

## Help Me Make a Strong Start! Strategies for Successful Kindergarten Transitions (webinar)

[Music]

Dawn Williams: Hi, everyone, and welcome to Teacher Time. I'm Dawn Williams.

Kristin Ainslie: I'm Kristin Ainslie.

Dawn: And we both are curriculum specialists here at the National Center for Quality Teaching and Learning, and we've both been classroom teachers.

Kristin: That's right. So, we will be with you for an hour today for our Teacher Time show, and we are live, which we have been for a while. It's really exciting. If you're having any trouble at all, there is a troubleshooting link that you can click on, and someone will answer a question for you.

Dawn: That's right. And you can also communicate with us in the chat box; that's over on right-hand side of your screen. We'll maybe ask you some questions there, and that's another way for you to let us know what's going on. And you'll also see some links for resources in there. You can also tweet with us at (hashtag)NCQTL.

Kristin: So, we want to know who's here today. We really would like you to sign in, because we keep track of attendance. We also -- if you opt in to join our Teacher Time community, that's how you'll be able to receive emails, you'll be able to receive follow-up documents to the show and announcements for upcoming webinars. So, please remember to sign in as well.

Dawn: And next to that is the evaluation button. That'll open up later in the show, and you can get a certificate for watching this today. To do that, each person will need to complete the evaluation. So, if you're watching in a group, we'll need each person to go ahead and click that link, and then you complete the evaluation at the end, enter your name and email address as you want it to appear on the certificate.

Kristin: All right, so our agenda for today is, just a moment we're going to have Gail Joseph come on. We're going to talk about kindergarten transition and all the successful strategies that we know about that. We're going to then go to our Try It Out! section, where Dawn and I will show you some videos of some ideas and strategies for how some programs do kindergarten transition and some ideas from the field.

Dawn: Mm-hmm. And then we will also share some resources with you that will come up in the chat box, as I mentioned, and we will end with Resiliency and Wellness.

Kristin: Yay, what a great spot. Okay, so all about kindergarten transition today, how to make that successful transition from preschool, from Head Start into kindergarten, and we're really excited about what Gail has to talk to us today, and even though it's May and kindergarten transition has already kind of begun, right, there's a lot still that can be done.

Dawn: That's right. So, to get us started, we have a poll for you guys. The question is, as a teacher, have you visited a kindergarten classroom in the last year? It's just a "yes" or "no" answer, so please go ahead and do that. And while you're doing that poll, Gail will be join-- with us when we come back, and then you'll hear some music.

[Music]

Thanks, you all, for taking the time to do that poll. Hi, Gail.

Gail Joseph: Hi, Dawn! How are you?

Dawn: I'm great. I'm so glad that you can be with us. And you've been with us all year long to do these.

Gail: So happy to be here on Teacher Time. It's my favorite show.

Dawn: Mine, too! So, what did you think about those poll results?

Gail: Well, I'm actually really excited, because it looked like there were, you know, more than half of our viewers today have actually gone out and visited a kindergarten classroom, and that's going to be pretty key, you'll find out, as we talk about transition strategies throughout our day today. So, going and visiting, seeing what a classroom looks like, meeting a kindergarten teacher. And I'm not sure if they took their children with them or not from Head Start, but we can talk about that as well as being a good strategy.

Dawn: Great. So, now we'll get into Gail's presentation where she'll be able to tell us some more about some of those strategies.

Gail: Absolutely. So, today we're talking about: "Help Me Make a Strong Start," those strategies for a successful kindergarten transition. So, it is May when we're broadcasting this live, and this -- I remember when I was a Head Start teacher, this was, I guess, kind of a bittersweet time. You're really excited about how much growth the children have made; you're excited that they're going to be moving on to kindergarten. It's kind of hard to believe. And you're also having to say goodbye to them. So, I just remember this as being like, not only an important time for the children, an important time for you, as well as a teacher, like getting ready to say goodbye if they have kind of a traditional school year program.

So, we're going to talk first why we're concerned about these early transition experiences. So, you know in Head Start preschool, we do such good work getting children ready for school, and then it's the end of the year and they move on, but we don't want to stop right there. We want to really be thinking about that transition into the kindergarten time. And so why are we concerned about that? Well, we have some data -- both some national data, some state data -- that tells us how successfully children are making that transition into kindergarten.

So, this slide right here comes from a study where they asked kindergarten teachers to report on what percentage of the children in their programs were transitioning successfully. And so, the good news here is that, you know, a little more than half of the children, they reported, were transitioning successfully; but that also means that almost half of the children were having some difficulty with that transition.

So, and when they were talking about difficulty, it was really about some kind of acting-out behaviors. So, transitions are change, and change can be very stressful for young children, stressful for families, and when we're feeling stressed, we can act out; we can have some challenges there. And so, that's certainly what we're seeing there, and something for us to be mindful about. So, transitions matter.

We're going to get back to that in a moment. But early school experiences matter, too. So, I'm just going to sing to the choir here a little bit and remind us that we know that effective early school experiences, such as what children are getting in your Head Start preschool programs, can close the achievement gaps, that's why we're here, right? We are building those skills, helping children move into kindergarten with a lot of great social and academic skills kind of under their belt, if you will.

