

## Transition Practices and Child and Family Outcomes: National Early Childhood Center

Council on Exceptional Children- Division for Early Childhood Minneapolis, MN October 29, 2008

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## RECOMMENDED TRANSITION PRACTICES and STRATEGIES

The following 21 transition practices and sample strategies were generated through a series of research studies designed to identify practices and strategies that support positive transition experiences for young children and their families and validated by the field. **Practices** are defined as key elements of transition planning that are *broad and global* in nature and can implemented in ways that reflect a shared understanding of the intent of the practice and are regularly and consistently implemented across staff and programs. For each practice, specific strategies have been identified as examples that reflect the practice in action. Strategies are defined as specific program or classroom activities used to implement a practice. Strategies presented include those that have been identified through empirical studies conducted by NECTC. Each *practice* is linked to one of two major components of the NECTC Conceptual Framework for Transition: Interagency Service System (i.e., Interagency Structure, Continuity and Alignment and Communication and Relationships) or Child and Family Preparation and Adjustment. While many practices support both major components of the conceptual framework, each practice is listed according to the component it primarily supports. Specific subcomponents of the framework addressed by the practice are denoted after the practice (in parentheses). Most strategies have been identified through the NECTC research as appropriate for the general population of children and families served through early intervention and preschool programs across multiple transition points. However, as part of the NECTC research, specific strategies were identified by families and professionals as particularly salient and helpful for 1) children with significant disabilities and/or from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and 2) specific transition points, either early intervention to preschool or preschool to school. Those strategies have been denoted with a check  $(\checkmark)$  in the appropriate column.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> A full report of the national validation process & findings is available at www.ihdi.uky.edu/nectc

## **Practices which support an Interagency Service System**

	Strategies are particularly salient for:		
Potential Strategies that reflect this practice:	Children from Diverse Backgrounds & w/ Significant Disabilities	Transition from Early Intervention to Preschool	Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten
1. A primary contact person for transition is identified within each program	m or agency (Interager	ncy Structure)	
A contact person is available for follow-up in case parents have questions after meetings.			
Provide a school liaison to work with health care providers.			
Geographically assign a transition coordinator to work with sending provider/teacher,	✓		
receiving program staff, & parent at transition planning meetings.			
A parent liaison visits with another parent for potential sites based on program suggestions.	✓		
Provide transition facilitators at early intervention, preschool, & kindergarten programs.	✓		
Family service involvement workers assist families with transition.			
Identify a staff member as a "contact person" to visit families prior to the initial IEP to			
establish rapport.			
Have an advocate assigned to assist families in identifying & navigating the system.	<b>✓</b>		
2. Community- & program-wide transition activities & timelines are identified	<b>ified</b> . (Continuity & Aligi	nment)	
Informational flyers about programs are disseminated widely in community settings (e.g.,			
grocery stores, WIC offices, & in a variety of formats (e.g., posters, pamphlets, local papers).			
Send letters to parents in their primary language regarding what to do to enroll their child in			
the program or school district & invite them to visit the receiving school; send checklist of			
needed steps/items to enroll in school.			
Attend a placement meeting with kindergarten teachers to discuss placement of children in			✓
kindergarten.			<u>,                                      </u>
An open house for parents & children before school starts.			
An open house for parents & children after school starts.			
Participation in registration for program, school or district.			
Transition plans are developed that include individual activities for each child & family.			
Provide Child Find & Health Fairs to support outreach to underserved populations.		✓	
Conduct quarterly meetings for families, service coordinators, & public school staff where	✓		
schools provide welcome packets to families.	•		
Staff swap classes & teach for a time to understand sending & receiving environments.	<b>√</b>		
Provide parent orientation at program & school sites.			
Develop a Transition Manual across all programs to be given to parents with training.			
Conduct large group program & classroom visitations for staff, children & families. Visits			
between professionals so they can see what other programs are doing. Family & providers	✓		
visit public school & other programs after eligibility determination.			
Hold a district wide "round-up."			
Local Interagency Council hosts transition forums for parents with school system, early	-		

