratings on peer interactions.

McWayne, et al., 2004; Barnard, 2004; and Rimm-Kaufman, et al., 2003
Kindergarten Changes

• Changes in academic demands and curricula
• Less family connection with school
• Complexity of social environment (peers and adults)
• Less time with teacher(s)
Preschool vs. Kindergarten

LaParo et al., 2009
Transition Activities and Positive Outcomes

More preschool to K transition practices

At the beginning of kindergarten:

• Greater frustration tolerance
• Better social skills
• Fewer conduct problems
• Fewer learning problems
• More positive approaches to learning

NCEDL, 1,000 children, 250 schools
Transition Practices and School Success

Early Childhood Longitudinal Study
17,212 children, 992 schools

Fall K Transition Practices = Spring K Academic Skills

Schulting, Malone, & Dodge, 2005
CONCEPTUALIZING EFFECTIVE TRANSITION
Transitions Across the Lifespan

- Becoming a new parent
- Going to (or back to) college
- Moving to a new town
- Starting a new job
- Experiencing an empty nest
- Retiring from a career
- Getting married
Fostering Successful Adjustment

• Information
• Relationships
• Alignment

Successful Adjustment

Planta & Kraft-Sayre, 2003
School Readiness and Transition

INADEQUATE VIEW

Cognitive Readiness & Intelligence
Language Abilities
Temperament
Poverty Status
Gender

Preschool

Kindergarten
When Connections are the Focus

Early Experiences
Kindergarten

The changing dynamics of these relationships during transitions influence child outcomes.

Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000
What does school readiness mean?

“The Head Start approach to school readiness means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children’s learning, and schools are ready for children.”
TRANSITION CONNECTIONS
Transition Connections

Child–School
To foster children’s familiarity with the classroom setting and people

Family–School
To foster family collaboration and engagement with the school

Program–School
To provide children with stable, high quality classroom experiences

Community–School
To facilitate the transition process within the community
Child–School Connections

**Goal:** To foster children’s familiarity with the classroom setting and those people within it. This serves to:

- Increase comfort.
- Decrease anxiety.
- Build teacher–child relationships.

Planta & Kraft-Sayre, 2003
Family–School Connections

**Goal:** To foster family collaboration and engagement with the school and the transition process. This is the context to:

- Share information about individual children.
- Familiarize parents with school routines.

Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 2003
Sample Activities from Rhode Island

- Transition videos
- Transition booklets
- Year-long calendars
- Community events
  - Breakfasts
  - Spaghetti dinners
  - Fairs
  - Registration included
- Summer programs
- Spring orientation and calendar of summer activities
- Transition forms
  - Form
  - Process for sharing
- Online registration
- K registration posters
- Robo calls
- Family surveys
Ready Freddy (readyfreddy.org)

- Kindergarten transition teams
- Transition events (spring)
- Kindergarten kick-off
- Kindergarten Club (6 sessions)
- Kindergarten outreach
- Kindergarten attendance strategies

- See Toolkits, especially the Team Handbook
Goal: To provide children with stable high quality classroom experiences and to increase consistency across contexts through alignment of:

- Routines
- Curricula
- Learning standards
- Assessments

Planta & Kraft-Sayre, 2003
## Transition Activities for Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition activity</th>
<th>Preschool teachers</th>
<th>Kindergarten teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preschool children visiting their kindergarten classroom</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool teachers visiting a kindergarten classroom</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding an elementary school-wide activity with preschool children</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a spring orientation about kindergarten for parents of preschool children</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having an individual meeting between a teacher and a parent of the preschool child</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing written records</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pianta et al., 1999
Community–School Connections

**Goal:** To facilitate the transition process within the community by:

- Getting the word out.
- Providing resources where they are needed.

Planta & Kraft-Sayre, 2003
https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/transitions/article/transition-kindergarten
Two Excellent Transition to Kindergarten Resources

• Collaborations, Connections, and Six Steps to Success
  • https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/publication/collaborations-connections-six-steps-success

• Leadership Practices for Successful Transitions to Kindergarten
  • https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/publication/leadership-practices-successful-transitions-kindergarten
Six Steps for Transition Planning

1. Assess your partnerships.
2. Identify the goals of the team around transition and alignment.
3. Assess what is happening now.
4. Identify data to support these practices.
5. Plan and prioritize.
6. Implement and evaluate.
Transition to Kindergarten Toolkit

1. Flyer and agenda
2. Six Steps to Transition Planning Guide
3. Summit slide deck
4. Planning the Transition to Kindergarten: Why It Matters
5. Six Steps to Success article
6. Transition Ideas by Connection
7. Transition plan template
8. RI Case Studies and Lessons Learned
9. Family Engagement in the Transition to Kindergarten; Special Education
10. Integrating Attendance into the Transition to Kindergarten
2021 Transition Team Support

Support

• Summit series: 5 meetings
• Team coaching
• Cohort of communities
• Small grants to cover team participation

Goal and Expectations

• Goal: Develop and begin implementing a transition plan
• Stakeholder commitment
• District as fiscal sponsor
• Summer session
• 2 community events
• Monthly team meetings
THANK YOU

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