We also know that stability and consistency between that preschool classroom and that kindergarten classroom is going to be crucial for children's continued success. So, this is why we're paying attention to transition, is thinking about building some stability and some consistency, so that children aren't leaving our programs ready to go and then kind of experiencing this shock and awe of transition and experiencing some bumps there. So, stability and consistency is important.

And we also know that when children, those first relationships with teachers, so of course their relationship with their Head Start teacher is very important. Their relationship with their kindergarten teacher is really important; so, those successful relationships predict academic and behavior outcomes, not just through kindergarten but actually through eighth grade.

Dawn: Wow.

Gail: That relationship with that kindergarten teacher. So, it's really important for us to think about how can we help that child and that kindergarten teacher get off to a good start.

Dawn: Yes, it really is.

Gail: Right?

Dawn: Yes.

Gail: Okay, so transitions really matter. So, again, from some great studies that have been conducted, a lot from Bob Pianta and his colleagues at University of Virginia -- so just a little shout-out there, one of our partners at NCQTL; we know that the more preschool transition practices that children experience, the better adjustment they have at the beginning of kindergarten.

So, fewer challenging behaviors, better social skills, better frustration tolerance, and this idea of approaches to learning, right? So, they're curious; they're excited about learning, right?

Dawn: So, all that hard work that Head Start teachers have been doing around social-emotional development really makes a difference.

Gail: Yes, yes.

Dawn: So, then what about academic preparation?

Gail: Okay, well, so this next slide is going to be one that you're really excited about. So, this is a study that actually has, you know, almost 20,000 children represented in it, and what they found is that not only do those transition practices, the more transition practices mean better kind of social adjustment or emotional adjustment, but they actually also found that the more transition practices that children experience, the better their spring academic skills.

Dawn: Wow!

Gail: So, it's important, both for social-emotional and academic.

Dawn: Goodness! So, this matters in so many different ways.

Gail: Huge.

Dawn: So, what we have next is a video to show you that gives you the children -- the child's perspective on kindergarten. It features a lot of different children in kindergarten and a little bit older, that tell you about their experiences.

Gail: Excellent.

Dawn: So, check it out.

[Music]

[Video begins]

Girl: What's kindergarten going to be like?

Boy: It's going to be really fun, when you move into kindergarten.

Girl: When I see other kindergartners, I think about how I used to be in kindergarten. You had to line up from alphabetical order of your first or last name, and I lined up for, like, recess and lunch and going to the library and PE and music.

Woman: Why do you line up?

Girl: So, I don't get a glob.

Teacher: I'm waiting until everyone is in a nice straight line in the middle of the hallway!

Boy: Yeah. For leaving play court or leaving school or arriving, we have to walk in a straight line.

Boy: When I rode the bus for the first time, I felt nervous.

Man: Welcome to the bus, to my bus!

Girl (speaking in Spanish): Hello!

Girl: It has yellow everywhere, and it has black windows.

Boy: It gets from home to here, then from here to home.

Girl: This is my class. But this is the lights.

Boy: I was wearing first-day-of-school clothes.

Girl: On my first day, I thought I wouldn't make any friends. And then I did.

Boy: I was nervous that the other kids would be mean to me.

Girl: I was scared to have a new teacher.

Girl: But I was scared.

Girl: I didn't know where everything was and stuff.

Boy: My mom helped me find my seat.

Girl: And I was sad, too, because my mom was going to leave.

Boy: My teacher said, "All the parents have to leave." I like gave my mom a hug.

Girl: We sing our morning song. And then, we go to our journals and then put them in our folders.

Girl: We listen to the teachers. We read with our friends. We learn math.

Girl: Sometimes, we wrote stories together.

Girl: We learn the schedule.

Girl: And we go to gym.

Boy: And do music.

Girl: Shaking the maracas.

Boy: We do journal.

Girl: What did you write about in your journal today?

Girl: Ummmm...

Boy: We write how we're feeling, like if we're scared, sad, mad, happy.



Boy: You check out books on the day where you have library.

Girl: I learned how to do better at art. I learned how to draw regular people, instead of stick people.

Girl: We draw pictures, and in the hallway we hang it up, and the parents come and look at them.

Girl: I learned how to write my name and last name, how to write "apple" and "flower."

Boy: We go on field trips, but not today.

Boy: My favorite thing in kindergarten is lunch.

Boy: Lunchroom.

Boy: You need to eat, and that's all.

Boy: I'm eating.

Girl: In preschool, you didn't get to pick where you got to sit. And in regular school, I got to buy my lunch and pick where I sit -- so, it could be next to a friend.

Boy: What do you play with in school?

Girl: Um, I get to go outside.

Boy: Free choice.

Girl: Mine is, too.

Girl: At preschool you got to really play and you didn't have to do anything, and at kindergarten, you kind of have to learn the alphabet and learn how to write and stuff.

Girl: I like to play with my friends. I like to play inside of classroom.

Boy: I wish we could play more in kindergarten.

Boy: Kindergarten's fun.

Boys: Kindergarten rocks.

[Video ends]

Dawn: All right, now I hope you were enlightened and inspired by those children talking about kindergarten. They were really articulate.

Gail: They really were. So, first of all, I love the sage, you know, second graders reflecting on, "Back in the day, when I was in kindergarten." But you're right, those children were really able to talk about their experiences and their adjustments to kindergarten, right? So, they could be articulate; they could talk about what was concerning to them, what was worrying them, and also how excited they were.