	Strategies a	re particularly sali	ent for:
Potential Strategies that reflect this practice:	Children from Diverse Backgrounds & w/ Significant Disabilities	Transition from Early Intervention to Preschool	Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten
intervention.			
Have preschool staff come to kindergarten early in September to help with transition.			✓
Provide community child/parent informational flyers where agencies & schools can share			
information on the services they provide for designated age groups.			
3. Referral processes & timelines are clearly specified. (Interagency Structure; C	Continuity & Alignment)		
Develop a universal intake form with personal information (e.g., allergies, behaviors, family			
situations, support systems) & a system of routing it to the correct agency.			
Conduct joint intake with regional early intervention center, school system, mental health, etc.			
Hospital staff conduct follow-up checks with families to verify child's referral to early		<b>√</b>	
intervention.		v	
Develop & follow memorandum of understanding (MOU) between early intervention &			
preschool programs to make referrals at age 2 years 6 months & transition by 2 years 9 months	✓		
to district for preschool.			
Provide outreach to other agencies & professionals so they are comfortable & knowledgeable			
about available programs when referring families.			
4. Enrollment processes & timelines are clearly specified. (Interagency Structur	re; Continuity & Alignmer	ut)	
Participate in registration for school or district.	✓	✓	
Develop guidelines to assist parents & agencies to better understand timelines & enrollment		<b>√</b>	
requirements.		v	
Develop a connected data base system to ensure & support enrollment & services.		✓	
5. Program eligibility processes & timelines are clearly delineated. (Interage)	ncy Structure; Continuity	& Alignment)	
Accept & utilize outside assessments for the child & family from qualified professionals.	✓	✓	
Streamline & clarify the eligibility process between programs (e.g. Part C & Part B).		✓	
Coordinate assessments between programs (e.g. early intervention & the school system).		✓	
Delineate & clarify responsibility for evaluation of children who turning 3 within school year.		✓	
Provide personal support in understanding the child/family beyond disability in the evaluation.	✓		
Develop graphic tools to help parents & agencies better understand the process & timelines.	✓		
6. Agencies develop formal mechanisms to minimize disruptions in service	s before, during, & a	fter the transiti	on of the child
& family. (Interagency Structure; Continuity & Alignment)	5 201010, cross <b>9</b> , <b>c</b> c c		
Provide funding for overlap services during the 6 months prior to child's third birthday for			
dialogue, co-treatment, & seamless transition.		✓	
Establish a Transition Committee (special & regular education/school readiness/community)			
that meets regularly to discuss needs & address issues.			
Provide service delivery for early intervention within the school system.		<b>√</b>	
Develop relationships with referring agencies (breakfasts, joint trainings, info to Higher Ed).	<b>√</b>	,	
Change system cut off dates for services to age 3/preschool services (like school system).	,	<b>√</b>	
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Potential Strategies that reflect this practice:  Develop interagency service agreements that are mutually adhered to.  Outside to provide services as supports to children & families in early intervention programs when child's birthday is after cutoff date (i.e., provide summer services until school resumes).  Develop MOUS with school districts that address services/inclusion.  Develop MOUS with school districts that address services/inclusion.  Develop MOUS with school districts that address services/inclusion.  Ordinate IFSP through age 3 & align Part C & Part B at both the federal & state levels.  Provide consistency & continuity of staff, teams & materials across transitions.  Offer service coordination in all programs (early intervention, preschool, & kindergarten).  Outduct regular meetings among school, early childhood, & preschool staff in the community to share ideas, discuss challenges, & dientify strategies.  7. Staff & family members are actively involved in the design of transition processes & systems. (Interagency Structure: Communication & Relationships)  Provide mechanism & support for clear, ongoing communication with individual families & program administrators.  Create a transition team or Transition Committee (special education/regular education/school readiness/community) that meets monthly to discuss needs & address issues.  Provide a wechshop for kindergarten & preschool staff to discuss strategies & modifications for transition activities.  Convene a work group of parents from different backgrounds (language, educational levels) to help develop parent from different backgrounds (language, educational levels) to help develop parent friendly forms.  Schedule a place & time for transition meetings at the convenience of parents.  **Families serves a part of the community transition team.**  Hold quarrefly meetings with parents & professionals, sending & receiving agencies, & community providers to plan for the transition & answer any questions.  **Families are a so c-chairs in events & meeti		Strategies are particularly s		
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	Strategies a	re particularly salie	ent for:
Potential Strategies that reflect this practice:	Children from Diverse Backgrounds & w/ Significant Disabilities	Transition from Early Intervention to Preschool	Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten
kindergarten) to discuss continuity between programs.			
Attend general meetings to discuss transition practices across programs.			
Provide administrators with early childhood training, information on developmentally			
appropriate practices, & opportunities to spend time in early childhood classrooms.			
Continue IFSP through after age 3 & align Part C & Part B at both the federal & state levels.		✓	
Offer a symposium explaining different philosophies/approaches used in various programs.			
Staff will visit sending programs to get a "feel" for programs that children have attended.			
Establish multi-level team workshops (e.g., birth-3/pre-K, K staff) on appropriate content	✓		
(DAP, standards, etc.).	•		
10. Transition plans are developed that include individual activities for each	n child & family. (Cor	itinuity & Alignmen	t)
Arrange for children & families to visit programs.			
Family visits to different programs and schools before a final decision on programs is made.			
Visit child's home before program/school starts.			
Visit child's home after program/school starts.			
Providers/Teachers arrange for children to visit their future teachers and classrooms.			✓
Talk with parents to help prepare them for the child's transition.			
Provide opportunities for a child's family to talk with preschool & kindergarten staff about the			
special needs of their child &/or details like meals, transportation, & special services available.			
Use a family services notebook or handbook with a section for medical information,			
IFSPs/IEPs, agencies, & staff names, to organize papers & introduce families to service			
system.			
Family & providers visit public school & programs after eligibility determination			
Invite children in early intervention to a play group/time/visitation for observation.		✓	
Develop more individualized education plans & following through with IEPs.	✓		
Offer visits to the new school prior to transition for personal introduction of child & family to			
new environment (e.g., 1:1 visit, small group visit, NOT open house).			
Implement gradual transition into preschool & kindergarten with specific goals & objectives.	✓		
Visits by family to programs prior to transition as part of transition plan.		✓	
Conduct comprehensive planning to discuss the child's & family's specialized needs.	✓		
Personalize the transition with a personal information sheet from teacher & parent to the new	✓		
staff.	v		
With parent permission, share a transition referral packet containing the following types of			
information:			
Pictures, social stories, primary reinforcers, strategies to implement/avoid, & videotape for	<b>√</b>		
the specific student. With parent permission, provide a note with a picture & biography of			
the child (e.g., likes, dislikes, etc.) so everyone knows he/she is an individual. Include			
family information for introductions at planning (e.g., IFSP/IEP) meeting.			

