TRAINING GUIDE FOR MODULE -
KINDERGARTEN HERE WE COME: PARTNERING TO ENSURE
CHILDREN’S SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS

INTRODUCTION
The development of these materials was based on the assumption that they would be used within already existing
delivery systems for professional development in early education. These include Resource and Referral networks,
two- and four-year colleges and universities, training institutes and professional development conferences and
seminars, and employer based in-service training through public and private schools and preschool programs, Head
Start programs, and family child care networks. It is not designed as a free standing training module, but instead
contains a large amount of material for a variety of uses.

Given the expectation that formats will vary widely -- from 90 minute workshops, to half- or full-day seminars, to 2
to 3 consecutive sessions during a college course -- we fully expect that instructors will use the video and discussion
guide in unique ways that will be modified to their particular formats and needs. As such, the contents of the guide
include 3 sections:

Section 1.  A listening guide and related material for use while viewing the video during a 90 minute
session;

Section 2.  Suggestions for discussion questions in PowerPoint form with note pages;

Section 3.  A collection of handouts and resources for more detailed exploration of the topic of
transitions

1.  Transition and School Readiness Resources
2.  Back to School Neighborhood Knocks Information
3.  Self-Assessment for Directors/Elementary School Administrators
4.  Self-Assessment for Kindergarten Staff
5.  Self-Assessment for Sending Programs
6.  Barrier Busters
7.  Tennessee School Readiness Model
SECTION ONE

1. **SAMPLE 90-MINUTE SESSION USING LISTENING GUIDE**

One approach to using the video is to show it in short segments stopping periodically for discussion. This can be very effective for a short session (90 minutes minimum) accompanied by the use of the *Listening Guide* on the following two pages.

Here are some points to stop the video for group discussion. They are recommended by a community college instructor who piloted the materials.

- After first scene with Carol Copple---stop to emphasize her first statement about transitions being important. During the pause, you may want to read one children's book\(^1\) that helps to capture the viewpoint of the child in transitions and why they are important for us to be concerned about.

- After a few slides and the part of the video about differences between preschool and kindergarten ---stop to discuss the differences.

- Right before moving into Child's Family section.

- After Child's Family section---stop to discuss more closely family issues

- Before "Identify Transition Goals" – stop to direct attention to upcoming discussion on actual strategies to try.

- Stop near end to highlight some of the strategies shared on video.

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\(^1\) children’s books about starting kindergarten can be found on website -- ([http://voices.yahoo.com/top-10-childrens-books-starting-kindergarten-6602394.html](http://voices.yahoo.com/top-10-childrens-books-starting-kindergarten-6602394.html))
2. **TWO (2) PAGE LISTENING GUIDE FOR VIDEO**
Developed by Nancy Ledbetter, Nashville State Community College

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**Voices and Viewpoints:** What voices do you hear on the DVD? Circle below:

- Principal
- Child care director
- Kindergarten teacher
- Family Services Supervisor
- Head Start Teacher
- Preschool Teacher
- Family Child Care provider
- Family Resource Director
- Coordinator
- Consultant
- College Professor
- Program Manager
- Parent
- School Nurse
- Pre-K Teacher
- Teaching Assistant

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**Barriers/Challenges:** What barriers or challenges to improving transitions do the participants express?

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**Solutions/Strategies:** What solutions or strategies do the participants share?
**Your role:** What are 2 ideas or strategies that you would like to try to help kindergarten transitions?

**Resources:** What are 2 resources you plan to use to help with kindergarten transitions?
SECTION TWO

VIDEO DISCUSSION GUIDE

This section contains suggestions for discussion questions to pose for participants. The following PowerPoint slides and note pages can be found at the Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA) website - http://ww2.tnstate.edu/learningsciences/tecta/tecta.htm. Also available at the Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) network website - http://www.tnccrr.org/

Slide 1

Every group of participants in professional development is different. And discussion leaders/instructors have their own styles and preferences. The period of time available for the professional development session(s) also varies. For these reasons, the guide provides options as well as more materials than you will need—so you can choose what is best for you. You will want to go through the video and the PowerPoint slides, and look over the notes pages where you will find accompanying questions designed to engage participants in discussion. Any of the slides can be used as handouts, and additional handouts are provided as part of the module that can be used either during the session or for participants to take home.

We encourage you to be creative is using these materials, because they have been designed with the hope that they will be useful in exploring the topic of transitions with participants, and at the same time will allow your best teaching skills to shine through. Enjoy!

Slide 1: Video title slide

Introduce the purpose of the guided discussion

• To think about the issue of successful transitions to kindergarten in participants’ context
• To think about what actions participants can take as individuals working with children and families
• To think about what actions participants can take outside of classroom work to help improve policy and practices to support children’s smooth transitions
It is important to begin the discussion focused on children’s experiences and feelings in starting kindergarten using questions such as these:

- What are some of the changes that children experience when they begin kindergarten?

- How do you think children feel when they move from an early childhood education program into kindergarten or from home into kindergarten?

- What are their expectations?

- What are they uncertain about?

- What may create stress?

OTHER SUGGESTIONS
Slide 3: These data come from Frank Porter Graham Center at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Dr. Sharon Ritchie and colleagues studied programs across the country to determine where/how children spend their time in preschool compared to kindergarten classrooms. The results shown in these charts indicate in general the percentage of the day children spend in each activity setting.

