



Kindergarten Transition

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Introduction

The transition to kindergarten is an exciting and pivotal milestone in the lives of children and families. Kindergarten transition refers not only to the period during which families register their children for school, but also to a collection of activities, benchmarks, and milestones, varying from social emotional to academic, that weave together to support kindergarten readiness for the child, family, and educators.

Prior to entering kindergarten, children engage in a wide array of diverse learning experiences. These early preschool experiences may include center-based child care, home-based child care, Head Start, Pre-K Counts, relative provider care, evidence-based home visiting, and/or early intervention.

Transition activities support children and engage families as they enter a new school as well as promote collaboration between early childhood programs and elementary schools.

Beyond enrollment, engagement with holistically supportive kindergarten transition activities has been shown to support social-emotional adjustment to school and relate positively to children’s academic achievement as measured at the end of kindergarten.¹ Kindergarten readiness has also been shown to correlate positively to achievement across a child’s academic lifetime, with a greater portion of young children

demonstrating “on-track” academic performance in third and eighth grade (as measured through district and standardized assessments) and a higher rate of on-time graduation than peers who did not meet kindergarten-ready standards at the time of K-12 school entry.²

To advance the mission of supporting equitable access to a strong kindergarten transition for all children across the region and to foster inter-agency collaboration, Trying Together has compiled the following resources, promising practices, and policy recommendations for stakeholders.



Research On Transition Activities

A growing body of evidence underscores the importance of specific, coordinated, and well-executed transition activities to sustain and build on young children’s social, emotional, and academic competencies as they enter kindergarten. Because children enter kindergarten from a wide variety of education systems, cultures, and backgrounds, successful kindergarten transition programs are those that take into account the diverse experiences and needs of families as well as the unique community within which they serve.³ Successful transition plans are not one-size-fits-all, but are likely to include: varied activity types and times across the year; engagement with family, community, and school (including both early childhood programs and the receiving kindergarten district); resources in multiple modalities (electronic, printed, presented, etc.);

and supporting access through multilingual and inclusive resources. This format leads to increased parent-initiated engagement during kindergarten and supports children in achieving greater academic gains throughout the kindergarten school year, regardless of socioeconomic status, with gains for children whose families are considered “low socioeconomic status (SES)” being even more pronounced than the gains observed for children of moderate and/or high SES.⁴

In addition to supporting academic achievement, strong kindergarten transition practices equip teachers with the opportunity to evaluate children’s social-emotional skills and individual needs and strengths. A 2008 study, “Pre-Kindergarten Teachers’ Use of Transition Practices and Students Adjusting to Kindergarten,” found a positive association between the number of transition activities and the kindergarten teachers’ perceptions of children’s social and emotional adjustment. Not only are the number and types of transition activities important, but so too is systems-based planning in which early childhood (birth to age 5) education providers and families are connected to the kindergarten system. The individual transition activity of pre-k teachers connecting with kindergarten teachers about curriculum and/or the children had the strongest and most consistent associations with children’s adjustment to kindergarten, as perceived by kindergarten teachers.⁵ These positive findings likely point to quicker adjustment to kindergarten as a result of the transition activities, allowing children to gain more from learning opportunities in the classroom than those who did not have adequate transition support.

For children who attend an early childhood program, some research suggests that early gains made in preschool may fade as children

move through the early elementary grades. This may be attributed, in part, to the differences in parental involvement, classroom organization, and teaching practices between early childhood programs and elementary school.⁶ However, the National Head Start Demonstration evaluation suggests that commitments to effective transition appear to combat the fade-out effect, particularly when strong partnerships exist between early childhood programs and K-12 systems, supported by strong connections from institutions to families and to the community at large.

