

Time for School: Transitioning
From Child Development to
Kindergarten

Report prepared by
Los Angeles County Policy Roundtable for Child Care
Los Angeles County Office of Education

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FOREWORD

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CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|-------------|
| Introduction | 1 |
| A Brief Description of the Policy Roundtable for Child Care | 3 |
| A Brief Description of the Los Angeles County Office of Education | 3 |
| Charge from the New Directions Task Force | 4 |
| Responding to the Charge | 4 |
| Survey of School Districts and Child Development Providers | 5 |
| Trends Related to Assessments and Transition Planning | 6 |
| A. Trends Related to Assessing School Readiness | 7 |
| B. Trends Related to Transition Planning | 9 |
| Developing Recommendations to Improve Transition Planning | 12 |
| Recommendations to Improve Transition Planning in Los Angeles County | 14 |
| Recommendation 1: Outreach and Communication | 14 |
| Recommendation 2: Standards and Assessment | 15 |
| Recommendation 3: Staff Development | 16 |
| Recommendation 4: Family Engagement | 17 |
| Conclusion | 18 |
| Endnotes | 19 |
| References | 21 |
| Appendix A: Transition Planning in Los Angeles County: Five Community Profiles | 22 |
| Appendix B: Executive Summary: Kindergarten Transition Survey | 27 |
| Appendix C: School Districts Responding to Transition Survey | 29 |
| Appendix D: Resources in Effective Transition to Kindergarten | 31 |
| Appendix E: Glossary | 33 |
| Appendix F: Organizations Represented at the December 2, 2005 Meeting on Effective Transition From Child Development Programs to Kindergarten | 37 |

A companion PowerPoint presentation is available for download at www.lacountychildcare.org

“Careful transition planning that involves parents, child development providers, community representatives, kindergarten teachers, and other school personnel, can result in many more young children entering kindergarten with confidence and an eagerness to learn.”

Introduction

It is estimated that there are more than 900,000 children under the age of 5 living in Los Angeles County.¹ In other words, there are more children under the age of 5 living in Los Angeles County than there are residents - of all ages - living in San Francisco! It is further estimated that nearly half of these young children have employed parents and 200,000 of those employed parents rely on licensed child development services to maintain their livelihoods. Child development providers are essential partners to parents – helping nurture the healthy development of young children and helping navigate the challenges of parenthood. The relationships that parents and children form with their child development providers tend to be both intense and intimate.

When children “graduate” from child development programs (including both child development centers and family child care homes) and enter kindergarten, they and their parents frequently “experience a substantial shift in culture and expectations, including more formal academic demands, a more complex social environment, less family support and connection, and less time with teachers due to larger class size and more transitions during the school day.”²

The Policy Roundtable for Child Care and the Los Angeles County Office of Education believe that careful transition planning that involves parents, child development providers, community representatives, kindergarten teachers, and other school personnel can result in many more young children entering kindergarten with confidence and an eagerness to learn.

Why are these transitions so important?

- High-quality, early education is critical to prepare children to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.³
- A body of evidence is building that underscores the importance of creating transitional mechanisms and practices in order to sustain and build on children’s social, emotional, and academic competencies. Early intervention cannot be viewed as an “inoculation” that ensures continued school success.⁴
- The transition into kindergarten is an important time in children’s lives and it influences their later school careers.⁵

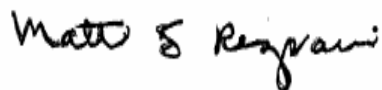
Our goal is that this document will facilitate articulation between child development programs and public school kindergarten, and contribute to successful transitions of young children into kindergarten.

- Transition plans are **required** by the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Title I of the Act requires School-wide Projects to plan children's transitions from early childhood programs to local elementary school programs. Further, the Act requires Targeted Assistance programs to assist preschool children in their transitions to elementary school.

This document discusses how schools and child development programs are addressing transition and assessment issues in Los Angeles County and other parts of the country; offers recommendations on policies and procedures for better coordination of child development services and kindergarten programs; and provides a number of community profiles where collaborative transition planning is underway. While this document addresses transition practices between child development programs and public schools, we believe that adoption of the proposed recommendations could also inform transition practices for other populations.

We hope that this document will be useful to families, teachers in child development and kindergarten programs, public school administrators and school board members, and community leaders. Our goal is that it will facilitate articulation between child development programs and public school kindergarten, and contribute to successful transitions of young children into kindergarten.

Our thanks go out to the family child care providers, child development centers, and school districts who took the time to complete and return surveys, to participate in discussions on these issues, and to share their valuable insights. Our efforts are more relevant as a result of their input.



Matt Rezvani, Chair
Policy Roundtable for Child Care



Darline P. Robles, Ph.D., Superintendent
Los Angeles County Office of Education

Policy Roundtable for Child Care

The Policy Roundtable for Child Care (Roundtable) is a 22-member body created by the Board of Supervisors in 2000. Members are appointed by the Board of Supervisors and represent various disciplines, including early care and education, research, business, government, K-12 and higher education, and a variety of community and professional organizations involved in child development services.

The mission of the Roundtable is to serve as the official County body on all matters relating to child care, working in collaboration with the Child Care Planning Committee and the Children's Planning Council to build and strengthen the child care system and infrastructure in the County by providing policy recommendations to the Board.

In keeping with its mission, the Roundtable regularly advises the Board of Supervisors on state and federal legislative and budget issues related to child care and development; advises County departments on policies and practices related to the child care needs of clients; researches, recommends and, when appropriate, implements policies and programs which increase access to high-quality, affordable child development services for residents of Los Angeles County.

The Office of Child Care, a unit of the Service Integration Branch, Chief Administrative Office, provides staff support to the Policy Roundtable for Child Care.

Los Angeles County Office of Education

The Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) is the largest regional educational agency in the United States. LACOE provides classroom instruction for specialized student populations, and programs and services to 80 K-12 school districts and 13 community college districts in Los Angeles County.

The County's 93 districts include over 1,900 school sites, serve more than 1.7 million students, and range in size from Hughes-Elizabeth Lakes Union School District with 421 students to Los Angeles Unified with 746,800 students. More than 90 different languages are spoken by students within the County and one in three students is considered limited-English speaking.

In addition, LACOE operates the largest Head Start-State Preschool program in the nation. Services are provided to children and families under contracts with 28 Delegate

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Agencies and child care organizations. The LACOE Head Start-State Preschool office provides administrative oversight program monitoring, technical assistance and staff training to each contractor.

LACOE's Chief Executive Officer is the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools, who is appointed by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors also appoints the seven members of the Los Angeles County Board of Education.

Charge From the New Directions Task Force

The New Directions Task Force (NDTF) is charged by the Board of Supervisors to promote the County's service integration agenda to design a seamless social service delivery model. NDTF includes the directors of key County departments, plus additional local entities, such as LACOE and the Roundtable. As a result of input from NDTF, the 2005 Update to the County of Los Angeles Strategic Plan included the following objective:

The Policy Roundtable for Child Care, in conjunction with the Los Angeles County Office of Education, will convene and facilitate a committee comprised of child care providers and elementary school districts for the purpose of developing policies and procedures for better coordination of early or preschool education services for children transitioning to kindergarten and more formal public schooling.

Responding to the Charge

In order to make meaningful recommendations on how to improve coordination between child development and kindergarten programs, the Roundtable and LACOE agreed that additional information was needed to better understand current practices of school districts, child development centers, and family child care home providers. In addition, various reports have noted that significant numbers of young children arrive at school without the cognitive, social and emotional skills needed to succeed in school.⁶ As a result, there was interest in learning how schools and child development programs determine if children are prepared for the important transition to kindergarten.

Rockabye

By Shel Silverstein

*Rockabye baby, in the treetop.
Don't you know a treetop
Is no safe place to rock?
And who put you up there,
And your cradle too?
Baby, I think someone down
here's
Got it in for you.*

Survey of School Districts and Child Development Providers

Specific survey instruments were developed for use with school districts, child development centers (includes full- and part-day programs, preschools) and licensed family child care homes. Surveys were distributed to superintendents in each of the 80 school districts in the early summer of 2005. LACOE conducted extensive follow-up with school districts, resulting in a response rate of 60 percent.

Based on information from the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division, 2,669 licensed child care centers serving preschool children (two through five years of age) were identified in Los Angeles County. From that listing, a stratified random sample of 546 child care centers was drawn. The sample was stratified according to the eight Service Planning Areas of Los Angeles County. Surveys were distributed during summer 2005 and 127 or 23 percent of the centers responded.

Presidents of the 19 family child care associations in Los Angeles County were asked to distribute surveys to their members during meetings held between June and August 2005. Nine associations agreed to distribute approximately 25 surveys to their members serving preschool age children. Only 26 surveys were returned, for a response rate of 12 percent.

Key findings of the surveys include⁷:

1. School districts reported engaging in outreach activities with district-operated early education programs (54 percent); Head Start and State Preschool (50 percent); and child care centers (44 percent). However, only 6 percent of responding school districts reported outreaching to family child care homes.
2. Only one-third of child care centers and 19 percent of family child care homes reported conducting any outreach activities with local kindergarten programs.
 - Maintaining a steady flow of communication between early education programs and kindergarten could lead to increased sharing of resources and bridging the gaps between school districts and pre-kindergarten programs.
3. Forty-four percent of districts reported they had defined school readiness indicators, but only 40 percent reported promoting those indicators with child development programs.

“Maintaining a steady flow of communication between early education programs and kindergarten could lead to increased sharing of resources and bridging the gaps between school districts and pre-kindergarten programs.”

“...the readiness of young children for kindergarten depends largely on the demands that individual kindergarten programs place on children and the supports provided, as well as the knowledge and skills of the children.”

- Communicating expectations and goals about school readiness can help teachers in child development programs and parents in preparing children for kindergarten. In addition, dialogue between child development and kindergarten teachers could facilitate programmatic continuity between child development and kindergarten programs.
4. Survey results indicate that about half of school districts conduct assessments prior to kindergarten entry.
- While the majority of school districts surveyed selected assessments that measure cognitive ability, a dialogue on the benefits of a more comprehensive assessment could lead to enhanced school readiness and improved overall child well-being and health.
 - Further study regarding whether assessments conducted by preschools and family child care homes are shared with kindergarten teachers would determine if confidentiality provisions or other barriers are obstructing the flow of information.
 - Learning more about current methods of transferring such information from the districts to early education programs and working together to integrate planning and curriculum goals should be examined.

The Executive Summary of the Survey is included as Appendix B and a listing of school districts that participated in the survey is included as Appendix C.

Trends Related to Assessments and Transition Planning

The Goals 2000: Educate America Act, signed into law in 2003, called for all children in America to “start school ready to learn.” While the Act focused new attention on the concept of “ready to learn,” it did not define those terms. Ten years later, there is consensus among parents, teachers and other stakeholders that a child’s future academic success is dependent on being ready to learn and participate in a successful kindergarten experience. However, determining the readiness of young children for kindergarten depends largely on the demands that individual kindergarten programs place on children and the supports provided, as well as the knowledge and skills of the children.⁸ As kindergarten programs become increasingly

“Early development is rapid, episodic, and highly influenced by experience.”

academic, parents and early childhood educators have become concerned that “readiness” overly emphasizes academic skills.

A. Trends Related to Assessing School Readiness

Thirty-nine states define children as eligible for kindergarten if they turn five on or before October 16. Sixty-nine percent of public schools and 47 percent of private schools report assessing the “readiness” of children prior to enrolling in kindergarten.⁹ Determining the readiness of young children for kindergarten is particularly challenging because “the younger the child, the more difficult it is to obtain valid assessments. Early development is rapid, episodic, and highly influenced by experience. Performance on an assessment is affected by children’s emotional states and the conditions of the assessment.”¹⁰

In their joint position paper on *Early Childhood Curriculum, Assessment and Program Evaluation*, the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education offer the following indicators of effective assessments:

1. Ethical principles guide assessment practices. *Young children are not denied opportunities or services and decisions are not made about children on the basis of a single assessment.*
2. Assessment instruments are used for their intended purpose.
3. Assessments are appropriate for ages and other characteristics of children being assessed. *Assessments are designed and validated for use with children whose ages, cultures, home languages, socioeconomic status, abilities and disabilities, and other characteristics are similar to those of the children with whom the assessment will be used.*
4. Assessment instruments are in compliance with professional criteria for quality. *Assessments are valid and reliable, and selected based on accepted professional standards of quality.*
5. What is assessed is developmentally and educationally significant. *Assessments include a comprehensive, developmentally, and educationally important set of goals and are aligned with early learning standards, program goals and specific emphasis in the curriculum.*

A person's a person,
no matter how small.

From
Horton Hears a Who
By Dr. Seuss

'Cause you never can tell
What goes on down below!
This pool might be bigger
Than you or I know!

From
McElligot's Pool
By Dr. Seuss

6. Assessment evidence is used to understand and improve learning. *Assessments support continuity across grades and settings.*
7. Assessment evidence is gathered from realistic settings and situations that reflect children's actual performance.
8. Assessments use multiple sources of evidence gathered over time.
9. Screening is always linked to follow-up. *Diagnosis or labeling is never the result of a brief screening or one-time assessment.*
10. Use of individually administered, norm-referenced tests is limited.
11. Staff and families are knowledgeable about assessment.¹¹

When assessments meet the rigorous standards just described, the results can inform:

- community stakeholders of the characteristics of young children entering school and the gaps in their early experiences,
- parents and teachers of an individual child's strengths and weaknesses, and guide efforts to support that child's learning, and
- schools about the skills and abilities of children as they enter the formal educational system.

Until there is a definition of "school readiness" that is broadly understood, endorsed, and applied consistently by school districts, serious concerns remain that "readiness" assessment data can be used to keep individual children out of kindergarten, mislabel, or inappropriately place children. The notion that a child is "ready for school" implies that some children are not ready, and that assessments can reliably sort out the two groups.

The alternative position is that all children who are age-eligible for kindergarten are in fact "ready" for kindergarten. Here, the responsibility for "readiness" shifts from children to schools. The likelihood of successful kindergarten experiences increases when the demands that schools place on children are aligned with the knowledge and skills of the children. The best use of carefully designed assessment instruments, and the data collected from appropriately administered assessments of young children, is to inform schools on how to

”effectively support the learning and development of young children with widely varying strengths and weaknesses.”¹²

B. Trends Related to Transition Planning

Various studies have shown that parents and teachers agree that there are discontinuities between preschool programs and kindergarten, and that these discontinuities pose real challenges for children, their parents, and teachers.¹³ There is less agreement, however, on how to promote effective transitions from child development to public school. The most common transition activities undertaken by schools involve contacting parents after school has started. These contacts tend to be generic and impersonal, and are not what parents think would be beneficial to them or their children.¹⁴

“Effective practices treat transition as a **process** – not an **event**. “

When public schools engage in outreach to child development programs, they are generally limited to programs operated by the school or school district. As such, opportunities to establish relationships with community-based part-day preschools, full-day child development programs and family child care homes, and the families using these various services go unrealized.

