

TATS eUpdate
Transition

Introduction to School: Orientation or Transition?

December 2007

Transitions are a process of change, and are a natural part of individual growth. Children may enter school from a variety of early intervention services or early care and education environments. These include: (a) from home to school district early childhood program, or kindergarten; (b) from a private or public school early childhood program to kindergarten; (c) from Early Steps (Part C) to prekindergarten programs for children with disabilities (Part B); or, (d) from prekindergarten programs for children with disabilities to kindergarten. Inherent in these transitions are a combination of factors such as becoming familiar with a new environment, getting to know a new set of adults and friends, and learning a new set of rules. Young children with special needs have additional concerns with respect to transition as they may have developmental delays that impact their ability to communicate, socialize, or acclimate to a new environment as readily as their typically developing peers.

Best Practice:

When considering the transition to school or educational placement at any age, a distinction should be made between programs that offer ‘orientation-type’ activities and those that offer ‘transition-type’ activities. The most common type of program implemented within the community is an orientation program. These programs provide basic information about the school and services that are provided. A tour of the campus, or classroom observation for the adult and child, may also be offered. This general approach provides information and an opportunity for the family to explore independently. It does not necessarily connect the child and family in a personal way to the program.

Conversely, programs that provide hands-on transition activities plan well in advance and offer an opportunity to connect the child and family to the new school environment. Children and families are able to see how the new school functions by participating in the day-to-day activities of the program. By doing this, children are able to interact positively with their new environment, families are able to communicate their concerns and hopes, and the school personnel can communicate expectations. Additionally, parents may be able to see similarities between past and future educational settings, which will give them a better sense of understanding. Each individual or agency involved in the transition process does not exist in isolation. Instead, they overlap so that the child and family feel supported and connectivity is established. Regardless of the type of program that is in place, planning is required, and open communication between families and the program,

is essential. Follow-up is recommended to ensure a smooth transition takes place, and family satisfaction is ascertained.

In order for programs to offer an effective transition to school, particularly for children with special needs, all of the key players must be involved. Administrators need to understand and provide resources and support for transition activities that can build bridges between agencies and their teachers. Sending and receiving teachers must be willing and able to share existing records and information, or arranging class visitations that will support a smooth transition for the child. Finally, families should be active participants in the transition process, as they will be transitioning along with the child.

Reflection:

1. What types of activities does my school district endorse as part of the transition to school?
2. What are the intended outcomes of the activities? Are the activities orientation-type or transition-type?
3. How are school-based administrators prepared to support staff and families in the process of transitioning young children to their schools?
4. How are sending and receiving teachers prepared to support the transition of young children and their families?
5. What is in place to assist all of the key players in becoming aware of the best practices related to the transitions of young children, particularly those with special needs?

“Education is the best provision for old age.” - Aristotle

References and Resources:

Easing the Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten: A guide for Early Childhood teachers and administrators. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Head Start Information and Publication Center.

www.headstartinfo.org/recruitment/trans_hs.htm

Florida’s Transition Project (FTP)

Provides technical assistance to local community partner agencies to assist them in outlining transition policies and procedures, and developing interagency agreements that define the system of transition for young children birth to six years and their families. Project resources include: Guidebook to Build Better Community Transition Systems; Interagency Agreement Checklist; Community Transition Self-Assessment, Transition

Booklet for Parents of Young Children Moving from Early Steps at Age Three to Other Community Programs, Transition Tools. Florida's Transition Project is affiliated with the Technical Assistance and Training System (TATS). www.floridatransitionproject.com

Florida Rule 6A-6.03026 Florida Administrative Code (FAC) Special Programs for Prekindergarten Children with Disabilities and 6A-6.03027 (FAC) Special Programs for Children Three Through Five Years Old Who are Developmentally Delayed.

<https://www.flrules.org/gateway/readFile.asp?sid=0&tid=1062846&type=1&file=6A-6.03026.doc>

<https://www.flrules.org/gateway/readFile.asp?sid=0&tid=1062943&type=1&file=6A-6.03027.doc>

Kraft-Sayre, M.E. & Pianta, R.C. (2000). *Enhancing the transition to kindergarten*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia. National Center for Early Development & Learning.

Krider, H. (2002). Getting Parents "Ready" for Kindergarten: The Role of Early Childhood Education. Harvard Family Research Project

<http://www.terrifictransitions.org/GettingParents.pdf>

National Early Childhood Transition Center (NECTC)

The Center's mission is to examine factors that promote successful transitions between infant/toddler programs, preschool programs, and public school programs for young children with disabilities and their families. The primary objective of the National Early Childhood Transition Center (NECTC) is to investigate and validate practices and strategies that enhance the early childhood transition process and support positive school outcomes for children with disabilities. The site contains resources including information and guides for transition, research, and policy and practice resources. Part of the site is available in Spanish.

<http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/NECTC/default.asp>

Terrific Transitions, Supporting Children's Transition to Kindergarten

A collaborative effort of the SERVE Regional Educational Laboratory and the National Head Start Association. Provides a wide variety of transition information and resources for families, professionals, and community partnerships to use as they address children's transitions into kindergarten. Provides activities and links to research and a trainer's guide to facilitate training on the transition to kindergarten.

<http://www.serve.org/TT/>

Technical Assistance & Training System (TATS)

Statewide project providing technical assistance and training to programs in Florida serving prekindergarten children with disabilities. Website provides information and

resources on curriculum and instruction, evaluation and assessment, family involvement, inclusion, program effectiveness/quality, and transition, as well as, linking early childhood partners.

www.tats.ucf.edu

Transition from Early Steps to the School District Prekindergarten Program or Other Community Programs for Children with Disabilities. Draft Technical Assistance Paper. (2007)

http://www.tats.ucf.edu/GenDocs/TAPs/Transition_DraftTAP.pdf



TATS eUpdates are a service of the Technical Assistance & Training System Communities of Practice. The TATS eUpdates are intended to provide current information related to best practices or trends in the education of young children with special needs in the areas of Transition, Program Effectiveness, Inclusion, Curriculum & Instruction, Evaluation & Assessment, and Family Involvement. For more information about the TATS Communities of Practices and the TATS eUpdates, please log on to www.tats.ucf.edu