For children who did not have the opportunity to attend an early childhood program, a strong kindergarten transition process is also essential. As of the 2021-2022 school year, 78% of 3-year-olds and 65% of 4-year-olds in Pennsylvania did not have access to a pre-k program.⁷ As such, transition to kindergarten may be a family’s first entry into a school system and the first opportunity some children may have for engaging with classroom routines, structured academics, peer-to-peer socialization on a larger scale, and other school-ready elements. For these children, a strong transition sets the tone for how they, and their families, might engage with school going forward. With family involvement at school being a critical component for children’s success across their educational careers,⁸ strong kindergarten transition is a critical building block that contributes to a child’s lifelong success, even beyond the K-12 school system.⁹

Promising Practices

Federal: Recent years have seen an increase in both federal and state investment in early childhood education, including the critically important transition to kindergarten. The 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) required states to have a plan for how kindergarten transition would connect to early learning programs.¹⁰ As of 2023, the federal Department of Education has utilized Bipartisan Safer Communities Act funding to support high-quality early childhood education and the early childhood education workforce.¹¹ President Biden’s April 2023 Executive Order on Increasing Access to High-Quality Care and Supporting Caregivers included those caring for children, with additional guidance issued in fall 2023 “to school districts and grantees on utilizing federal funds to expand access to high-quality preschool in high-need schools.”¹²

State: In 2013, the Pennsylvania Department of Education was awarded \$51.7 million to “improve program quality and close the achievement gap for at-risk children so they can enter kindergarten ready to succeed.”¹³ This grant, known as the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant, led to subsequent Community Innovation Zone (CIZ) grants, which enabled recipients to implement kindergarten transition activities and other birth through third grade alignment strategies to positively impact early learning experiences for children.¹⁴ In 2019, utilizing Preschool Development Block Grant funding, Hi5! awarded mini grants to several local early childhood programs to attend the fall roundtable event with their partner school district. Each program that attended had time to plan with representatives from a school district in their community and received a grant to implement transition activities for pre-k children preparing to go to kindergarten.

Local: Kindergarten transition activities should meet the needs of local communities. The United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania supports local transition activities in Allegheny, Westmoreland, Fayette, Armstrong, Butler, and Greene counties. Hi5!, led by the United Way, Allegheny Intermediate Unit, and Trying Together, engages with nearly all 43 school districts in Allegheny County to ensure on-time kindergarten registration and support schools to design and implement effective kindergarten transition activities. The transition teams, made up of (at minimum) a district administrator, a kindergarten teacher, and a pre-k provider, are required to meet twice a year. Inclusion of multiple district and early childhood stakeholders—including family/community members, counselors, Title I school coordinators, and other community education leaders (such as librarians)—is also encouraged. During the fall planning meeting and spring celebration, transition teams from the school districts have the opportunity to share the successes and challenges of transition activities. Six times per year, Trying Together hosts a virtual professional learning community for Hi5! participants focused on kindergarten transition known as the “Coffee & Conversation” series. This series invites experts to share and lead conversation around a collection of relevant themes, such as bridging literacy acquisition across the early childhood continuum, early intervention, learning through play, and developmentally appropriate practice. District administrators and teachers also share their knowledge and experiences, providing a space for districts and communities to share strategies and problem solve on how to support kindergarten transition regionally and locally.

A specific list of promising practices from research on kindergarten transition can be found in *Appendix A*. Examples of promising practices from local transition work in the region of southwestern PA are highlighted in *Appendix B*.

Policy Opportunities

The 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA) envisioned a pre-kindergarten through grade 12 continuum. To accomplish this goal, increased flexibility was provided to states and districts regarding usage of federal investments for evidence-based early education opportunities to encourage alignment and collaboration in the birth through third grade continuum. Specifically, under Title I, federal funds can be used to support the kindergarten transition process. Title I plans must include how local education agencies will smooth transitions between Head Start and elementary schools. Title II, Part A of ESSA allows and encourages joint professional learning and planning activities for school staff and educators in pre-k programs that address the transition to elementary school.¹⁵

Expressly outlining kindergarten transition plans and objectives within ESSA state plans is an effective way to emphasize the importance of supported transitions. Examples of this practice include:

- New Jersey utilizing Preschool Expansion Grant funds to establish transition teams made up of administrators, families, and teachers across early grade levels.¹⁶
- Illinois encouraging intra- and inter-school collaboration to smooth out transitions between grades and buildings.¹⁷
- Michigan requiring school districts to address the transferring of child records and coordinating developmental screenings with early care and education programs.¹⁸
- North Carolina compiling a planning document to guide the development of local transition plans.¹⁹

The Pennsylvania plan promotes successful transitions from pre-k to kindergarten by (a) emphasizing the importance of coordination and collaboration between early childhood programs and school districts; (b) sharing and connecting data between the early childhood system and K-12 system; and (c) promoting principal preparation focused on early childhood development.²⁰

In addition to leveraging opportunities to promote early learning and transition under ESSA, states have taken the opportunity to play a greater role in encouraging or requiring effective transition policies. Individual schools and districts can use state policy examples and adapt strategies to best meet the needs of the community. ESSA encourages alignment and collaboration in the birth through third grade continuum by providing more flexibility for states and districts to use federal investments for evidence-based early education opportunities. The state ESSA plan includes pre-k, identifying it as a factor for children to later become college and career ready. The Pennsylvania state board's Master Plan for Basic Education also highlights the importance of high-quality pre-k and highly qualified teachers.

In late 2023, Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro signed an executive order re-establishing the Early Learning Investment Commission (ELIC), a group of business and civic leaders appointed by the administration. ELIC is tasked with developing recommendations to stabilize the early childhood workforce, ensuring availability of universal pre-k, and expanding the availability of all-day kindergarten in all Pennsylvania public school districts and charter schools. This is the first time that kindergarten has been included in the priorities for the commission.

At the federal level, in 2024 the Biden-Harris Administration proposed:

“a first-ever preschool incentive demonstration program by the U.S. Department of Education to expand access to high-quality preschool in school- and community-based settings for children eligible to attend Title I schools [with the intention of supporting] school districts and participating schools in aligning high-quality preschool programs with kindergarten through third grade instruction, facilitating a successful transition from preschool to kindergarten and from kindergarten to third grade.”²¹

The consideration of such investments shows promise for supporting the systems that surround kindergarten transition, highlighting the importance of connected and well-resourced systems across the birth to age nine early childhood continuum and the imperative of intersectional and overlapping support beginning at birth to guide children toward kindergarten readiness.²²

Appendix C displays examples of state policies to support kindergarten transitions.



Recommendations To Support Effective Kindergarten Transitions

Effective transition policies call for activities that are more individualized, initiated earlier, and focused on both vertical (pre-k to kindergarten classrooms) and horizontal connections (teacher to family).²³ Hi5!, for instance, focuses on four connections: child to school, family to school, school to school, and community to school. The following recommendations are key takeaways for the state and school districts to consider. Some recommendations require state policy, while other recommendations can be pursued at the district level.

State Policymakers

1. **REQUIRE LOCAL TRANSITION TEAMS** - Effective transition activities include pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers, school administrators, child care providers, and families, at minimum. Depending on the unique needs of a district, teams may also include community resource leaders, such as librarians, or support staff, such as counselors and social workers. Including specific guidelines for all of these stakeholders will support planning and encourage sharing, enhancing the early learning continuum.
2. **PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON LEVERAGING FUNDS** - Leveraging funds to support transition activities may be difficult for school districts because there is no designated federal, state, or local funding source. However, the state can support districts by encouraging the use of Title I, Part A and/or Title II, Part A funds for transition activities as well as ESSA funds for early childhood programs.

