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## ECE Kindergarten Transition Plan

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Intentional transition planning and practices enable our pre-kindergarten students and their families to experience a smooth and positive transition to kindergarten, and ensures that they are set up for success in this transition. Effective transition planning involves active engagement with children, their families, and their teachers, including regular communication about children’s progress, development, and learning. These activities should occur over time and should be tailored to meet the unique needs of children, families, and school communities. The following guidance outlines the DCPS kindergarten transition process that should be followed by all DCPS elementary schools and education campuses.

### **Development of Kindergarten Transition Team**

The first step in the kindergarten transition process is the development of a school-based transition team. Each school-based transition team should have a designated Kindergarten Transition Team Coordinator who is responsible for convening the meetings and coordinating activities. The Coordinator may be the principal or an assistant principal, or may be one of the Early Childhood Teachers, School Social Worker or another school staff member who has an interest in this work. Responsibilities of the Kindergarten Transition Team Coordinator include facilitating the transition process; scheduling and facilitating regular team meetings; identifying suitable transition activities; and ensuring that all transition-related timeframes are met. Each kindergarten transition team should also include all kindergarten teachers and Pre-K4 teachers and educational aides, and may also include a school social worker or other members of the school community. The [Canvas e-learning module](#) related to kindergarten transitions provides useful resources and guidance for planning effective transitions to kindergarten and should be reviewed by the transition teams.

### **Kindergarten Transition Team Meetings**

Once the kindergarten transition team has been formed, the Kindergarten Transition Team Coordinator should work to develop a schedule for regular meetings. It is the expectation that the kindergarten transition team should meet at least twice per month, beginning in mid-March. The first meeting held by the kindergarten transition team should focus on the following action items:

1. Outlining the structure of the agenda and goals for each subsequent meeting. The transition team should brainstorm the various elements of the transition plan that would be suitable for the school community. The Canvas e-learning transition module can be helpful for this element of the process.
2. Identifying the family activities, student activities, instructional alignment activities, and teacher-initiated activities that will be included in the transition plan.
3. Developing an action plan that operationalizes the activities that the transition team decides to implement, and that assigns “owners” for each element of the work and that designates specific timeframes for the implementation of specific transition goals.

The work of the transition team should focus on three core elements of the transition process. Suggested activities to support each of these core elements can be found in the Canvas module.

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- Activities for children – These activities are designed to help Pre-K4 students become familiar with the kindergarten environment, teachers, routines, and expectations, and can include visits to the kindergarten classrooms; visits from the kindergarten teachers and kindergarten students; and read-alouds and other lessons and activities designed to familiarize students with kindergarten and to minimize any anxiety that students may feel.
  - Activities for parents – These activities are designed to support parents in understanding the transition process and becoming familiar with the kindergarten environment; to start the process of building positive collaborative relationships between families and kindergarten teachers; and to support parents in identifying ways that they can set their children up for success in kindergarten and beyond.
  - Activities for kindergarten teachers – These activities are designed to facilitate effective data sharing in order to ensure that receiving kindergarten teachers are equipped with the knowledge that they need in order to plan effective transitions for each student.

### **Collaboration between Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten Teaching Teams**

One of the key elements of a successful kindergarten transition plan is the collaboration between kindergarten teachers and pre-kindergarten teachers. As part of the collaborative process, kindergarten teachers should actively partner with the pre-kindergarten teachers on the Early Childhood Education teaching team.

The goal of the partnership between teachers should be to help the receiving kindergarten teachers get to know the pre-K4 students before they transition to kindergarten. This process should involve sharing information about the strengths and interests of each child; the unique learning profiles of each child; the challenges that have been experienced by each child; and the ways in which each family prefers to be engaged in the schooling process. Current GOLD data should be shared, and Pre-K teachers should share information about how each child learns best. Prekindergarten teachers should use this time to help kindergarten teachers understand the focus areas outlined in the GOLD assessments system. Preschool and kindergarten teachers should also work together to design collaborative activities to support a smooth transition for children and families and to ease any anxiety that future kindergarten students and their families may experience. ECE teachers should also document on the final GOLD report card that the student will be moving to kindergarten.

### **School Outreach to Families of Rising Kindergarten Students**

A smooth transition not only means that students feel supported when beginning kindergarten, but also that parents feel welcomed and empowered with the knowledge necessary to help their child have a successful kindergarten year. The kindergarten transition team can help make this happen by organizing various activities, such as parent information sessions, open houses, and kindergarten classroom tours prior to the start of the school year. The kindergarten transition team should also aim to create a wide range of summer enrichment activities for families to implement with their children, covering core learning domains such as literacy and numeracy. All family outreach activities should be scheduled to begin in May.

### **Supporting the Transition of non-DCPS Preschool Students to Kindergarten**

The kindergarten transition process should also support children who will be transitioning to kindergarten from a non-DCPS early childhood or childcare program. DCPS school-based kindergarten transition teams can support collaboration between DCPS elementary schools and community-based early childhood programs by organizing and scheduling a community forum each spring. The community forum is designed to provide an opportunity for DCPS kindergarten transition teams to engage with

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community-based programs that will be sending their Pre-K4 students to DCPS elementary schools. During this forum, DCPS transition team members can share details about DCPS common core learning standards, kindergarten curriculum, enrollment, registration, and general school information with the representatives from local community-based early childhood programs and childcare providers. DCPS elementary schools are encouraged to create a brief reference sheet outlining the core elements of the kindergarten program to distribute during the community forum. The DCPS kindergarten transition team should also allot time during the community forum for each community-based program to share information about their early childhood programs, assessment methodology, and general practices. During the forum, the community-based providers can also share information about their programming in order to enable receiving kindergarten teachers to understand the learning context in which their future students have been immersed. Understanding the learning environment, learning standards, and expectations that children have been exposed to will help receiving kindergarten teachers to develop an effective transition plan for these students.

The DCPS kindergarten transition team should also schedule individual follow-up conversations with community-based programs during the spring to review anecdotal notes and assessment data for each child who has met the DCPS enrollment deadline and successfully enrolled at the school.

In addition to the community forum, DCPS elementary schools should establish ongoing communication with families of newly enrolled children from community-based programs. As part of this relationship building process, DCPS kindergarten teachers should touch base with each family in June and shortly before the school year begins in August.