

Welcome to Public School: Building High-Quality Transitions

Module 4 Being “School Ready” Building Transition Teams and Plans

**Maine Department of Education
Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Children’s Cabinet**



**GOVERNOR’S OFFICE OF
Policy Innovation
and the Future**

Objectives

- Gain an understanding related to identifying members and tasks of a school/SAU-wide transition team
- Understand how to develop a community-based school/SAU-wide transition plan
- Gain access to sample resources and templates to use in the development of your school/SAU transition plan

The Importance of Transition Plans

Research has found that effective transition strategies can promote teachers increased self-efficacy, increased knowledge about transitions and child development needs, increased use of transition practices, improved teacher-child relationships, increased engagement with families, and decreased stress levels

(e.g., Arneson, 2016; Gooden & Rous, 2018; Pears, 2018; Schulting, 2009).

Therefore, building and implementing a plan for seamless transition from the early learning environment to kindergarten can make a significant difference for children's on-going school success AND teacher success!

Resource

THE READY SCHOOL

“An elementary school that is ready to receive kindergarten students is prepared to deliver evidence-based instruction, hire and continually train knowledgeable teachers and principals, and be culturally responsive of all its students.” -IES

THE READY SCHOOL
An Important Component of Preparing a School-Ready Child

What is school readiness?
School readiness involves more than just children. In the broadest sense, school readiness is about children, families, early environments, schools, and communities. Children are not innately “ready” or “not ready” for school. Their skills and development are strongly influenced by their families and through their interactions with other people and environments before coming to school.

School readiness means when children have the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in primary school. Later learning, and life. Physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development are essential ingredients of school readiness. School readiness refers not only to ready children, but to ready communities, families, and schools.

An elementary school that is ready to receive kindergarten students is prepared to deliver evidence-based instruction, hire and continually train knowledgeable teachers and principals, and be culturally responsive of all its students.

Evidence-Based Instruction
A ready school's teachers deliver explicit, systematic, evidence-based instruction to help ensure student success. Planning, execution, and reflection in Pre-K to 3rd grade. It is aligned to help maintain continuity in instruction from pre-K to learning.

- **Pre-K - 3: What Does it Mean for Instruction?**
- **Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Pre-K - 3rd Grade Approaches**
- **Teaching Math to Young Children**
- **Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade**

Well-trained Teachers and Leaders
A ready school employs teachers and leaders who know how to teach young children and have the resources to do so.

- **RIEL Projects on Educator Effectiveness: Resources and Professional Development Opportunities Young Children**
- **Learning Pre-K - 3 Learning Communities: Competencies for Effective Principal Practice**
- **Leading for Early Success: Building School Principals' Capacity to Lead High-Quality Early Education**

Culturally Responsive Staff
A ready school takes into account individual differences in language, culture, and prior experiences.

- **Meeting the Needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners Through Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practices**
- **Culturally Responsive Instruction: Best Practices and Supports**

Additional Resources

- Developing Early Literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel**
<https://files.eric.gov/fulltext/ED589297.pdf>
- Ready for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Kindergarten to Grade 3**
<https://ies.ed.gov/heart/eddc/prepare/prepare.asp?prepid=1016>
- Pre-K Teacher's Guide for the Practice Guide: Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade**
<https://ies.ed.gov/heart/eddc/prepare/prepare.asp?prepid=1016>
- Getting Right: Reference Guide for Beginning Students with Non-English Names, 2nd Edition**
<https://ies.ed.gov/heart/eddc/prepare/prepare.asp?prepid=1016>

This document was developed by a collaborative group of representatives of the ten Regional Educational Laboratories throughout the United States.

Points to Ponder...

- Creating connections to facilitate a successful transition to kindergarten requires focused effort and leadership.
- Transition work is most effective when strong relationships and valuable partnerships that link children, families, schools, early childhood programs, and the community, are established before kindergarten starts.

Is your school READY?