3. **ENCOURAGE DATA SHARING** - Early childhood programs should share observation and assessment data of children with their future schools. Transferring records to kindergarten teachers provides them with a baseline of children’s social, emotional, and early academic skills. Streamlining pre-kindergarten and kindergarten screenings and assessments will allow for teachers to track gains and improvement of their children over the course of the year. While individual efforts for sharing child records between an early childhood program and elementary school is possible, the state can help resolve problems with a data bridge as a means of supporting transitions. Historically, data sharing has presented problems due to different standards for the early childhood data system PELICAN and the K-12 data system PIMS. The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) is working to address these inconsistencies, but local initiatives are an important support in the interim. Policymakers should also consider gaps that may exist within their data design and ways to utilize disaggregated data to acknowledge the intersectional identities and experiences of children and families.²⁴

4. **ADVOCATE FOR FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN** - Full-day kindergarten programs have been shown to support greater reading and math outcomes for all students, notably including when data is adjusted for race, poverty status, and fall achievement levels. Full-day kindergarten has also been shown to support stronger social-emotional adjustment to kindergarten and first grade and to help build student and familial confidence and comfort with the school system. In advocating for full-day kindergarten, policymakers should ensure that the programs require high-quality teachers, high-quality curriculum, and are publicly funded in the same manner as the rest of the K-5 school system.²⁵ While

84.5% of students enrolled in kindergarten in Pennsylvania were enrolled in full-day kindergarten in the 2021-2022 school year,²⁶ some districts still do not offer it as a possibility. Policymakers can support all students in accessing the positive lifelong effects of full-day kindergarten by advocating for its availability in all districts across the state.

Local School District Administrators

5. **INCLUDE PARENTS AND GUARDIANS IN THE TRANSITION PROCESS** - Parents/Guardians are a child’s first teacher. The stress of transitioning to kindergarten impacts them too. Schools will be able to best address the social and emotional needs of children with support from families. Partnerships between schools and families that support children’s progress are the foundation of successful transitions.²⁷ Opportunities for parents/guardians to share about their child’s birth to age five experiences, including highlighting the ways in which they thrive, can provide school districts with a more holistic picture of each child, thus supporting the district in creating the most welcoming and affirming environment possible in which all learners are best supported. Sharing this information is also highly effective in ensuring that children who need early intervention and special education support are given the appropriate intervention at the start of their kindergarten journey. *Appendix B* highlights examples of strong parent/guardian involvement in the transition process.

6. **ENSURE HIGH-QUALITY, DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE KINDERGARTEN** - Developmentally appropriate practices require educators to meet children where they are. Kindergarten teachers should have an understanding

of child development and incorporate meaningful play-based learning activities in the classroom. Policies focused on preschool through grade 3 (P-3) alignment can support developmentally appropriate practices and expectations in kindergarten classrooms. This includes developmentally appropriate screenings for incoming kindergarteners.

- 7. SHOW SUPPORT FOR LOCAL PRE-K AND CHILD CARE PROVIDERS IN PROVIDING PRE-K** - High-quality pre-k builds on high-quality infant and toddler child care. It's important to acknowledge how pre-k exists within the early care and education system and at the district level. OCDEL administers birth-to-five programming and is jointly overseen by the Department of Human Services and the Department of Education. As one part of the early care and education system, pre-k is offered in various settings known as a mixed-delivery system. This includes child care centers, group child care homes, family child care homes, public schools, and private schools. The options of a mixed-delivery system offer parental choice and meet the needs of families.²⁸ While district pre-k is a great option and resource for many families, local child care providers are also a strong value to the community. Additionally, public pre-k funding provides much-needed revenue to programs, ultimately allowing for more child care providers to remain open and operate at capacity, supporting working families with children of all ages across the early childhood spectrum.²⁹



Both State And Local

- 8. STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS** - The importance of relationships and collaboration in kindergarten transitions cannot be overstated. Policies need to foster communication between early care and education programs and elementary schools, specifically on topics such as alignment in expectations and curriculum across programs. Relationships and coordination between pre-k and kindergarten teachers support children's ability to function successfully within a new classroom environment, setting the stage for future school success and supporting a child in developing a lifelong positive association between their own self-efficacy and capacity and school and learning environments.³⁰ *Appendix B* highlights examples of strong relationships across early childhood systems.
- 9. EMPHASIZE CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICES** - To support diverse children and families, it is critical that state and local policymakers, district leaders, teachers, and invested community members evaluate their systems for implicit and explicit bias and consider how structures may be supporting or discouraging families from engaging with the school system and having a strong kindergarten transition. Onboarding processes, written information, and assessment practices should be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are meeting the needs of, and affirming, all children and cultures so as not to perpetuate systemic inequities or harmful assimilation culture in their structure or practice. Examples of culturally responsive practices in kindergarten transition include, but are not limited to:

- Providing resources in the languages represented in your district/multiple languages
- Translation and interpretation services/ access to translation and interpretation services
- Accessibility supports, such as readily available 1:1 assistance via phone or in person, in addition to online portals
- Considering diverse cultural calendars and holidays when planning community events
- Scheduling events at varying times (rather than always in the evening, for example) to meet diverse family scheduling needs
- Including a variety of terminology for caregivers (example: rather than just “parents,” consider using inclusive language such as “caregivers,” “grown-ups,” or “families”)

availability and access to early learning resources. Kindergarten readiness should not be viewed as a task to be completed, or merely a list of skills, but rather as a culmination of learning gained through layered and multifaceted support and experiences across a child’s life from birth until school entry. To this end, policymakers should seek to build bridges across systems, experiences, and opportunities, so that children’s experiences from birth to age five are adequate to support their readiness for entry into kindergarten.



10. **RETHINK THE RESPONSIBILITY OF SCHOOL READINESS** - The concept of school readiness is often associated with kindergarten transition. However, children develop in different ways and at different times. While every child is born ready to learn, children are not innately ready or not ready for school systems. Policymakers, educators, and families must be developmentally appropriate with the goal of school readiness. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) “believes it is the responsibility of schools to meet the needs of children as they enter school and to provide whatever services are needed to help each child reach his or her fullest potential.”³¹ Rather than the child as the focus of school readiness indicators, readiness is a result of relationships established by adults in early care and education programs, schools, families, and the community and the corresponding

Appendix A

Kindergarten Transition Activities

From *The Effect of School-Based Kindergarten Transition Policies and Practices on Child Academic Outcomes*:³²

- Communication from the elementary school to home of incoming kindergartener (letter or phone call)
- Pre-k children visit kindergarten classroom
- Shorter school days at the beginning of the year to ease children and families into school
- Children and parents visit kindergarten classroom and teacher prior to beginning of school year
- Teachers visit homes of new kindergarteners at the beginning of the school year
- Parent orientation at the elementary school prior to the beginning of the school year

From *Pre-Kindergarten Teachers' Use of Transition Practices and Students Adjusting to Kindergarten*:³³

- Pre-k children visit kindergarten classroom
- Pre-k teacher visits kindergarten classroom
- Kindergarten teacher visits pre-k classroom
- Spring kindergarten orientation for pre-k children
- Spring kindergarten orientation for parents of pre-k children
- Schoolwide activity for pre-k children
- Individual meetings with parents about kindergarten
- Early childhood programs share records of incoming children with elementary schools
- Pre-k and kindergarten teachers communicate about curriculum and/or children

Note: This is not an all-encompassing list of possible transition activities.



Appendix B

Local Examples

Avonworth School District³⁴	<p>It is never too early to think about connecting schools to the community to increase awareness about the importance of kindergarten transition. Avonworth Primary Center partners with the local pre-k providers during the fall to host a <i>Pre-K Open House</i> at their school. This is one of many events for families and incoming kindergarteners to experience the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-k teachers and directors tour the building, meet staff, and discuss the strengths and challenges of kindergarten transition.• Network and improve communication among the school and providers• Share best practice resources with the providers so that both the pre-k and kindergarten programs are using the same materials for letter identification with all children
Carlynton School District³⁵	<p>Carlynton School District prioritizes a wraparound support model that prioritizes whole-child and social-emotional wellness, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hosting an annual kindergarten playdate event, designed to welcome incoming students and their parents/guardians. This event prioritizes social connections such as students building friendships prior to the start of school and parents having a peer-to-peer support network. During the event, teachers and administrators facilitate games and “icebreakers” to build connections.• Proactive engagement with local libraries to support early literacy beginning at birth• Connections with local doctors’ offices to support the medical wellness of students as they head to kindergarten (and provide an access point for obtaining needed forms)• Hosting connection events at pre-k and community centers to reach families through various avenues• Allowing families to schedule a time for assessment rather than trying to include the assessment in other pre-k transition events or the start of school

<p>Derry Area School District³⁶</p>	<p>Derry Area families can register children online or in person. The district holds various events throughout the year for young children and their families, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two story-time events held annually for infants, toddlers, and pre-k children • <i>Shadow a Kindergarten Buddy Day</i> allows pre-k students to experience a portion of the school day. Ninety percent of children who will be in Grandview Elementary kindergarten classrooms the upcoming fall participate. Eleven center staff members accompany their children to the school for this event. The school district provides bus transportation to and from the school.
<p>Greensburg Salem School District³⁷</p>	<p>The P.A.W.S. program, which stands for <i>Parents Are Welcome in School</i>, invites pre-k students and their families to experience the kindergarten classroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During four evening sessions leading up to kindergarten registration, families meet with kindergarten teachers in the elementary school their child will attend the following year. • Teachers actively engage pre-k students and their families in literacy, math, and science activities. Families take home books and activities to prepare children for kindergarten. • <i>Kindercamp</i> is held the first week of August and provides incoming kindergarteners another opportunity to get to know their new teacher and classroom prior to the beginning of the school year.
<p>Pittsburgh Public Schools³⁸</p>	<p><i>Message from Me (MFM)</i>, a technology tool developed by Carnegie Mellon University’s CREATE Lab in collaboration with Trying Together, engages families in everyday classroom experiences of preschool and kindergarten students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many kindergarten classrooms in various Pittsburgh area public schools utilize <i>MFM</i> to take pictures and record audio messages of learning experiences during the school day. • Children and teachers send digital messages to families in the form of a text message and/or email to capture daily activities in a kindergarten classroom. • Messages sent from the school to families support the home-school connection and engage children in the learning process in the classroom environment.

<p>Quaker Valley School District³⁹</p>	<p>Quaker Valley takes a comprehensive approach for the transition to kindergarten:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During a week-long registration event in February, parents visit the school to register their child for kindergarten and sign a waiver to allow the school to connect with the child’s early learning provider. • Families have the opportunity to meet with teachers, the principal, and other community organizations. • In addition to kindergarten registration activities, the district hosts a <i>Story Walk</i> that is held twice a year for families with young children. • This event provides children many opportunities to visit the school throughout the first five years of their life.
<p>West Mifflin Area School District⁴⁰</p>	<p>West Mifflin Area School District focuses on blending academic readiness with social-emotional readiness, with expressly stated planning around inclusion and access in their transition plan. Some of the activity examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Transition Night during which families can participate in fun activities such as a “School Scavenger Hunt” and acclimate to the space. Teachers, Speech and Occupational Therapy services, and PTA volunteers are all present. • An official kindergarten orientation event that includes a bus ride and cafeteria snack • A three-week (optional) camp held prior to the start of school where students can gain skills in the areas of reading, math, following rules and routines, riding the bus, and accessing technology. This camp also supports social-emotional acclimation to school in a small group setting. • An additional transition day for special education students so they may have a meet and greet with special education teachers and paraprofessionals, and parents/guardians can take a tour and ask questions specific to their child’s needs in a smaller group setting

Note: This table reflects examples from Allegheny, Fayette, and Westmoreland Counties. This is not a comprehensive list of all the transition activities that occur within southwestern Pennsylvania.



Appendix C

State Examples

Alabama⁴¹	<p>Alignment and coordination through a statewide pre-k through third grade Integrated Approach to Early Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The program is designed to improve transitions for students exiting the state’s First Class Pre-K program into kindergarten and beyond.• The P-3 program aims to improve instruction by: aligning and coordinating standards, instructional practices, environments, and professional development across the P-3 continuum; using instructional coaches with experience in early childhood education to improve teacher practice; and requiring horizontal and vertical team meetings to ensure alignment within the continuum.• Leadership is centered on a yearlong Pre-K-3 Leadership Academy that is required for principals of schools that are part of the P-3 program.
Colorado⁴²	<p>Data collection and organization through the statewide program – <i>Results Matter</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Streamline observation systems – GOLD assessment is used to track ongoing, observation-based assessments of children from birth through age five and is used for kindergarten readiness assessment in many school districts.• The state education department recommends that pre-k teachers share hard copies of assessment data and summarize children’s strengths and needs with kindergarten teachers.

<p>Massachusetts⁴³</p>	<p>Joint policies between the Department of Education and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education are established to support smooth transitions to kindergarten. The policies must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researched based • Aligned with best practices • Inclusive of family day care, center-based preschool, and public preschool <p>Processes are required to expose children and families “early and regularly” to the kindergarten environment during the transition process, and every preschool program that receives funding from the commonwealth is required to develop a local transition plan, consistent with the statewide policy plan.</p>
<p>Oregon⁴⁴</p>	<p>Encourages local innovation through the <i>Early Learning Kindergarten Readiness Partnerships and Innovations</i> grant program. This includes initiatives through county early learning hubs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P-3 coordinators in eight high-needs schools lead kindergarten teachers on home visits to incoming kindergarten families and organize playgroups for children ages birth to five and their parents. • Professional learning communities, including both providers and kindergarten teachers, meet monthly to discuss implementation of the <i>Conscious Discipline</i> model to support social-emotional development of children as they transition.

<p>Rhode Island⁴⁵</p>	<p>Pilots for developing best practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state has supported three communities in developing and implementing kindergarten transition plans in partnership with the Education Development Center’s “First 10” initiative.⁴⁶ • The department also held two statewide summits, inviting teachers and administrators from both elementary schools and community pre-k programs to discuss their transition efforts. • As part of the programming, professional learning summits and onsite coaching are provided. Community transition teams participate in these activities as they develop and implement Transition to Kindergarten plans. • Efforts are documented in a lessons learned and case study publication. • A Transition to Kindergarten Toolkit has been created to be shared with all communities. • A survey of kindergarten teachers’ use of data to inform teaching and learning occurs at the start of the year.
<p>Washington⁴⁷</p>	<p>State policy requires that state-funded, full-day kindergarten programs implement three components to ease transition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family connection: Individual meetings between families and teachers to discuss goals and expectations for kindergarten • Whole-child assessment: Kindergarten programs required to use GOLD assessment, the same tool used in state pre-k programs • Early learning collaboration: Required to establish relationships with community providers and engage them and families in kindergarten readiness activities. Local education agencies have flexibility in the methods used to accomplish collaboration.

West Virginia⁴⁸

Section of the universal pre-k policy mandates that the county collaborative early childhood team create a written transition plan that includes:

- Opportunities for pre-k children and families to visit kindergarten classrooms
- Written information for families about registration and expectations for kindergarten
- Annual meetings of pre-k providers and kindergarten teachers to discuss how to prepare children for transition
- System for transferring assessment data to future kindergarten teachers



Hi5! is a partnership between Trying Together, United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania, and the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU).



The Hi5! partnership focuses on engaging all 43 public school districts in Allegheny County and supports each district to:

- Develop and implement their own kindergarten transition plans
- Build awareness with families that when “your child reaches five years of age, it’s time to register” them for kindergarten
- Network and share best practices between pre-k teachers, kindergarten teachers, early childhood program directors, and school administrators
- Gather community resources throughout the county
- Support connections between early learning providers and school districts



The United Way of Southwestern PA also works with school districts in Westmoreland, Fayette, Butler, and Greene counties supporting kindergarten readiness and transition work.

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