	Strategies are particularly salient for:		
Potential Strategies that reflect this practice:	Children from Diverse Backgrounds & w/ Significant Disabilities	Transition from Early Intervention to Preschool	Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten
Teaching strategies for child are forwarded to receiving teachers.			
Write a parent report & place a picture of the child on the front of the report or include a			
note with a picture & biography of the child & family information to new teacher for			
introductions.			
Information on child & family before transition (e.g., number for whom to contact; number			
of previous teachers/service provider agencies).			
Provide copies of reports for parents to share with school or agency.			
11. Children have opportunities to develop & practice skills they need to Alignment)	be successful in the i	next environme	<b>nt</b> (Continuity &
Use high quality assessments to identify children's skill levels.			
Choose & implement curricula that are developmentally appropriate.			
Implement strategies that will help the child learn skills they will need in developmentally			
appropriate ways.			
Modify the curriculum before the child enters a preschool or kindergarten class.			
Conduct staff visits to potential placements to get a "feel" for where they are sending children.			
12. Methods are in place to support staff-to-staff communication both with Continuity & Alignment)	in & across programs	S (Communication of	& Relationships;
Participate in joint workshops/trainings across early childhood programs in the community.			
Provide training to program staff on effective transition practices.			
Ask staff which communication method they prefer (email, voicemail, daily/weekly buddy	,		
news, monthly newsletter).	<b>√</b>		
Provide meeting time for teacher & paraprofessional for transition planning.	<b>√</b>		
Provide stipends to staff to collaborate & plan prior to beginning of school year.			
Preschool & kindergarten staff swap classes & teach for a time to understand sending & receiving environments.	✓		
Developing partnerships & offer cross-training between regular & special education			
administrators & staff.			
Provide release time for teachers to support transition planning.	✓		
Increase & enhance collaboration, early contacts, & relationships across all agencies (e.g.,			
meetings, communication, pooling resources) for the good of the child & to increase			
awareness.			
13. Staff roles & responsibilities for transition activities are clearly delinea	ated (Communication & R	elationships: Conti	nuity & Alignment)
Offer staff education regarding transition regulations.	The state of the s	, Comm	
Provide training to program staff on effective transition practices.			
Learn the family dynamics across diverse populations (native American, Hispanic, Anglo).	<b>√</b>		
Support staff (e.g., release time, staff development) in gaining necessary information/			
knowledge regarding their role, the process, curriculum, range of options, & resources.			