Effective practices treat transition as a process – not an event. The purpose of the transition process is to facilitate ongoing communication and relationship-building among schools, community stakeholders, families, preschools and child development settings. As a result of these relationships, schools become ready to serve children who are eligible for kindergarten; community stakeholders participate in and support the transition process; families become knowledgeable and involved in the schools; preschools and child development programs ensure continuity for young children moving into kindergarten.

In their publication, *Successful Kindergarten Transition*, Robert Pianta and Marcia Kraft-Sayre describe a multi-level approach to transition planning. This approach, which is designed to reflect the perceptions and beliefs of participants and to draw on the resources of individual communities, results in transition practices that are uniquely suited to each school community. Five guiding principles have been identified as forming the core elements of effective transition planning and practices:

1. Foster relationships as resources – parents and children benefit from positive relationships.
2. Promote continuity from preschool to kindergarten – when preschools and kindergartens work together collaboratively, they are more likely to develop programs that are consistent and build on one another.

Here Comes
By Shel Silverstein

*Here comes summer,
Here comes summer,
Chirping robin, budding rose.
Here comes summer,
Here comes summer,
Gentle showers, summer clothes.
Here comes summer,
Here comes summer -
Whoosh - shiver - there it goes.*

3. Focus on family strengths – families feel valued when their interactions with schools are based on their competencies.
4. Tailor practices to individual needs – successful transition planning and practices are menu-driven not proscriptive, and build on the strengths of families, classrooms, and communities.
5. Form collaborative relationships – where communication is valued, a common frame of reference is shared and conflicts are resolved.¹⁵

The following list describes a variety of promising transition practices. The categories of school-, child development-, or community-initiated reflect current practitioners and are not intended to imply that the activity can only be initiated by that particular entity.

*School-Initiated Practices*¹⁶

- *Contact with preschool families* – via telephone or face-to-face, to begin sharing information about the child prior to the start of school.
- *Contact with preschool children* – to begin to develop a relationship prior to school entry.
- *Kindergarten visits* – during the spring prior to a child's enrollment in kindergarten.
- *Home learning activities* – including summer booklists and activities prior to school entry.
- *Family meetings* – prior to the onset of kindergarten to discuss teacher expectations.
- *Partner with local PTAs* – to inform parents how they can be involved in their child's kindergarten.
- *Information dissemination* – on the transition to kindergarten, registration guidelines, information on kindergarten options, health, and nutrition.
- *Home visits* – before and after children enter kindergarten.
- *Establish Transition Planning Committee* – with participation from child development and kindergarten programs.

Think left and think right
And think low and think high.
Oh the THINKS you think up
If only you try!

Dr. Seuss

Child Development Program-Initiated Practices¹⁷

- *Convene open houses* – between child development and kindergarten teachers.
- *Conduct joint in-service workshops* – focusing on curriculum, assessment, articulation, and transitions between child development and kindergarten.
- *Coordinate exchange days* – between child development and kindergarten staff.
- *Coordinate the transfer of records* – between child development and kindergarten programs.

Community-Initiated Practices¹⁸

- Institute a uniform, citywide pre-K/kindergarten transition system to assess preschool experiences, and provide timely information to families and kindergarten teachers to respond to each child's needs as the child enters kindergarten.
- Establish and maintain a comprehensive community and parent-centered engagement strategy that involves them in planning, and implementation of pre-K/kindergarten transition programs.
- Develop agreement among center-based early childhood education providers and public schools to use a common set of measures to assess each preschool child's status as the child nears kindergarten.

Appendix A includes five profiles of organizations in Los Angeles County that are working on school transition activities.

Developing Recommendations for Transition Planning in Los Angeles

As results of the transition surveys became available, a committee was formed to review the data and develop recommendations to impact local planning for effective transitioning of young children from child development settings to kindergarten programs. Committee participants included representatives of LACOE, the Roundtable, and community-based agencies. Roundtable members included a local school board member, a community development organizer, and child development program administrators from a school district and university campus. In addition, a number of child care resource and referral agencies were represented in the discussion.

Drawing on the survey results, the literature on transition practices, and professional expertise of the members, the Committee developed a series of draft recommendations. The recommendations were purposefully structured to build on the existing service infrastructure and to address school districts and individual schools; child care resource and referral agencies and child development programs; and families. These recommendations were distributed in draft form to the 80 K-12 school districts within the County, and to child care centers and family child care associations that participated in the transition survey. These organizations and other community stakeholders were invited to provide written feedback on the recommendations and/or to attend a meeting featuring the results of the surveys and discussion of the draft recommendations on December 2, 2005.

Eighty persons participated in the December 2, 2005 meeting. Committee members were pleasantly surprised that comments were largely focused on how to implement, rather than modify, the recommendations. The following issues were raised:

1. Transition planning requires staff capacity at the child development program, school district and school site.
2. When working across disciplines and with the community, it is extremely important that players are attributing the same meaning to words.
3. Family engagement in transition planning and activities should be clearly defined to ensure meaningful participation of family members.

“Transition planning requires staff capacity at the child development program, school district and school site.”

Anchored
By Shel Silverstein

*Our anchor is too big for our ship.
So we're sitting here tryin' to think.
If we leave it behind we'll be lost.
If we haul it on board, we will sink.
If we sit & keep talkin' about it,
It will soon be too late for our trip.
It sure can be rough on a sailor
When the anchor's too big for the
ship.*

4. A commitment to transition planning needs to be made at various levels within school districts, including the:
- school boards,
 - superintendents,
 - school administrators,
 - principals, and
 - kindergarten teachers.
- Child development programs have experienced mixed results when discussing transition planning with schools. Responses across districts and within districts vary from supportive to uninterested.
 - Transition planning is extremely important and needs to be “sold” to school districts throughout the County.

In closing the discussion, Committee members heard that participants believed in the value of transition planning and were looking for tools to promote collaborative efforts with the families in their child development programs, in their schools, and communities.

“Conversations with stakeholders have reinforced that notion and identified a willingness on the part of many child development and school district personnel to begin a collaborative and inclusive planning process.”

Recommendations to Improve Transition Planning in Los Angeles County

Surveys conducted in Los Angeles County in mid-2005 revealed a need for increased communication among schools, families, and child development programs on how to effectively transition young children to kindergarten. Conversations with stakeholders have reinforced that notion and identified a willingness on the part of many child development and school district personnel to begin a collaborative and inclusive planning process. The following recommendations address how these populations can work together to facilitate both the successful transition of young children to, and participation in, kindergarten.

Recommendation 1: Outreach and Communication

- a. **School boards**, in conjunction with representatives of their local child development community, should establish policies that promote communication among local schools, child development programs, parents, and the community for the purpose of facilitating the transition of young children to kindergarten.
 - **Individual schools** should engage in regular communication with local child development programs for the purposes of:
 - i. promoting programmatic consistency between kindergarten and child development programs,
 - ii. fostering developmentally appropriate expectations and practices, and
 - iii. facilitating communication with families prior to enrollment of children in school.
- b. **Child care resource and referral agencies** should serve as liaisons to school districts, individual schools, and the larger child development community. In this capacity, these agencies would identify the full range of child development resources (including licensed family child care) within specific service areas and facilitate communication between child development programs and individual schools.

Put Something In
By Shel Silverstein

Draw a crazy picture,
Write a nutty poem,
Sing a mumble-gumble song,
Whistle through your comb.
Do a loony-goony dance
'Cross the kitchen floor,
Put something silly in the world
That ain't been there before.

