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New book offers transition approach

This Spotlight is based on *Successful Kindergarten Transition: Your Guide to Connecting Children, Families, and Schools*, a 124-page book grounded in research by authors Robert C. Pianta and Marcia Kraft-Sayre of the University of Virginia. Published by Brookes Publishing of Baltimore, it also contains examples of forms that transition teams can use or adapt to customize transition plans that meet the needs of children, families and schools.

Supporting children, families during the transition to school

This new book, *Successful Kindergarten Transition*, describes an approach to enhance children's transition into kindergarten by forming a variety of social and information linkages that support children and families. It has been implemented and tested by researchers at the National Center for Early Development & Learning in a variety of school districts and states.

These linkages are important for supporting competencies in young children that can ensure their school success – they are resources for children. When social and informational connections are established and maintained, children may have more positive school experiences because more resources are available.

For example, if parents have positive relationships with their children's teachers (a social linkage), then teachers and parents can work more effectively together to support children's education progress. Similarly, when preschool providers and kindergarten teachers meet regularly to discuss how to integrate their curricula (an informational linkage), then children are more likely to be offered educational opportunities that smoothly connect with their prior experience and skills.

(See "Supporting" on reverse)

Book contents

- **Chapter 1** describes several ways to think about transition with a focus on the model used in this book. Also, the key principles used in formulating a community transition plan are described.
- **Chapter 2** outlines the components of a transition plan.
- **Chapter 3** presents a menu of specific transition practices that communities can use to develop their own transition strategies.
- **Chapter 4** discusses the process by which transition programs can be implemented, evaluated and revised.
- **Chapter 5** highlights our researchers' experiences in implementing this approach in a variety of settings.
- **Chapter 6** focuses on what was learned in implementing this approach to transition in relation to the principles used to design the intervention.
- **The Appendix** has examples of forms that transition teams can use or adapt in creating their own customized transition plans.



Successful Kindergarten Transition is available from the publisher, Brookes Publishing in Baltimore, and also from retailers, such as Barnes & Noble and Amazon.com.

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Supporting *(continued from front)*

Also peer relationships that continue from preschool and neighborhood experiences into kindergarten (another social connection) can help ease children's transition to school and function as avenues for building social competencies.

This approach systematically addresses the multiple connections that affect children's transition to school.

School districts and communities can use this approach to generate, implement, and evaluate a transition plan that suits their needs. A variety of transition strategies are offered that can be tailored to the individual needs of families and schools.

Good transition planning should not result in a one-size-fits-all program applicable to all schools and all families. Every family's needs are different, and each community has unique characteristics and constraints. Rather, good transition planning offers a framework for enhancing children's transition into kindergarten that can include a range of practices that educators can use in their local settings.

This book describes this framework and researchers' experiences in collaborating with local communities and states in development and implementing interventions to smooth children's transitions into kindergarten.

Through the collaborative process, researchers learned first-hand about transition issues facing families and schools. This book shares what was learned from this collaboration, what school personnel and families say about successful strategies, and the challenges they face in the process.

This guide includes quotations from teachers, administrators, and parents who were involved in interventions that epitomize, capture and clarify the material.

Three keys to a successful transition

Collaborations and relations

It is clear that good transition planning and implementation involves collaboration and relationships, and transition is a two-way street, involving both giving and receiving. The quality of the collaborative process and the relationships among the participants is the central criterion by which to evaluate day-to-day efforts and the longer-term results of the transition plan.

Success in building collaborative relationships often involves giving up certain views or priorities about what might be the best practice or the key issue involved in a certain situation and adopting a new or different perspective offered by another collaborator. This is not easy; yet over time, it helps develop a sense of mutuality and trust that makes change easier.

Conceptual model as a guide

In this model, adjustment in the transition to school is a product of relationships among a wide array of contexts and people, including the child, his or her family, schools and teachers, peers, and the wider community.

Community-guided efforts

These practices focus on relationships among key contexts and people and emphasize the importance of continuity over time starting well before entry into kindergarten, and they embrace the principle that interactions be based on mutual respect and support for the child.

How to obtain book

Successful Kindergarten Transitions is available from the publisher, Brookes Publishing in Baltimore, as well as book retailers such as Barnes & Noble and Amazon.com. For more about NCEDL's transition research, go to <www.NCEDL.org>.

NCEDL is administratively housed at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In addition to UNC-CH, partners in NCEDL are the University of Virginia and the University of California at Los Angeles. This project is supported under the Education Research and Development Centers Program, PR/award number R307A960004, as administered by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education. Opinions do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education <ed.gov/offices/OERI/ECI/>, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, the U.S. Department of Education, or any other sponsoring organization. Permission is granted to reprint this Spotlight. We ask that you acknowledge NCEDL and the authors of the book on which this Spotlight is based.

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