

Transitions in Early Childhood and Preschool

Before entering kindergarten, children may make multiple transitions as they move between home, daycare and community preschool programs. The formal transition process for children who are involved in the Early Intervention system (Help Me Grow) is outlined in Interagency Agreements and involves Help Me Grow, local school districts and the Boards of Developmental Disabilities. This document will address the Reynoldsburg City School's plan for facilitating smooth and efficient transitions of all types, including home to a typical preschool setting or Early Childhood Grant setting, home to special needs preschool setting, home to itinerant services, as well as program to program transitions.

Information Sharing: Each child, each family, and each transition is unique, so the transition process begins by gathering information from the people who know the child best. Parent's expectations, hopes, and concerns are used to guide the transition process. As families develop trust in the process, they are often more comfortable sharing information about their circumstances that may impact the child's educational needs. This enables the preschool staff to personalize the support they provide to families.

Developing Relationships: The Interagency Agreement and the Ohio Department of Education Operating Procedures detail the multi-factored evaluation process. If a child is suspected of having a disability, the program staff will naturally have multiple opportunities to engage with the family and child in a variety of settings. Multiple contacts and opportunities for dialogue about the child help develop a relationship of mutual trust. During this process, the preschool staff also initiates communication with other providers who may be involved with the child and family. Although not all children require a multi-factored evaluation, sharing of information and development of trust are critical components of any successful transition process.

The following activities are used to insure a smooth transition from one early childhood setting to another:

1. Staff has conversations with families to obtain information that will guide the transition process. Information is recorded via the structured interview form, the typical peer application and/or the family information forms in the enrollment packet, as appropriate.
2. Staff obtains information from multiple sources, as indicated, to guide the transition process (parents, daycare provider, teachers, related service providers, pediatrician, caseworkers, etc.) Staff shares information with other programs, with consent of parents, when a child is moving to a different setting (progress notes, curriculum based assessments, state assessments, and behavior plans.)
3. Staff engages with family/child in more than one setting (home visits, daycare visits, etc.)
4. Staff facilitates parental visits to programs and provides information about the range of programs and/or services available. Staff accompanies families to visits so that they can provide immediate information and feedback.
5. The staff shares information with parents and programs regarding effective techniques for supporting communication skills, social-emotional-behavioral development and other areas of need during the transition process.

The preschool team facilitates the transition from preschool to kindergarten for children with special needs and peer models in the following ways:

1. Preschool staff share information and address parental concerns at parent conferences throughout the year before a child moves to kindergarten.
2. Parents are provided with information about how to register for kindergarten and which building their child will attend.

- 3.** Parents are provided with written information regarding kindergarten readiness and ways they can help their child at home.
- 4.** Preschool staff meets with the receiving kindergarten staff and shares information about all preschoolers entering kindergarten.
- 5.** Kindergarten teachers and support staff are given opportunities to observe children in the preschool classroom to help with planning for the upcoming year.
- 6.** Preschool children who attend the center based program at Graham Road are already familiar with an elementary school building and are used to moving around the school and playground with older students.
- 7.** Parents are given opportunities to visit kindergarten classrooms and specialized programs as needed. When appropriate, preschool children visit kindergarten classrooms.
- 8.** Preschool staff is available at the beginning of the school year to facilitate transitions through consultation and direct behavioral support.
- 9.** Preschool classroom activities, such as literature selections and dramatic play, address children's anticipation and concerns about kindergarten.