

Transitions: Preschool to Kindergarten and Beyond

California Preschool Instructional Network

CA Department of Education and SEEDS

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(Handbook on Transition from Early Childhood Special Education Programs)



Transition:

***a passage from one state, stage,
or place to another:***

CHANGE



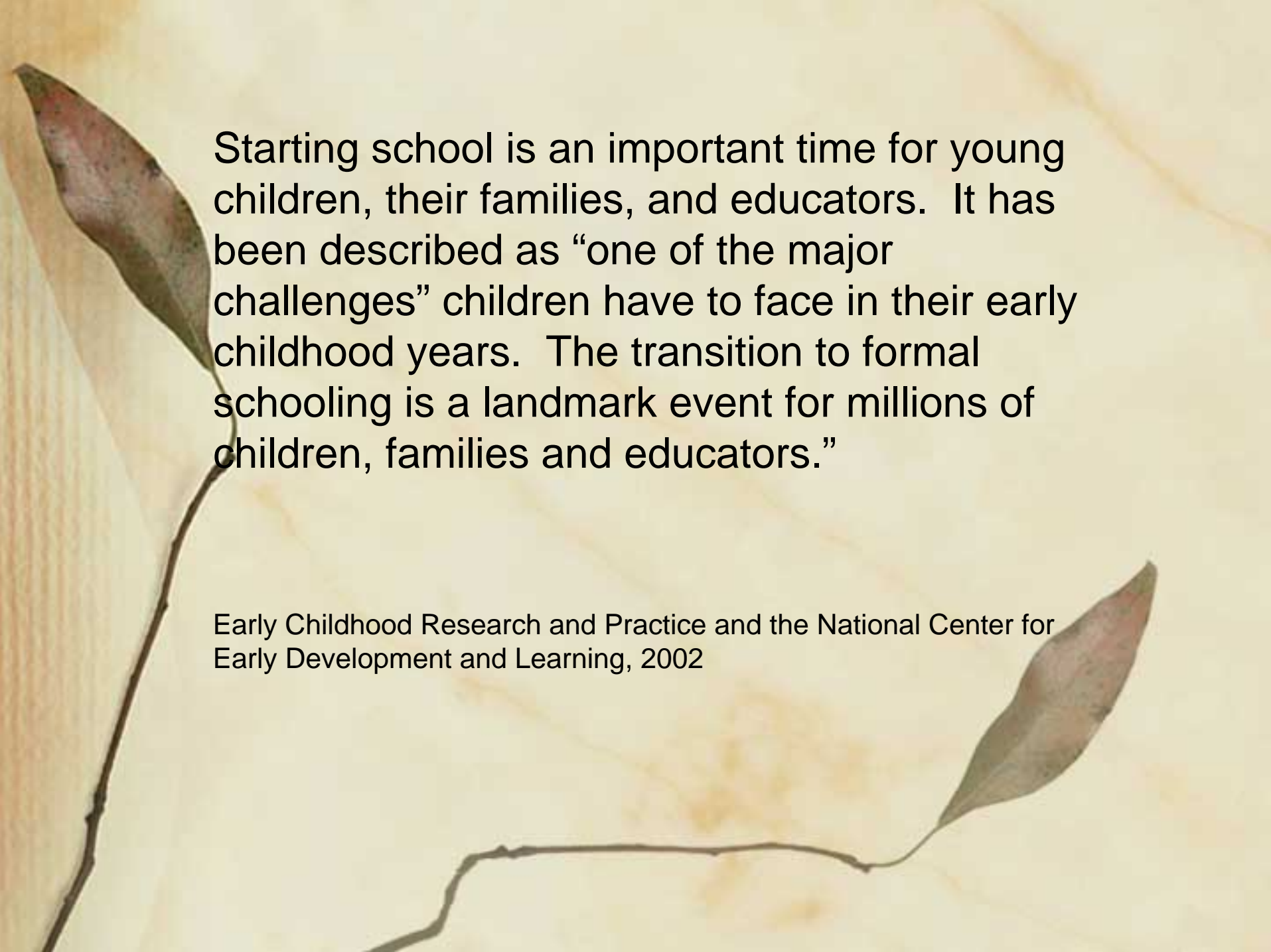
Reflection

Think of a time you went through transition...