- c. **Child development programs** should communicate with local schools and families for the purpose of facilitating the transition of young children into formal education. Child development programs should work with the teaching staff of local schools to facilitate developmentally appropriate expectations of young children.
- Child development programs should be aware of the expectations that local schools hold for kindergarteners and should work with families and children, in developmentally appropriate ways, to foster the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive skills that children need to succeed in formal education.
 - Child development programs should actively support the development of social competencies of young children and inform families of the long-term importance of social competencies.
- d. **Families** should be engaged in promoting developmentally appropriate school readiness skills and behaviors with their children, and in determining the readiness of the local school to serve their child.

Recommendation 2: Standards and Assessment

- a. **School districts** should adopt district-wide policies regarding how children transition to school and if the transition process is to include an assessment.
- **Individual schools** that conduct pre-kindergarten assessments should do so consistently, with the capacity to assess children in their home languages. Assessments should address all of the following domains: health and physical development; emotional well-being and social competence; approaches to learning; communication skills and cognition; and general knowledge. Assessments should also incorporate input from parents and child development programs, and the resulting information should be shared with families.
- b. **Child development programs** should be aware of the assessment process used by local schools and be able to accurately discuss these processes with families enrolled in their child development programs. In addition, child development programs should provide families, and if authorized by the family, the school, with

So you see!
There's no end
To the things you might know,
Depending on how far
beyond Zebra you go!

From
On Beyond Zebra!
By Dr. Seuss

developmental profiles or observation narratives on the child to facilitate the school's readiness to serve the child.

- Developmental profiles or observation narratives should be conducted in accordance with best practices of the field and address all five domain areas. The results should be shared with families, providing them with accurate and practical information on their child's development in the five domains.
- c. **Families** should be aware of their children's development in the various domains, and use this information to determine their child's readiness for kindergarten.

Recommendation 3: Staff Development

- a. **School boards** should implement policies that support multidisciplinary training and exchanges among child development programs and kindergarten teaching staff.
- **Individual schools** should convene and/or participate in multidisciplinary training with child development programs on at least an annual basis, provide release time for kindergarten teachers to observe in local child development programs, and expect kindergarten teachers to have a working knowledge of the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten guidelines developed by the California Department of Education.
- b. **Child care resource and referral agencies** should serve as a contact point, facilitating multidisciplinary training for kindergarten and child development program teachers and families of young children.
- Child care resource and referral agencies should serve as local clearinghouses on training and educational options in their respective service areas.
- c. **Child development programs** should convene and/or participate in multidisciplinary training with kindergarten teachers on at least an annual basis; provide release time for child development program teachers to observe in local kindergarten classrooms; and child development teachers should have a working knowledge of the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten

guidelines developed by the California Department of Education.

Recommendation 4: Family Engagement

- a. **School district** transition policies should include outreach activities to families well before their children are enrolled in kindergarten.
 - **Individual schools** should outreach to families using innovative techniques that are culturally and linguistically appropriate, and foster a sense of connection to the school.
- b. **Child development programs** should provide opportunities for families to develop and refine the skills needed to be effective champions for their children.
- c. **Families** should be their child's educational advocate.
 - Families should partner with their child development program, well before kindergarten entry, to promote the development of social, emotional, and cognitive competencies of their children.
 - Prior to school entry, families should have the opportunity to meet with the kindergarten teacher, transition coach, or other elementary school personnel, be informed of the school's transition and assessment practices, as well as behavioral and other expectations.

I know, up on top
You are seeking great sights,
But down at the bottom
We, too, should have rights.

From
Yertle the Turtle
By Dr. Seuss

Unless someone like you
cares a whole awful lot,
nothing is going to get better.
It's not.

From *The Lorax*
By Dr. Seuss

Conclusion

Effective assessment and transition practices hold great potential for positively impacting the lives of young children and their families. Much work remains to be done if families, child development programs, and schools in Los Angeles County are going to realize this potential. In undertaking this assignment, the Roundtable and the County Office of Education found clear interest among various stakeholders, but no champion dedicated to addressing either the immediate goal of increasing communication among families, child development providers, school districts and kindergarten teachers, or the long-term goals of aligning developmentally appropriate curricula between child development and kindergarten programs, and promoting consistent and meaningful engagement of families in their children's education.

Therefore, we were pleased to learn that the Los Angeles County region of the California Preschool Instructional Networks (CPIN) shares our commitment to supporting programs in implementing effective transitions to kindergarten. A relatively new statewide entity, CPIN is funded by the California Department of Education, and administered in partnership with the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association. CPIN includes 11 regions and Los Angeles County is Region 11. Each regional network provides professional development and technical assistance to preschool teachers to ensure preschool children are ready for school.

Our local CPIN network, which is housed in the Division for School Improvement at the Los Angeles County Office of Education, has agreed to support efforts designed to facilitate smooth transitions from child development to kindergarten and will promote the recommendations outlined in this document with their network members and key stakeholders.

The Office of Child Care, located in the Service Integration Branch of the Chief Administrative Office, will continue to work with a range of community partners to promote the alignment of developmentally appropriate curricula in child development and kindergarten programs.

To advance the short-term goal of increased communication among stakeholders, the Superintendent and the Roundtable will each continue to promote appropriate transition planning and practices. As a first step in this effort, the Superintendent and the Roundtable will disseminate hard copies of this report and post it on their respective websites, with a companion PowerPoint presentation.

ENDNOTES

¹ County of Los Angeles Child Care Planning Committee Child Care Needs Assessment Report, April 2005, www.lacountychildcare.org .

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¹⁷ *Easing the Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten: A Guide for Early Childhood Education Teachers and Administrators*, Head Start Information and Publications Center. http://www.headstartinfo.org/recruitment/trans_hs.htm

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| <u>Appendix</u> | <u>Page</u> |
|--|-------------|
| A. Transition Planning in Los Angeles County: Five Community Profiles | 22 |
| B. Executive Summary: Kindergarten Transition Survey | 27 |
| C. School Districts Responding to Transition Survey | 29 |
| D. Resources on Effective Transitions to Kindergarten | 31 |
| E. Glossary | 33 |
| F. Organizations Represented at the December 2, 2005 Meeting on Effective Transition From Child Development Programs to Kindergarten | 37 |

TRANSITION PLANNING IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY: FIVE COMMUNITY PROFILES

Profile 1: Child Care Resource Center: Serving the San Fernando, Santa Clarita, and Antelope Valleys

The Child Care Resource Center (CCRC) has been assisting parents, child care providers, employers, and local communities in all matters related to child care for over 30 years. The mission of the agency is to promote optimal child development and family well-being through access to quality child care, family support, economic development, and community education. Currently, the CCRC service area, which includes the San Fernando, Santa Clarita, and Antelope Valleys, encompasses 135 ZIP Codes. The CCRC School Readiness Grant, through which their school transition efforts are funded by a First 5 LA grant, is limited to three ZIP Codes – 91402, 91403 and 91303. These ZIP Codes correspond to underperforming schools as indicated by third-grade test scores. As an organization, CCRC is mindful of both their funding obligation to First 5 LA and their history of trying to reach children and families throughout their service area.

CCRC prides itself on working collaboratively with a variety of community partners. In their school transition project, the agency works closely with Volunteers of America and other Head Start grantee groups to share costs and pool staff to cover various events. Head Start has a variety of mandatory transition activities for families in its programs. Rather than replicate these activities, CCRC focuses its readiness work on “big picture-whole child” topics. As an example, the Grossman Burn Center recently did a workshop on “Burn Safety” for the parents in their programs. Increasing parent attendance and participation at workshops and meetings is as much an agenda item as the actual workshop topic. Workshops and other events are held on school campuses prior to the child’s enrollment. Speakers are brought in to address parent concerns and to discuss the parental role as education advocates for their children. The goal is that by the time the child is registered for school, the parents will have attended two or three events on their child’s elementary school campus.