Six Steps to Strong Transition Planning

#1: Develop a transition team

#2: Assess current practices

#3: Identify specific goals

#4: Build Out the Transition Plan

#5: Identify data and evidence

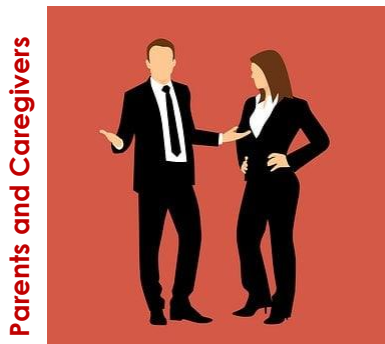
#6: Implement and evaluate the plan

Step #1: Developing a Transition Team

- The first consideration for step #1 is to identify the key leaders in your community, including leaders who:
 - have the competence and ability to direct resources, focus attention, and make important policy decisions
 - are motivating for teachers and families
 - are key in community partnerships and in the school
 - can lead from a culturally responsive place, and are knowledgeable in diversity, equity, and inclusion

Developing the Team

Transition Teams are community specific and depend on people and resources.



Community Health Personnel



Outreach and Invitation

Once you have established a list of key transition team members:

- Reach out and provide introductions
- Schedule an informational session to discuss the transition team and their involvement
- Provide a timeline for perspective team members that outlines date for invitation acceptance, first meeting date, and future expectations and obligations



Consider Identifying a Transition Coordinator

Possible Roles for the Transition Coordinator include:

- Track timelines for the Transition Team and Transition Plan
- Schedule and lead transition meetings, events, and activities
- Act as a parent liaison who ensures the most vulnerable families and children receive targeted attention

Responsibilities of the Transition Team

Identify
Community
Needs

Evaluate
current
transition
practices

Assess
partnerships
and
community
resources

Include
educators and
providers in the
process

Develop
transition
practices and
policies

Communicate
about roles and
planning

Step 2: Assess Current Transition Activities

- What is currently happening to support kindergarten transitions in the school/district?
- How well is information being shared?
- Are relationships with families, community and schools intentionally fostered?
- Is communication across settings effective?

Assess Current Transition Activities

Take two minutes with your team and write down 2-3 transition activities that are already happening in your school.

Did you consider...

- Recalling our activity from Module 2, are current activities supportive of building strong relationships, helping families work through emotions and understanding developmental milestones?
- What needs attention? Are there resources not being utilized?
 - Are there actions that need to be built into the plan that will support transition processes more effectively?

What is Already Working?

“Meetings in-person (or via zoom) in the spring ahead of in-school screening to introduce key school administrators, teachers, and staff, introduce parents to the routines and schedules, and have families meet other families and children who are also transitioning into kindergarten, has been great and helpful! CDS and school IEP K transition meeting was key (if overwhelming-20+ people in a room!) Ride-the-bus & classroom meet & greet for family in late August right before school starting up was great.”

- Quote from a Maine Parent

Step 3: Identify S.M.A.R.T. Goals

S Specific: What will it accomplish & who is involved?

M Measurable: Can you track progress & know when it is accomplished?

A Achievable: Are there constraints & is this achievable?

R Relevant: Is this worthwhile & match our needs?

T Time Bound: What does the timeline look like?

Year-Long Transition Plan Goals may include:

Meet with
100% of
private ECE
programs

Screen 100%
of incoming
students

Change
student and
family
identification
timeline

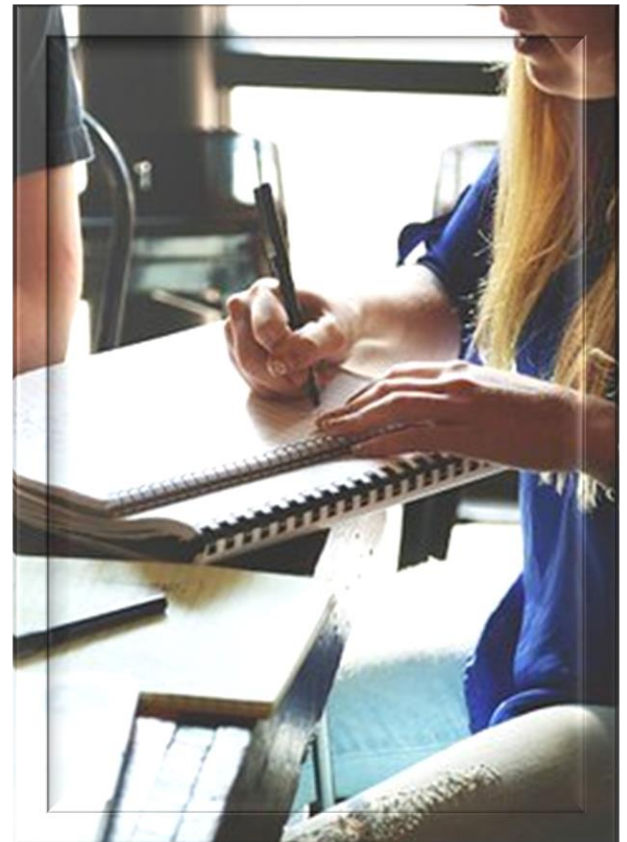
Begin family
identification/
outreach in
fall

Begin family
nights with
50% of
families in fall

Step #4: Build Out the Transition Plan

Now that you have current practices and goals identified, it is time to build out the year-long transition plan with activities to support families, children, providers and educators.

The next couple of slides look closely at the yearly timelines, and then we will follow up with some planning questions, as you build out your plan.



Sample Transition Timeline: The Pre-k Year

October

- Begin to identify pre-K families
- Communicate important dates and contact information

November

- Offer family meetings, playgroups
- Work with community providers on alignment of activities
- Work with community partners to provide family activities such as library story hour

Dec-March

- Visit pre-k classrooms, to observe children
- Read books about kindergarten
- Continue family outreach