I mean, kindergarten, for the most part, children are really excited to go to kindergarten. They really are. But what we want to do is make sure that that adjustment for them goes smoothly, so that they remain excited about kindergarten, right?

So, they aren't kind of shocked when they get there. But some children are, and for good reason. So, I want to show this next slide here. This actually comes from some research that Karen LaParo and her colleagues have done, where they actually looked at the percentage of time that children are spending in different activities. So, across the bottom of that, you can see the different activities, such as free choice, individual work time, small group time, and whole group time. The orange is the percentage of time that children are spending doing that in preschool or in our Head Start classrooms, and the light blue is kindergarten.

Dawn: Wow.

Gail: So, just looking at that, you can see there are huge differences. Children spend a lot less time in that free choice or that center. I think preschool children think about that as play time; so, you actually hear the boy say, "I wish we could play a lot more in kindergarten." So, you see that that's really a dramatic shift. The amount of time children are expected to work on their own, individually, really shifts. Small group stays about the same, but whole group learning also shifts quite a bit. There's a lot more whole group learning that's happening in kindergarten classrooms. So, of course, with all of these big changes, no wonder some children kind of experience a little bit of bump or a little bit of adjustment, if we don't kind of get them ready for that experience, all right?

There's some other kindergarten changes that are important to note here that people are probably already thinking about, and of course if they visited a kindergarten, which most of our viewers have recently, they've noticed these things as well. You know, there's big changes in the academic demands and in the curriculum. There can be some big changes there in how much children are writing. Children are expected to learn to read by the end of kindergarten now. So, big changes there.

There's less family connection time with school; so, it breaks my heart when the little boy in the video says, you know, "The teacher said all the parents have to leave." You know, it's the first day of school, and all the parents had to leave. In fact, I had a principal once tell me that she saw a teacher -- or a parent that was kind of up in a tree trying to get a look inside that kindergarten classroom, right?

So, families feel less connected, and there just is, by the nature of the ways that some schools work, less connection with that school. The family's not bringing them, picking them up every day; they're not in the classrooms volunteering as much, although I hope they would be. The complexity of the social environment really changes, too. There are more children; there are more peers, and there are fewer adults, and that fewer adults means less time with a teacher. So, think about, in our preschool classrooms, you know, maybe we have 18 children, maybe three adults. You know, there's often a lap or a hand you can hold that's available to you. Not so, in kindergarten sometimes. And so, all of that, again, can create some real adjustment problems for children. It's just a big change there.

And here's just one more slide, in case I haven't talked about this enough. Preschool versus kindergarten. And so, we can see just, again, like the hours of the day might change; so, they might be there twice as long sometimes. The ratio changes; we've talked about that. The fact that in our preschool classrooms, we're often doing more play-based instruction, children are learning through play. And kindergarten used to be that way. It's changing now, right? So, there's more explicit instruction there. We move from that child-directed to teacher-directed.

So, again, a lot more is going on, a big shift, if you will, between preschool and kindergarten. And children can experience some stress, if this is not -- if we don't kind of help them make that transition smoothly between those two environments.

Dawn: Well, I think -- you know, you think the setting is different, but seeing it presented like that, it hits me. Like, that setting really makes a big difference. So, it makes me worried about families. Like, what can we do to support families to make that transition a little bit easier?

Gail: That's right. So, we're going to talk about some -- a kind of a way to conceptualize more effective transitions. And so, in talking about the different connections that we can make here. So, one thing to think about is that transitions across the life span really are all about change, right? So, you can think about any transition that you've experienced; so, maybe there's a new baby, maybe there's -- you've moved to a different home or to a different city. Maybe, you've changed your school; maybe, you've changed your marital status; maybe someone's retired. I mean, all of these kind of big changes can be stressful, right? They can be hard, and they can be stressful. But what makes them successful and what's made them successful for you, when you've experienced transitions is when you have enough information about what's going to happen, where you're going -- what's going to be different or the same; when you have a relationship both with kind of if someone's coming with you through that change or somebody on the other side; you've built a relationship with them on that other part of -- other side of that transition. And when there's some alignment or some consistency, right?

So, if something kind of stays the same, right? So, maybe you're -- if you've moved to a new house, your room gets set up the same way. Or, you know, like something stays the same, right? All of those things really can help with a successful adjustment, and that's the way that we want to be thinking about children and families making that transition from our Head Start classrooms into kindergarten. It's a big change.

They're walking over that bridge. I love that picture of the bridge. They're walking over that bridge, and we want to think about what can we do to fortify that bridge, to make that bridge strong, so that the walk is smooth, okay?

Dawn: Oh, yes.

Gail: All right. So, some things we want to think about. So, keep in mind information, relationships, and alignment. I also want you to keep in mind this guiding principle, is that for successful transitions, remember that it's really -- it's a process. It's not a program, it's not a one-size-fits-all transition activity, okay? So, an open house might work for one family. An open house might not work for other families. Getting information in English might work for some families. It might not work for other families, okay? So, what we've understood is that families have different preferences for transition strategies and practices, and they might have some different needs that we want to adjust for, all right? So it's not just a program or a one-size-fits-all. It's really a process, and it's important to individualize, just like we individualize for all kinds of things.

