

Welcome to Public School: Building High-Quality Transitions

Module 1: An Overview of Kindergarten Transitions

**Maine Department of Education
Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Children's Cabinet**



Objectives

- Develop a shared understanding of the transition to kindergarten
- Establish the importance of kindergarten transition
- Identify key components for effective kindergarten transition processes
- Gain an understanding of the available training modules in this series and the topics to be addressed

Transition refers to the **process** of a child moving from one program or setting to another. When children make the transition from **preschool** to **elementary school**, they must **adjust** to new settings and situations — including new **rules** and **expectations**, new **ways of learning**, new **relationships** with peers and adults, and new **physical surroundings**. Yet there is a **persistent gap** in the transition between preschool to kindergarten.

(Dunlap & Fabian, 2007)



Benefits of Transition Processes

Multiple large-scale research studies have found transition activities beneficial.

- Higher ratings of social emotional competence and reduced stress at the beginning of the school year
- Improved academic growth in kindergarten and increased family involvement over the year
- Stronger benefits for children living in poverty

(Schulting, Malone & Dodge, 2005; and LoCasale-Crouch, Mashburn, Downer & Pianta, 2008)

When children experience discontinuities between early learning programs and kindergarten, they may be at greater risk for academic failure and social adjustment problems (Conyer, Reynolds, & Ou, 2003).

Guiding Documents

“Preparing A School-Ready Child” Series

PREPARING A SCHOOL-READY CHILD

“Children who enter kindergarten ready to meet its academic, social, and emotional demands are more likely to achieve later academic and life success.”

What is school readiness?

School readiness involves more than just children. In the broadest sense, school readiness is about children, families, early environments, schools, and communities. Children are not innately “ready” or “not ready” for school. Their skills and development are strongly influenced by their families and through their interactions with other people and environments before coming to school?

School readiness occurs when children have the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in primary school, later learning, and life. Physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development are essential ingredients of school readiness. School readiness refers not only to ready children, but to ready communities, families, and schools.

The ready child

- has been well-cared for physically, interacts socially with others, has a positive self-perception, has the ability to understand the emotions of others, and can interpret and express feelings;
- approaches learning with enthusiasm and curiosity, has developed language and listening skills, and has cognition skills and general knowledge; and
- is prepared to learn successfully in school.

School Readiness: Helping Communities Get Children Ready for School and Schools Ready for Children. Child Trends Research Brief. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED444712.pdf>

The ready school

- uses curriculum in kindergarten and the early grades that builds on prior learning;
- takes into account individual differences in language, culture, and prior experience; and
- employs teachers who know how to teach young children and have the resources to do so.

NACIP Position Statement on School Readiness: https://www.nacip.org/sites/default/files/2014/05/nacip_position_statement_on_school_readiness.pdf

The ready family

- supports children in their learning and through transition to kindergarten;
- reads to their children daily; and
- continues to engage in their child’s learning through the school years.

ACE Interactive Framework: https://hlc.ace-sr.org/school_readiness/article/interactive-framework

The ready community

- helps ensure that children have access to health care, immunizations, and nutrition;
- helps ensure that families have access to quality early childcare and education; and
- invests in resources and activities that support families and promote school readiness.

School Readiness: Helping Communities Get Children Ready for School and Schools Ready for Children. Child Trends Research Brief. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED444712.pdf>

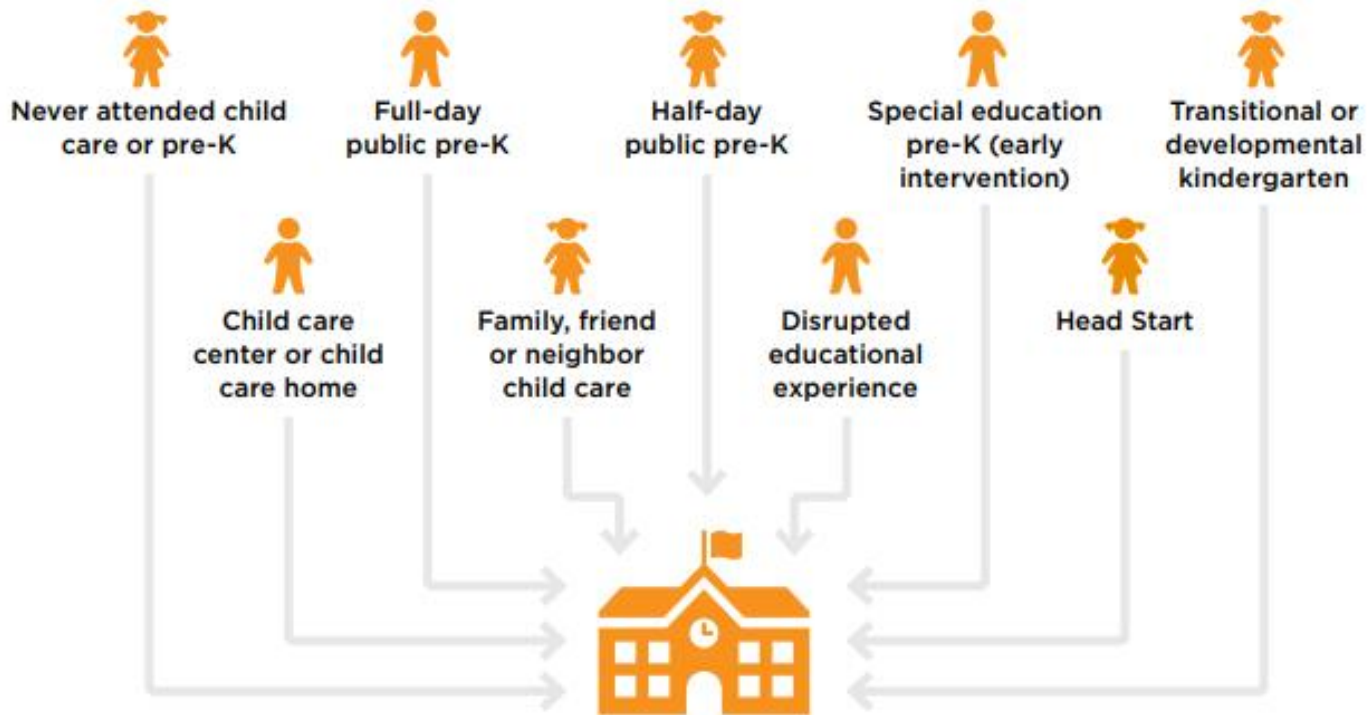
Why is this Transition so important?

