



Supporting an Effective Transition to Kindergarten

Presenter:



NATIONAL CENTER ON
Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning

Take a few minutes to:

- Introduce yourself to others at your table.
- Describe the role you play in transition work.
- Share one recent transition you have experienced and how you dealt with that period of change.

1. The state of school readiness.
2. Why we are concerned about early transition experiences.
3. The nature of the kindergarten transition.
4. Conceptualizing effective transition.
5. Transition partnerships.
6. Building successful transition experiences.

Goals for the Day

- Meet and collaborate with fellow educators and other early childhood stakeholders.
- Gain a better understanding of the importance of successful early childhood transitions for children's success.
- Learn about best practices related to the kindergarten transition.
- Share experiences to learn from each others' successes and challenges.
- Make plans to move forward in your own transition work.
- Walk away with knowledge about kindergarten transition that you can share with colleagues.



What Does
School
Readiness
Mean?

What Does School Readiness Mean?

“

The Head Start approach to school readiness means that **children** are ready for school, **families** are ready to support their children's learning, and **schools** are ready for children.

”



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How a group of parents defined school readiness:

- Academic competencies
- Social skills
- Communication among all stakeholders
- Schools that are ready for children and families
- Knowledge of kindergarten standards



The State of
School Readiness

How Are Young Children Doing?

We are seeing increasing poverty.

Of American children under age six, about **1 in 5** currently lives in poverty, and the total number has steadily increased over the past decade.

Of those in poverty, most have **multiple additional risk factors** such as single parent homes, low levels of parental education, or teenage mothers.

(2017)

How Are Young Children Doing?

Low-income children are at risk for entering school significantly behind their more affluent peers:

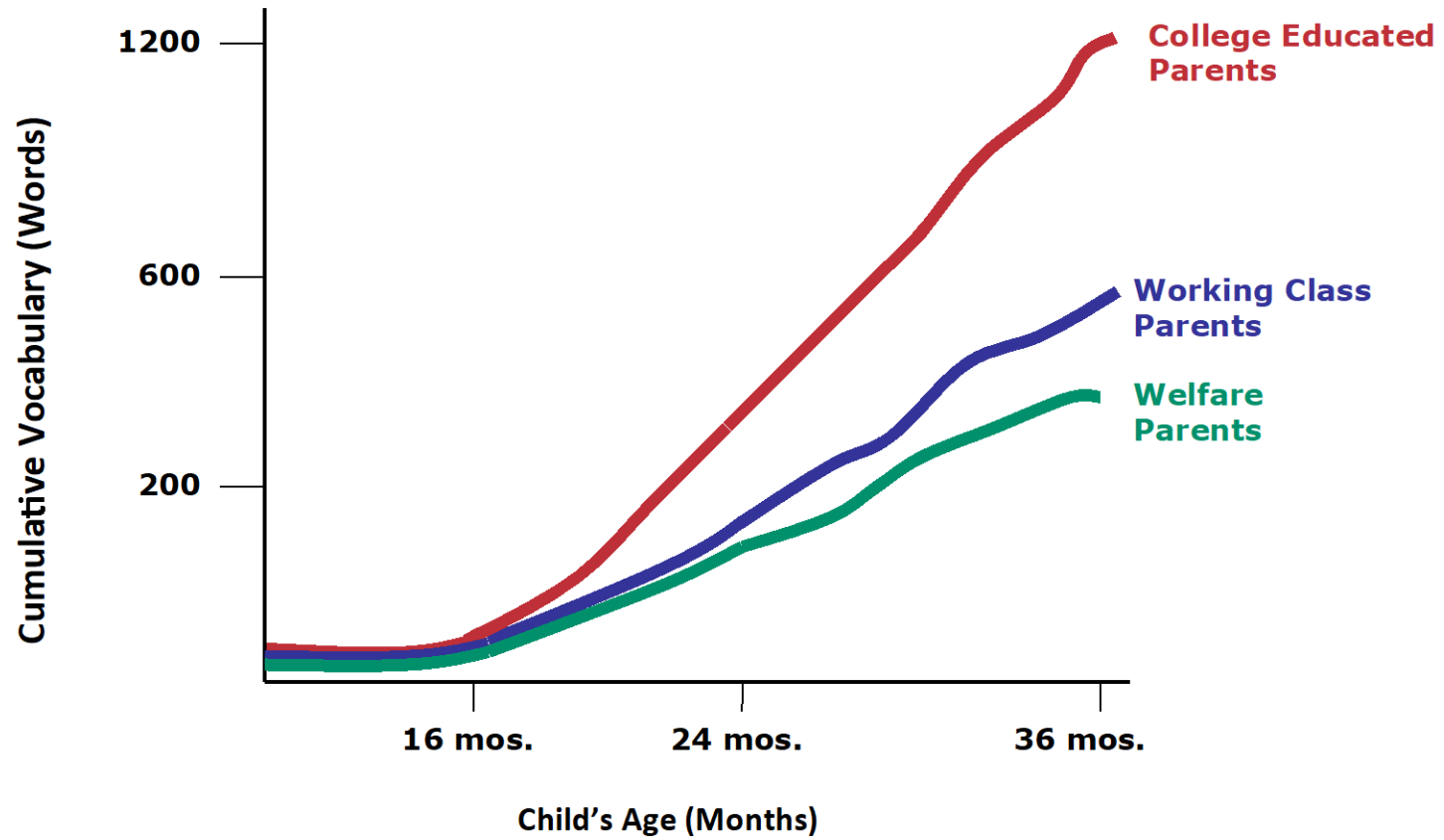
On average, **children aged 4-5** living in low-income households are 12–14 months below national language development norms.

How Are Young Children Doing?

Of children experiencing poverty:

- 70% do not read on grade level at 3rd grade.
- 73% do not catch up in later grades.

