



# Terrific Transitions:

Supporting  
Children's  
Transitions to  
Kindergarten

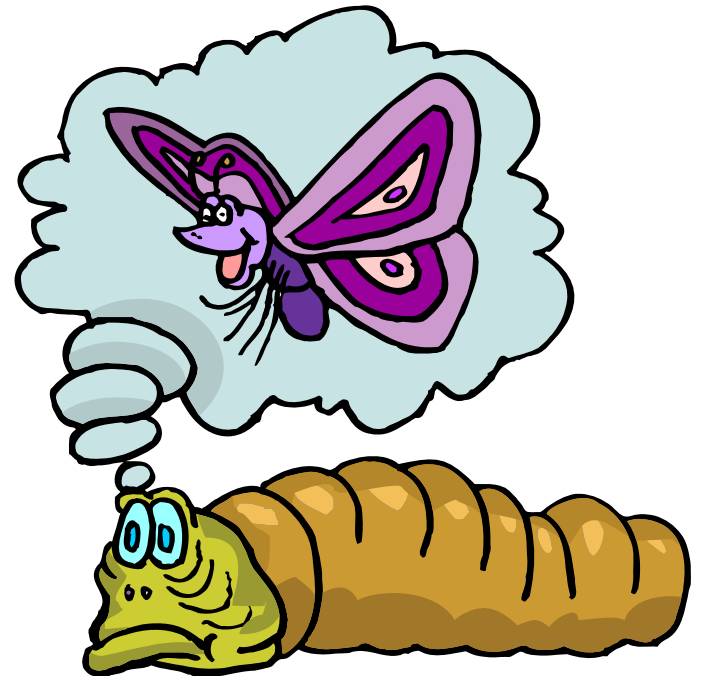


Strong Connections Between  
Home and School Can Help Ease  
Children's Transition  
Into School.



# What do we mean by "transitions"?

It is a process of adapting to change.





Children's success  
in school can be linked,  
in part, to effective  
transition practices and  
activities.



# Benefits of Facilitating Transition

- Children will like school and look forward to school.
- Children will show steady growth in academic skills.
- Parents will become actively involved in their children's education.

Ramey & Ramey, 1994



# Transitions Occur as Children Move

- Between activities
- Between settings
- Between services or agencies

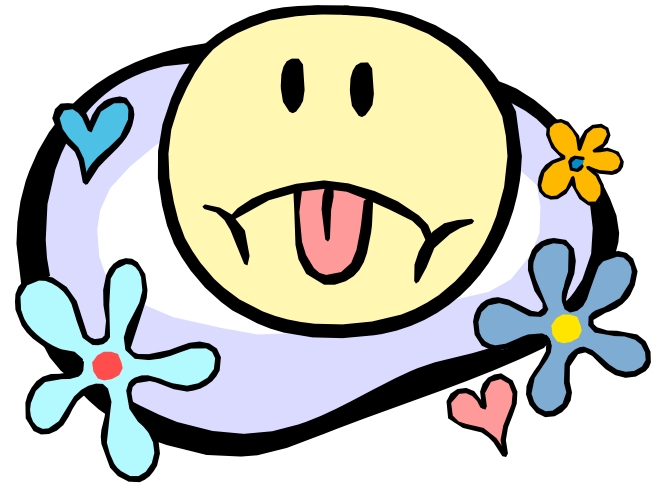


The move from preschool to kindergarten is one of the most important transitions a child will make.



# During transitions, children may feel

- Sad
- Confused
- Anxious
- Uncertain
- Overwhelmed
- Hopeful
- Insecure







# Continuity Occurs

- When there is a strong connection between the services and programs provided
- When children and their families receive the support they need



# Discontinuity Occurs

When changes are abrupt and children and families experience little support or assistance in handling those changes.



To ensure continuity, it is important that schools help create connections that support children and families during the transition to school.



Programs that are mandated to provide continuity of services include

- Title I
- Head Start
- IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)
- Even Start



Continuity of services is  
not only good for  
children...  
it is the law!





The National Education Goals Panel Ready Schools Resource Group advocated that Ready Schools should

- Strive for continuity between early care and education programs
- Smooth transitions between home and school



# What Research Tells Us

- The National Center for Early Development & Learning (NCEDE) conducted a national survey of 3,600 kindergarten teachers.
- NCEDE found that teachers report that 48% of children have moderate or severe problems with transitions.



## Percentage of teachers who say half or more of their students enter kindergarten with needs in the following areas:

Following directions.....	46%
Academic skills.....	36%
Home environment.....	35%
Working independently.....	34%
Working in a group.....	30%
Immaturity.....	20%
Communicating.....	14%





## What teachers see as the barriers to helping with transitions:

- 56% said class lists are generated too late.
- 47% said summer work was not supported by salary.
- 43% said that no transition plans were available.
- 37% said it takes too much time to conduct and plan transition activities.
- 33% said that it was dangerous to visit homes.
- 32% said that parents don't bring their child to registration/open house.
- 27% said that they couldn't reach the parents.
- 25% said the parents were not interested.