**Note:** “Basics” indicates movement between activities, clean up time, toileting  
“Station” indicates sitting, waiting  
“Individual” indicates children working on their own, not one-to-one work with teachers

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:**

- **What strikes you about these two charts and how they compare? How different SHOULD preschool and kindergarten be, do you think?**

- **What issues for teachers and children do these differences raise?**

- **Do you think preschool teachers should make any changes in response to these differences? If so, what? What about kindergarten teachers?**
Slide 4 – How about the teachers?

Depending on whether there are preschool teachers, kindergarten teachers, or both in the group, ask:

- In your experience, do preschool teachers and providers (and directors) have a clear understanding of the kindergarten experience and expectations? How can this be addressed?

- In your experience, do you think kindergarten teachers (and principals) have a clear understanding of the preschool experience and expectations? How can this be addressed?

- Do perceptions differ for public prekindergarten, Head Start, programs such as Montessori, family child care, and so on?

- Are there issues you think it would be helpful for preschool and kindergarten teachers to discuss together?
Slide 5: Discussion of families’ experiences in kindergarten transition

- What are some of the changes that families may experience when their children go to kindergarten? How do you think parents feel as they approach the kindergarten year and as the years begins?

- What might be the feelings and concerns of parents who speak limited English? How about low-income parents? Families with a special-needs child?

- How might the family’s feelings and concerns about kindergarten transition affect the child’s transition?

- During the months before the school year, what are parents likely to want to know about kindergarten choice, entry, etc.? What about in the early weeks of school—what do they want information or reassurance about?

If some of the participants are parents themselves, you might ask: What do you wish you had known as your child was starting kindergarten?
Slide 6: Kindergarten teachers’ perception of children when they enter kindergarten

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- [to kindergarten teachers] Are your observations of children’s behaviors similar to what is reported here?

- [to preschool teachers] Are you surprised by anything you see here?

- Do you think these behaviors are largely developmental—things that are characteristic of many children around 5—or do they need different experiences to develop the self-regulation and other abilities needed in kindergarten today
As you consider the transition practices where you live and work, let’s begin by thinking about:

- What’s working?
- What’s missing?
- What is a work-in-progress?

With this slide, encourage participants to reflect on what’s working and not working in present practice. Engage them in thinking about the transition practices (or lack thereof) they are familiar with—in their system, program, etc. The questions on the slide are:

- *What’s working?*
- *What’s missing?*
- *What is a work-in-progress?*
Where preschool and kindergarten experiences are different, transition can be abrupt.

- Could more preschool-kindergarten communication help with the continuity issue?
- How could the start of kindergarten be approached to ease the transition?

**Strategies for Successful Transitions:**

Overcoming Barriers

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**Slides 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 - Discussion of Common Barriers to Successful Transition Efforts**

How you use these slides to dig deeper into the barriers issues raised in the video (or whether you pass over them lightly) will depend on how much discussion of barriers or challenges you have had up to this point. As you use them, show each slide that identifies a particular barrier that may impede transition efforts. The questions for discussion of addressing that barrier will appear one at a time when you click Enter.

After the questions for slide 8 have been discussed, you may want to ask:

*Can you think of other strategies that would reduce the abruptness of the transition?*
Strategies for successful transition efforts: overcommitting barriers, **continued . . .**

Responding appropriately to growing diversity in children’s and families’ languages, cultures, and circumstances (e.g., work schedules, families moving) can help make transitions successful.

- To improve responsiveness, do you think home visits could play a role?
- Some districts have translators so they can better communicate with families, and others lack the resources for this. What else could they do?
- Are there strategies that could be useful with the cultural divides, the transience in families’ residences, and the variety in families’ schedules and circumstances?

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**Slide 9: Responding appropriately to diversity**

Show slide 9. The questions for discussion will appear one at a time when you click Enter.

Ask participants if they can think of anything they would like to add.
Strategies for successful transition efforts: overcoming barriers, continued . . .

Teachers’ time for meeting is limited, and they lack a consistent way to share information.

❖ What institutional supports are needed to make this communication possible for kindergarten and preschool teachers?

❖ Which do you think is more useful?

1. to have teachers from both sectors meet in groups to collaborate, or
2. to pair one preschool teacher with a kgn teacher for ongoing communication?

❖ How could technology be helpful in communication strategies?

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Slide 10: Time limitations

Show slide 10.

The questions for discussion will appear one at a time when you click Enter.

Before the discussion ends, ask:

- Are there other strategies you’re aware of or can imagine that would help with time pressure and other barriers to preschool-kindergarten communication?
Strategies for successful transition efforts: overcoming barriers, continued...

Elementary schools’ larger size and more formal structure are new to families and children entering kindergarten

- What strategies could help families form good relationships with the kindergarten teacher and the school?

Slide 11: Size of elementary school compared to preschools

Show slide 11.

The one question for discussion will appear when you click Enter.

Before the discussion ends, ask:

- Are there other strategies you’re aware of or can imagine that would ease the adjustment for families and children?
The systems in which preschool and kindergarten exist are mostly separate, and usually with no forum for joint planning across systems and programs.

❖ How important is it to bring school and preschool administrators as well as teachers together to talk about transition?

❖ What other community groups should be part of the conversation?

❖ At the community level, who should lead the effort for such communication and coordination?

**Slide 12: Separate systems barrier**

Show slide 12.

The questions for discussion will appear when you click Enter.

Before the discussion ends, ask:

- Are there other strategies you’re aware of or can imagine that would ease the adjustment for families and children?
Tennessee School Readiness Model

emphasizes connections essential for enabling children are to succeed in school

- children to the school
- families to the school
- preschool programs with schools
- community with schools

SLIDE 13: Tennessee School Readiness Model

There are many ways to think about how to help children have a smooth transition from preschool to kindergarten. The Tennessee School Readiness Model is useful to help us see transition issues as a function of each influential component in the child’s life – Schools, Families, and Communities.