The **child** and their **family** are adjusting to new settings and situations, such as:

- New school and physical surroundings
- New rules and expectations
- New ways of learning
- New relationships with peers and adults
- New schedules
- First time on bus

Adequate transition time and activities should be provided to the child and their family as they adjust to new settings.

Understanding and Adapting to Children's Diverse Experiences



Not all formal child care and pre-K programs are **accessible and high quality**, and not all children enter kindergarten with **experience in a formal setting**.

Advice from Kindergartners



Schools & Communities Work Together

Schools and their **communities** have an important role to play as well—they:

- Provide **continuity** between Early Education and care and elementary school programs
- Are **committed** to the success of the children and families within their community
- Build **relationships with** and **understanding** of the children and families that are entering their programs
- Meet children and families where they are, and work to **engage, teach** and **enjoy** the school journey, while building a partnership

Intentional Transition Practices

Intentional Transition Practices support children and families:

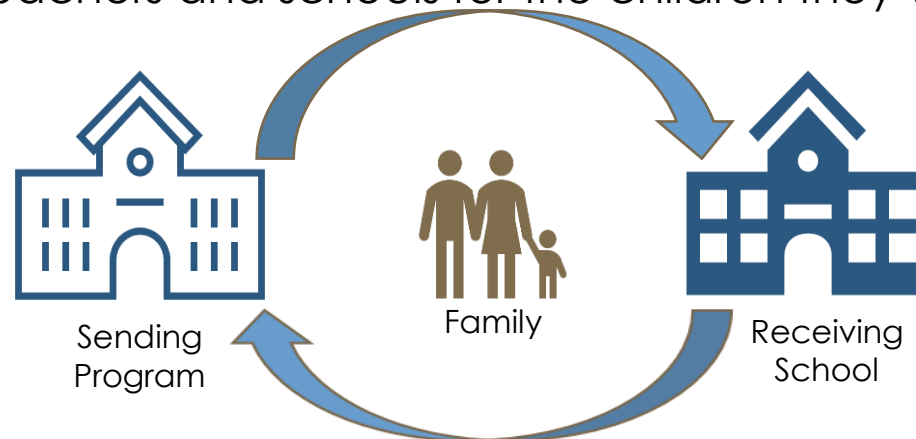
- In understanding the transition to kindergarten and what they should expect
- To engage in the school community
- In reducing the likelihood that children fall behind socially and academically early in life



Intentional Transition Practices

Intentional Transition Practices support educators and providers to:

- Prioritize coordination between the sending program and the receiving school, including each attending IEP transitional meetings;
- Encourage preschool and kindergarten teachers to work together to engage parents and caregivers;
- Ensure regular communication about children's progress, including the child's assessment data, which:
- Prepare teachers and schools for the children they will receive



Key Components of High-Quality Transition Practices

School readiness involves more than just children, school readiness is about Ready...

Schools, families and communities working together toward successful transitions for children into a public-school classroom.

This works best when an inclusive and collaborative **transition team** is formed

And

District and school-wide, year-long, **transition plans** are built, as well as individual child and family transition plans

A child's skills and development are strongly influenced by their families and through their interactions with other people and environments before coming to school.

(Maxwell & Clifford 2004)



Image from Pixabay.com

**Using a systems lens,
communities can
address and improve
kindergarten transitions
for all students.**

-Bornfreund et al.



A Systems Lens for Transitioning into Kindergarten

Acknowledging the complex nature of transition processes will enable:

- State policymakers, from state departments of education and health and human services agencies, governors' offices and state boards of education, to play a role in providing technical assistance to schools and programs, to enable successful transitions for young children.
- Relationships, collaborations, and partnerships across the community.
- The necessary time and energy from school leaders well before children enter their building.

Ensure Equitable Transitions

A systems lens can help provide diverse and effective supports for all children, including children:

- with diverse backgrounds and experiences
- From under-resourced families
- experiencing homelessness
- with disabilities
- experiencing adverse childhood experiences or other trauma
- experiencing chronic stress
- who are dual language learners

From a holistic perspective, transition into kindergarten necessitates a focus on the social, emotional and health needs of children and families; the culture in a community and in individual schools; and the resources available to support individual children, family members, teachers and school leaders. -Bornfreund et al.



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Module 2 Student and Family Engagement

- [The Ready Child](#)
- [The Ready Family](#)

Module 3 School and Community Engagement

- [The Ready School](#)
- [The Ready Community](#)

Module 4 Building Transition Teams and Plans

- Resources to be determined/added/linked

Questions?

Thoughts?

Digging
Deeper...