Child Care Resource Center (CCRC)

Contact: Kathy Cone

Phone: (818) 256-1000
ext. 2057

E-mail: kccone@ccrcla.org

Profile 2: A Community Coalition in the City of Long Beach

The Long Beach Early Care and Education Committee (ECE), an ad hoc committee of the City of Long Beach Board of Health and Human Services, worked collaboratively with the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) to create a collaborative approach to school readiness and transition. The organizational representation on the ECE Committee was very broad, including; the YMCA of Greater Long Beach, Children's Home Society of California, Cal State Long Beach, St. Mary's Medical Center, Long Beach Memorial Medical Center, West Ed, Long Beach City College, Head Start, Greater Long Beach/Lakewood Family Child Care Association, Long Beach Day Nursery, Comprehensive Child Development, Young Horizons, and the Community Improvement League.

The ECE Committee met with representatives of LBUSD to develop an approach to school transitions that would outreach to children and families:

- in public and private child development programs,
- in license-exempt care; and
- to the large Khmer- and Spanish-speaking populations of Long Beach.

The ECE Committee viewed promoting an understanding of school expectations, school access and registration as particularly important with these communities.

The ECE Committee worked hard to ensure that social/emotional readiness factors were included in the LBUSD's School Readiness indicators. Committee members were successful in convincing the School Board to give strong consideration to this aspect of development, even though there is no specific "test" for this under No Child Left Behind. In addition, the ECE Committee cosponsored, along with Stand for Children/Long Beach Chapter, the following activities:

- a symposium for kindergarten teachers, child care center and family child care providers,
- the publication of a book for parents describing the skills children need to have prior to entering kindergarten, and
- six site-specific events, in addition to district-wide "open houses."

The Knight Foundation and several smaller donors are supporting the school readiness and school transitions work of the ECE Committee.

Long Beach Early Care and Education Committee

Contact: Patrice Wong
Executive Director
Long Beach Day Nursery

Phone: (562) 591-0509

E-mail: pwong@lbdn.org

Profile 3: Pasadena Civic Interest Hits Demographic Reality

Peggy Sisson, the Child Care Coordinator of the City of Pasadena, described her community's recent efforts to launch transition planning between child care programs and the local school district.

The Child Care Center Directors Alliance, an allied group of the Child Care Information Service, became interested in activities to promote successful transitions from child development or preschool programs to the K-12 system. The members with public school affiliations wanted to present public schools as a viable option for parents who may have selected a private pre-kindergarten early education experience. Directors from private programs wanted to be sure the families they worked with had the information needed to make developmentally sound choices for their children.

A School Transition Subcommittee was formed out of the Child Care Center Director's Alliance and met several times in the fall of 2005. Their charge was to draft a School Transition Plan to bring back to the full group. The Director of Early Childhood Programs for Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD), with the support of the Pasadena Education Foundation, organized a luncheon to discuss developing a district plan on School Transition. However, before a date could be finalized for this event, the local papers reported that a budget deficit was forcing PUSD to close four elementary schools. PUSD involvement in transition planning dissolved. Energy was sapped from the School Transition Subcommittee like a balloon suddenly deflated.

Recent reports indicate that the hurdle created by school closures has been overcome and there is renewed interest in efforts to facilitate the transition process from child development to kindergarten. In her capacity as Child Care Coordinator for the City, Peggy is working with the school district and the Child Care Center Directors Alliance to organize effective transition practices.

City of Pasadena

Contact: Peggy Sisson
Child Care
Coordinator

Phone: (626) 744-6939

E-mail:
psisson@cityofpasadena.net

Profile 4: Pomona Unified School Districts: Old Pros at Collaboration in the Public System

The Pomona Unified School District (PUSD) has promoted collaboration between district-sponsored early childhood and elementary programs for 11 years and is very successful in securing funding to support these collaborative programs. The district is organized in clusters that combine elementary and early childhood programs. Currently, three early childhood centers are located on elementary school sites. This structure, plus relatively low staff turnover, has contributed to a somewhat unique level of respect and understanding between the child development and education divisions. Hugh Menton, Director of Early Childhood programs for PUSD, puts it this way: "I've been with Pomona 36 years. I know these teachers and I've trained a lot of them."

PUSD hosts an annual breakfast in September for child development and kindergarten teachers, along with key administrative staff. Child development and kindergarten teachers share a table at breakfast and develop transition plans for the children at their site. Sample activities include the kindergarten teacher coming into the preschool class to read a story or the preschool children visiting the kindergarten classroom. All activities developed at the breakfast are placed on a master calendar, and copies are circulated among the full teaching staff. This helps to insure that school transitions are an ongoing part of the school year. There are several activities that involve parents, such as visits to the upper school classrooms, workshops focused on the transition needs of all children, promoting social and emotional development, the reading program, "Read With Me/Lea Conmigo," and transitioning children with Individual Educational Plans into kindergarten. By involving both the child development and kindergarten programs, children and families are better prepared for the educational challenges of kindergarten.

Pomona Unified School District (PUSD)

Contact: Maria Alvarez
Child Development
Resource Teacher

Phone: (909) 398-4740
ext. 5636

E-mail:
maria.alvarez@pomona.k12.ca.us

Profile 5: A Slice of the Westside: Westside Children’s Center

Since its founding in 1987, Westside Children’s Center (WCC) has been providing foster care and family reunification services to children from birth to the age of eleven who experienced child abuse and/or neglect. Over time, the agency’s services have expanded to include adoption, child development, and family support services. WCC received a School Readiness grant from the First 5 LA Commission and call their program “School Readiness on the Westside.” This program serves children and families in two ZIP Codes; Culver City (90230) and Venice (90291). Community partners on this project are Mariana Early Education Center, St. Joseph Early Learning Center, and Westminster Early Education Center. Elementary school partners include Broadway Elementary School, Broad Oak Drive Elementary School, and Stoner Drive Elementary School, all of which are part of Los Angeles Unified School District.

“School Readiness on the Westside” is in year two of a four-year grant designed to address: the academic preparation of participating children; the ability of receiving schools to effectively serve children; and parents to prepare them to support their children educationally.

The project seeks to facilitate coordination between pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs, and to ensure that all aspects of school readiness – social, emotional, and academic – are addressed. WCC reports that elementary educators would like to see a greater academic emphasis. However, the child development teachers are holding firm on the importance of social and emotional readiness.

“Second Step” is a violence-prevention program that has been incorporated as a transition activity in “School Readiness on the Westside.” Early education and elementary teachers work together to develop a transition plan and come to consensus on its goals and implementation. This written plan is a key goal of this project. Funding makes it possible for programs to hire substitutes and release teachers to attend the joint planning and information meetings.

Some kindergarten and School Readiness Language Development Program (SRLDP) teachers would like to increase the communication and connections between the children and the “big school.” These teachers would like to organize field trips so that children can spend the day at the elementary school, become familiar with the teacher, classroom, cafeteria, and the bathrooms. These activities remain controversial as it is difficult to guarantee that children would actually be assigned in the fall to the kindergarten teacher they had visited previously. All stakeholders want to promote continuity between programs and are concerned that last-minute changes regarding classroom assignments could be upsetting to children and their families.

Westside Children’s Center

Contact: Karla Medellin
School Readiness
Coordinator

Phone: (310) 846-4100

Email:
karlam@westsidechildrens.org

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION SURVEY County of Los Angeles Policy Roundtable for Child Care

August 2005

This document was prepared by the County of Los Angeles Office of Child Care, within the Service Integration Branch of the Chief Administrative Office. Data collection, analyses, and report writing conducted by Lesley Blacher and Vani Kumar. For more information call (213) 974-2440.

The County of Los Angeles Policy Roundtable for Child Care (Roundtable) in conjunction with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) distributed a survey to school districts, child care centers, and family child care associations on current practices related to transitioning young children from early education/child development programs to kindergarten. Survey results will serve as the basis for launching a meaningful dialogue between child development and kindergarten educators, which is the first step toward developing innovative policies to improve the overall transition of preschool-age children to kindergarten.

School districts, child care centers, and family child care associations received mailed surveys during the summer months of 2005 to obtain information on their transition and assessment practices. Forty-eight (60%) of the 80 school districts, 127 (23%) child care centers, and 26 (12%) family child care homes returned completed surveys. Key findings are highlighted below:

School Districts

- Over half engage in outreach activities with district-operated early education programs. Half work with Head Start/State Preschool programs, followed by child care centers (44%).
- One-third of school districts have a written plan for transitioning students into kindergarten. In addition, less than half of the districts have defined school readiness indicators for children entering kindergarten. Similarly, 40% promote an understanding of these indicators with local child care and early education programs.
- Seventeen percent of school districts have a district-wide policy regarding assessment prior to kindergarten and half assess children prior to their entry into kindergarten.
- Over half (58%) of respondents conduct child assessments to determine specific social skills. Half of the districts screen for disabilities or special needs. An equal number of school districts (46%) assess for specific self-help skills and “other” purposes.
- Parents are generally informed of the assessment at an in-person conference with the teacher, others are informed by mail or phone. Seventy-nine percent of school districts share results with parents in their home language.

Centers

- One-third of centers engage in outreach activities with local kindergarten programs. Far more programs (85%) relay information about kindergarten programs to parents.
- The overwhelming majority (91%) of preschool programs report being familiar with the academic and social expectations of the kindergarten programs in their communities.
- A large majority of centers (83%) report assessing the readiness of children prior to their transition to kindergarten.
- The majority of centers (79%) maintain developmental profiles, and this information is routinely shared with parents (72%). However, it is shared less frequently (24%) with kindergarten programs.

Family Child Care

- While over half coordinate communication with kindergarten programs and 85% report familiarity with academic and social expectations of kindergarten programs, over two-thirds report no participation in outreach with kindergarten programs.
- Over half of family child care providers report parents ask about their child's readiness for school.
- Half report conducting assessments on children prior to kindergarten entry, and 62% maintain developmental profiles. Half share information on children with parents/guardians, while only 12% report sharing information about children with kindergarten programs.

Conclusion

Recent findings on kindergarten transition by the National Center for Early Development and Learning indicate a need for greater communication among kindergarten teachers, families, preschools, and family child care. Knowing the importance of strengthening the bond between families and schools, the Roundtable and LACOE surveyed both school districts and child care providers to learn more about current kindergarten transition practices and child assessment goals in Los Angeles County.

Three main findings are highlighted and each relates to the quality of the interactions among the early education program, family, and elementary school. Strategies to strengthen these relationships follow each survey finding.

Information from child care providers shows that while school districts are engaging various early education programs, only one-third of child care centers and 19% of family child care homes report conducting any outreach activities with local kindergarten programs.

- Maintaining a steady flow of communication between early education programs and kindergarten could lead to increased sharing of resources and bridging the gaps between school districts and pre-kindergarten programs. In addition to aligning outcomes and better understanding how child outcomes/goals link to early education programs and kindergarten curriculum, a collaborative discussion on measuring school readiness should follow.

Although many school districts have a written plan for entering kindergarten students, two-thirds of school districts do not, and over half have not defined school readiness indicators.

- Aligning curriculum goals with school readiness assessments can strengthen instruction planning efforts by school districts. Moreover, communicating expectations and goals about school readiness can help direct pre-kindergarten teachers and parents in preparing children to be ready for kindergarten. Additional questions on how assessment results are used to plan and implement change for the individual student as well as the student population would allow further evaluation and discussion of current practices.

Survey results indicate that about half of school districts conduct assessments prior to kindergarten entry.

- Further study regarding whether assessments conducted by preschools and family child care homes are shared with kindergarten teachers would determine if confidentiality provisions or other barriers are obstructing the flow of information.
- Learning more about current methods of transferring such information from the districts to early education programs and working together to integrate planning and curriculum goals should be examined.
- While the majority of school districts surveyed select assessments that measure cognitive ability, a dialogue on the benefits of a more comprehensive assessment should lead to enhanced school readiness and improved overall child well-being and health.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS RESPONDING TO TRANSITION SURVEY

| SCHOOL DISTRICT | PARTICIPATED IN SURVEY | NUMBER OF KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS | PERCENT OF STUDENTS IN COUNTY |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. ABC USD | ✓ | 1,424 | 1.17 |
| 2. Acton-Agua Dulce USD | ✓ | 105 | 0.09 |
| 3. Alhambra USD | ✓ | 960 | 0.79 |
| 4. Antelope Valley UHSD | | 3 | 0.00 |
| 5. Arcadia USD | ✓ | 493 | 0.41 |
| 6. Azusa USD | ✓ | 913 | 0.75 |
| 7. Baldwin Park USD | ✓ | 1,382 | 1.14 |
| 8. Bassett USD | ✓ | 516 | 0.42 |
| 9. Bellflower USD | | 1,011 | 0.83 |
| 10. Beverly Hills USD | | 190 | 0.16 |
| 11. Bonita USD | | 665 | 0.55 |
| 12. Burbank USD | ✓ | 855 | 0.70 |
| 13. Castaic Union SD | ✓ | 373 | 0.31 |
| 14. Centinela Valley UHSD | | 0 | 0.00 |
| 15. Charter Oak USD | | 455 | 0.37 |
| 16. Claremont USD | | 423 | 0.35 |
| 17. Compton USD | | 2,473 | 2.03 |
| 18. Covina-Valley USD | ✓ | 927 | 0.76 |
| 19. Culver City USD | | 442 | 0.36 |
| 20. Downey USD | ✓ | 1,407 | 1.16 |
| 21. Duarte USD | ✓ | 344 | 0.28 |
| 22. East Whittier City SD | ✓ | 614 | 0.50 |
| 23. Eastside Union SD | ✓ | 285 | 0.23 |
| 24. El Monte City SD | ✓ | 1,207 | 0.99 |
| 25. El Monte Union HSD | ✓ | 0 | 0.00 |
| 26. El Rancho USD | ✓ | 663 | 0.55 |
| 27. El Segundo USD | ✓ | 228 | 0.19 |
| 28. Garvey SD | | 624 | 0.51 |
| 29. Glendale USD | ✓ | 1,654 | 1.36 |
| 30. Glendora USD | ✓ | 499 | 0.41 |
| 31. Gorman Joint SD | | 108 | 0.09 |
| 32. Hacienda La Puente USD | ✓ | 1,460 | 1.20 |
| 33. Hawthorne SD | ✓ | 1,029 | 0.85 |
| 34. Hermosa Beach City SD | ✓ | 131 | 0.11 |
| 35. Hughes- Elizabeth Lakes Union SD | ✓ | 30 | 0.02 |
| 36. Inglewood USD | | 1,273 | 1.05 |
| 37. Keppel Union SD | ✓ | 289 | 0.24 |
| 38. La Canada USD | | 226 | 0.19 |
| 39. Lancaster SD | ✓ | 1,555 | 1.28 |
| 40. Las Virgenes USD | | 631 | 0.52 |
| 41. Lawndale SD | ✓ | 602 | 0.49 |
| 42. Lennox SD | | 689 | 0.57 |
| 43. Little Lake SD | ✓ | 474 | 0.39 |
| 44. Long Beach USD | ✓ | 6,842 | 5.63 |