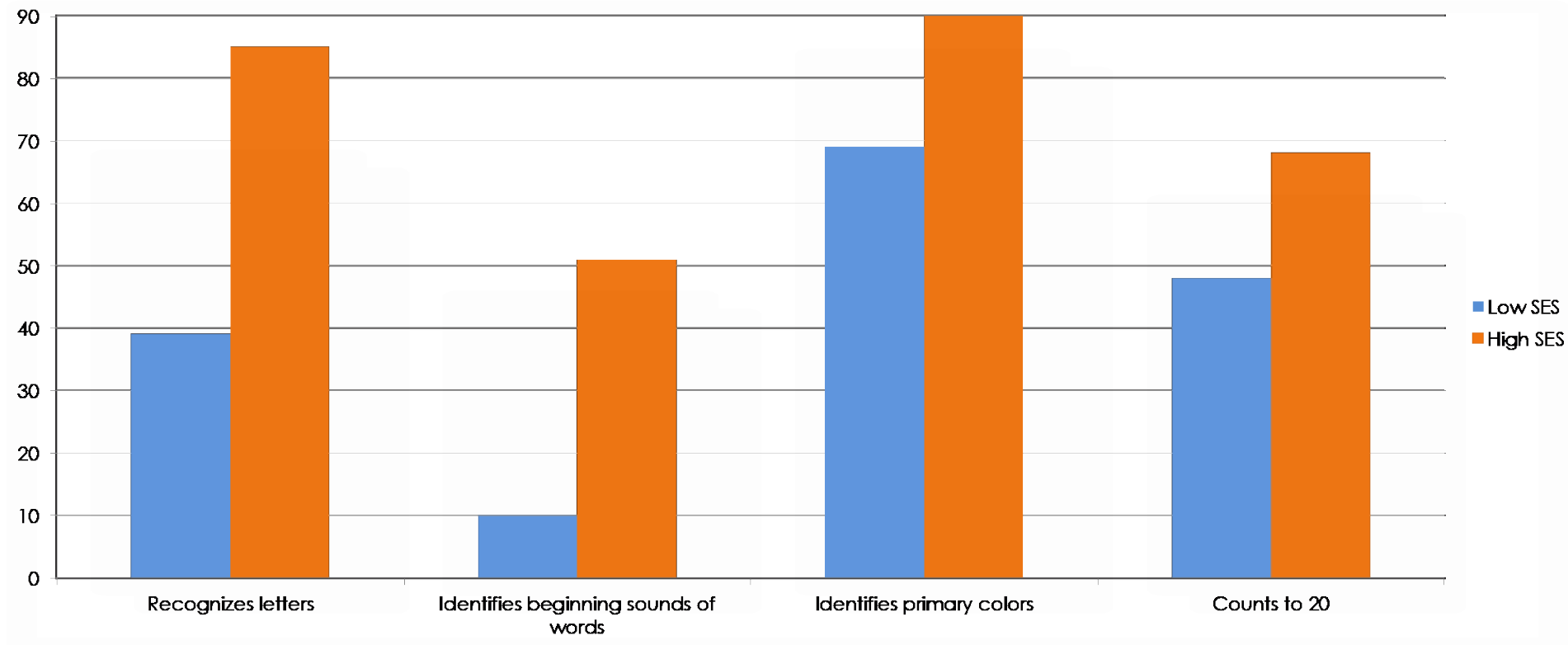
Disparities Begin Early



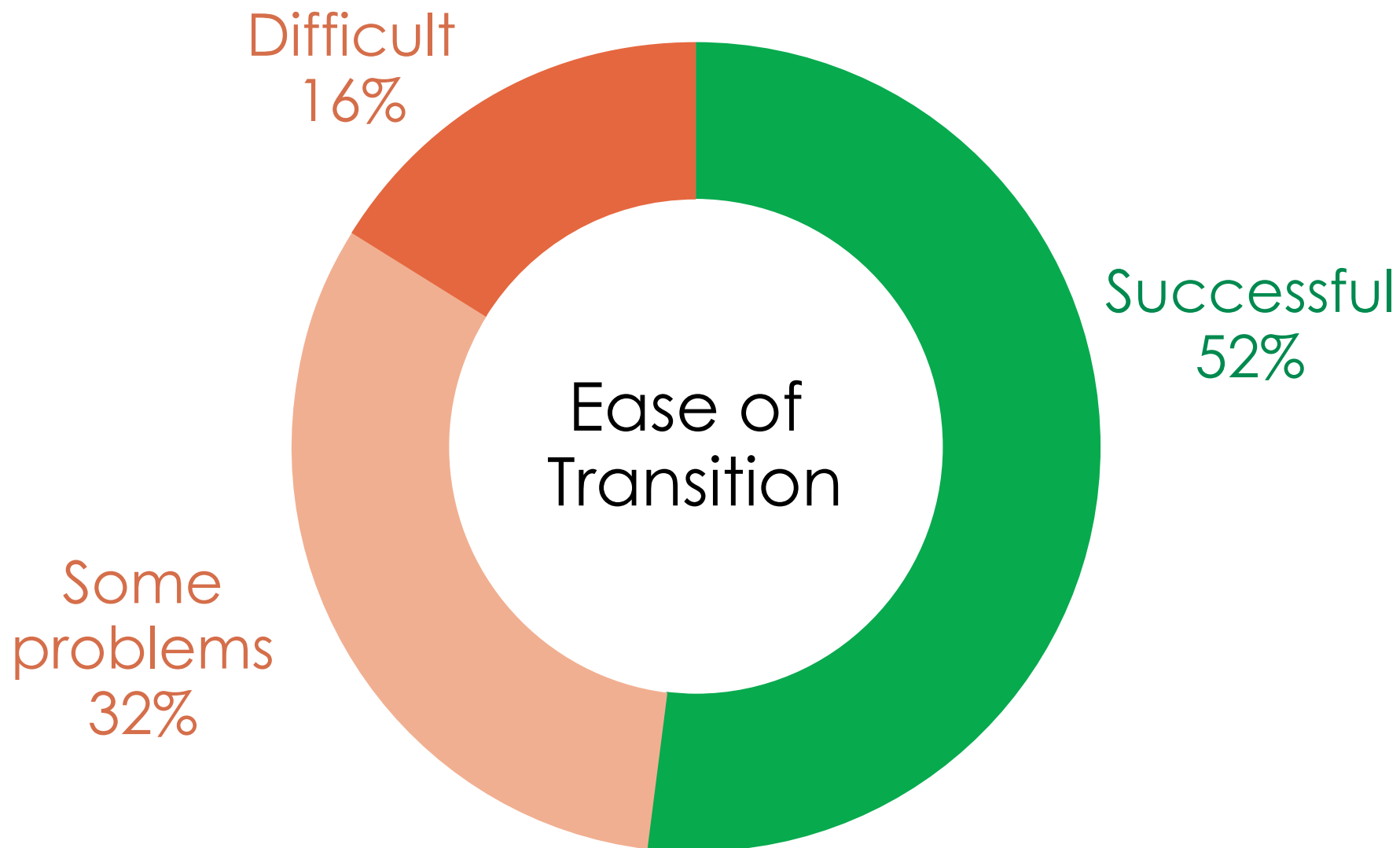
Hart & Risley, 1995

Disparities by Kindergarten

Percent of Kindergarteners Passing Proficiency Levels in Fall

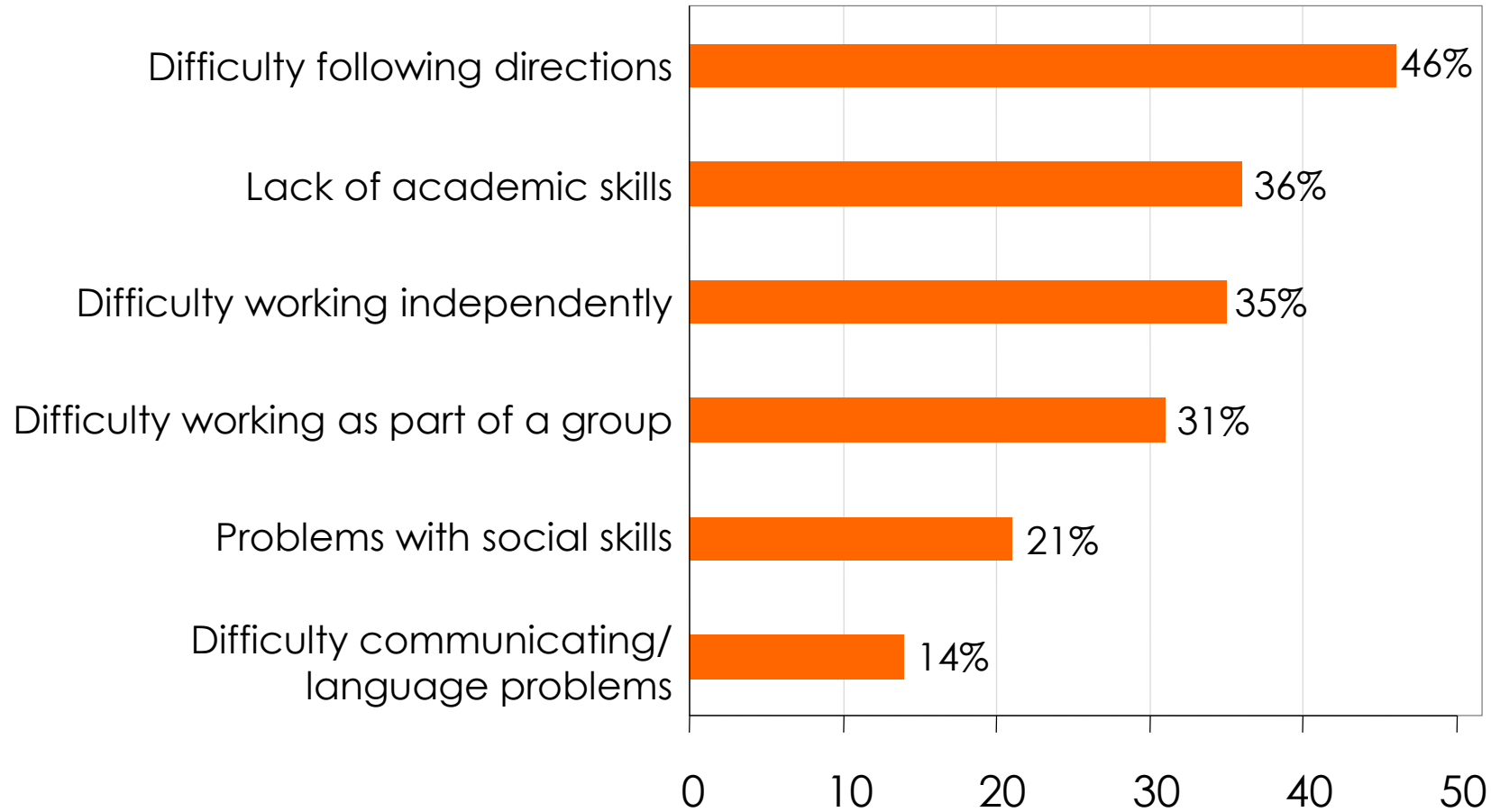


How Successfully Are Children Entering Kindergarten?



Rimm-Kaufman, Pianta, & Cox, 2000

Teachers say “half my class or more” exhibit these problems entering kindergarten:





Why We Are
Concerned
About Early
Transition
Experiences



Early School Experiences Matter

We know that:

- Effective early school experiences can close achievement gaps.
- Stability and consistency between settings is crucial to children's success.

Educator–child relationships predict:

- Academic and behavior outcomes through eighth grade, particularly for children with behavior problems in kindergarten.
- Stability of relationships with educators over time.

Early School Experiences Matter

Kindergarten family involvement is associated with:

- More cooperative, self-controlled, and socially engaged children.
- Lower rates of high school dropout, increased on-time high school completion, and higher grade completed.
- Higher achievement in language and math, and higher ratings on peer interactions.

Transition Activities and Positive Outcomes



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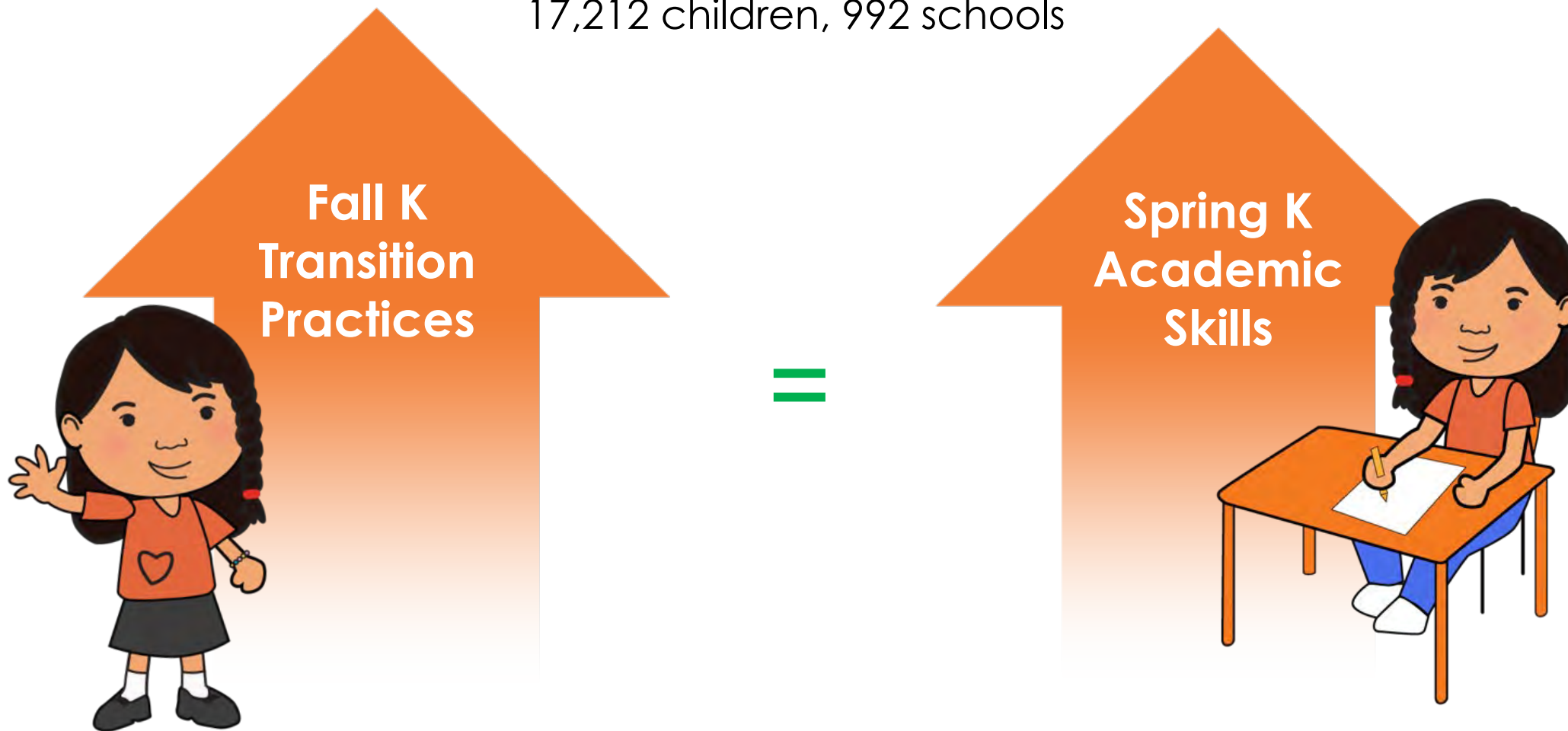
At the beginning of kindergarten:

- Greater frustration tolerance
- Better social skills
- Fewer conduct problems
- Fewer learning problems
- More positive approaches to learning

NCECDTL, 1,000 children, 250 schools

Early Childhood Longitudinal Study

17,212 children, 992 schools

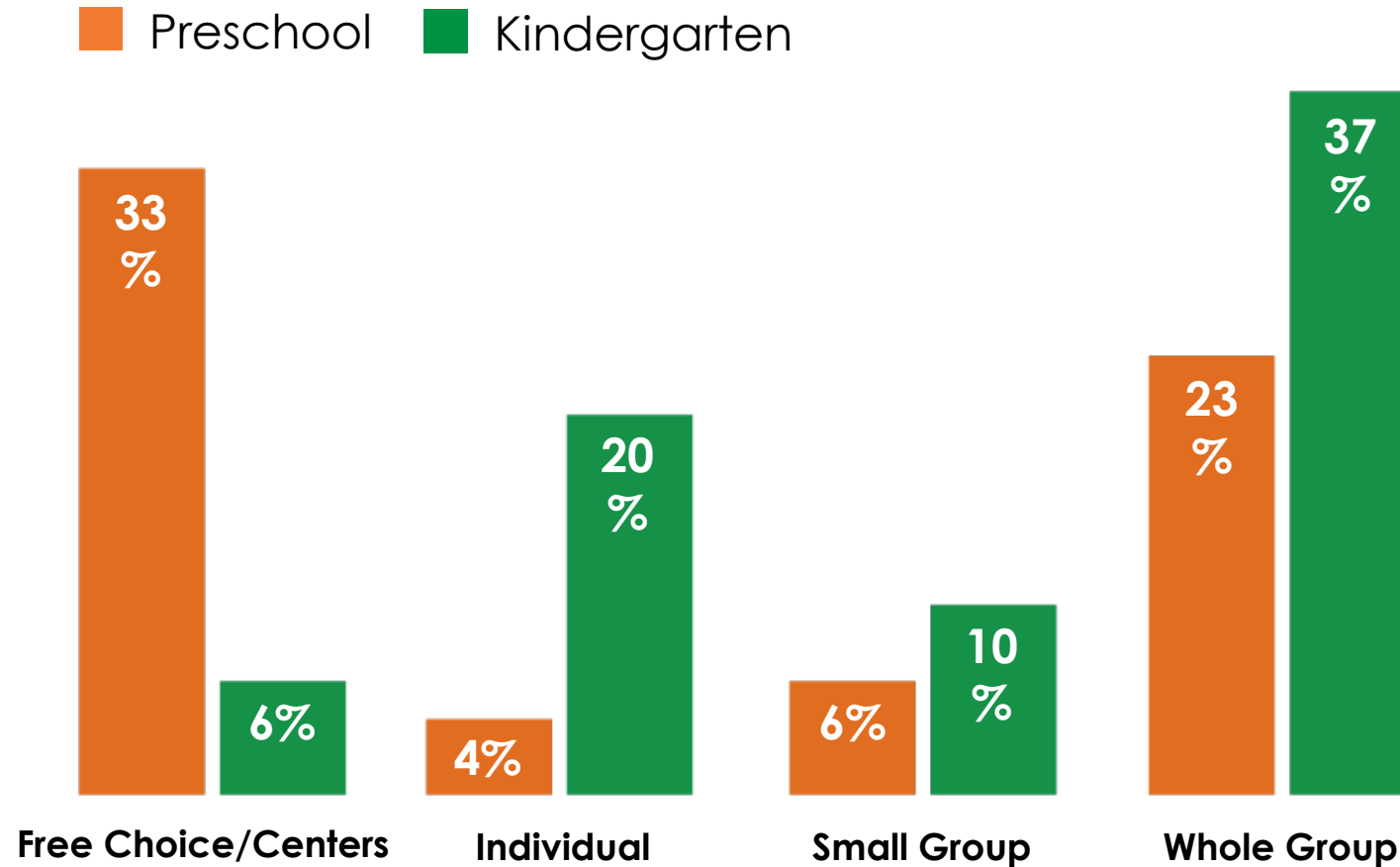


Schulting, Malone, & Dodge, 2005



The Nature of
Kindergarten
Transition

Early Learning Settings vs. Kindergarten



Kindergarten Changes

Changes in academic demands and curricula

Less family connection with school

Complexity of social environment (peers and adults)

Less individual or small group time with educator(s)



Family Transition Experiences

His educator called several days before school started; it was great and really made Nate feel great.

At the beginning I got her excited by talking about starting school six months before it started....It made the transition easy....Before school started I took her to the classroom to get her adjusted to it.

I am pleased...The educator called after the first two days of school to say how well she was doing.

Family Transition Experiences

On a more personal level, my son spends eight hours a day with his educator and his best friend. I want to know those people. I don't want it to be a once-every-three-months-for-report-card thing. I want to have more interaction.

The educator called the first week of school to say he is the biggest clown in the class.

Family Transition Experiences

The kindergarten teacher called me the first week of school and said she should have been evaluated for Ritalin because she can't teach her.

We weren't sure about sending him, he may be too young. His kindergarten teacher called to say he's way behind and should go back to preschool.

I'm not happy with it...I sent in notes but got no response from the educator...The kindergarten teacher is new and she's not very organized. I'm anxious about this year.

Kindergarten Transition Perspectives

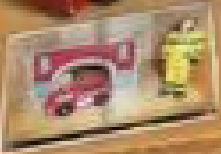




People with disabilities
Participate in all activities



People with disabilities
Participate in all activities



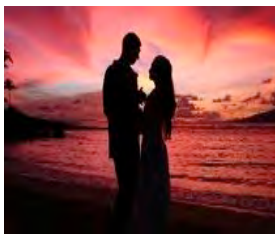
People with disabilities
Participate in all activities

Conceptualizing
Effective
Transition

Transitions Across a Lifetime

- Becoming a new parent
- Going to (or back to) college
- Moving to a new town
- Starting a new job
- Experiencing an empty nest
- Retiring from a career
- Getting married

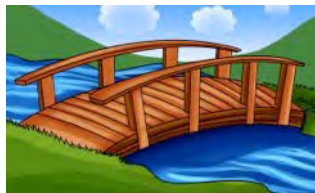
Transitions Across the Lifespan



Transition = Change = Difficulty

What creates successful transition?