All right, here's another kind of picture of this, is this way that people used to think about school readiness and transition. And that is that we get the child ready for school, right? We give them all these great social and academic skills; they're ready to go, and they head to kindergarten, right? And that's the way that we thought about transition, right? That we get them ready to go, they go to kindergarten, and they're ready. So it was really just the child moving from preschool into kindergarten. But we really find that that's an inadequate view of transition.

So, researchers such as Bob Pianta and his colleagues have really said, you know, that's really not a very supportive view of that transition to kindergarten, and it really forgets that children are within families; they're within schools; they're within communities, and so we really have to have a more holistic and interactive view of that transition.

So, they would really emphasize that connections here are the focus in a successful transition, that we're thinking about the connections that we can make. And this seems really complicated. Lots of arrows going lots of ways, but that's how it is, right? So, we're thinking about building those connections, between the preschool teacher, our Head Start teachers, and kindergarten teachers. So, again, those teachers that have gone and visited a kindergarten classroom, they've met a kindergarten teacher; they've connected in that way.

Maybe, they are thinking about sharing information about the way that they -- their curriculum or their assessments that they use, sharing information about their routines, sharing information about individual children with parent permission, of course. So, making those connections between teachers, helping families make connections. So, maybe the family of a -- that are in Head Start right now, connecting them with families that their children transitioned last year, right? So, having some kind of peer support there, helping them kind of understand what that transition will be like. Helping connect the families with the teachers or the kindergarten teachers with that school.

So, you can -- those arrows go in all different ways; so, you can make a lot of different connections there. And that's the way we want to think about successful transition, is that it's not just moving the child filled with all these great skills to kindergarten, but it's really thinking about building these connections, sharing information, building those relationships, and creating some alignment in there. So, a lot of connections.

We want to just talk about a few of them today. So, one is that child-school connection, and here the goal really of this connection is to foster the child's familiarity with the classroom setting and the people that are in it, all right? So, where are you going? What is that setting like? What's that school like? What's that classroom like? Who's there, right? Kindergarten teachers are there; a lot more children are there, and the whole purpose here is to get them comfortable, so that we can increase their comfort, decrease their anxiety or stress, right? "I know where I'm going. I'm getting that information. I see some alignment between things that are the same," right? "Oh, they have the same carpet squares that we had." But another big thing here is building a teacher-child relationship, okay? So building that relationship between that child and that kindergarten teacher, remember how important that is?

Dawn: Yes, it is.

Gail: Eighth grade, right? Really important to build that relationship. So, how can we think about that as Head Start teachers? How can we think about what role we could play in helping build that connection

between -- that relationship between not only the child and ourselves, but that child and their kindergarten teacher and that next relationship.

So, maybe taking a field trip, meeting a kindergarten teacher. Finding out where children will be going to kindergarten and arranging a time that they can meet that kindergarten teacher. Maybe, it's inviting that kindergarten teacher to come visit your classroom and see the child being really successful in your Head Start program.

Dawn: So, I was wondering, are books a good way to help decrease anxiety and get kids more comfortable?

Gail: That is an incredible way to do that.

Dawn: Well, that's what we were thinking, because we brought some books we wanted to show you guys. One of the ideas we were thinking of to make that child-school connection is to take a -- do a home literacy bag over the summer where you put these books in there, and parents can read it to children over the summer. And it helps -- and these books also come in other languages, so it helps try to make that connection a little bit.

Gail: That is such a great idea, because you can show pictures of what kindergarten is like; you can talk about that first day of kindergarten, what it might be like. And I love the idea that you're thinking about involving families and parents, right? Literacy bags, what a great way to start, towards the end of the year, sticking some transition books in there about going to kindergarten. So smart. Such a smart idea. It's like you read my mind, too, because the next connection I want to talk about is that family-school connection, right?

So, to foster the family's collaboration and engagement with the school and engage them in that transition process. And so here I think a couple things are key. So, one is helping families share information about their individual child with that kindergarten teacher, right? I want to tell you not only kind of the vital information -- certainly about if they have allergies or anything like that -- but I also want you to know what they might be like when they're feeling tired, how they might act when they meet someone new.

I want you to know what it seems like when they're getting hungry. I want you to just know my child: What they really love, what might scare them, what might be something that excites them. So, sharing that individual information. We collect so much great assessment information in Head Start, so how can we figure out a way to help families share that with that receiving kindergarten teacher, in a way that kindergarten teachers would like to receive that, okay? So, sharing that information.

And also helping familiarize parents with the school routines. Things are different, right? Attendance is incredibly important. So, it's important in our Head Start programs. It's also really important once they get to school, right? So, helping parents understand attendance policies, that they need to get there on time, right? So, that might be different, because sometimes in preschool, children show up at different times. Getting there on time is important. Getting them familiar with how will they get lunch, right? In our Head Start classrooms, children come, we provide a healthy, nourishing meal in a kind of family serving way. But how will they get lunch when they go to kindergarten? How do they fill out the paperwork to make sure that they can get free and reduced meals if they qualify? So, how are they going to do that? What's the crossing guard? You know, what role do they play? So just all of that.

Helping familiarize parents with those school routines, so they're not just wondering on that first day filled with anxiety. Because, I can tell you, that first day is really a hard time to ask all of those questions; so we want to help parents get familiar with that before.

Dawn: It's so much to think about.

