Welcome to Public School: Building High-Quality Transitions

Module 3
Engaging with Your Community

Maine Department of Education
Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Children's Cabinet

Objectives

- Build an understanding of the different connections across a community that help strengthen transitions

- Gain knowledge around community and school resources that can help establish strong home-school connections

- Establish an understanding of building relationships and alignment with sending programs, such as Head Start, private and family childcare, and community preschool programs

School readiness involves more than just children. School readiness is about children, families, early environments, schools, and communities. - Maxwell & Clifford 2004

What Research Shows Us…

➢ When children experience discontinuities between early learning programs and kindergarten, they may be at greater risk for academic failure and social adjustment problems (Conyer, Reynold & Ou, 2003)

➢ Research using a nationally representative sample found that a simple increase in TTK practices predicted prosocial behavior in kindergarten (Cook & Coley, 2017).

➢ One study of TTK efforts found that the only practices significantly linked to children's outcomes were in-person meetings between Head Start and kindergarten teachers (Cook & Coley, 2019).

➢ Time-intensive strategies, such as shared professional learning among ECE and kindergarten teachers, have been found to be the least common strategies enacted (Little et al., 2016).

Transition to Kindergarten (TTK)

Reflection and Something New

Use this Notes Page as a tool for capturing ideas and main thoughts on the video in the next slide and take note of ideas for new transition practices that would be helpful to families in your community.

NOTES PAGE

VIDEO: EDUCATORS SUPPORTING SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS TO KINDERGARTEN (ECLKC WEBSITE)

LISTEN FOR IDEAS AND STRATEGIES TO TAKE NOTE OF THAT MIGHT OFFER YOUR COMMUNITY IDEAS FOR IDENTIFYING NEW TRANSITION PRACTICES THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO FAMILIES. BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS THE NOTES YOU HAVE TAKEN.

SHARE INFORMATION	BUILD POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS
PREPARE CHILDREN FOR WHAT TO EXPECT:	GET TO KNOW THE UNIQUE STRENGTHS OF FAMILIES:
COMMUNICATE WITH FAMILIES IN THEIR HOME LANGUAGES:	PARTNER WITH RECEIVING ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS:
SHARE DATA WITH FAMILIES AND RECEIVING ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	

ALIGNING PROGRAMS

PARTICIPATE IN JOINT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

PARTNER AROUND YEAR-LONG TRANSITION ACTIVITIES:

SUPPORT KINDERGARTEN READINESS WITH CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENTS THAT SUPPORT KINDERGARTEN READINESS:

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Video Activity

This video is from Head Start; while you are watching, use the Notes Page to capture ideas for collaborating with sending community providers.

Overarching Document

The Ready Community

A community that is ready to support its children ensures access to health care, provides quality childcare and early education, and invests in resources for families. –IES

Building a Collaborative Framework…

Consider the settings, environments, and people that are all interconnected in the child's life, as they transition from an early learning program or home setting to kindergarten; these might include:

Families and Caregivers	Childcare centers & Providers	Public or private schools

Recreational Centers & Programs	Local Playgroups

All of these pieces of a child's community are an important part of their world, and the experiences they bring with them.

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Who Are Your Community Partners?

Each community encompasses their own unique partners. Take a moment and create a list of entities in your own school's community who may become beneficial partners, with a few reasons explaining your thoughts.

Here are some you may or may not have considered:
- ✓ Healthcare providers (medical/dental)
- ✓ Community organizations that the child/family interacts with
- ✓ Sending childcare/preschool program
- ✓ Grocery stores and restaurants
- ✓ Library
- ✓ YMCA/Community Centers, public pool or playground
- ✓ Children's Museum
- ✓ Houses of Worship
- ✓ Cultural Organizations

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Community Connections

Building strong community connections enables:

- Continuity through the transition process
- Support for outreach
- Cohesive services

How Might We Engage Our Community?

ACTIVITY:

Choose two or three potential partners from your list and brainstorm about **how** they could support your school/district around reaching out to incoming families, connecting families with resources and/or providing space for gatherings for incoming children and families.

How Do We Engage Our Partners?

Let's share some of the ideas for partnering in your community.

And other ideas:

- Hang posters at local businesses can inform families of contact information and important dates around enrollment
- Host collaborative transition events in the community, such as play and learn groups at a community center or library story hour
- Work with a retail or grocery store to distribute pamphlets that include school supply lists, contact information and/or important dates
- Engage with private and family childcares and center-based care centers
- Collaborate with community agencies that work with families to distribute information.

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Healthy Family, Healthy Child

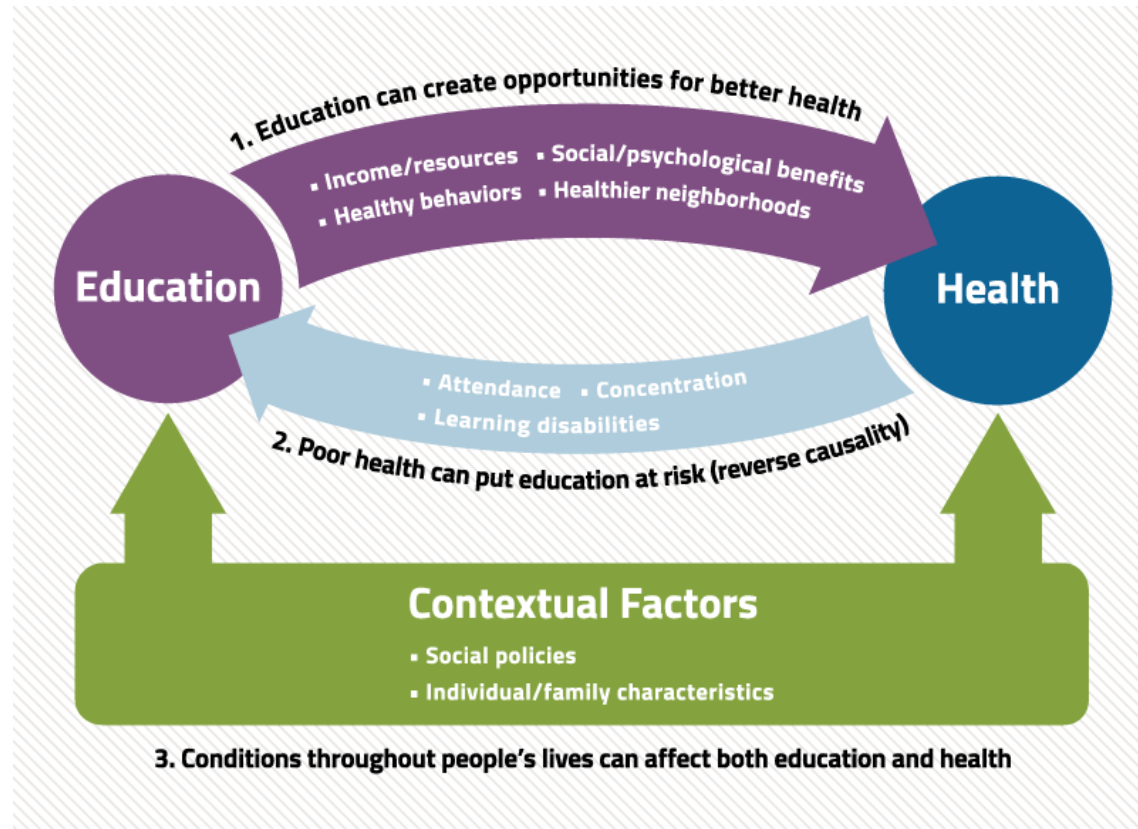Schools and communities that are ready to support children…

- Understand that children's health and well-being can affect learning
- Help ensure Access to Health Care
- Invest in Resources for Families
- Provide Access to Quality Childcare and Early Education

School readiness is enhanced by positive early childhood conditions—e.g., fetal wellbeing, social-emotional development, family socioeconomic status, neighborhood socioeconomic status, and early childhood education—but some of these same assets also appear to be vital to the health and development of children and their future risk of adopting unhealthy behaviors and adult diseases.

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-https://societyhealth.vcu.edu/work/the-projects/why-education-matters-to-health-exploring-the-causes.html

The relationship between education and health is never a simple one. Poor health not only results from lower educational attainment, but it can also cause educational setbacks and interfere with schooling.

