

THE NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S
TOOL TO ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TRANSITIONS
FROM PREKINDERGARTEN TO KINDERGARTEN

Considerations for an effective transition plan

Building relationships, partnering and collaboration are extremely important to facilitate the transition of prekindergarten students to kindergarten. This is a time of great change for children, parents, families and schools in which new relationships, new expectations and new competencies are being developed. The local school district should have a comprehensive plan for supporting its newest incoming students and their families as they transition into a K-12 system.

This checklist will help to determine how complete your school district's prekindergarten to kindergarten transition plan is. It may signal areas for improvement for your district to work on to ensure a positive start for young children in the school community.

How to use this self-assessment

In the example below, a person indicated that the district almost always considers the number of children moving into kindergarten in the fall as part of its transition plan.

Read each element carefully and indicate how strongly your district considers it as part of a plan for the youngest children coming into the district. Place a checkmark in the box indicating 1 through 5.

List in the evidence column what has informed your choice of 1 through 5.

	1	2	3	4	5	EVIDENCE
	Not at all considered	Rarely considered	Occasionally Considered	Frequently considered	Almost always considered	Briefly describe the evidence used to inform this choice
EXAMPLE: <i>District knows the approximate number of children entering kindergarten each fall.</i>					X	<i>District keeps records regarding anticipated counts for September entrance to each grade level including kindergarten.</i>

Part 1: Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis of the Feeder System

	1 Not at all considered	2 Rarely considered	3 Occasionally Considered	4 Frequently considered	5 Almost always considered	EVIDENCE Briefly describe the evidence used to inform this choice
District personnel know the names and locations of early childhood programs/providers in the district.						
District personnel know the ages of the children attending each of these early childhood settings, and the hours that these facilities are open.						
District personnel have established a contact at each of the early childhood locations.						
District has a preschool census.						
District has a kindergarten registration process that includes questions for parents about a child's preschool experience.						
District has contacts with local libraries, housing authorities, adult education providers, job training providers, early childhood special education providers, English language learner support programs, etc. <i>note: knowledge of programs supporting parents helps locate children</i>						

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District schools are accessible to families before children’s enrollment in kindergarten (play groups, story hours, cultural activities, and open houses are established and welcome parents and preschoolers).						
District, schools, Parent Teacher Association, guidance departments, among others provide training and information sessions for all parents in the community, even those with children not yet enrolled in kindergarten (i.e. reading to my child, getting ready for kindergarten, make and take sessions, supporting children when they suffer a loss).						
District has made outreach to families of those children not enrolled in a prekindergarten program.						
District has knowledge of QUALITYstarsNY if it is being used in their community.						
District hosts meetings with directors and teachers from prekindergarten sites that include principals and kindergarten teachers to discuss transition.						

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District personnel (principals, reading specialists, special education representatives, kindergarten teachers) visit the prekindergarten sites in the community within the first quarter of the year and meet with staff there for the purpose of sharing and learning curricular content of both prekindergarten and kindergarten.						
District personnel have knowledge of children with existing preschool special education plans/placements (Individual Education Plans) and have plans to work with the Committee of Special Education (CSE) and parents to determine effective programming.						
District personnel have had training to recognize children who may have disabilities and are knowledgeable about procedures for referring children to the CSE.						

Part 2: Analysis of Shared Professional Development

	1	2	3	4	5	EVIDENCE
	Not at all considered	Rarely considered	Occasionally Considered	Frequently considered	Almost always considered	Briefly describe the evidence used to inform this choice
Staff from the district, and from local early childhood agencies, are involved in a needs assessment for professional development. Staffs have identified needs and are involved in the planning of the professional development.						
Professional Development is connected to the goals and needs of the prekindergarten and kindergarten programs.						
Professional development includes approaches that are grounded in research and application of practice in real situations.						
Training is based upon the knowledge, strengths and needs of the participating staff and emphasizes a strengths-based approach to instruction, classroom environment and behavior management.						

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Professional Development includes principles of child development, curricular guidance, and discussion of the standards. Sources include: NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core, NYS Early Learning Guidelines, The Core Body of Knowledge, and the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, particularly if there is a Head Start in the community.						
Staff Development provides discussion on how to integrate components of early learning. Staff receives professional development on social/emotional health, approaches to learning, physical health and development, and abuse.						
Staff development includes participants from collaborating agencies as well as district personnel, and training takes place at multiple times in multiple locations to maximize attendance and participation.						

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Trainers have the qualifications, experience and knowledge to provide informative, practical research based training in the content areas. Credentialed trainers are used whenever possible.						
Incentives are provided for participation in professional development						
Evaluation of staff development occurs over time and addresses the benefits and applications to practice, not just the satisfaction level of the participants.						

Part 3: Analysis of how Data is used to Improve Instruction

	1	2	3	4	5	EVIDENCE
	Not at all considered	Rarely considered	Occasionally Considered	Frequently considered	Almost always considered	Briefly describe the evidence used to inform this choice
District has a system to access information from parents about their children entering kindergarten.						
Representatives from the district are knowledgeable of each child's socioeconomic background, the status of mother's education, the first language, if this is an English Language Learner (ELL) child needing support, preschool experience including special education services or involvement with CSE.						
District has a system to access information and data from children's educational experiences prior to kindergarten.						
Parents have consented that screening information from preschool (UPK, Head Start; 4410 placements, nursery schools) is passed on to kindergarten.						
Assessment information from preschool (UPK, Head Start, 4410 placements, nursery schools) is passed on to kindergarten.						

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District has a plan to use incoming data as an assessment of a child's strengths.						
Systematic and critical observations of children are made within the first six to eight weeks of kindergarten. These observations are in different content areas and at different times throughout the day.						
Assessments and observations are made and recorded throughout kindergarten year.						
Parents are welcome and encouraged to provide information and feedback.						
Teachers make concerns about children's learning readily known to parents.						
Report cards are explained to parents, and other teachers supporting the child's education and development.						

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When assessments of any kind are completed, teachers examine the results for individual progress and also for progress across the group. A review of individual items occurs to inform teacher's decisions.						
Analysis of attendance occurs throughout the year. Parents are encouraged to become a critical part of the plans made to improve student attendance.						
Instruction for each child is based on individual strengths and weaknesses as well as progress with the standards and curriculum.						
All kindergarten assessments are recorded and transferred to the grade one teacher.						

Part 4: Parent Engagement and Family Support

	1 Not at all considered	2 Rarely considered	3 Occasionally Considered	4 Frequently considered	5 Almost always considered	EVIDENCE Briefly describe the evidence used to inform this choice
District demonstrates respect for the culture, language and background of the parents and families of incoming kindergarten children.						
Communications from the district are written to support the culture, home languages and reading levels of the families of incoming children.						
District develops a system for engaging parents and families in the transition of their children to kindergarten that is clearly communicated within the community.						
Parents are provided the opportunity to learn about district routines, the school calendar, and expectations regarding their child's curricula.						
Parents have the opportunity to meet school staff before the first day of kindergarten.						

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When district personnel visit preschool sites they have the opportunity to meet with parents of the children attending the site.						
Parents are provided the opportunity to express their needs and concerns about their children's attendance in kindergarten.						
Parents are contacted at least once during the first 3 weeks of kindergarten regarding something specific about their child. This should be about something positive or interesting and not related to a challenge or a concern.						
Parents are contacted promptly when there is a concern about a child's learning or behavior.						
District personnel are knowledgeable about the community supports for kindergarteners and their parents, and can assist in making connections for families.						