Click Enter for the remainder of the SLIDE to appear.

- As we think about improving children’s transitions to school, what roles do schools, families and communities play?

- And how can we incorporate each of these interactions into our thinking about our own individual actions to make changes for children?

- Can you think of a way to use the model to make the case for reducing barriers to improving kindergarten transition for children?
Potential strategies to improve children’s transitions to kgn?

- Preschools planning for the kindergarten environment—field trips to school, reading and talking about kgn, practicing kgn routines
- Kindergarten day camp in the summer
- Staggered kindergarten start with 4-5 children at a time in the first days

SLIDES 14, 15, 16, and 17: Discussion of Strategies for Connecting to Improve Transition

You can begin by saying: Let’s first look at/review strategies that would be used with children themselves—to help preschoolers be prepared for what they will encounter in kindergarten or to help new kindergartners adjust to the new world they are entering. Can you suggest a concrete action you could take in your current position?

- If you have used or observed any of these strategies, what suggestions do you have for implementing them successfully?
- What other strategies have you tried for helping children themselves with the transition?
Potential strategies to connect families with schools?

- Outreach and welcoming — kindergarten fairs, open houses, “neighborhood knocks”
- Helping to prepare families — schools, preschool programs, others in the community, and websites providing information about kindergartens
- Home visits by kindergarten teachers
- Preschools, schools, and community agencies sharing with families about helping children learn and be ready for kindergarten
- Teacher communication with families throughout the year through family nights, parent conferences, and “backpack communication”

Slide 15: Strategies to connect families with schools

- Now let’s look at/review strategies that would be used with Families and Schools — to help families to be more at ease and feel more confident about their role in helping their child be prepared for what they will encounter in kindergarten.

- If you have used or observed any of these strategies, what suggestions do you have for implementing them successfully?

- What other strategies have you tried for connecting families with schools?
Potential strategies to connect elementary school and preschool?

- Joint transition planning and written transition agreements
- Schools and preschools working to increase continuity (e.g., both settings can try to tailor the learning environment and daily routines to be more closely aligned)
- Kindergarten teachers visits to preschool settings and vice versa
- Teacher preparation and in-service provide training about kindergarten and preschool education (when possible include preschool and kindergarten teachers together in professional development)

Slide 16: Strategies to connect elementary school and preschool

- Now let’s look/review strategies that would be used with preschools/family child care homes, and elementary schools —to open communication and pave the way for the transfer of information that will be beneficial towards helping children experience continuity between settings.

- If you have used or observed any of these strategies, what suggestions do you have for implementing them successfully?

- What other strategies have you tried for connecting elementary schools and preschools?
Potential strategies to connect across the community to improve transition?

- Establish a community-wide committee with leaders from the various systems and sectors of education and care and other community leaders/stakeholders
- Invite members of the community to the school for events
- Give families information about health, mental health, social services, etc., especially relating to children's starting school

Slide 17: Strategies to connect across community

- Now let’s look at strategies that would be used to engage community partners – libraries, recreation centers, museums, business, faith groups and other organizations, to support families, early childhood education professionals, elementary schools and early education and care programs —to support children's successful transition between education and care settings.

- If you have used or observed any of these strategies, what suggestions do you have for implementing them successfully?

- What other strategies have you tried for connections across communities?
Slide 18: What difference it will make

Conclude the discussion by returning a view of benefits –

- *When we are able to achieve much better kindergarten transition, let’s look at the many ways we will all benefit.*
For more information about state resources and services for families and children:
Visit www.kidcentraltn.com

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Kindergarten Here We Come: Partnering to ensure children’s successful transitions, TN Early Childhood Advisory Council, 2013

SLIDE 19: Permissions to copy and State of Tennessee kidcentraltn website for further information about services for families and children.

Encourage participants to visit the website
SECTION THREE
Handouts

For more detailed exploration of the topic of transitions, the following handouts are on
unnumbered pages 25-40 --

1. Transition and School Readiness Resources 2 pages
2. Back to School Neighborhood Knocks Information 1 page
3. Self-Assessment for Directors/Elementary School Administrators 2 pages
4. Self-Assessment for Kindergarten Staff 2 pages
5. Self-Assessment for Sending Programs 2 pages
6. Barrier Busters 3 pages
7. Tennessee School Readiness Model 4 pages
**Transition and School Readiness Resources**

Many free resources about transitioning to kindergarten available are available on the internet, providing ideas for introducing children to new experiences at home and in the community, and containing information about research and best practice in early childhood education.

**Alignment Nashville Pre-K Committee**
http://www.alignmentnashville.org/itp/itrails-online-portal-itp
Brings together Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS), Head Start-Metro Action Commission, multiple agencies and non-profit organizations serving young children to support early childhood educators and to provide services, guidance and experiences that engage families of young children and prepare them for success in MNPS.

**Countdown to Kindergarten Boston**
http://www.countdowntokindergarten.org/
Countdown to Kindergarten Boston is a nonprofit collaborative that engages families, educators, and community members in a citywide effort to celebrate and support the transition into kindergarten, recognizing it as a significant educational and developmental milestone for children and their families.

**Fairfax (Virginia) County Government**
Brochure titled “Paving the Way to Kindergarten: Building Neighborhood Partnerships to Support Young Children’s Smooth Transition to School,” includes a useful community calendar for planning /carrying out successful transition.

