Transition to Formal Schooling

Best Practice Rubric (Sending Schools)

Introduction: The transition from Early Care to formal schooling can be one of the most significant events a young child experiences. The transition to formal school setting consists of more than a one day registration and a bus ride. It takes careful advance preparation and planning in order to be a successful milestone for the child. It is a dynamic process that is ongoing. Excitement, shock, fear, happiness, anxiety, surprise and a sense of being overwhelmed are a few of the emotions children and families might feel. All children will experience this change differently. Thoughtful and deliberate attention to this process by those who are directly involved can make this a positive experience for a young child and his/her family.

Implementation of effective transition strategies has been linked to the sustainment of developmental and academic gains attained in quality early education settings (Howes, C. et. Al., 2007), increased and sustained family involvement (Barnett, M. A., 2009, Ferguson, C. & Wood, L., 2005), and positive developmental and academic outcomes (Ahtola, A. et al., in press, LoCasale-Crouch, et al., 2008).

Purpose: The *Transition to Formal School Best Practice Rubric* provides early learning personnel the means to evaluate current transition practice, as well as a means to plan for continual quality improvement. The tool is divided into five areas: Management of transition practices, school in community, child-to-school, family-to-school and school-to-school.

Management of transition practices
This section emphasizes the necessary systematic and structural components for the implementation of best transition practices.

School in Community
Early learning communities can support young children's successful transition to formal schooling by viewing the transition as a collaborative process that happens over time. "Transition has to be understood in terms of the settings that contribute to child development (e.g., family, classroom, community) and the connections and relationships among these settings at any given time and across time." (Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 2003). This section emphasizes practices which connect programs and services which touch the lives of children and family to provide a seamless system of early education. Linkages between school and these multiple partners provide access to resources and information that can enhance the outcomes of the transition process.

PA pennsylvania
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
AND EARLY LEARNING

Child-to-School

Pianta & Kraft-Sayre (2003) have noted that a successful transition to formal schooling is a key component of school readiness. This transition to formal schooling sets the tone and directions of a child's school career. Bailey, in Pianta (1999) notes that, "Formal schooling is the place in which children make important conclusions about school as a place where they want to be and about themselves as learners. If no other objectives are accomplished it is essential that the transition to school occur in such a way that children and families have a positive view of the school and that children have a feeling of perceived competence as learners" (p. xv).

The transition to formal schooling can be exciting because the child is moving to something new that the adults in his or her life regard as important. He or she may be apprehensive about leaving familiar people and routines and facing the unknown. A child entering a new program must learn to cope with an unfamiliar place, changes in expectations, a new role, peer group, and authority figure, and many new experiences. If not handled well, these new experiences and relationships may be stressful for the child. This section emphasizes practices to help make transition an exciting event with a high level of comfort. These practices help foster positive attitudes toward school and learning, foster positive teacher-child relationships and help children develop, and maintain positive relationship with peers.

Family-to-School

As families begin to prepare for the transition into formal schooling they feel a range of emotions. There may be pride that their child is entering school and will be facing new challenges. There also may be concern about how their child will cope with the change. They may be apprehensive about their child "growing up" and may be worried about having less control over the experiences of their child's day. They hope that the transition to formal schooling will be a smooth and positive one.

Studies show that successful programs actively involve parents in their programs. The family's influence is fundamental in the early years. Studies show that when families are actively engaged in the transition process their involvement tends to continue throughout their child's school career (Barnett, M. A., 2009, Ferguson, C. & Wood, L., 2005). Family involvement has been linked to positive student outcomes. This section emphasizes practices to involve and engage families in the transition process, fostering positive attitudes toward school and learning and helping families act as partners in their children's learning.

School-to-School

Continuity across early childhood services in which all programs for children birth-age 8 in the community work together can ensure consistent and effective services throughout these important years. Continuity includes alignment of expectations, environmental design, as well as instructional practice. When sending and receiving teachers use similar strategies, children adjust more easily to school. It is essential that both early learning teachers and elementary school staff work together to overcome the barriers to smooth transitions for children and families.

Companion resources can be found at www.pakeys.org or at www.pdesas.org

PA pennsylvania
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
AND EARLY LEARNING

Management of Transition Practices

This section emphasizes the necessary systematic and structural components for the implementation of best transition practices.