- Information
- Relationships
- Alignment



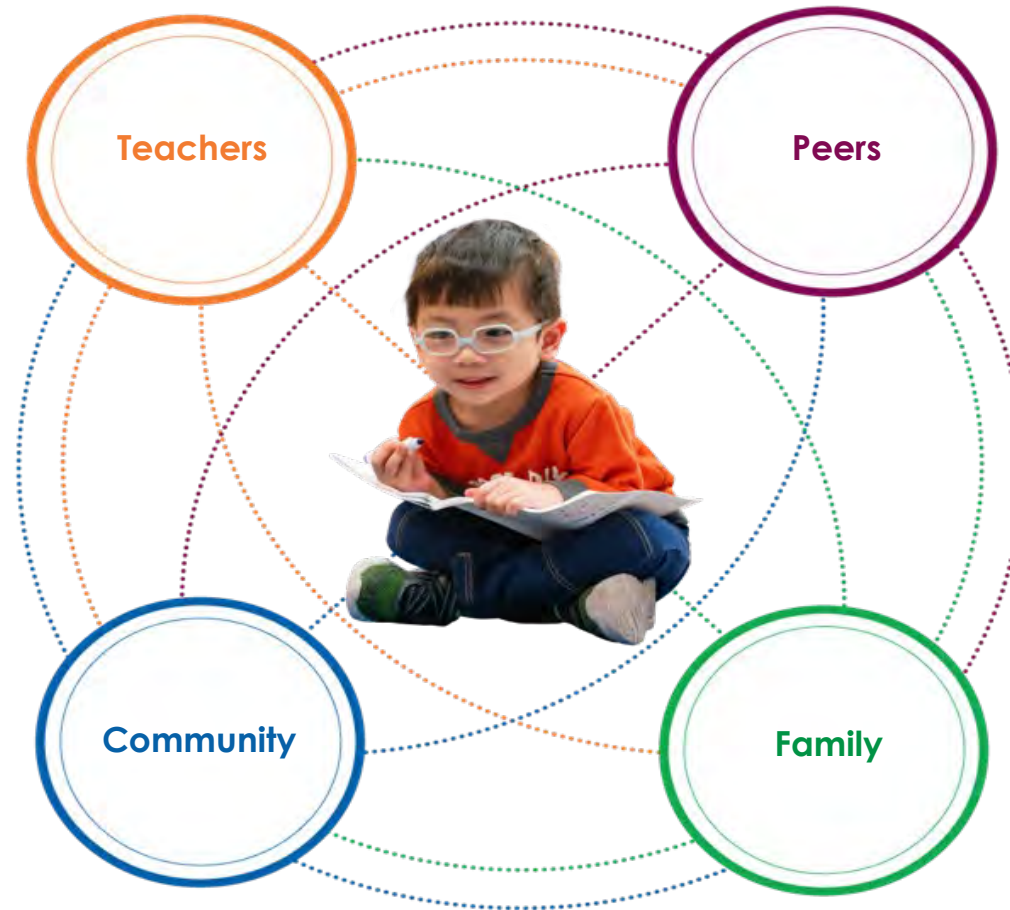
Successful
Transition

Children need our help to manage these changes.

INADEQUATE VIEW



When Connections Are The Focus



Early Experiences ————— **Kindergarten**

The changing dynamics of these relationships during transitions influence child outcomes.

Guiding Principles

For successful transitions, remember that:

- It's a **process**, not a program.
- Supportive and informational relationships are resources for children.
- Connections serve as a bridge for children, families, and schools across time and contexts.

Dual Language Learners (DLLs)

General transition practices are beneficial for all children. Children who are dual language learners can further benefit from additional supports, such as:

- Provide information to families in their home language(s).
- Communicate about the benefits of maintaining a child's home language while learning English.
- Identify continued language learning services for the child in the new learning setting.

Children with Disabilities

Children with disabilities can benefit from the supports in place for all children, in addition to individualized supports, such as:

- Increased communication and planning between educators, consulting educators, families, and children.
- Participation by both Head Start and elementary school educators in the IEP transition planning meeting.
- Individualized accommodations prepared prior to the child's arrival in the new school environment.

Valeria Jasmin

Diego Anthony

Jesse Angela Frank

Isaac Jason

Lance Jesus Jenny

Precious Juan

Jennifer Nerik

Caleb Alexander

Damian

Leslie Giselle

Ezequiel Marcos

Anthony

Camila George

Transition Connections

Child–School Connections

Goal: To foster children’s familiarity with the kindergarten setting and the people within it.

This serves to:

- Increase comfort.
- Decrease anxiety.
- Build educator–child relationships.

How a Child Sees Kindergarten

Emily: It's a big, big, big school and there's more kids. Because there's hundreds and hundreds and hundreds. And there's kids that don't know each other's names. Everyone knows names here.

JS: Are you ready to go to kindergarten next year?

Marcy: Yeah.

JS: How do you know you're ready?

Marcy: Because I feel so happy.

Family–School Connections

Goal: To foster family collaboration and engagement with the school and the transition process. This serves to:

- Facilitate sharing of child data and records.
- Familiarize parents with school routines.
- Help parents to support learning at home.

How Families Contribute

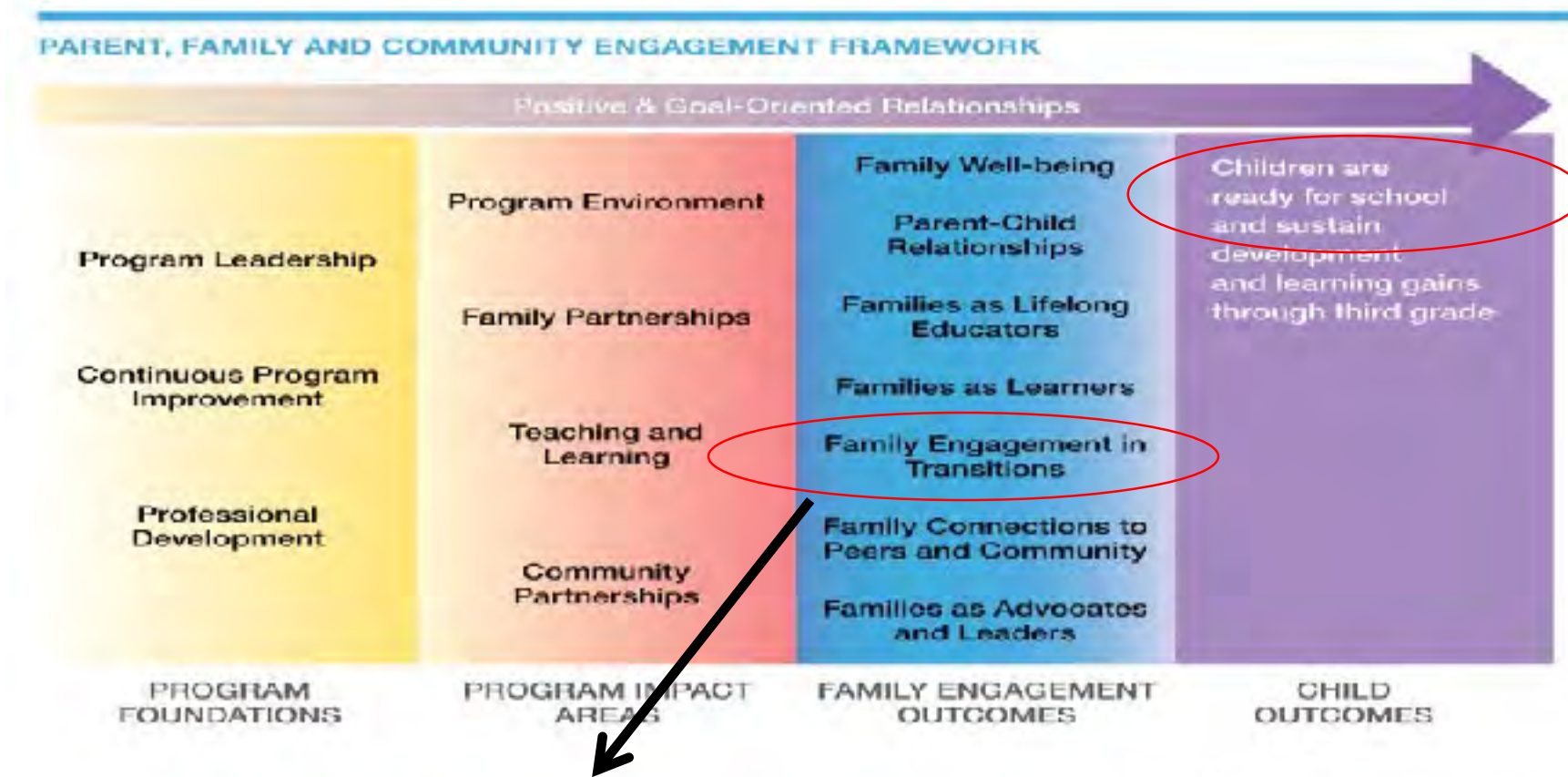
Family well-being is a powerful predictor of school success.