What was the experience like for you?

Share with an elbow partner.





Starting school is an important time for young children, their families, and educators. It has been described as “one of the major challenges” children have to face in their early childhood years. The transition to formal schooling is a landmark event for millions of children, families and educators.”

Early Childhood Research and Practice and the National Center for Early Development and Learning, 2002

Transition to Kindergarten

Early Childhood Research & Policy Briefs, 2003

An Article Review

Why is the transition to Kindergarten so important?

What are typical ways that U.S. schools support this transition?

What barriers impact efforts to transition?






Why is Transition Important?

- Establishes competencies critical to children's school success and achievement.
- Learning environments are quite different from traditional elementary school classroom settings.
- Children's experiences prior to kindergarten are different now than they were a generation ago.

Why is Transition Important? Continued

- Increasingly large amounts of public funds are now dedicated to educating young children with the intent of boosting their chances for success in elementary school and beyond.





“Children who make a smooth transition and experience early school success tend to maintain higher levels of social competence and academic achievement.”

(Alexander & Entwistle, 1988; Early, Pianta, and Cox, 1999; Luster and McAdoo, 1996; Shepard and Smith, 1998)



How Do U.S. Schools Support the Transition to Kindergarten?

Common Practice:

- Send a letter to parents after the beginning of school.
- Hold an open house after school starts.
- Send a brochure home after school starts.



How Do U.S. Schools Support the Transition to Kindergarten?

Uncommon Practice:

- Call the child before or after school starts.
- Visit the child's home or preschool program(s).
- Invite children to spend the day in the receiving classroom.

The transition practices commonly used in school may not be well suited to the needs of children and families.

National Center for Early Development and Learning (NCEDL)





Moving Toward Effective Transition

- **National Center for Early Development and Learning:**

- parent/teacher discussions

- trust building through home visits and accompanying families on school visits

- meetings between preschool and elementary teachers

- school to home demonstrations

The Transition to School: What's Important? (S. Dockett and B. Perry, *Educational Leadership*, April 2003)



The Transition to School: What's Important?


“The Starting School Research
Project in Australia”

Sue Dockett and Bob Perry



Jigsaw Research Article

1. Working with Remote Communities (pg. 32)
2. Communicating across the EC Sector (pg. 33)
3. Children's Voices in the Transition to School (pg. 33)



The Transition to School: What's Important?

Effective Transition Programs:

- Establish positive relationships among the children, parents, and educators.
- Are based on mutual trust and respect.
- Facilitate each child's development as a capable learner.
- Have dedicated adequate funding and resources.
- Are flexible and responsive.



The Transition To School: What's Important?

Effective Transition Programs:

- Are well planned and evaluated.
- Involve a range of stakeholders.
- Take into account the context of the community and its individual families and children.
- Rely on reciprocal communication among participants.
- Develop long-term individualized “transition-to-school programs,” not just short-term orientation sessions.

“The relationship that children have with adults and other children in families, child care, and school programs provide the foundation for their success in school.”

(Pianta and Walsh, 1996; Rimm-Kaufman and Pianta, 2001)



Transition...An Elementary School Story

- 97% free/reduced lunch
- 79% second language learners
- 95% actual attendance record
- 40% multiple-family homes
- Overcrowded school: 2x intended number