**Foundation for Child Development**
Information, research and profiles on PreK-3 alignment.

**Foundation for Early Learning—Getting School Ready! Campaign**
This Web site offers information for parents and teachers that focus on trying to close the "preparation gap" that many children face as they get ready for school. Parent booklet (“Getting School Ready”) available online and in print in 10 languages.

**Harvard Family Research Project**
http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/fine/resources/research/bohan.html

**Head Start**
http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/center/transition/plan.html
Head Start has been at the forefront of transition work and has a variety of resources to support teams thinking about and planning to work across systems to support children and families as they move from early childhood classrooms to kindergarten classrooms.

**National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**
www.naeyc.org
The world’s largest organization working on behalf of young children has a variety of resources for teachers and families that relate to preschool/kindergarten continuity and transition. A recent resource is *Basics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice: An Introduction for Teachers of Kindergartners.*
Transition and School Readiness Resources
Page 2 of 2

National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools
Read a strategy brief on what schools and families can do to address child readiness and the transition to kindergarten.

National Center for Learning Disabilities
www.ld.org
This is your online guide to essential information about learning disabilities, early literacy and learning resources, support for adolescents and adults with LD, public policy and advocacy tools.

National Early Childhood Transition Center (NECTC)
http://www.hdi.uky.edu/nectc/NECTC/Home.aspx
The Center's mission is to examine factors that promote successful transitions between infant/toddler programs, preschool programs, and public school programs for young children with disabilities and their families.

National Education Association
“A Parent's Guide to a Successful Kindergarten Transition” was developed to provide parents with information they can use to help their preschooler transition to kindergarten.

Ready for School
A project of Live United--United Way of Chattanooga, the Ready for School website links families to Imagination Library, free books for children, and a variety of community resources.

Recognition & Response
http://www.recognitionandresponse.org/content/view/23/108/
Based on the approach Response to Intervention (RTI) approach designed for children who are at risk for learning disabilities. Transitioning to Kindergarten: A Toolkit for Early Childhood Educators (free download) includes practical tools and materials to facilitate children’s transition to kindergarten.

Tennessee Voices for Children
www.tnvoices.org
Includes resource list, including fact sheets, websites, news articles, and archived copies of newsletter. A major mission is to provide public awareness, education, training, and technical assistance to communities statewide.

Terrific Transitions
http://www.serve.org/
This website is a collaborative effort of the SERVE Regional Educational Laboratory and the National Head Start Association. Their goal is to provide a wide variety of transition information and resources for families, professionals, and community partnerships to use as they address children’s transitions into kindergarten.

The Urban Child Institute, Memphis
www.urbanchildinstitute.org
Brochures, articles, and other resources relating to kindergarten readiness and transition.
**BACK TO SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOOD KNOCKS INFORMATION**

![Logo](image)

**WHAT?**
A Back to School Neighborhood Knock is a school-wide campaign that conducts door-to-door home visitations to the families of each incoming student, to deliver important school information and welcome the student back to school.

**WHY is it important?**
A Back to School Neighborhood Knock or home visit is essential to the positive relationship-building process between parent, child and school. The home visit is initiated by the school and should convey to the family a sincerity of concern, comfort and willingness to work together to achieve the best results for the student.

**WHEN?**
A Back to School Neighborhood Knock is held on a Saturday morning.

For example, school administrators, teachers and volunteer walkers meet at their school by 9 a.m. for a quick breakfast and orientation meeting, and then depart from the school to begin their assigned home visits.

**WHERE?**
A Back to School Neighborhood Knock is held in the local neighborhood of your school. The meetings between the teams and families are held on the door steps of the families visited.

**WHO?**
A Back to School Neighborhood Knock is hosted by the school, using two-person (or more) teams consisting of teachers, administrators, support school staff and community member volunteers. It is beneficial to combine teams that include a school representative and a parent or community representative.

The representation for the school (teachers, administrators and support staff) is the most familiar and recognizable to the student and to the family. Parents and community members are familiar with the neighborhoods and are comfortable with the communities in which the visits are taking place.

**HOW do we do it?**
A Back to School Neighborhood Knock team visits at least 4 homes per team. During the visit, the team should accomplish the following:

- Establish a positive rapport with the parent/guardian.
- Share and discuss your school’s parent engagement plan, parent responsibilities and/or school covenant.
- Encourage parents/guardians to be involved with the school and their child’s education.
- Have parents/guardians complete a parent survey that will help to identify where and how the school can better address parental concerns for them and their children.

Directions: You may use this checklist for individual reflection, to prompt group discussion, or as a way to track progress as you improve your transition practices. For each item, place an “X” next to the appropriate word to indicate whether you believe that example of best practice is followed by your program.

Strategies used for Maintaining Ongoing Communication between Preschool and Kindergarten Staff

As a Preschool Director or Elementary Administrator do you...