Connecting with Families



The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework



Successful Transitions

5. Family Engagement in Transitions

Parents and families support and advocate for their child's learning and development as they transition to new learning environments, including EHS to HS, EHS/HS to other early learning environments, and HS to Kindergarten through Elementary School.

EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIES FOR PROGRAM PROGRESS

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| PROGRAM LEADERSHIP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that systems, supports and resources are in place to address professional development, continuous improvement and partnerships related to child and family transitions. Establish ongoing communications and Memorandas of Understanding between Head Start |
| CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use data to improve |
| PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide trainings, |
| PROGRAM ENVIRONMENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure an safe and |
| FAMILY PARTNERSHIP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure families know about their rights under federal and state laws, such as their rights |

Available on:
Head Start's Early
Childhood Learning &
Knowledge Center
eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov

deal with disagreements between parent and teacher).
■ Ensure families know about their rights under federal and state laws, such as their rights

Transition Activities for Families

Transition activity	Percent of families who found this activity helpful
Had child visit a kindergarten classroom	99
Met with the early childhood educator	89
Met with the principal	95
Took a tour of the school	100
Talked with Head Start staff about kindergarten	99
Visited the kindergarten classroom	97
Talked with families of new classmates	97
Participated in elementary school activities	100
Attended a workshop for families	98
Met with the new kindergarten teacher	92
Attended a kindergarten orientation event	96

Program-School Connections

Goal: To provide children with stable, high-quality learning experiences and to increase consistency between settings by aligning:

- Routines
- Curricula
- Learning standards
- Assessments

Transition Activities for Educators

	Early Childhood Educators	Kindergarten Teachers
Transition activity	Percent who found the activity helpful	Percent who found the activity helpful
Children visiting their future kindergarten classroom	100	96
Early childhood educator visiting a kindergarten classroom	100	100
Holding an elementary school-wide event with new students	83	100
Having a spring orientation about kindergarten for parents of preschool-age children	100	100
Having an individual meeting between educators and families	100	100
Sharing child records	100	100

Professionals Working Together

Kindergarten and early childhood educators meet four times per year and focus on aligning experiences for children. The outcomes of this cooperation are:

- Increased participation in transition opportunities such as kindergarten camp.
- Increased consistency between settings related to routines and expectations.
- Increased awareness of the community needs for more spaces for children.

Community–School Connections

Goal: To facilitate the transition process with community support, including:

- Distributing information about the kindergarten transition.
- Identifying community resources, and providing them where they are needed.

Community–School Connections

- Clarifying community hopes and needs regarding schools and the kindergarten transition.
- Achieving inter-agency connections.
- Providing additional support to children who are at risk.

www.kindergartenhereicome.org



If your child will be attending kindergarten this fall, mark your calendar for:

Seventh Annual Kindergarten!...Here I Come!

Saturday, August 13, 2011

9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Children's Museum of Pittsburgh

Free Admission for All Children Entering Kindergarten and One Parent



Kindergarten Camps

Child, family, program, school, and community connections support:

- Improved kindergarten social adjustment.
- Improved familiarity with routines.
- Reading and mathematical skills.

Benefits From Connections

- Children become more socially ready and can participate more academically.
- Families become more connected to school, which improves long-term child outcomes.
- Teachers achieve better relationships with children and families that improve child outcomes.



Transition Questionnaire Results



Aligning
Curricula
and
Assessments

Partnerships:

- Strengthen educational community.
- Support transition.
- Narrow the achievement gap.
- Foster school-readiness and self-efficacy.
- Engage parents.

Big Ideas Around Partnering

Partnerships can boost school achievement.

Collaboration is a relational endeavor.

Welcoming and supporting parents enhances child learning.



Leaders Supporting the Transition to Kindergarten



VIDEO: Building Bridges
Leaders Supporting the Transition to Kindergarten

Video Discussion

- Overall impressions or concerns
- The importance of the program–school partnership
- Strategies for partnering and possible barriers