| SCHOOL DISTRICT | PARTICIPATED IN SURVEY | NUMBER OF KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS | PERCENT OF STUDENTS IN COUNTY |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 45. Los Angeles USD | ✓ | 55,099 | 45.30 |
| 46. Los Nietos SD | | 268 | 0.22 |
| 47. Lowell Joint SD | | 316 | 0.26 |
| 48. Lynwood USD | ✓ | 1,474 | 1.21 |
| 49. Manhattan Beach USD | | 536 | 0.44 |
| 50. Monrovia USD | ✓ | 401 | 0.33 |
| 51. Montebello USD | ✓ | 2,589 | 2.13 |
| 52. Mountain View SD | ✓ | 1,088 | 0.89 |
| 53. Newhall SD | ✓ | 928 | 0.76 |
| 54. Norwalk-La Mirada USD | | 1,626 | 1.34 |
| 55. Palmdale SD | ✓ | 2,193 | 1.80 |
| 56. Palos Verdes Peninsula USD | ✓ | 783 | 0.64 |
| 57. Paramount USD | | 1,232 | 1.01 |
| 58. Pasadena USD | | 1,739 | 1.43 |
| 59. Pomona USD | | 2,630 | 2.16 |
| 60. Redondo Beach USD | | 561 | 0.46 |
| 61. Rosemead SD | | 294 | 0.24 |
| 62. Rowland USD | ✓ | 1,356 | 1.11 |
| 63. San Gabriel USD | ✓ | 390 | 0.32 |
| 64. San Marino USD | | 182 | 0.15 |
| 65. Santa Monica- Malibu USD | | 833 | 0.68 |
| 66. Saugus Union SD | ✓ | 1,350 | 1.11 |
| 67. South Pasadena USD | ✓ | 243 | 0.20 |
| 68. South Whittier SD | ✓ | 447 | 0.37 |
| 69. Sulphur Springs Union SD | | 702 | 0.58 |
| 70. Temple City USD | | 300 | 0.25 |
| 71. Torrance USD | ✓ | 1,657 | 1.36 |
| 72. Valle Lindo SD | | 142 | 0.12 |
| 73. Walnut Valley USD | | 589 | 0.48 |
| 74. West Covina USD | ✓ | 732 | 0.60 |
| 75. Westside Union SD | ✓ | 645 | 0.53 |
| 76. Whittier City SD | ✓ | 712 | 0.59 |
| 77. Whittier Union HSD | | 0 | 0.00 |
| 78. William S. Hart Union HSD | | 0 | 0.00 |
| 79. Wilsona SD | ✓ | 193 | 0.16 |
| 80. Wiseburn SD | ✓ | 252 | 0.21 |
| LA County Total | | 120,956* | 100.00% |

*CDE reports 121,623 kindergarten students enrolled that differs from the figures presented. To calculate the percentage of kindergarten students per district, a total of 121,623 kindergarten students were used.

RESOURCES ON EFFECTIVE TRANSITIONS TO KINDERGARTEN

Websites

1. California Preschool Instructional Networks (CPIN)
<http://www.sonoma.edu/cihs/cpin/>

Los Angeles County Region 11 CPIN - contact Judy Sanchez (562) 922-8945, Los Angeles County Office of Education, Division for School Improvement.
2. UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities
www.healthychild.ucla.edu
 - Transition to School Toolkit
3. Child Care Aware
<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/dailyparent/>
 - The Daily Parent
 “Getting Your Child Ready for Kindergarten”
4. Collaborating Partners
<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/transition/movingon.htm>

An online community for parents, administrators and staff of early education programs throughout the state of Wisconsin. This site offers a variety of resources on transitioning children with and without special needs to kindergarten.
5. Enhancing the Transition to Kindergarten
http://discovery.wcgmf.org/resources/sps_resource_409.pdf
 - 33-page article by Robert Pianta and Marcia Kraft-Sayre describing their framework and key principles for conducting community transition planning.
6. Getting School Ready
<http://www.earlylearning.org/gsr/gettingschoolready.html>
 - Foundation for Early Learning website includes “Getting School Ready” brochure in multiple languages and the King’s County Getting School Ready Handbook.
7. Hartford Blueprint for Young Children: Delivering the Promise of Success
www.hartfordinfo.org/issues/wsd/education/projectreportBlueprint.pdf
 - City plan that sets as a goal to “assure each child experiences a smooth transition from preschool to elementary school...”
8. Harvard Family Research Project
www.hfrp.org
 - The Transition to Kindergarten: A Review of Current Research and Promising Practices to Involve Families.
9. Head Start Information and Publication Center

www.headstartinfo.org/recruitment/trans_hs.htm

- Easing the Transition From Preschool to Kindergarten: A Guide for Early Childhood Teachers and Administrators.

10. National Association for the Education of Young Children

www.naeyc.org

- Various publications and position statements, including:
 - On Early Learning Standards
 - On Curriculum, Assessment and Program Evaluation
 - Still Unacceptable Trends in Kindergarten Entry and Placement
 - Top 10 Signs of a Good Kindergarten Classroom

11. National Center for Early Development and Learning

www.fpg.unc.edu/ncedl/

- Policy briefs, fact sheets, and case studies on a range of issues, including transitions to kindergarten.

12. National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools

www.sedl.org/connections/resources/rb/rb6-readiness.pdf

- Easing the Transition from PreK to Kindergarten

13. National Child Care Information Center

www.nccic.org/poptopics/transition.html

- A sampling of initiatives sponsored by national organizations, state governments, and public schools on the topic of transitioning to elementary school.

14. National Education Association

www.nea.org/parents/kindtrans.html

- Brochure describing kindergarten classrooms and how to prepare for the transition to kindergarten.

15. Paving the Way

<http://thechp.syr.edu/PavingtheWay.pdf>

Document offers timelines and guides to facilitate the transition of children with special needs to kindergarten.

16. State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network

www.finebynine.org

- Seven Things Policy Makers Need to Know About School Readiness

Publications

Successful Kindergarten Transition by Robert Pianta and Marcia Kraft-Sayre, published 2003 by Paul H. Brookes. Includes sample forms for transition teams.

GLOSSARY

Age eligibility for kindergarten: In California, children who turn five on or before December 2 are eligible to begin kindergarten in the September of that year.

California Preschool Instructional Networks (CPIN): Supported by the California Department of Education and the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association to support early childhood programs by providing networking opportunities and professional development for administrators and teachers.

California Preschool Transfer Act of 2001: Assembly Bill 1539, Chapter 629, Statutes of 2001, requires state-funded preschools to provide to the parent/guardian(s) developmental and any other information deemed beneficial to the child and public school teacher (see *EC* sections 56435, 56449, and 58930). If parents/guardians authorize it, preschools may provide this information directly to the schools.

Child care: Is broadly defined as non-parental care of children for periods of less than 24 hours in a non-medical setting. Care may be provided in the home of the child, the home of the caregiver, or in a child care facility.

Child development program: Is frequently used interchangeably with “child care,” “early childhood education,” and/or “preschool.” For the purposes of this report, child development programs include licensed child care centers and licensed family child care homes.