1. Plan joint professional development sessions and invite all stakeholders to attend.  
   ____ Yes  ____ Partially  ____ No

2. Schedule regular meetings and sharing sessions between the staff of ECE and K (i.e., Breakfast, meetings on teacher workdays.)  
   ____ Yes  ____ Partially  ____ No

3. Familiarize yourself with the centers/schools that your students will either go to or come from.  
   ____ Yes  ____ Partially  ____ No

4. Respect each other and have an honest acceptance of each other’s professional roles.  
   ____ Yes  ____ Partially  ____ No

5. Periodically visit each other’s programs or schools to observe.  
   ____ Yes  ____ Partially  ____ No

6. Implement policies that allow teachers to visit other programs and make visiting teachers feel welcome.  
   ____ Yes  ____ Partially  ____ No

7. Plan joint activities for registration, screening (if applicable), and other activities.  
   ____ Yes  ____ Partially  ____ No

8. Participate on each other’s policy advisory committees where possible.  
   ____ Yes  ____ Partially  ____ No

9. Research what information about children would be most beneficial for cross-program sharing and discuss the transfer of specified records to the school while respecting parental rights to privacy.  
   ____ Yes  ____ Partially  ____ No

10. Share any newsletters or information about ongoing activities with the other programs or schools.  
    ____ Yes  ____ Partially  ____ No
Strategies for Preparing Children for Transition

As a Preschool Director or Elementary Administrator do you …

1. Welcome prospective children and families into your school.
   ___ Yes  ___ Partially  ___ No

2. Ensure that children who are registered late and those coming into your program or school during the year are given individual support to help acclimate them to the new program.
   ___ Yes  ___ Partially  ___ No

3. Allow preschool children to visit their prospective classroom they will attend next year.
   ___ Yes  ___ Partially  ___ No

Policies for Strengthening Transition:

As a preschool director or elementary administrator do you …

1. Generate class lists (at least preliminary ones) in the spring and distribute to kindergarten teachers and families of incoming children.
   ___ Yes  ___ Partially  ___ No

2. Encourage and support joint inter-program curriculum and assessment planning is encouraged and supported.
   ___ Yes  ___ Partially  ___ No

3. Do you encourage community partners as an integral part of your planning process.
   ___ Yes  ___ Partially  ___ No

4. Have a transition team in place at your center/school and encourage it to meet on a regular basis.
   ___ Yes  ___ Partially  ___ No

5. Align curriculum between programs.
   ___ Yes  ___ Partially  ___ No

6. Share information between centers/schools in a timely manner while maintaining confidentiality policies and procedures.
   ___ Yes  ___ Partially  ___ No

7. Have a representative from administration that is an active participant on the transition team.
   ___ Yes  ___ Partially  ___ No

8. Provide incentives for involvement on the transition team (e.g. refreshments, additional planning time).
   ___ Yes  ___ Partially  ___ No
Self-Assessment for Kindergarten Staff

From the training curriculum Planning for Terrific Transitions: A Guide for Transition-to-School Teams, developed by the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Directions: You may use this checklist for individual reflection, to prompt group discussion, or as a way to track progress as you improve your transition practices. For each item, place an “X” next to the appropriate word to indicate whether you believe that example of best practice is followed by your program.

Sample Strategies for Maintaining Ongoing Communication between Early Childhood Program (ECP) and Kindergarten Staff

ECP and Kindergarten Staff

1. Get to know each other and share information about our programs. __Yes __Partially __No
2. Work together to implement a formal plan for effective transitions. __Yes __Partially __No
3. Provide accurate and unbiased information about programs. __Yes __Partially __No
4. Respect each other and have an honest acceptance of each other’s professional roles. __Yes __Partially __No
5. Periodically visit each sending program to observe. __Yes __Partially __No
6. Plan joint activities for registration, workshops, and other activities. __Yes __Partially __No
7. Participate on each other’s policy advisory committees where possible. __Yes __Partially __No
8. Conduct joint kindergarten screenings, as applicable. __Yes __Partially __No
9. Discuss the transfer of specific records to the school while respecting parental rights to privacy. __Yes __Partially __No

Sample Strategies for Preparing Children for Transition

We
10. Invite parents to visit the school with their children during the school year before the child starts kindergarten. __Yes __Partially __No
11. Hold a back-to-school night in August prior to the beginning of school. __Yes __Partially __No
12. Send a personal “letter from the teacher” to all new students in the late summer, welcoming them to kindergarten. __Yes __Partially __No
13. Provide for a wider range of developmental interests and abilities than the chronological age range suggests. __Yes __Partially __No
14. Compare types of activities among ECP programs and begin kindergarten with similar activities so children begin their kindergarten experiences with confidence. __Yes __Partially __No
15. Design experiences to stimulate learning in all areas—physical, social, emotional, and intellectual. __Yes __Partially __No
16. Plan activities that are responsive to individual differences in ability, interests, cultural backgrounds, and linguistic styles. __Yes __Partially __No
17. Provide an environment in which children can learn through active exploration and interaction with concrete materials, adults, and other children. __Yes __Partially __No
18. Organize the environment to allow children to select their own activities from a variety of choices. __Yes __Partially __No
19. Read books to the children about changes and moves. __Yes __Partially __No
20. Invite children to express their feelings through dramatic play. __Yes __Partially __No
21. Invite kindergarteners or older siblings to visit and talk about the change. __Yes __Partially __No
22. Make phone books so that children can keep in contact with their friends from ECP over the summer. __Yes __Partially __No
23. Encourage parents to provide activities that allow their children to make a greater variety of friends than just those that are in their ECP classroom. __Yes __Partially __No
24. Use both formal and informal times to talk to the children about kindergarten and allow them to express their feelings. __Yes __Partially __No
25. Have children dictate a letter to their new teacher, telling them what they’ve learned and what they look forward to learning the next year. __Yes __Partially __No
26. Keep a portfolio of each child’s progress throughout the year. At the year’s end, we share this book with each child and show him or her how much he or she has gained and grown. __Yes __Partially __No