Forming Partnerships

Create list

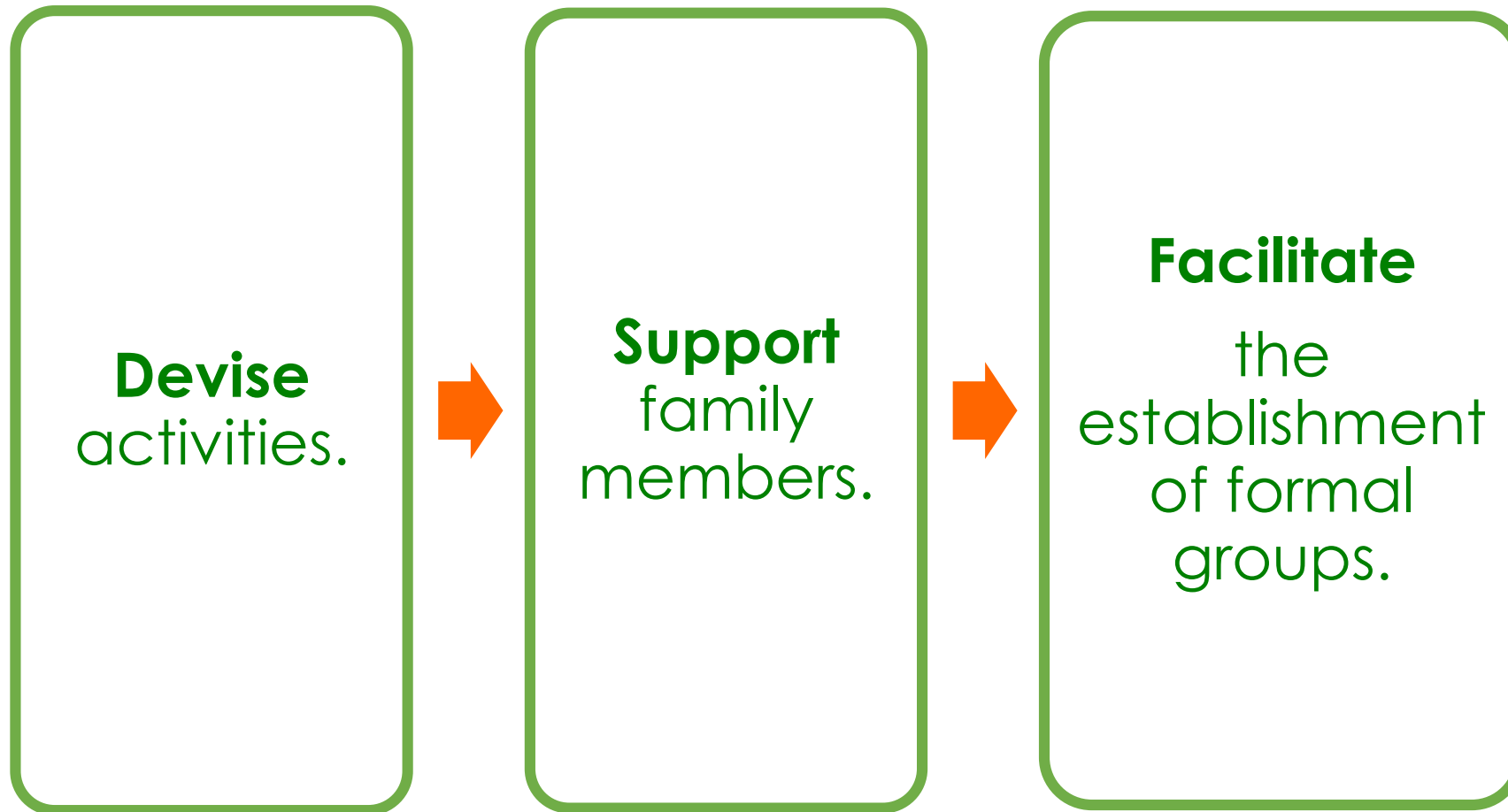
Meet

Share

Visit

Form plans

Forming Partnerships with Families



Partnering: A Joint Effort

- Early childhood and elementary school leaders jointly ensure successful transitions.
- Teachers need guidance and support from leadership to implement transition practices.
- The best transition plans include collaboration between administrators, educators, parents, and community members.
- There should not be an adversarial relationship between educators and leadership.

Elements of Effective Partnering

- Creating effective partnerships requires focused effort and leadership.
- Transition work is most effective when strong relationships and valuable partnerships are established before kindergarten starts.
- Successful transition teams have leadership, support, commitment, active engagement, connections with families, and access to community resources.



Aligning
Curricula
And
Assessments

Discuss:

- In what ways are early learning and kindergarten curricula and philosophies similar?
- In what ways they are different?

Head Start vs. Kindergarten

Head Start	Kindergarten
3.5+ hours/day	6+ hours/day
1:10 staff-child ratio	1:25 staff-child ratio
Play-based, implicit instruction	Explicit instruction
Child-directed	Teacher-directed
Developmental focus across the learning domains	Focus on academics

First Steps for Alignment

- Get to know and understand each other's practices.
- Understand each other's expectations.
- Conduct visits of both settings.
- Become colleagues and allies.

Commonalities and Gaps

- Share current assessment information.
- Identify alignments and misalignments.
- Align curricula and practices by building on commonalities and filling in gaps.

Curricular Alignment

September	December	March	Extension
Show interest in simple patterns in everyday life.	Copy simple repeating patterns.	Extend and create simple repeating patterns.	Recognize, create, explain, and extend more complex repeating patterns <i>and simple growing patterns.</i>

K.2.A Copy, extend, describe, and create simple repetitive patterns.

Students can complete these activities with specified patterns of the type AB, AAB, AABB, ABC, etc. Examples:

- Make a type AB pattern of squares and circles with one square, one circle, one square, one circle, etc.
- Here is a type AAB pattern using colored cubes: red, red, blue, red, red, blue, red, red. What comes next?

Common assessments include:

- Key kindergarten readiness skills.
- Embedded assessments.
- Accessible instructions.

Alignment of Assessments

	May	
Demonstrates knowledge of patterns	Extends and creates simple repeating patterns; note pattern and tool used Beading: red-blue (create) Movement: clap-clap--stomp (extend)	1 Does not create simple repeating patterns 2 Creates simple patterns 3 Creates and extends simple patterns across a variety of activities
Phonological awareness	Child identifies if a rhyme: Man/Pan Y N Bear/Chair Y N Cat/Dog Y N Pig/Wig Y N Bat/Ball Y N	1 Does not identify whether or not word pairs rhyme 2 Correctly identifies whether or not 1–3 word pairs rhyme 3 Correctly identifies whether or not 4–5 word pairs rhyme

To evaluate curricula and assessments:

- Use child data.
- Use data on academic entrance levels.
- Use data on social entrance levels.
- Conduct joint review of data and use for planning changes.

A young boy with short dark hair, wearing a dark blue t-shirt with red lettering, is smiling and looking to the left. He is in a gymnasium, with other people and equipment visible in the background. A white circle with an orange border is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text "Building Successful Transition Experiences".

Building
Successful
Transition
Experiences



Six Steps for Transition Planning

1. Assess your partnerships.
2. Identify the goals of the transition team.
3. Assess what is happening now.
4. Identify data to support practices.
5. Plan and prioritize.
6. Implement and evaluate.

1. Assessing Your Partnerships

Who is involved?

- Educators (early childhood and kindergarten)
- Leaders (early childhood and kindergarten)
- Family representative(s)
- Community leaders

2. Identifying Team Goals

Choose several goals that fit your program's needs. Some examples are:

- Support children being ready for school
- Help families know more about how to support learning and school readiness at home
- Get your community more involved with children

3. Assessing What is Happening Now

Sort what you are currently doing into categories, for example:

- Fostering child–school connections
- Fostering family–school connections
- Fostering program–school connections
- Fostering community–school connections

3. Assessing What is Happening Now

Take a few minutes to talk at your tables about transition practices that are going on in your programs.

Write these practices down on sticky notes and place them under the connection they best fit into.

4. Examining Data You Have

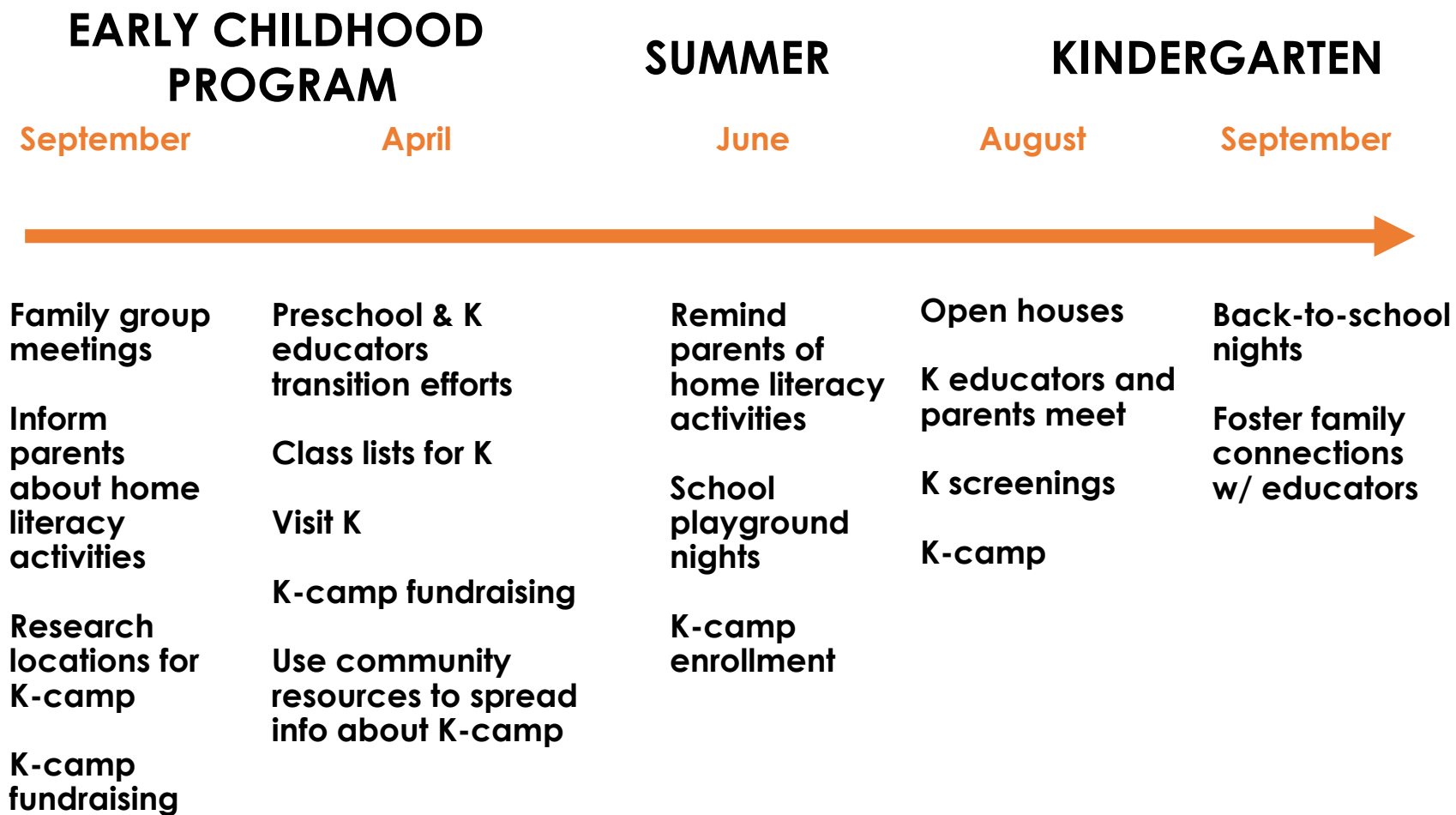
How do you know your current practices are working?