	Best Practice Emerging	Best Practice Progressing	Best Practice Achieved
Audience	Transition practices are in place and are implemented for limited groups of children (i.e. those children with IEPs, children identified "at risk").	In addition to transition practices offered to limited groups of children, some transition practices are offered to ALL children.	All available transition practices are offered to ALL children.
Personnel	Issues related to transition are handled by personnel as an add-on to other responsibilities.	Issues related to transition are handled by one person as a dedicated portion of their job responsibilities.	There is a designated Transition Coordinator and where applicable, one team leader at each partner location.
	Teachers volunteer time to engage in transition practices that extend beyond their job descriptions and typical work hours.	Incentives are provided for teachers to engage in transition practices that extend beyond their job descriptions and typical work hours.	Transition practices that extend beyond typical work hours are incorporated into and are compensated as part of teachers' job descriptions.
Transition Plan	A written Transition Plan is present.	A written Transition Plan is current, is implemented, and is reviewed and updated periodically.	A written Transition Plan is current, is implemented and is reviewed and updated on an annual basis. Plan effectiveness is evaluated annually.
Data Collection	Early Learning community collects and uses outcomes data to identify children who may be "at risk" for a difficult transition.	Early Learning community collects and uses outcomes data to identify children who may be "at risk" for a difficult transition and has a system in place to share this information with formal school partners.	Early Learning community collects and uses outcomes data to identify children who may be "at risk" for a difficult transition and offers intentional supports for these children BEFORE the transition occurs.
School registration	Information on relevant school registrations are collected from partnering schools and are shared with families.	Early care representative participate in <u>some</u> kindergarten and formal school registrations throughout receiving district.	Early care representative participate in <u>most</u> kindergarten and formal school registrations throughout receiving districts.

PA pennsylvania
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
AND EARLY LEARNING

Resource Use	Early care representative uses the PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning Transition Toolkit to plan and implement transition practices.	Early care representative uses the PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning Transition Toolkit to plan and implement transition practices and shares information from the toolkit with early learning personnel including pre-kindergarten teachers.	Early care representative uses the PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning Transition Toolkit to plan and implement transition practices and shares information from the toolkit with early learning personnel including pre-kindergarten teachers. Additional resources and information are sought by networking with other early learning and school district personnel.

Companion resources can be found at www.pakeys.org or at www.pdesas.org

PA pennsylvania
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
AND EARLY LEARNING

School in Community

Early learning communities can support young children's successful transition to formal schooling by viewing the transition as a collaborative process that happens over time. "Transition has to be understood in terms of the settings that contribute to child development (e.g., family, classroom, community) and the connections and relationships among these settings at any given time and across time." (Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 2003). This section emphasizes practices which connect programs and services which touch the lives of children and family to provide a seamless system of early education. Linkages between school and these multiple partners provide access to resources and information that can enhance the outcomes of the transition process.

	Best Practice Emerging	Best Practice Progressing	Best Practice Achieved
Participation in Community Transition Team	An Early Learning Community representative is involved in a community-wide transition team.	An Early Learning Community representative is involved in a community-wide transition team and an internal; program level transition team has been formed.	An Early Learning Community representative is involved in a community-wide transition team and a program level transition team has been formed which includes representation of key stakeholders including but not limited to family members, multiple early education providers, and other community partners.
Partnerships	The early learning program is aware of, communicates, and shares information about and with community partners serving children who will transition into school.	The early learning program is aware of and refers families to community partners providing supportive services to children transitioning into formal school settings. (Hearing & vision screenings, Occupational therapy, Immunizations, etc.)	The early learning program establishes intentional links with community partners to provide school based screenings and education, and other supportive services.

Companion resources can be found at www.pakeys.org or at www.pdesas.org

PA pennsylvania
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
AND EARLY LEARNING

Child-to-School

The transition to formal schooling can be exciting because the child is moving to something new that the adults in his or her life regard as important. He or she may be apprehensive about leaving familiar people and routines and facing the unknown. A child entering a new program must learn to cope with an unfamiliar place, changes in expectations, a new role, peer group, and authority figure, and many new experiences. If not handled well, these new experiences and relationships may be stressful for the child. This section emphasizes practices to help make transition an exciting event with a high level of comfort. These practices help foster positive attitudes toward school and learning, foster positive teacher-child relationships and help children develop and maintain positive relationship with peers.