Child development programs can serve children as young as six weeks through early elementary school. Services to elementary school children include before- and after-school care, and full-day services during school vacations. Child development programs serving the children of working parents tend to operate full-day (6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.), throughout the year. By contrast, some preschool programs are limited to children between 3 and 5 years of age, providing part-day services and operating on an academic year calendar. However, many preschools offer “extended day” or “wrap-around” services from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Some people see the term “child development” as emphasizing the importance of and support for the healthy development of young children, and associate the term “child care” with custodial care.

Child care center: A non-residential facility that is equipped and staffed to provide non-medical care to children in a group setting for periods of less than 24 hours. Child care centers are regulated by the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division.

Developmentally appropriate: Refers to educational practices that take into account:¹

- The various and interrelated domains of children’s development, including physical, social, emotional, and cognitive.
- The sequence in which children tend to develop and learn.
- The varying rates at which development proceeds among children.
- That there are optimal periods for certain types of development and learning.
- That children are active learners, drawing on direct physical and social experiences, as well as culturally transmitted knowledge.

¹ Bredekamp, S., and Copple, C. *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs*, 1997, National Association for the Education of Young Children, pp 10-15.

- That development and learning result from the interaction of biological maturation and the environment.
- That play is an important vehicle for children’s social, emotional, and cognitive development.
- That development advances when children have opportunities to practice newly acquired skills and to experience challenges just beyond the level of their present mastery.
- That children demonstrate different modes of knowing and learning, and different ways of representing what they know.
- That children develop and learn best in the context of a community where they are safe and valued, their physical needs are met and they feel psychologically secure.

Early childhood education: See child development program.

Family child care: Defined in Title 22, Division 12, Chapter 3 of the California Code of Regulations as regularly provided care and protection and supervision of children, in the caregiver’s own home, for periods of less than 24 hours per day, while the parents or authorized representatives are away. These regulations also set a maximum number of children that can be cared for in a family child care home.

Kindergarten: Is a voluntary program in California, designed to serve children who turn five on or before December 2 of the school year. Families choosing to enroll age-eligible children in kindergarten must be provided access to a kindergarten program. While demographics and class-size reduction restrictions may prevent parents/guardians from enrolling their children in the neighborhood school, the school district must provide the name(s) of available schools. Parents/guardians may discuss school choice options with district officials. To help make placement decisions, parents/guardians may compare schools online at either <http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/> or <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/>. Both sites offer information on schools’ demographics and characteristics.

Licensed child care: In California, most programs providing regular, non-medical care and supervision of children in a group setting are required to be licensed by the Community Care Licensing Division of the California Department of Social Services. Programs that are exempt from this requirement are described in “license-exempt child care.”

License-exempt child care: Certain types of care are able to operate legally without a license. The following exemptions apply to family child care:

- A family child care home providing care for the children of only one family in addition to the operator’s own children.
- Any cooperative arrangement between parents for the care of their children where no payment is involved and meets specific conditions.
- Any arrangement for the receiving and care of children by a relative.
- Any child care program that operates only one day per week for no more than four hours in that one day.

The following exemptions apply to child care centers:

- Public and private schools that operate a program before and/or after school for school-age children provided that the program is operated by and run by qualified teachers employed by the school or school district.
- Programs offered by certain health and community care facilities.
- Cooperative arrangements involving no more than 12 children, no payment is exchanged and the person caring for the children is a parent, guardian, or where relative of at least one child in care.
- Certain recreation programs.

- Any program operating only one day per week for no more than four hours on that day.
- Certain programs that offer temporary child care services to parents when parents are on the same premises.

National Education Goals Panel: An independent executive branch agency of the federal government charged with monitoring national and state progress toward the National Education Goals. Under the legislation, the Panel operated from 1990 through 1999 and was charged with a variety of responsibilities to support system-wide reform, including:

- Reporting on national and state progress toward the Goals over a 10-year period;
- Working to establish a system of high academic standards and assessments;
- Identifying actions for federal, state, and local governments to take; and
- Building a nationwide, bipartisan consensus to achieve the Goals.

No Child Left Behind: The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was signed into law in 2002 and expanded the federal role in education. The law set new standards for students, teachers, affecting every public school in America. Title I, Part A, Section 1114 (b) (1) (G) of the Act requires Schoolwide Projects to plan children's transitions from early childhood programs to local elementary school programs. Section 1115 (c) (1) (D) of the Act requires Targeted Assistance programs to assist preschool children in their transitions to elementary school.

Beginning in 2005, students in grades three through eight must be tested every year in math and English to ensure they are meeting state standards. Students in grades ten through twelve will be tested at least once. By 2007, states will begin testing students in science as well. Each year, schools must increase the number of students who achieve state standards. At the end of 12 years, all students should be able to pass the tests. Schools that fail to achieve this progress will be targeted for improvements that could include increased funding or staff and curriculum changes.

Parent Engagement: Goes beyond involving parents in bake sales and potlucks, and focuses on parents' potential for:

- helping their children succeed in school and in life,
- becoming knowledgeable and demanding parents/advocates, and
- championing the educational success of all children.

Preschool: See child development program

School readiness: Tends to be defined differently by parents, child development teachers, kindergarten teachers, and other community stakeholders. The following definition, from the Education Commission of the States, offers a comprehensive approach to the concept of school readiness:

Children's readiness for school is multifaceted and is generally agreed to have five primary components:

- Physical well-being and motor development.
- Social and emotional development.
- Approaches to learning.
- Language development.
- Cognition and general knowledge.

A second key component of school readiness is “ready schools.” Such schools work toward continuity and alignment between early care and education programs and elementary schools, and are committed to the success of all children, regardless of the skills and abilities they enter school with. In addition, ready schools are learning organizations that alter programs and practices if they do not benefit children.

Children and schools exist within a context of family and community. To that end, it is critical that communities offer services and supports that encourage every parent to be a child’s first teacher and that allow all children access to high-quality early care and education. Such supports include access to nutrition, health care, mental health care and parenting classes.

School Readiness Assessment: Generally refers to the assessment of young children around school entry. In general, assessments of young children are best used to: 1) inform teachers of the strengths and weaknesses of all children, so that teaching practices can be adapted; 2) identify children with special needs; and 3) evaluate programs. “High-stakes accountability” assessments are not recommended for children younger than third grade.

Transition: A passing from one condition, form, stage, activity, place, etc., to another; the period of such passing. (Webster’s New World Dictionary)

Transition to kindergarten: An important developmental, relationship-based process involving children, their families, schools, and communities.

**ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED AT THE DECEMBER 2, 2005 MEETING
ON EFFECTIVE TRANSITIONS FROM CHILD DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMS TO KINDERGARTEN**

This meeting was co-hosted by the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and the Los Angeles County Office of Education. Representatives from both organizations participated in the meeting.

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| ABC Unified School District | Mexican American Opportunity Foundation |
| Bonita Unified School District | Montebello Unified School District |
| Burbank Unified School District | Mothers Club of Pasadena |
| Center for Community & Family Services | New Harvest Christian Preschool |
| Child Care Resource Center | Los Angeles County Office of Child Care Options |
| Child Development Consortium of LA | Palmdale Head Start |
| City of Pasadena | Paramount Unified School District |
| Claremont Unified School District | Pasadena City College |
| Connections for Children | Pasadena Unified School District |
| El Proyecto del Barrio | Pathways |
| El Rancho Unified School District | Pomona Unified School District |
| Glendora Unified School District | Rowland Unified School District |
| Hacienda-La Puente Unified School District | Santa Monica Community College |
| Lennox School District | St. Stephens Preschool |
| Los Angeles Children's Planning Council | South Bay Center for Counseling |
| Los Angeles Universal Preschool | Volunteers of America/Head Start |
| Los Nietos School District | Westside Children's Center |
| | YWCA of Greater Los Angeles |