# Typical Transition Practices

- A talk with parents after school starts
- A letter to parents after the beginning of school
- An open house after school starts
- A flyer or brochure sent after school starts
- A review of the child's prior records



# 5-Step Planning Process for Transitions

- Form a collaborative team.
- Identify a transition coordinator.
- Develop a timeline.
- Implement transition strategies.
- Evaluate and revise.

Kraft-Sayre & Pianta, 2000



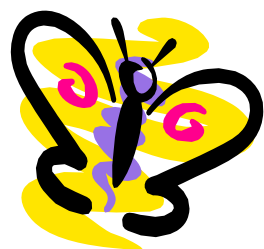
# Step 1: Forming the Team

- Invite all of the relevant stakeholders.
- Make sure that the team is representative of the community.
- Identify a team coordinator who will arrange and facilitate meetings.



# Who Are the Relevant Stakeholders?

- Pre-K staff and administrators
- Kindergarten staff and administrators
- Parents, guardians, grandparents, and other family members
- Other community agencies and programs (e.g., Head Start, social service agency, health department)



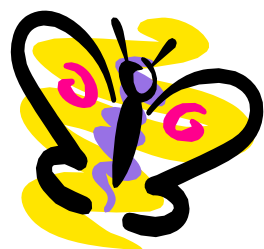
## Step 2: Identify a Transition Coordinator

- Is usually a social worker, parent coordinator, guidance counselor, or pre-k/kindergarten teacher
- Serves as a liaison between families and the school
- Assists with the development of the plan and coordinates transition activities



## Step 3: Create a Timeline

- Establish a timeline for when activities will occur.
- Organize transition activities throughout the year.



## Step 4: Implementing Transition Practices

- Networking and training should involve all collaborators.
- Review and assess strategies for effectiveness.
- Offer a variety of activities in order to accommodate a broad range of families.





# Promoting Successful Transition Efforts

- Support the transition team.
- Plan events and communication.
- Allocate resources  
(time, money, space, personnel).



## Step 5:



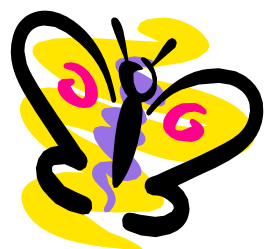
The primary purpose behind evaluation of transition activities is to determine if transition planning is having a positive effect on children and families.

**Rous, Hemmeter, & Schuster, 1994**



It is important that procedures are in place for conducting:

- Formative evaluations
- Summative evaluations



As partners meet to discuss and evaluate the effectiveness of their transition activities, here are some questions to consider:

- Is the transition plan effective in identifying children and families who need services?
- Are there policies and procedures in place that support transition efforts? If not, what are the gaps?
- Are the activities effective in smoothing the transition and ensuring continuity of services?
- How well is the collaboration between transition partners working?



Some tools and instruments that can be used to collect data on the effectiveness of transition practices:

- Interviews
- Observations
- Checklists
- Children's Records
- Contact Logs



## Possible indicators to use during summative evaluation include:

- Children's adjustment during the first week of school
- Parent satisfaction
- Number of parents involved in school activities
- Pre-K and kindergarten teacher satisfaction



# Menu of Effective Transition Practices

- Family-school connections
- Child-school connections
- Peer connections
- Community connections



# Family-School Connections

- Contact with family during first days of preschool or kindergarten
- Assessment of family needs
- Connecting family to community resources
- Family participation in home-learning activities
- Family participation in the classroom/school
- Family & pre-K teacher sharing with the kindergarten teacher
- Newsletters and resource material





# Child-School Connections

- Preschool child connection with the kindergarten teacher
- Preschool connection with the elementary school for special school functions
- Preschool practice of kindergarten rituals
- Preschool teacher contact with former students
- Kindergarten support staff visit preschool children



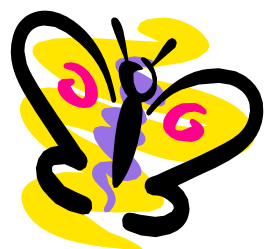
# Peer Connections

- Peer connections within the class
- Peer connections outside of school
- Connections with non-classmate peers who will be in kindergarten
- Preschool peer connections with kindergarten peers



# Community Connections

- Inter-school collaboration about programs and practices
- Identifying and communicating curriculum/community expectations for children
- Connections with community agencies



# The Big Picture

## Questions for the Future

- What is your vision for effective transitions?
- What are some barriers to your vision?
- What are some existing strengths of transitions in the community?
- What are some existing limitations?
- What leadership is needed to make this work?
- What next steps will you take to improve transitions?

# References and Resources

**Much of the information in this presentation was drawn from the following sources:**

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