Gail: So much to think about, I know. We know. We've had children make that transition.

Dawn: It's happening!

Gail: I know, it's happening again. It keeps happening.

Dawn: Yeah.



Gail: All right, so another connection to think about is school-school connection. So, remember that we want to think about information, relationships, and alignment. And so, again, I'm so excited that so many of our viewers today have actually gone to a kindergarten in the last year. I don't think I ever did that when I was a Head Start teacher, and I realize now that that would've been really important, because I could've been more aware of what the routines are like in kindergarten and started to just help children understand how the routines might be different, right? So, in our classroom, we had a bathroom in the classroom, right, that children could go to when they needed to, but in kindergarten, what I would've found out is that that's kind of different, right? You have to get a hall pass; you have to wear the hall pass; you have to keep the hall pass; you have to find the bathroom.

Gail: Use the right one, right.

Dawn: You might get one a day.

Gail: Yeah, so it can be really different. So, helping understand what the routines are, finding out what their curriculum is, right? Are there some things I can help children get familiar with before they go on into their kindergarten? The learning standards, making sure that we're aware of what those are and that we're aligning with those. And then also assessment information and sharing our assessment information. But finding out if there are some ways that we can build some consistency around those. So, all of those things helping make those school-school connections. And there are a lot of transition activities.

It might be hard for our viewers to see everything that's on there, but there are just a whole list of transition activities that teachers find really helpful. So, not only do children find them helpful, not only do parents find transition activities helpful, but teachers find them really helpful. Both preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers for the most part find almost the same activities very helpful here. So, visiting, having preschool children visit kindergarten classrooms before, having preschool teachers visit a classroom before, a kindergarten classroom, so they can be aware of those things. Having elementary school wide activities and inviting preschool children, right?

So, saying -- a lot of our Head Start programs might be, from viewers, might be in elementary school classrooms or in school buildings right now, so, "Hey, can our kids go to those school assemblies? Can our kids go to the curriculum night or the science night so that they can start to be familiar with those?" Having spring orientations about kindergarten for parents. So, having maybe some of our Head Start parents that have made that transition come back and connect during a parent night. All these kinds of things we can do.

And sharing written records is something that both preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers find really, really helpful.

Dawn: Oh, sure.

Gail: Yes, yeah. I heard of one program -- this was great -- that they actually spend the first two weeks of the Head Start year; they actually, instead of bringing on their new children at that point, they spend that time with teachers going back and visiting the kids that went to kindergarten, right? So, they kind of -- they drop in, and they get to see the kids, they get to connect with the teacher and the families and make sure that transition's going smoothly. I love that. Love that idea. And then the last connection I want to talk about is one that's really important, and that's a child-child connection. And that is helping children transition to kindergarten with at least one reciprocal friend, right?

So, hopefully our feeder patterns are such that a teacher can find out who's going to the same kindergarten, maybe even the same kindergarten classroom, and just saying, you know, "Hey, Dawn, did you know that Kristin's also going to that same kindergarten? Oh, isn't that great?" Because having a buddy, having somebody there, can really help buffer the stress of that kind of new setting and that new kind of context for you.

Dawn: Oh, that makes perfect sense. I mean, even when I go to a workshop, I feel better when I know that there's someone there.

Gail: Right. Oh, yeah. Exactly, right? You walk in, you're like, "I've never done this before, but I know Dawn, so I can sit next to her." All of a sudden, my anxiety goes down and I'm ready to concentrate and learn.

Same principle for that child-child connections. So, just to kind of reiterate fostering those successful adjustments for children going from our Head Start preschool classrooms into kindergarten is to think about the information and relationships and the alignment, and that all serves to make that walk across that bridge really smooth and successful for them.

Dawn: Oh, thank you, Gail. We appreciate it so much. They're just jam-packed with strategies that you can try and use in your classroom still at this time of the year. So, we are going to take a short break, and Kristin will be back with me to do Try It Out!

[Music]

Dawn: We are back for Try it Out!, where we're going to be sharing some strategies that you can use for kindergarten transition.

Kristin: That's right, and if we haven't seen this bridge enough, I want to show it again, because it's such a great visual to really, really show that connection. And really, the successful kindergarten transitions are all about connections, all about the relationships. And as Gail just talked about, those are not built on just the first day of school or even the day before school. Those are built out a long time prior to the child's starting kindergarten.

Dawn: That's right. And so some of these things we're talking about right now really relate to the videos that we're going to show you. And I wanted to show you this again that Gail showed, that it's really about those efforts of the players you see up there. So, for the teachers, for the peers, for administrators and the community and the family, they're all focused on supporting that child through transition. But they're also supporting each other, so teachers supporting families, and families are connecting with administrators in the next school, and teachers, and all of them are working together individually and collectively for the child.

Kristin: That's right. So we are going to show you two videos. And the first video is going to be sort of a community perspective on kindergarten transitions. You're going to hear from some administrators, some teachers, some parents for ideas for how they do kindergarten transition and how important it is to make those connections.

So watch with us.

[Video begins]

Kevin Schwartz: The relationship is absolutely vital to helping their students be prepared for what's going to be expected when they get to kindergarten. In our interactions with them, we can help them understand what the students need to know, and they can help us understand what they need to learn.

Teacher: The last two weeks of our program, we do transitioning.