- Are children transitioning better because educators read them books about kindergarten?
- Are more families registering early for kindergarten because of community efforts?
- Are kindergarten educators better informed about individual students because of program–school collaboration?

5. Planning and Prioritizing

- Determine next steps—Reevaluate goals and formulate new ones.
- Identify who is responsible for tasks—Assign roles within the transition team.
- Decide when tasks should be implemented—Set deadlines and a timeline.
- Anticipate barriers and make plans to overcome them.

Timeline Example



6. Implementing and Evaluating

- Implement the plan you created.
- Evaluate whether what you are doing is working and how you know.
- Examine data on new practices to identify changes.
- Modify practices as needed and define new goals.

Transition to Kindergarten

Collaborations, Connections, and Six Steps to Success

This document outlines a step-by-step approach to build, implement, and evaluate a kindergarten transition plan, and includes sections on:

- The importance of kindergarten transition, forming a transition team, and fostering four types of connections
- Six steps to transition planning
- Successful stories of kindergarten transition
- Resources

The ideas presented here are largely based on the book *Successful Kindergarten Transition: Your Guide to Connecting Children, Families, and Schools*, by Pianta and Kraft-Sayre, at the University of Virginia's Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning. The ideas in this document are appropriate for every young child, including those with disabilities and other special needs.

Section 1:

The importance of kindergarten transition, forming a transition team, and fostering four types of connections

Transition Experience Matters

The transition from early learning settings to kindergarten is an important event in children's lives and can be challenging for those who are not prepared for the adjustment. Multiple large-scale research studies, including those by Schulting, Malone & Dodge, 2005; and LoCasale-Crouch, Mashburn, Downer & Pianta, 2008, have found that more transition activities provided to children and families (such as visiting the new setting, or forming a relationship with a new teacher before schools starts) are associated with the following gains in kindergarten:

- Higher ratings of social emotional competence and reduced stress at the beginning of the school year

- Improved academic growth in kindergarten and increased family involvement over the year
- Stronger benefits for children living in poverty
- Additionally, research suggests that when children experience discontinuities between early learning program and kindergarten, they may be at greater risk for academic failure and social adjustment problems (Conyer, Reynolds, & Ou, 2003). Therefore, building and implementing a plan for seamless transition from the early learning environment to kindergarten can make a significant difference for children's on-going school success.

A Collaborative Framework

A collaborative approach to the transition to the kindergarten transition recognizes that children, families, schools, programs, peers, and communities are all interconnected throughout the transition process. A collaborative framework considers the contexts and people that interact as the child transitions from an early learning program or home setting to kindergarten. The figure below illustrates the idea of a child surrounded by a web of supportive relationships during this transition. It shows that positive, high-quality relationships among educators, peers, and families are especially important during transitions. These relationships can serve both as bridges from Head Start to kindergarten and as resources to help children and their families during the period of adjustment.



Figure adapted from Strom-Kaufmann & Pianta (2000)

Presentation Summary

Today, we covered

1. The state of school readiness.
2. Why we are concerned about early transition experiences.
3. The nature of the kindergarten transition.
4. Conceptualizing effective transition.
5. Transition partnerships.
6. Building successful transition experiences.

Questions?



Questions?

Thank you!





NATIONAL CENTER ON Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning

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Understanding Family Engagement Outcomes: Research to Practice Series



Family Engagement in Transitions: Transition to Kindergarten

The National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement has created a Research to Practice Series on the Family Engagement Outcomes of the Office of Head Start (OHS) Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework. One in the series, this resource addresses the "Family Engagement in Transitions" Outcome: "Parents and families support and advocate for their child's learning and development as they transition to new learning environments," and focuses on the transition to kindergarten.

Aligned with Head Start Performance Standards, this resource presents a selected summary of research, promising practices, and program strategies intended to be useful for the Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS) community.

Introduction

Children experience many big and small transitions in their early years. Small transitions may include moving from playtime to cleanup, from hand washing to snack time, or from playing outdoors to coming back into the classroom. Big transitions might include moving from home to EHS or HS, from being an only child to becoming a big brother or sister, or leaving HS to go to kindergarten. Of all of these transitions, the transition to kindergarten is one of the biggest. This is a major event in the lives of children and families, and a pivotal point for establishing the kinds of practices that can help sustain gains children have made in their early learning settings.

The transition to kindergarten can be a time of great excitement and joy for everyone involved. For children, it is an opportunity to learn new things, master new skills, and proudly declare, "I'm going to kindergarten." For families, it can bring a sense of delight as their children reach another milestone. For HS and other preschool educators, it is a time to reflect on the progress the children have made.

This transition can also be a time of uncertainty and concern about the unknown. For children, it may involve a loss of friends and teachers who have worked to win a place in their hearts. And, at the same time, a separation from a safe, familiar, and loving setting.



The OHS PFCE Framework is a research-based approach to program change that shows how HS/EHS programs can work together as a whole – across systems and service areas – to promote family engagement and children's learning and development.

¹ For more resources on the child perspective, read "Transitions from the Children's Perspective" at <http://nrcs.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hsrtoe-systems/eosng/060405-TransitionsFromtheChildrensPerspective.pdf>, and Docket & Perry, 1999, 2003 (see full citation at the end of this document).



Planning the Transition

In your teams, discuss and fill out the Transition Plan Form.

Do your best to come to a consensus about what priorities are important to your team.

Child–School

To foster children’s familiarity with the kindergarten setting and people

Family–School

To foster family collaboration and engagement with the school

Program–School

To provide children with stable, high-quality early learning experiences

Community–School

To facilitate the transition process within the community



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