**Sample Strategies for Involving Parents in the Transition**

**We**
27. Provide parents with information about the school their child may be attending. __Yes __Partially __No
28. Encourage parents to attend open house/back-to-school night. __Yes __Partially __No
29. Discuss child care options with working parents and provide information and referrals. __Yes __Partially __No
30. Invite kindergarten staff to come to a parents meeting at the ECP to provide an overview of the program and answer questions. __Yes __Partially __No
31. Discuss the transfer of records with parents and provide “release of information” forms. __Yes __Partially __No
32. Create a story about the new school for parents to read to their children. __Yes __Partially __No
33. Introduce parents to others with children attending the same school. __Yes __Partially __No
34. Discuss any changes in services available to parents. __Yes __Partially __No

**Sample Strategies for Reaching Into the Community**

**We**
35. Participate in community forums on kindergarten transitioning. __Yes __Partially __No
36. Participate in community-wide workshops for pre-K staff. __Yes __Partially __No
37. Organize an annual effort to identify books about being ready for “big school.” __Yes __Partially __No
Self-Assessment for Sending Programs
From the training curriculum *Planning for Terrific Transitions: A Guide for Transition-to-School Teams*,
developed by the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Directions: You may use this checklist for individual reflection, to prompt group discussion, or as a way to track progress as you improve your transition practices. For each item, place an “X” next to the appropriate word to indicate whether you believe that example of best practice is followed by your program.

**Sample Strategies for Maintaining Ongoing Communication Between Early Childhood Programs (ECP) and Kindergarten Staff**

**ECP and Kindergarten Staff**

1. Get to know each other and share information about our programs. __Yes __Partially __No
2. Work together to implement a formal plan for effective transitions. __Yes __Partially __No
3. Provide accurate and unbiased information about programs. __Yes __Partially __No
4. Respect each other and have an honest acceptance of each other’s professional roles. __Yes __Partially __No
5. Periodically visit receiving programs to observe. __Yes __Partially __No
6. Plan joint activities for registration, workshops, and other activities. __Yes __Partially __No
7. Participate on each other’s policy advisory committees when possible. __Yes __Partially __No
8. ECP staff assists in screening for kindergarten, as applicable. __Yes __Partially __No
9. Discuss the transfer of specific records to the school while respecting parental rights to privacy. __Yes __Partially __No

**Sample Strategies for Preparing Children for Transition**

**We**

10. Provide for a wider range of developmental interests and abilities than the chronological age range suggests. __Yes __Partially __No
11. Design experiences to stimulate learning in all areas—physical, social, emotional, and intellectual. __Yes __Partially __No
12. Plan activities that are responsive to individual differences in ability, interests, cultural backgrounds, and linguistic styles. __Yes __Partially __No
13. Provide an environment in which children can learn through active exploration and interaction with concrete materials, adults, and other children. __Yes __Partially __No
14. Organize the environment to allow children to select their own activities from a variety of choices. __Yes __Partially __No
15. Organize the day so that children work individually or in small informal groups most of the time. __Yes __Partially __No
16. Provide many opportunities for children to see how spoken and written language are related. __Yes __Partially __No
17. Schedule visits to the new school for the children. __Yes __Partially __No
18. Discuss new activities, schedules, rules, and bus routes to help the children feel comfortable and confident. __Yes __Partially __No
19. Read books to the children about changes and moves. __Yes __Partially __No
20. Invite children to express their feelings through dramatic play. __Yes __Partially __No
21. Invite kindergarteners or older siblings to visit and talk about the change. __Yes __Partially __No

22. Make phone books so that children can keep in contact with their friends from ECP over the summer. __Yes __Partially __No

23. Encourage parents to provide activities that allow their children to make a greater variety of friends than just those that are in their ECP classroom. __Yes __Partially __No

24. Use both formal and informal times to talk to the children about kindergarten and allow them to express their feelings. __Yes __Partially __No

25. Have children dictate a letter to their new teacher, telling them what they’ve learned and what they look forward to learning the next year. __Yes __Partially __No

26. Keep a portfolio of each child’s progress throughout the year. At the year’s end, we share this book with each child and show him or her how much he or she has gained and grown. __Yes __Partially __No

Sample Strategies for Involving Parents in the Transition

We

27. Provide parents with information about the school their child may be attending. __Yes __Partially __No

28. Encourage parents to attend open house/back-to-school night. __Yes __Partially __No

29. Discuss child care options with working parents and provide information and referrals. __Yes __Partially __No

30. Invite kindergarten staff to come to a parents meeting at the ECP to provide an overview of the program and answer questions. __Yes __Partially __No

31. Discuss the transfer of records with parents and provide “release of information” forms. __Yes __Partially __No

32. Create a story about the new school for parents to read to their children. __Yes __Partially __No

33. Introduce parents to others with children attending the same school. __Yes __Partially __No

34. Discuss any changes in services available to parents. __Yes __Partially __No

Sample Strategies for Reaching Into the Community

We

35. Participate in community forums on kindergarten transitioning. __Yes __Partially __No

36. Participate in community-wide workshops for pre-K staff. __Yes __Partially __No

37. Organize an annual effort to identify books about being ready for “big school.” __Yes __Partially __No
Early childhood educators and administrators describe a variety of barriers to providing effective transition practices. Here are some effective strategies for breaking down these barriers:

**There is no forum for joint planning across the multitude of programs involved in serving children before they come to school.**

- Survey all the agencies involved to find out what, if anything, they are doing to address transition issues.
- Investigate who your most likely partners would be to work on transitions with you.
- Form a transition team if there is not one in place already. Transition teams can be formed both at the community level and at the program or school level.