Athisia Juarez: And the kids have portfolios where we put in their work, like writing their name from the beginning, when they first came, and when they ended.

Teacher: We do songs. We talked about safety.

Mary Jo Christenson: We're working with families to kind of prepare them on what school-ready looks like, to get their children really focused on those skills that they'll need.

Maggie Thompson: We're using some of the same language and some of the same methods and approaches, so when students leave the preschool classrooms that we work with and enter into the kindergarten classrooms, it's not a huge transition.

Kevin: Our kindergarten teachers are doing a couple of things, and probably the biggest thing that we started this year was we delayed school by three days, and so those teachers had the opportunity for a three-day period to meet with parents and children individually.

Erika Twohy: They get to meet the teacher; they see where they sit; they see the different areas in the classroom.

Parent: He got to meet some of his peers and he got to meet some of his PM class.

Kevin: That interview process really provided the teachers and the families that nice transition into kindergarten that they've never had before.

Woman: And every kindergarten teacher that I talk to that does that loves it.

Kevin: In addition to that, the teachers do some transition work the follow -- or the year before; so they'll do it this spring for kids coming into kindergarten next year.

Woman: That intimidation or uncertainty of walking into a brand-new place is no longer there. They've already got the connection, so the transition is really smooth.

[Video ends]

Dawn: So, one of the reasons we like showing that video is that it really highlights the connections between administrators and teachers and parents, and they talk about the importance of that peer connection all in that one video and how important those relationships are to have. And so you talked about -- you saw a parent sharing how important it was for the child to meet their new kindergarten teacher and to meet with their peers. You saw the one administrator talking about preparing families for what school-ready looks like. I mean, what does school-ready look like? Do they know their ABCs? Are they starting to read? Or is it more that you can sit and listen well in the classroom? Like, parents -- it would really help parents to understand what school-ready means and what it looks like.

Kristin: Absolutely.

Dawn: And then, you know, also using some of the same approaches and the same language so there's more of that continuity that Gail was talking about.

Kristin: Right, the language that we might use in preschool also is what they use in kindergarten for routines and everything, yeah. Yeah, important. Okay, so the next video that we're going to show you is an event that takes place in one program, and it's called Kindergarten Round-up, and you probably are doing something similar to this.

It's about enrolling children; it's about really gaining a lot of information in one event about the child and how they're developing and how ready they are for kindergarten. And so kind of look at this video and think about ways that you can maybe replicate some of these things that this program does in this event. And we'll watch.

[Video begins]

Kevin: Here we are at the Kindergarten Round-up for the Anacortes School District. We have quite a few people -- volunteers and school district staff -- who are here to register our students and also to screen them for early learning. We do a lot of different communicating to all of our private providers in town, which is really preschool and early childhood centers, and provided them with our school registration packets and let them know. It's also been in the newspaper; it's been on reader boards, and in our Clamdigger, which is a local flyer that we have. So, we've done a pretty good job of making sure that the community knows this day is coming.

The various rooms throughout this area have people inside of them, and that's where the kids will go get their hearing checked and all that. So, if there's a concern at that point when they come through, they'll check it off, and that gives them the time between now and the time school starts to go see a doctor. And then once -- after they've had their health part of it checked, then they come in, and this is our developmental screening, and this is really the part that we developed as the school district to look at how many kids coming into kindergarten are considered school-ready.

So, we have an occupational and a physical therapist doing screening; we have speech therapists doing screening for articulation and receptive and expressive language, and we have a kindergarten teacher and a volunteer doing cognitive screenings. So, at that point they're looking at letter, number recognition, counting -- rote counting and also 1:1 correspondence.

Teacher: What sound does that letter make maybe?

Girl: Buh.

Teacher: Right.

Kevin: And then when they're all done here, if they want to, there's a school bus outside, and there actually is a driver on it, and they're just sitting there, and the kids can get on the bus and play around and get a little bit of an idea of what a school bus looks like from the inside. Because typically they're used to seeing them drive by, but they haven't had a chance to be on one yet, so... And that's really the whole process.

[Video ends]

Dawn: So, one of the things that stands out to me about that video is how much information is gathered about one child in 45 minutes.

Kristin: It's amazing. Yeah, it's amazing. You know, hearing and vision and physical and cognitive and language, all of that within one event.

Dawn: Right.

Kristin: Yeah.

Dawn: And that the new kindergarten programs can be prepared ahead of time to support them.

Kristin: Right, and they're enrolled at the end of the event, so yeah.

Dawn: Yes. And it gets it done for the kindergarten program and for families. They're done in one shot. And, you know, a lot of the strategies we're showing today will look differently depending on where your Head Start program is. Some programs are rural; some programs are urban. It's a nationwide program.

And so, there is one program I used to work with in Idaho that had 17 different LEAs. And so when they do kindergarten transition, they did some different things. Like they --

Kristin: That's amazing.

Dawn: It's amazing.

Kristin: Seventeen!

Dawn: Seventeen different LEAs that they're working with, which means -- and sometimes multiple elementary schools within those LEAs. And so they would do a great job about preparing information about the child and supporting the family and transitioning -- transitioning them with information from preschool to kindergarten. So, all the things that we're sharing here with you today, especially the information that Gail shared, are strategies that are effective for kindergarten transition. And one of the beautiful things about Head Start is that, because we are so diverse in the types of programs we can provide, you can find a way to make those work for you in a way that's great for your environment.