	Strategies a	Strategies are particularly salient for:		
Potential Strategies that reflect this practice:	Children from Diverse Backgrounds & w/ Significant Disabilities	Transition from Early Intervention to Preschool	Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten	
Develop policy & accountability processes related to who participates in IEP & transition.	✓			
Provide training for program clerk/secretary on the child find/referral process & services & community programs.		✓		
Provide joint training sessions for parents, staff, & agencies on transition, including cultural awareness training.	✓			
Establish individual program policies, procedures, & staff training to ensure smooth transitions.				
Provide release time for teachers to support transition planning.	✓			
Develop procedures to ensure sending & receiving program staff participate in transition planning meetings.				
Hire a permanent substitute for preschool & kindergarten classrooms so teachers can participate in in-service & planning.				
Conduct multi-level team workshops (e.g., birth-3/pre-K, K staff) on appropriate content (DAP, standards, etc.).	✓			
Require continuing education in the area of special needs & transition.	✓			

## **Practices which support Child & Family Preparation & Adjustment**

14. Staff know key information about a broad array of agencies & services a	available within the	community.	
Increase accessibility of resource information by developing a directory (community agency			
resource booklet) of public & private programs & agencies available in the community.			
Provide on-line access to transition information.			
Preschool & kindergarten staff swap classes & teach for a time to understand sending &	<b>√</b>		
receiving environments.	,		
Provide outreach services to early childhood & medical professionals to help them feel		<b>√</b>	
comfortable with & knowledgeable about available programs when referring families.		,	
Visit and observe other programs.	✓		
Offer a symposium explaining different philosophies/approaches used in various programs. At			
the state level, gathering information regarding various services & models for transition &	✓		
share statewide.			
Participate in joint workshops/trainings with early intervention, public school, Head Start &			
other early childhood programs in the community.			
Conduct regular meetings among school, early childhood, & preschool staff in community.	✓		
15. Individual child & family transition meetings are conducted.			
Attend a transition meeting to plan transition activities for individual children.			
Attend transition conferences for individual children.			

	Strategies are particularly salient for:		
Potential Strategies that reflect this practice:	Children from Diverse Backgrounds & w/ Significant Disabilities	Transition from Early Intervention to Preschool	Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten
Service providers help prepare this child's family ahead of time for the transition process.			
Staff meet with child & family before school starts.			
Geographically assign a transition coordinator to work with sending early intervention program/provider, receiving program/school, & parent at transition planning meetings.			
Develop strong transition meetings (e.g., transition conferences).	✓		
Support parents in preparing for meetings by helping them identify appropriate & relevant questions.	✓		
Provide parents with information & answers to key questions regarding Part B services at transition meetings (i.e., 90 day transition conference).		✓	
Provide a personalized transition to the programs. Multi-level team workshops (e.g., birth-3/pre-K, K staff) on appropriate content (DAP, standards, etc.).	<b>√</b>		
Multi-level team workshops (e.g., birth-3/pre-K, K staff) on appropriate content (DAP, standards, etc.).	✓		
Invite school district representatives to attend transition meetings with families, therapists, & service coordinators.	✓	<b>✓</b>	
Hold a meeting with the child & family before program/school starts.	✓		
Conduct a visit to the child's home before &/or after program/school starts.	✓		
Provide substitutes for providers, & preschool & kindergarten teachers so they can participate in transition meetings.			
16. Families are aware of the importance of transition planning & have info transition planning with their child.	ormation they need to	actively partic	cipate in
Simplify communication & information regarding transitions so they are clear & to the point (e.g., address different literacy levels & languages).	✓		
Provide a flyer or informational brochure to families before school starts & after school starts.			
Send parents information on preschool and kindergarten programs.			
Provide family with information they need to help make decisions and about how their child's services will change after transition.			
Provide families with specific information about the new setting, such as the name of a			
contact person, skills this child would be expected to have, & assessments needed.			
Inform & educate families on all possible placement options, & the procedures & expectations of the programs.			
Support families in being part of the decision-making team about where/when their child will go for services after transition.			
Including the family as an active team member in assessment of the child.			
Prior to transition, invite parents to orientation specifically for them.	✓		
Provide parents with an information sheet with principal name, school name/address, & school phone number.			