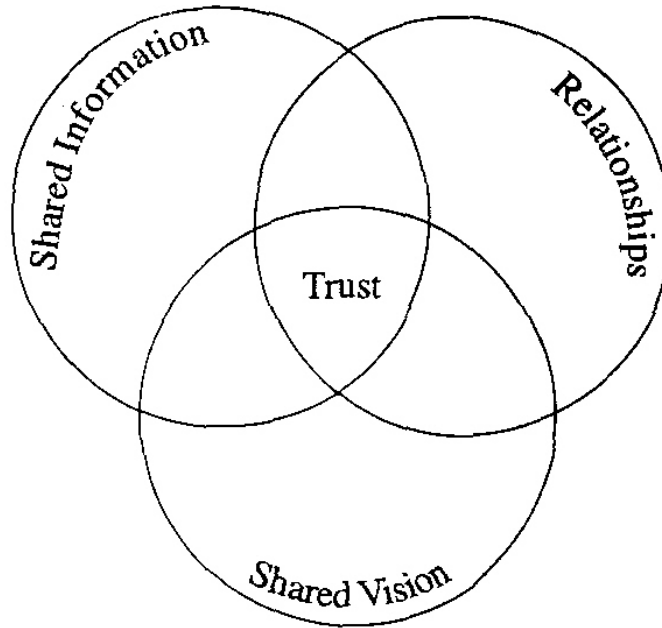
Transition...An Elementary School Story

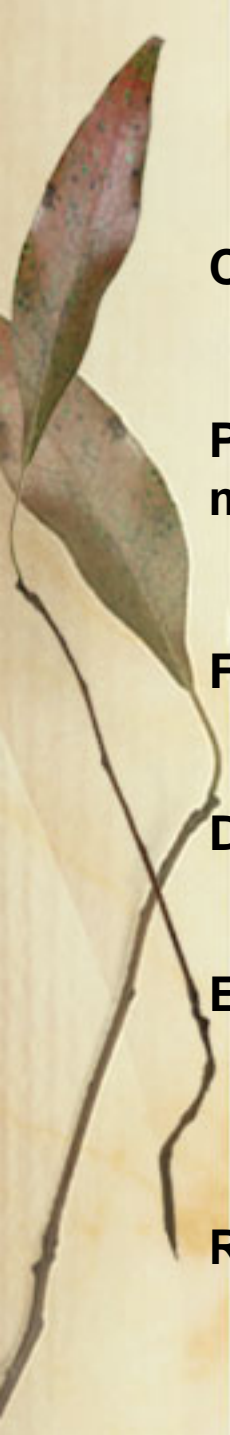
- Year round, multiple track, K-2 staggered sessions
- Immediate Intervention/Underperforming School (II/USP)
- Title I and Economic Impact Aid-Limited English Proficient
- Preschool-6th grade classes
- Bilingual teachers, resource teachers, instructional aides

Transition Plan

Vision:

Teachers, administrators, parents, and students will collaborate together so that children entering kindergarten are cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically ready to master the kindergarten standards.





Needs:

Create a transition team

Provide an organizational meeting with transition team

Facilitate collaborative meetings

Devise an action plan*

Evaluate transition process

Revise and plan for next year

Action:

Invite preschool, kindergarten, resource teachers, child care providers, parents, administrators

Establish a vision; set norms; set meeting dates

Investigate the community/survey needs
Hold meetings to discuss needs

Brainstorm actions based upon collaborative meetings

Set three checkpoints for the transition team throughout the process; utilize time to discuss what is working and what needs to be changed; plan for changes

Seek feedback from necessary participants


Transition team utilize feedback information to plan for the new cycle

Elementary Transition Action Plan

Needs	Action	Time
Professional Development in Language and Literacy	Participate in SEED training	Two day training; visit
Preschool-Kindergarten Collaboration	Build a collaborative learning community: Preschool/kindergarten site programs Guidelines/Standards/Expectations Classroom visits/substitutes New student parent meeting New student assessment Preparing for new students On-going assessments/student data Portfolio exchange	Monthly meetings
Parent/Family Education	Preparing Children for School Family Education Nights CBET	Initial and On-going
Parent Participation	Home Visits Translation Incentives and transportation	Initial and On-going

Transitions & the Desired Results Developmental Profile

- Staff must obtain consent from the family before sharing Desired Results information.
- Child Development Progress Form is what should be shared.
- Desired Results information can be shared by the family or it can be mailed to the school.
- It may be helpful to share some samples of the child's work.



The transition to school “sets the tone and direction” of a child’s school career (Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 1999) and it has been described in the literature as a rite of passage associated with increased status, a turning point in a child’s life. (Christensen, 1998)



Resources

Pianta, R. & Kraft-Sayre M., (2003)
Successful Kindergarten Transitions: Your
Guide to Connecting Children, Families &
Schools. *Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.*,
Baltimore

Reflect and Share

1. On a note card, list transition efforts at your site.
2. Share with an elbow partner.
3. Discuss:
What are common strategies utilized?
What strategies stood out as unique?





Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten

For Children with Disabilities and their Families



Transition Begins Early

○ Many children with disabilities and their families have already experienced many transitions:

- From hospital to home
- Into Part C infant services
- Into Part B preschool services

□ **TRANSITION From Preschool**

TRANSITION From Preschool

- ❖ While federal requirements drive transition, the purpose remains the same...
- ❖ The purpose is to ensure a smooth transition with no interruption in services.





Transition to Kindergarten

○ Issues for Agencies

- Legal Requirements
- Smooth Transitions
- Coordination and timing
- Transition activities

Source: Transition Handbook,
pp. 20-25

○ Issues for Families

- Need for information
- Opportunities to talk
- Understanding of new system and services
- Preparation for change

Source: Transition Handbook, pp. 1-5

Transition Requirements

The law requires that:

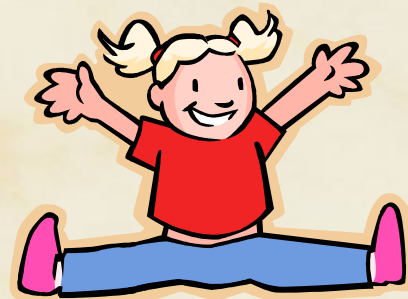
- appropriate reassessment to determine need of special education and services.
- gains made in the special education program are not lost by too rapid a removal of individualized programs and supports.
- a means of monitoring continued success.
- As part of the exit process from special education, the present performance levels and learning style shall be noted by the individualized education program team.

California Education Code, Part 30, Chapter 4.45: §56445.

Brault, 2005

Steps to a Smooth Transition

- Establish relationships between preschool and elementary staff, identify the schools that children may be attending.
- Begin sharing information about the transition process with the family in the fall, connect them to general kindergarten transition activities.
- Preschool special education staff begins contact with potential receiving district.





Steps to a Smooth Transition

- Reassessment
 - Schedule 3-4 months ahead of the transition
 - Complete and discuss educational implications 2 months ahead
- Conduct IEP Meeting
- Provide support at the beginning of the school year



Supporting a Smooth Transition

- Develop relationships across agencies and programs.
- Examine attitudes and assumptions about agencies, families, practices.
- Ensure that current process and forms support you.
 - Clarify any legal questions.
 - Sample forms are provided as starting points.



Supporting a Smooth Transition

- Invite families in your programs (or program graduates), to share their transition experiences.
 - Look for success stories
 - Vignettes
 - Recent transitions may provide more information



Guiding Principles

- Developed by the National Center for Early Development & Learning (NCEDL) Kindergarten Transition Studies to assist communities.
- The principles:
 1. Foster Relationships as Resources
 2. Promote Continuity from Preschool to Kindergarten
 3. Focus on Family Strengths
 4. Tailor Practices to Individual Needs

Website Resources

fpg.unc.edu/~ncedl/

nectac.org/topics/transition/transition.asp

ihdi.uky.edu/nectc/

ihdi.uky.edu/stepsweb/

ideapartnership.org

dec-sped.org

ncedl.org



healthychild.ucla.edu/First5CAReadiness/TransitionKindergarten.asp



Resources

- Susan Sandall, Ph.D., Mary Louise Hemmeter, Ph.D., Mary McLean, Ph.D., and Barbara J. Smith, Ph.D. (2004). *DEC Recommended Practices: A Comprehensive Guide for Practical Application*. Colorado: Sopris West.
- Brault, L.M.J. (2005). *Handbook on Transition in Early Childhood Special Education Programs*. Sacramento, California: California Department of Education.
- Brault, L.M.J. (2005) *Transitions: Smoothing the Path for Families*. Handout developed for SEEDS to accompany presentations on the *Handbook on Transitions in Early Childhood Special Education*. Available from SEEDS or the author.



Cultural Considerations

- Family considerations

- Families experiences around school
- Language differences

- Community considerations

- Within a particular population (Hmong or is there even a community)

- Regional considerations

- Urban vs. rural