**There is little support for formalized transition planning.**

- Participants must have the chance to learn about why transition planning is important and how they can help. Encourage attendance at transitions training, such as this one.
- Provide research that supports formalized transition planning to those from whom you are seeking support.

**Children will be attending many different kindergartens in the fall.**

- Invite kindergarten teachers from several schools to visit your classroom throughout the year. If teachers cannot get release time, they may still be willing to come for a breakfast or lunch on their own time on a day when school is out.

**There is no consistent means for sharing information between programs about children and their families, including special needs, native language, and individual preferences.**

- Plan to provide numerous opportunities for the staff of both the pre-K and the kindergarten to interact.
- Develop a packet or portfolio (with parental permission) that will precede the child into his new program. It should include samples of his work, his likes/dislikes, and strengths/needs.
- Attach a photograph of the child and a child-dictated letter to personalize the packet.
- Provide joint training, in which the staff from both early childhood programs and schools learn the same information and have a chance to get to know each other.

**It is difficult to arrange cross-program visits.**

- With careful planning, job swap days can be worked out where the kindergarten teacher and a child care provider exchange positions for the day. This way each early childhood educator gets a real feel for what the other’s job includes.
- Plan with parents and the receiving program to provide some common routines. This can be done via phone calls or e-mail.
Programs are often isolated from each other, thus making communicating and working on common goals more difficult. There is a tradition of separateness that means we don’t often think of those in other programs as “colleagues.” We often think of our programs, our philosophies, and our approaches as superior to those in other types of programs.

* Encourage regular communication via telephone or e-mail. Set up listserves for information about early childhood issues and happenings.
* Provide social situations where staff from both programs can meet. Have an early childhood educator party at your center.
* Form a mentoring system. Pair with a kindergarten teacher to help build a stronger personal relationship.

It is difficult to be aware of all the different programs and supports that are available in the community.

* Work with other community members interested in early childhood issues to host a community showcase.
* Have a poster contest that each program would prepare about available resources it provides.
* Flyers, pamphlets, and other materials should be made available so that everyone can refresh his or her memories about where to look for resources when needed.

There is a lack of time to speak individually to parents about the process of transitioning the children into kindergarten.

* Consider hosting a parent meeting early in the school year and invite a principal and/or a kindergarten teacher to speak to the parents.
* Use a spiral bound notebook to write individual notes home to parents about transition activities going on in your community, reminders about scheduling an appointment for the kindergarten physical, etc.
* Call the schools and ask them if you can help disseminate information about any kindergarten registration or event that your parents might be interested in attending.

No funding is available to support transition efforts.

* Share information with the community about the value of good transition practices. Community support for activities can sometimes be initiated by letting others know about a need.
* Some state initiatives, such as [insert example from Tennessee] have funding for early childhood education. Check with your local partnership to see if there is some money available for projects that you wish to participate in.
Class lists are generated too late.

* Form or work with an existing transition planning team to advocate for earlier lists. See if there is a way to receive tentative class lists in the spring. Early lists enable pre-K teachers to help children become familiar with the next teacher and allow time for individualized joint planning between the two programs. Class lists also enable kindergarten staff to make summer contacts with the children and their families.

There is a lack of knowledge about how cultural and language differences can affect a child’s transition.

* It is important for staff to realize that culture affects all aspects of a child’s life. A child’s beliefs, values, spiritual practices, rules for behavior, communication, and ways of knowing originate with the child’s home culture. Some cultures may expect cooperation and obedience within the group instead of competition and individual achievement. Other cultures may value creativity and artistic expression (Regional Educational Laboratory Network, 1999).

* Provide staff training around the issues of culture and home language.

* Invite community members and parents from different cultures to share photos, food, and customs they have at parent and staff meetings.

* If you have children whose home language is not English, provide materials in the home language of that family.

* Hire staff members from the community who reflect the cultures and languages of the children enrolled.

* Recognize that each home also has its own culture. How parents communicate, play, discipline, etc. will be different in each home.

* Toys and materials in the classroom should reflect the various cultures of the children.
Tennessee School Readiness Model

*Tennessee's school readiness model* emphasizes that the state's children will be ready to succeed in school only when families, communities, and schools work together on their behalf throughout the early childhood years. This document provides specific guidance for what communities, schools, and families can do to support learning and development, but does not describe all possible examples. Further, the model provides indicators of what "ready children" know and are able to do across the birth-5 age span, but does not detail nor overemphasize them. For "readiness" is not seen solely as a condition within a child, but is a condition that exists when communities, schools, and families collectively create a nurturing environment for child development starting at birth.

**Ready Communities.** A ready community is one that holds high expectations for the organizations that provide services to protect young children's health and well-being, such as early childhood service agencies, social services agencies, health and mental health care services providers and other children's and family services agencies. A ready community supports such organizations by working to assure them resources that strengthen their capacity to serve children's and families' changing needs. Ready communities, including businesses, faith based organizations, early childhood service providers, community groups and local governments, work together to support children's school and long term success by providing families affordable access to information, services, high quality child care, and early learning opportunities.

**In Ready Communities:**

**Children have access to high quality early care and education programs**

- Center based programs, family and group child care homes achieve high quality ratings through the TN Department of Human Services' quality rating system and/or are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) and other state approved accrediting bodies.
Child care programs have policies and practices that support social-emotional development, child nutrition, physical activity, and other healthy habits.

**Teachers in early care and education programs are well prepared to work with families, children, and elementary schools in their communities**

- Professional development opportunities responsive to changing community needs are provided on a continuing basis.
- Communication and collaboration with schools where children will attend kindergarten are encouraged and supported.

**Agencies and organizations provide family services related to physical health, mental health, and family support**

- Caregivers of infants with disabilities or developmental delays identified through screening are connected with support services such as the Tennessee Early Intervention System (TEIS).
- County health departments and other health care providers offer access for child wellness, immunizations, and preventive education services.
- Community partners work together to support families, promote resilience, and increase awareness of child abuse and neglect.

**Agencies and organizations provide leadership and focus for early childhood issues in their communities**

- Businesses, faith-based and community organizations sign the pledge to support school readiness at kidcentraltn.com
- Libraries, recreation centers, museums, and parks offer early learning opportunities.
- Businesses, recreational facilities, faith-based and community organizations become child health friendly, providing smoke-free environments, healthy food choices, and support for family activities that prevent unhealthy behaviors.

**Community leaders gather data regularly to assess the status of children, families, schools, and community resources and use these data to improve program planning and to direct resource allocation**

- Manageable indicators are identified that are valued and important enough to measure and to track over time.
- Reliable data reports are provided on an annual basis, with results available by the local, county, and/or city level.
- Ongoing commitments are made to improve the quality of existing data over time.

**Ready Schools.** A ready school accepts all age-eligible children and provides a seamless transition to a high-quality learning environment with rich, age appropriate learning opportunities that build children's confidence in their skills, knowledge, and abilities. School policies support the continued physical, intellectual, and social/emotional well-being of children and encourage avoidance of high-risk behaviors and habits. Children in ready schools are led by skilled teachers, who recognize, reinforce, and extend children's strengths and who are sensitive to cultural values and individual differences.
In Ready Schools:
Kindergarten children engage in high-quality learning experiences that are connected to and build on their experiences throughout their earliest years

- Schools develop formal working transition plans between community early childhood settings and kindergarten to address alignment of curriculum and teaching practices, and school readiness expectations.
- Children entering kindergarten are assessed for progress toward the academic and developmental goals reflected in the TN-Early Learning Development Standards (TN-ELDS) and Common Core State Standards.
- Schools conduct annual school readiness events that engage kindergarten teachers, early childhood professionals, families, children, businesses, faith-based and community organizations.
- Schools have kindergarten standards that are communicated to families and provide the basis for information exchange with families through activities such as home visits, telephone calls, questionnaires, and kindergarten visitation days.

School policies and practices address the diverse and individual needs of students

- Teachers engage in professional development activities that develop and cultivate sensitivities and special skills needed to work with the diverse families and children in their community.
- Classroom activities help to build bridges between various cultural and family backgrounds and to create a shared culture in the classroom.

Schools and teachers engage families as partners in their children's development and education

- Schools and teachers have multiple strategies to involve parents and family members in their children's education and well-being, on an ongoing basis.
- Schools communicate to families in their home languages and use culturally responsive interactional strategies.
- School staff partner with parents/family members in creating policies, practices and programs that ensure optimal intellectual, physical, and social/emotional development of children.

Ready Families. In a ready family, adults understand they are the most important people in the child's life. They are deeply engaged with the child and advocate on his or her behalf. Parents and other family members support children's well-being by interacting with them positively and frequently, taking a strong interest in all aspects of their welfare, development and learning. Recognizing they are the child's first and most important teachers, they provide steady and supportive relationships, ensure safe and consistent environments, promote good health, and foster self-esteem, confidence, determination, and self-control.

In Ready Families:
Family members interact with children to help them develop listening and communication skills and to express their feelings, needs and wants

- Family members read to children every day.
- Family members engage children in conversations about their daily activities and encourage them to express themselves.
- Family members take children to reading and community events at libraries, parks and museums.
- Family members sign the pledge to support school readiness at kidcentraltn.com
Parents and family members act as advocates for their children in all aspects of their lives

- Family members participate in early education program events and activities.
- Family members follow their children's progress and speak up on their behalf.

Parents and family members ensure their children are healthy

- Parents schedule regular wellness visits and immunizations for their children, and follow through with recommended action needed.
- Family members provide foods to their children that promote optimal brain and body development and limit the consumption of unhealthy foods.
- Family members visit kidcentraltn.com for information about child health, education, development, and available resources for families.

Ready Children. A ready child is prepared intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically within the eight developmental domains addressed in the Tennessee Early Childhood Early Learning Developmental Standards (TN-ELDS): Language, Social Emotional, Physical, Approaches to Learning, Math, Science, Social Studies, Creative Arts. These standards reflect what research says about the pathway of development and learning from birth through age 5 and the importance of understanding that progress toward school readiness begins at birth.

To Be Ready Children:

Ready children are healthy physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively

- Children enjoy listening to stories and discussing what happened.
- Children understand that rules and routines are part of our daily lives.
- Children ask questions and are curious to find answers and solve problems.
- Children relate well to peers and adults.
- Children enjoy running, drawing, pretending, climbing, and other play activities.

In order to give our children the best chance for success in school and beyond, communities, schools, and families must hold each other accountable to promote these goals and measure progress toward reaching them. In order to define, assess, and track school readiness, we must set objective, research- based benchmarks for each component of school readiness and develop clear strategies for measuring progress towards these benchmarks.

1 Many states have developed a definition of school readiness with widely varying intentions and thus widely varying content. Tennessee’s Children’s Cabinet and Early Childhood Advisory Council wish to acknowledge that this statement draws heavily in conceptual approach from the National School Readiness Indicators Initiative: A 17 State Partnership and in format from the state of Virginia.