	Strategies are particularly salient for:		
Potential Strategies that reflect this practice:	Children from Diverse Backgrounds & w/ Significant Disabilities	Transition from Early Intervention to Preschool	Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten
Hold quarterly meetings/socials for parents, sending & receiving agencies, & community providers to plan for the transition & answer any questions.	✓		
Provide opportunities to meet with the receiving school staff prior to transition & include all staff in the classroom.			
Arrange for children & families to visit preschool or kindergarten programs.	✓		
Ensure families understand information and take time to explain information when it is not understood by the families.	✓		
17. Families' needs related to transition are assessed & addressed.			
Offer staff training on dealing with the grieving process to support parents during transition.			
Use native speakers.	✓		
Have early intervention provider identify with parent how to be involved in the transition process; particularly, strategies that work for the individual family.		<b>✓</b>	
Provide more personal support in understanding the child/family beyond the disability in the evaluation.	✓		
Talk with the child's parents before school starts.			
Continue family support across programs & services.	✓		
Assign case manager to each child to help families go through the process.			
Provide written materials in the parents' home language & at the appropriate literacy level.	✓		
Have staff & bi-lingual aides visit families at home to talk with families prior to the transition	✓		
meeting.			
18. Families have information about & are linked with resources & services needs.	s to help them meet tl	neir specific chi	ild & family
Facilitate contacts between parents of children in a program or class.			
Offer opportunities for a child's family to talk with other parents about the experiences they had during the transition.			
Provide contact information to families of other families of children who will be in child's			
class.			
Introduce family to other families of children who will be in child's class.	,		
Offer parent support groups & case workers to help manage schedules.	<b>√</b>		
Empower the parent to exercise their rights.	✓		
Offer a lending library or community-based pool of equipment. Ask families to donate their used equipment.	<b>√</b>		
Develop a parent resource/support network with agencies/programs & parents who have transitioned (of some commonality) who are trained to support other parents.	<b>✓</b>		
Offer parent advocacy groups with an advocate in all schools to assist families in identifying & navigating the system.			

	Strategies a	re particularly sali	ent for:
Potential Strategies that reflect this practice:	Children from Diverse Backgrounds & w/ Significant Disabilities	Transition from Early Intervention to Preschool	Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten
Encourage direct contact with Family Resource Centers (e.g., to attend IEP meetings with			
families & to hold transition workshops for families).			
Have families talk to the IEP team to know who their contacts are.			
Build relationships with families, participate/visit, & join a home/school club.			
Work with families to identify their needs & provide them with a list of resources to access.	✓		
19. Families actively participate in gathering information about their child'	's growth & developr	nent.	
Arrange for children & families to visit preschool or kindergarten programs.	✓		
Include family as an active team member in assessment of child.			
Ask child's family about their child's interest & abilities during the assessment process.			
Ensure that assessment results accurately reflect child's behavior & ability during daily			
routines.			
Determine if assessment results were useful in planning transition outcomes.			
Provide family with plenty of time to review assessment results & ask questions before			
decisions about child are made.			
Give families easy access to their child's records.			
Send information home to parents about preschool or kindergarten programs.			
Talk with the child's parents before school starts.			
Honor parents' knowledge of the child.			
Provide education to parents & make expectations clear.			
Staff communicate consistently between home & school.			
Provide parents with developmental checklists to help them understand what child growth &			
development means.			
Help parents' keep a developmental journal of their child's growth & development.			
Support parents in working along with the school in documenting what their child can do.	✓		
20. Transition team members share appropriate information about each ch	ild making a transiti	on.	
Informal contacts with sending providers/ teachers about children are supported.	8		
Regular meetings between sending & receiving teachers to discuss individual children's			
progress throughout the year.			
Early intervention, preschool & kindergarten staff communicated to the child's family about			
the transition.			
Written records of the child's past experiences or status were made available.			
Written records of the child's past experiences or status were reviewed.			
Child's records promptly followed him/her to the new program.			
With parent permission, receiving & sending staff share information/observations prior to the transition.	✓		
With parent permission, share a transition referral packet containing the following types of information (see item above for examples)	<b>√</b>		
miormation (see item above for examples)	1	1	

	Strategies a	re particularly sali	ent for:
Potential Strategies that reflect this practice:	Children from Diverse Backgrounds & w/ Significant Disabilities	Transition from Early Intervention to Preschool	Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten
Develop a goal matrix to show how goals are addressed throughout the day.	✓		
Provide accessible/convenient information to all teachers (e.g., lead, PE, music, etc.).	✓		
Ensure all receiving agency staff have access to specific information on child's special needs.	✓		
21. Staff follow-up on children after the transition to support their adjustm	ent (also Continuity & Al	ignment)	
Providers share information with child's family about how he/she is adjusting to the new			
setting.			
Providers talk with the child's parents after school starts.			
Child's new teacher asks child's family about how they think their child is adjusting to the			
new setting.			
Staff from both settings work with this child's family to solve any problems or difficulties			
encountered with the new setting.			
Sending staff go to receiving class for initial transition.			
Evaluation & follow-up of transition occurs (i.e. contacting family as to how transition went &	<u> </u>		
what we can do better).	•		
Schedule a talk or conference with the child's parents after school starts.			
Send a letter to the child's parents after school starts.			<u> </u>
Invite parents & children to an open house after school starts.			<u> </u>
Hold a meeting with child & family after school starts.			
Transition team that meet regularly to plan, discuss, & evaluate transitions.			