Kristin: Absolutely. It's got to work for your program.

Dawn: Yeah.

Kristin: Yep. Okay, so we are going to go right into our resources section. We're going to offer you a lot of really exciting resources today. And one of the first resources that we're going to show you today is a great, great book. A lot of the information that we've talked about today comes from this book. It's called "Successful Kindergarten Transition." It's by Robert Pianta and Marcia Kraft-Sayre, and it's just a fantastic resource. In the back, there are some really great checklists. So, checklist for transition coordinators, for principals, for teachers, and it just really helps to know that you're on the right track.

Some things that we pulled out were practicing kindergarten rituals at school. So, again, that lunch ritual. Or maybe you find another bathroom in the building that the children can walk to.



Connecting parents whose children are going to the same school, we talked about how important that was. Visiting kindergarten teachers. Again, all of this is really important, and this book is just a fantastic guide.

Dawn: All right. And then there's also Ready Freddy. This is a website that's dedicated solely to kindergarten transition. There's a number of resources on there that focus on the components of quality instruction. They've got resources specifically for schools and communities, researchers, and parents. And then you'll also find some videos and interactive books and songs. So, it's a great place to get a whole bunch of information on kindergarten transition.

Kristin: That's right. So another fantastic resource which I really, really love, and it's one that can really help to make that family-school connection. It's called "Introducing Me!" And it comes from the Washington kindergarten transition program here, and it's a really fantastic document that families and children can fill out together.

So, lots of questions that are really family-friendly, child-friendly, that children can fill out and answer. We have some right here just to pull out. "When I feel tired, I might:" You know, what? What do I like when I feel tired? Or when I feel angry, when I feel sad, when I feel excited. So, it gives such a nice snapshot of a child and how they -- you know, things that make them feel comfortable. And this can just be brought to the teacher. I know I taught kindergarten and preschool, and I would've loved to have received something like this on some of the children that were coming into my program. So, it's a great resource. I know we have the link up there for you.

Dawn: And also there is NCQTL Kindergarten Transition page that's on the ECLKC. You'll find the whole versions of the videos we showed you today, so, the Children's Perspective and the Community Perspective, as well as some planning resources. But in addition to that is this Kindergarten Transition DVD that your ECE specialist has. This has everything that NCQTL has done around kindergarten transition, and it's got lots of different ideas and activities that you can use in addition to this.

Kristin: To this. Let me show you. So, it's a fantastic calendar. So, it's a planning calendar. It's called "Get Ready for Kindergarten!" It has activities for every month for this calendar. I'm just going to flip to May, because it is May.

And you will just see that there are still lots and lots of things that can be done even in May for children and families. I know that a lot of your activities have already happened, and a lot of maybe the paperwork has already happened, but we can continue to build that bridge to connect families and children with kindergartens throughout even in May. So, look for this, and you want to ask your ECE specialist about this if you haven't seen it, but it's a fantastic resource.

Dawn: Yes. And also we wanted to show you all a few of the children's books on kindergarten transition. There's a number of books that we showed you earlier today, but we also wanted to show you some of the ones that are in at least Spanish, and there are some that are available in other languages. So, this is "¡Que Nervios!" And this is "Un Beso en Mi Mano." Everyone knows "The Kissing Hand." But these are two books that really help with that transition into kindergarten and help get children prepared for that.

Kristin: That's right.

Dawn: Okay, so we are going to take another short break with a poll. And over the course of the summer -- this is going to be our last live Teacher Time show until the fall. But over the course of the summer, we're going to rebroadcast two of the shows that you all will be able to get certificates for; so, what we wanted to do was ask you guys what topics you would like to see on those rebroadcasts. So, go ahead and do that voting, and while you're doing that, Gail and Kristin are going to be here to do Resiliency and Wellness. So, please go ahead and do that poll while you hear some music.

[Music]

Kristin: All right, everybody, we're back. Thank you for taking that poll. We're excited about the summer rebroadcasting. And Gail is back with us. Hi, Gail.

Gail: Hello.

Kristin: And I know that you always calm us down in the end. Thank you very much.

Gail: I try, I try.

Kristin: I can't wait to -- [laughs] you do a great job with it. Let us know what is on for today for Resiliency and Wellness.

Gail: All right. All right. So, today's topic around resiliency and wellness, something that we know is really important as teachers. This is a hard job, and our well-being really contributes to our effectiveness as teachers, so, it's something we want to take seriously. So, you have permission to take care of yourself, because it's actually very critical to your job.

Kristin: Doctor's orders.

Gail: That's right, that's right. Okay, so today's tip is a nice one here, which is building and nurturing your support network: your friends, your families, your coworkers that support you. And so there is just a lot of research now that suggests that having a support network is connected to your psychological well-being as well as your health. So, supportive friends, colleagues, family members, that's the tip for today. I want to talk a little bit more about how they help, okay? So, our support network really, they share in the good things that happen to us, and this really can increase our own happiness and our excitement about what's going well for us, okay? So, those people that are in your support network that are celebrating the things, that are happy when good things happen to you, that are not jealous or mad or at least don't act that way, then that is a good support network for you, all right? And our support network really will be the people that help us realize our goals, our dreams, to be our best selves.

