

Recommended Practices and Strategies in Supporting Successful Early Transition: A Checklist for Transition Preparation and Adjustment of Children and Families

We have referred often to the National Early Childhood Transition Center (NECTC) in our Early Childhood Transition modules. This checklist is based on recommended practices identified by NECTC's extensive research. Early Intervention Colorado and the Colorado Department of Education/ Preschool Special Education, determined these practices and strategies to be priority for early childhood transition in Colorado.*

Use this checklist as a guideline as you work with your school district or BOCES to support successful transition preparation and adjustment for children and families.

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- 1) Your agency has developed formal mechanisms to minimize disruptions in services before, during, & after the transition of the child and family.
 - A transition committee is established that meets regularly to discuss needs and address issues (this includes people from special and regular education, school readiness, and the community)
 - Funding is available to provide overlapping services and supports to children and families in early intervention programs to encourage dialogue, co-treatment & a seamless transition (e.g. prior to child's birthday both programs can meet and share information or when the child's birthday is after the cutoff date summer services are provided)
 - System cutoff dates for services are in line with overall school system dates
 - 2) Staff & family members are actively involved in the design of transition processes & systems.
 - Kindergarten and preschool staff have formal opportunities to discuss strategies and modifications for transition activities
 - Time and place of transition meetings are scheduled at the parents convenience
 - 3) Conscious & transparent connections are made between curricula & child expectations across programs/environments

- Regular meetings are held to discuss continuity of programs and curriculum between early intervention and preschool and preschool and kindergarten
 - Staff are allowed to visit both sending and receiving program to get a “feel” for their respective programs
 - Administrators are provided early childhood training, developmentally appropriate practices, & opportunities to spend time in early childhood classrooms
- 4) Transition plans are developed that include individual activities for each child & family.
- Opportunities are made available for children and families to talk with preschool & kindergarten staff about the special needs of their child and details of their care
 - A comprehensive plan is done to discuss the child’s & family’s specialized needs
 - A *transition referral packet* containing a bio of the child, teaching strategies, parent information is prepared for receiving program
 - 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).
- 5) Children have opportunities to develop & practice skills they need to be successful in the next environment
- Strategies are used to help the child learn skill they will need in developmentally appropriate ways
 - Modify the curriculum (and environment) before the child enters a preschool or kindergarten class.
- 6) Methods are in place to support staff-to-staff communication both within & across programs
- Meeting time and stipends are provided to plan and collaborate for transitions
 - Preschool and kindergarten staff swap classes & teach for a time to understand sending and receiving environments
 - Develop partnerships & offer cross-training between regular and special education administrators and staff
- 7) Staff roles and responsibilities for transition activities are clearly delineated

- Support staff (e.g., release time, staff development) in gaining necessary information and knowledge regarding their role, the process, curriculum, best practice, range of options & resources
- Provide release time for teachers to support transition planning
- There is a permanent substitute for preschool & kindergarten classrooms so teachers can participate in in-service training & planning.

8) Families' needs related to transition are assessed & addressed

- Staff has training in the grieving process to support parents during transition
- A case manager is assigned to each child to help families go through the transition process
- Written materials are provided in parents' home language and literacy level

9) Staff follow-up on children after the transition to support their adjustment.

- Staff from both settings work with the child's family to solve any problems or difficulties encountered with the new setting
- Sending staff goes to the receiving class for the initial transition
- Evaluation & follow-up of transition occurs (family is included in the process)
- Create a Transition Team that meets regularly to plan, discuss, & evaluate transitions

*(NECTC) now housed in the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA).