



## SIX STEPS

# to Transition Planning: A Guide

**EDC’s Center for Early Learning Professionals recommends that school—community Transition teams draw on the resources in this Toolkit as they follow the six-step process described below. This process is based on the National Center for Quality Teaching and Learning’s resource, *Planning the Transition to Kindergarten: Collaborations, Connections, and Six Steps to Success* (referred to as *Six Steps to Success* throughout the rest of this Toolkit).**

You can find *Six Steps to Success* in Section 5 of this Toolkit.<sup>1</sup> In addition to outlining the planning process, *Six Steps to Success* explains the four types of transition connections that we recommend as the framework for your transition planning.

Informed by our work with Rhode Island communities and communities in other states, we summarize and elaborate on the six-step process below. This process is aligned to the Planning Template found in Section 7 of this Toolkit. We suggest you use the outline below in conjunction with the *Six Steps to Success* article.

**Important note:** Where *Six Steps to Success* says “Head Start,” read, “Head Start, community-based preschools, and family childcare providers.”

### 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/preschool teacher, one kindergarten teacher, one Head Start/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 and discussing the following documents as a team:
  - » *Planning for the Transition to Kindergarten: Why It Matters and How to Promote Success* (2 pages, Section 4)
  - » *Six Steps to Success* (Section 5)
  - » *Transition Summit Slide Deck* (Section 3)
- › 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)?

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## 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 work currently underway.

## 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 Summit Slide Deck and the *Six Steps to Success* article. **Note that** “School—School” connections means Program—School connections and also Teacher—Teacher connections (e.g., prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers in the same school).
- › 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 *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? Other assessment information? **See the West Warwick case study in Section 8** for good examples of using data to inform transition strategies.
- › 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

- › Read the **remaining case studies in Section 8** for examples of possible strategies. Discuss the challenges, lessons learned, and advice sections. **What can you learn from the experience of these three communities?**
- › See a starter list of possible transition activities organized by type of connection in the *Transition Ideas by Connection* document in Section 6. 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 Sections 9 and 10. Do they suggest strategies that would meet needs in your communities?
- › **Program—School 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.