-https://societyhealth.vcu.edu/work/the-projects/why-education-matters-to-health-exploring-the-causes.html

1. Education can create opportunities for better health

Education

- Income/resources   - Social/psychological benefits
- Healthy behaviors   - Healthier neighborhoods

Health

- Attendance   - Concentration
- Learning disabilities

2. Poor health can put education at risk (reverse causality)

Contextual Factors
- Social policies
- Individual/family characteristics

3. Conditions throughout people's lives can affect both education and health

Health and Learning Connection

- How do you know that children are healthy and ready to learn? What data do you use?

- How do you communicate the connection between children's health and learning outcomes to staff and families?

- How do you screen for and manage health concerns that impact school success?

- How do you make use of community resources to support children's ongoing health and wellness?

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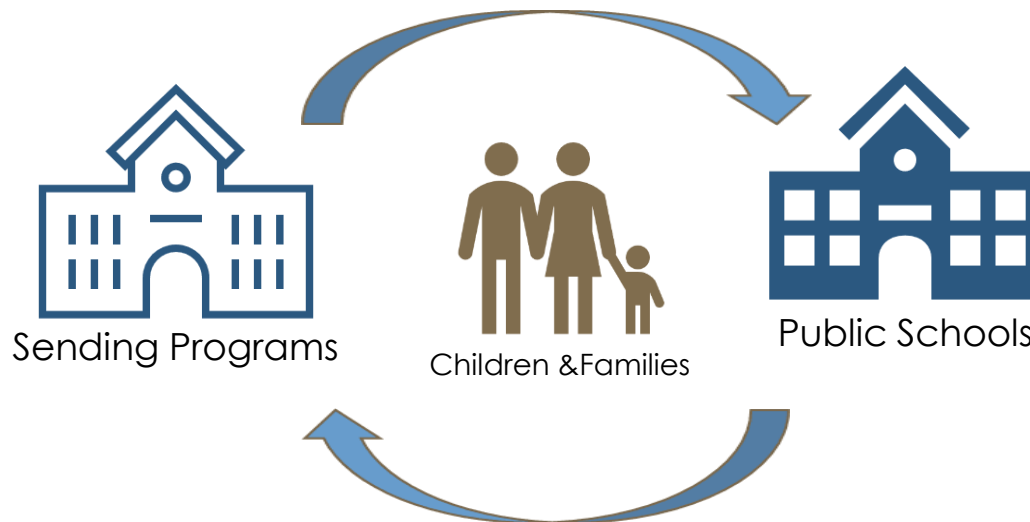# The Ready Community Invests in Resources for Families

- A ready community invests in resources and activities that support families and promote school readiness.

- It is important for communities to support families so that children enter school with a firm foundation for learning.

- It is critical that communities support schools, so they are ready to meet the needs of children.

Quick activity: Brainstorm 1-3 ideas about how your community and school partner around resources for families

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Community ECE Provider Partnerships

One of the most important Community Partners you will have may be the sending preschool and childcare programs. These may include:

- Private Preschool and childcare centers
- Head Start Programs
- Family/in home childcare

Sending Programs

Children &Families

Public Schools

Developing Relationships:
Sending Program - Receiving School

- Working together to identify information that becomes part of transition packets that follow children to school

- Sharing of assessment information (skill inventory)

- Collaborating on needs, culture and interests unique to each family and child

- Informing parents and caregivers can support families in engaging in transition activities with shared scheduling and information between programs

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What are the Benefits?

1) Working together provides continuity

2) Sharing of children's assessments informs schools

3) Alignment of activities within programs

4) Shared professional development

Tying It All Together

Transitions can be strengthened when public schools reach out to their community.

Working with private and community caregivers, including preschools, childcares, family childcares, faith-based preschools and Head Start programs, information is shared to inform educators and enable families and children to have successful transitions.

For More Information

Head to the Maine Department of Education's *Transitioning into Kindergarten* webpages

Resources for Educators

Information and tip-sheets for sharing with families

Resources for Providers

Transition Plan templates

Link:

www.maine.gov/doe/learning/earlychildhood/transitions

Welcome to Public School: Building High-Quality Transitions

Module 2 — Student and Family Engagement

- The Ready Child
- The Ready Family

Module 3 — School and Community Engagement

- The Ready Community

Module 4 — Building Transition Teams and Plans

- The Ready School

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Questions?

Thoughts?

Digging
Deeper…