	Best Practice Emerging	Best Practice Progressing	Best Practice Achieved
Orientation to new setting	Early care representative/ teachers collect information from the new setting that the majority of the children will transition into and share this information with the families.	Early care representative/ teachers collect information from the various new settings that children will transition into and share this information with the families.	Early care representative /teachers provide multiple and varied opportunities for child to become familiar with the new settings /teachers/future classmates.
	Pre-kindergarten teachers intentionally address the differences between the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten settings with the children in their class.	Some elements that are similar to formal school environments and routines are incorporated into the pre-kindergarten environment a few months prior to the transition into formal school.	Pre-kindergarten teachers intentionally partner with formal school teachers to incorporate elements that are similar to formal school environment and routines a few months prior to the transition into formal schooling. Elements might include: instructional practices, songs and finger plays that will be used in formal school settings, specific materials etc.
Orientation to child	Early care representative/ teacher provide some information about the child to the new setting.	Early care representative/ teacher has information exchange policies with receiving schools and sends information to children's new setting.	Sending and receiving schools meet to disseminate information and provide information (where appropriate) that will be used in instructional and transition planning.

Companion resources can be found at www.pakeys.org or at www.pdesas.org

PA pennsylvania
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
AND EARLY LEARNING

Family-to-School

As families begin to prepare for the transition into formal schooling they feel a range of emotions. There may be pride that their child is entering school and will be facing new challenges. There also may be concern about how their child will cope with the change. They may be apprehensive about their child growing up and having less control over the experiences of the day. They hope that the transition to formal schooling will be a smooth and happy one.

Studies show that successful programs actively involve parents in their programs. The family's influence is fundamental in the early years. Studies show that when families are actively engaged in the transition process their involvement tends to continue throughout their child's school career (Barnett, M. A., 2009, Ferguson, C. & Wood, L., 2005). Family involvement has been linked to positive student outcomes. This section emphasizes practices to involve and engage families in the transition process, fostering positive attitudes toward school and learning and helping families act as partners in their children's learning.

	Best Practice Emerging	Best Practice Progressing	Best Practice Achieved
Orientation to School	Early care representative/ teachers provide general written information to families about the formal school including information on registration.	Early care representative/ teachers collaborate with partnering schools to provide written or digital opportunities to learn about school personnel and routines prior to the start of school.	Early care representative/ teachers collaborate with partnering schools to provide face-to-face opportunities to learn about school personnel and routines prior to the start of school.
Family Networking	Early Care program encourages family-to-family connections between families with transitioning children.	Early Care program creates a process for connecting families with children transitioning to the same formal school.	Early Care Program partners with formal school/PTO/community organization to create and implement a Family Mentoring Program in which previous families of kindergarteners provide outreach to families of transitioning children.
Partnerships	Early care representative/ teachers provide written information to assist all families in preparing their child or children for school. E.g. distribution of readiness calendars and other materials.	Early care representative/ teachers collect and use outcomes data to identify children who may be "at risk" for a difficult transition and has a system in place to share this information with families.	Early Learning community collects and uses outcomes data to identify children who may be "at risk" for a difficult transition and intentionally partners with families to support the child BEFORE the transition occurs.

Companion resources can be found at www.pakeys.org or at www.pdesas.org

PA pennsylvania
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
AND EARLY LEARNING

School-to-School

Continuity across early childhood services in which all programs for children birth-age 8 in the community work together can ensure consistent and effective services throughout these important years. Continuity includes alignment of expectations, environmental design, as well as instructional practice. When sending and receiving teachers use similar strategies, children adjust more easily to school. It is essential that both early learning teachers and elementary school staff work together to overcome the barriers to smooth transitions for children and families.

	Best Practice Emerging	Best Practice Progressing	Best Practice Achieved
Partnerships	Early care representative/ teachers partake in open communication with at least one formal school to which a majority of children transition occurs.	Early care representative/ teachers partners with one or more formal schools to which children transition. Partnering includes providing the formal school with information on the child, transition process, etc.	Early care representative/ teachers partners with most of the formal schools to which the children transition to. Partnering includes providing the formal schools with information on early learning curriculum, transition process, etc, as well as establishing community of practice in which early care and formal school teachers collaborate.
	Early care representative/ teachers initiate and design a release of information agreement between sending and receiving school.	Early care representative/ teachers initiate a release of information agreement between sending and receiving school and create a process for sharing of information.	Early care representative/ teachers partner to create a series of intentional plans design around designing a seamless transition between sending and receiving schools. For example: Release of information agreement in place between sending and receiving school, a process for sharing of information, and sharing goes beyond required forms to includes developmental information, unique interests, learning styles, etc
Resources	Early care representative/ teachers within the community share resources and coordinate transition efforts with formal school and staff.	Neighboring Early Learning Communities share resources and coordinate some transition efforts. (Professional Learning Community at www.pdesas.org)	There is active mentoring, shared resources, and coordination of transition efforts among multiple Early Learning Communities (possibly county-wide) and formal schools.

Companion resources can be found at www.pakeys.org or at www.pdesas.org

PA pennsylvania
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
AND EARLY LEARNING