So, whether that is to increase healthy habits, whether that is to get that degree that I want to get or go back to school, whatever that is -- to save money -- whatever it is that's helping me to be the best person I can be, and those people will also help us to be the best teacher we can be, right? I really want to get better at this, I want to be better at connecting with families; our support network is going to help us. They're going to be our cheerleaders to help us do that. And the other great thing about a support network is that they share the tough times with us as well, and that can be everything from having a bad day, right? Those bad days; we've all had those. Or, you know, pretty serious things: going through a loss, going through -- having a chronic illness. Those things that can be very stressful for us, when we have a positive and supportive network, when we surround ourselves with those people that are positive around us, they're going to help buffer that stress.

Just like that friend going to kindergarten with you, surrounding ourselves with friends are going to help us through those tough times. And so really the charge is today is to think about and find those role models and those supporters who model for you and help you be the best teacher that you can be, help you be the best person that you can be.

And I also want to say a part of this, too, is being cautious of those people around us that might zap some of our energy, that might drain our energy, drain our enthusiasm, that might be -- that we might feel are undermining some of our goals, right? So, if you have a goal to really connect with families and increase your connection with families, just be aware if you're spending too much time around people that are always blaming parents, blaming families. If you have a goal of engaging in healthy behaviors, be cautious around those that seem to undermine that by, you know, encouraging you to not take that walk or to -- you know?

So, you really want to find those role models and supporters that can help you. I have a good friend who talks about this as kind of creating your own personal board of directors, right, for you. And if they're not working for you, then you spend a little less time or at least pay a little less attention to them. So, I want to give people permission to do that.

Kristin: That's great.

Gail: And I also want to say that because finding kind of a support network has all of these great benefits and outcomes, it's never too late. It's never too late to meet a new friend. You can learn how to be a good friend at 4 and at 40, right? So you can find some new friends, you can invite someone to have coffee or just spend a little bit more time with them. "I'd like to visit your classroom." Those kinds of things. So, it's never too late to build and to maintain that supportive network.

Kristin: Well, I think that's great. I mean, thinking about my first year as a teacher and how much it was easy for me to get discouraged. I didn't feel like I was doing all the things that I could be doing. Luckily, I was in a place where, you know, the teachers around me had more experience, right, and could actually -- you know, it just kind of -- I wanted to be around them. I wanted to be around them and inspired by them all the time, so yeah. You were one of them.

Gail: Oh! That's so sweet.

Kristin: Just had to say that.

Gail: Want to get coffee after? Okay, good.

Kristin: Really, that's a really great -- a really great key for today, so thank you.

Gail: Thanks.

Kristin: Thanks, Gail. All right, so we are going to be back in just a moment. We're going to take a very short break. We are going to close our show for the day, but we have an incredible media team here at NCQTL that take hours and hours of footage of amazing teachers, adorable children. A lot of the footage we can't use, because it might not fit exactly in one of our training suites, but we want to show it to you, because there are so many clips that just make us smile. So, please hold on for a clip at the very end that is definitely going to make you smile. We like to call it "our moment of awww!"

[Music]

Kristin: All right, we're back after that short break, and Dawn is back with us.

Hi, Dawn.

Dawn: Hi.

Kristin: All right, so we are going to wrap up today. We just have some really important things we want to tell you about. So, as Dawn said earlier, we're going to take a break for the summer. But we will be rebroadcasting on June 9th and July 14th, and those are going to be decided by you today, so we will look at those results and just tell you which topics we're going to rebroadcast. The exciting thing is that, even though you can always watch these archived recordings, this time with the rebroadcasting, you will be able to get a certificate for watching for that day.

All right? So, tune in to those if you want to get a certificate and if you want to see the show again. We will be having some live chat during the show, so you can always ask questions. And then, we're going to start up with new shows in the fall, and a lot of what we're going to be doing is going to be around instructional interactions.

Dawn: And we also want you to stay in touch over the summer. And one of the things we wanted to share with you guys is this resource here -- for successful kindergarten transitions. And some of those children's books we actually have to give away to you guys. So, what we would love for you to do is just shoot us an email. And again, send us your ideas or photos if there aren't children in them or any type of communication that tells us how you might do kindergarten transition or anything about any of our other topics on social-emotional development that we covered over the year.

These are going to be given out on a first-come first-served basis, so go ahead and email at [ncqtl@uw.edu](mailto:ncqtl@uw.edu), so we can give you this book and some of the other children's transitions books.

Kristin: That's right. All right, so please follow us on Twitter if you want to. It's (hashtag) NCQTL. There's always exciting things happening on Twitter. And you can join right now if you want to.

Dawn: That's right. And then if you haven't signed in yet, please do that so we get a record of your attendance, and you can opt in to get our follow-up announcements, as we mentioned earlier in the show. And that'll help us stay in touch over the summer about the rebroadcasts and the other information we'll send out then. So, the evaluation certificate should be opened up now. Please go ahead and complete that. You can expect the certificate later next week. And the recordings of this Teacher Time should be available later next week as well at [teachertime.org](http://teachertime.org).

Kristin: All right, so we will see you back in the fall. And as promised, here is our moment that is just sure to put a smile on your face.

[Music]

[Video begins]

[Children and teachers talking in the background]

Boy: [Blows raspberry]

Teacher: Adrian, where's your spot? Did you get your plate yet?

[Music]