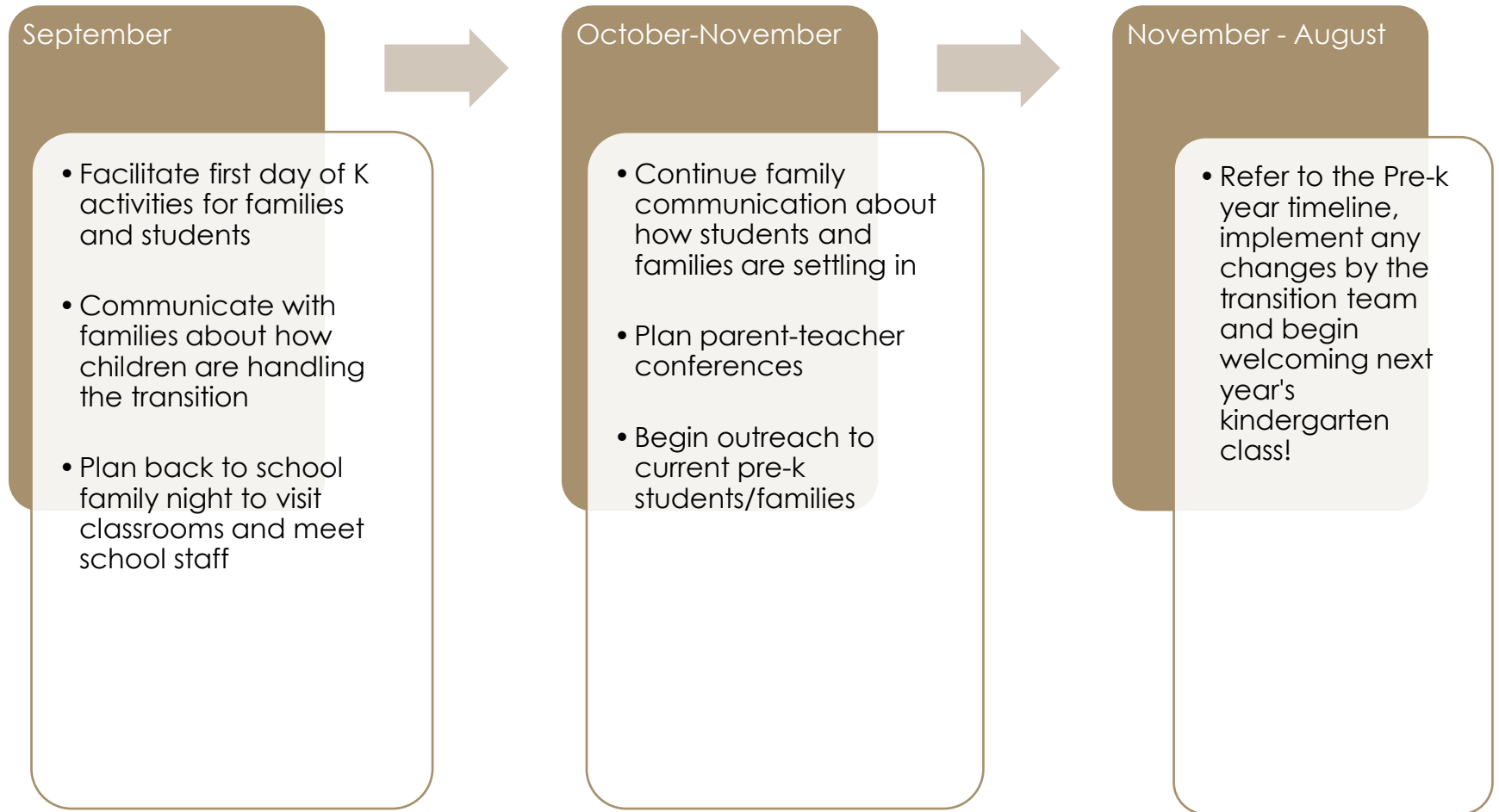
March-June

- Meet with pre-k teachers to share children's needs and goals, and to build class lists
- Invite families to visit the school

July-August

- Facilitate summer family transition activities
- Finalize class lists with pre-k teachers input
- Continue communication with families on back-to-school dates

Sample Transition Timeline: The K Year



Common Barriers

As with all things, there are common barriers to be mindful of.

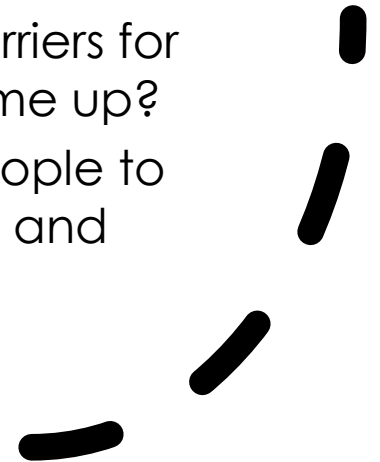
Think about how you will:

- Support families who may be unable to attend scheduled activities due to work, childcare needs, lack of transportation, or other factors;
- Identify and make connections with Immigrant, rural and migrant families in your community;
- Work with educators around scheduled time of activities;
- Share transition plans so that everyone understands their role and the importance of planned activities;
- Have clear and consistent communication focused on all aspects of the plan, including dates and times, to all stakeholders;
- Consider home visiting and support educators around safety factors

Writing the Transition Plan

Use these questions to support planning:

- What current transition to kindergarten practices support the goals?
- What activities should be added to support the goals?
- Are the transition activities equitable for all families?
- What community supports will be needed?
- What are common barriers for families that might come up?
- Have you assigned people to carry out specific roles and activities?



Step 5: Identify Data Sources

- The goal for this step is for the transition team to identify or create a data collection process to evaluate plan implementation.
 - What data do you already have?
 - What data do you need and how can it be collected?
- Data will be used to evaluate transition activities to determine how the plan is working and future next steps.

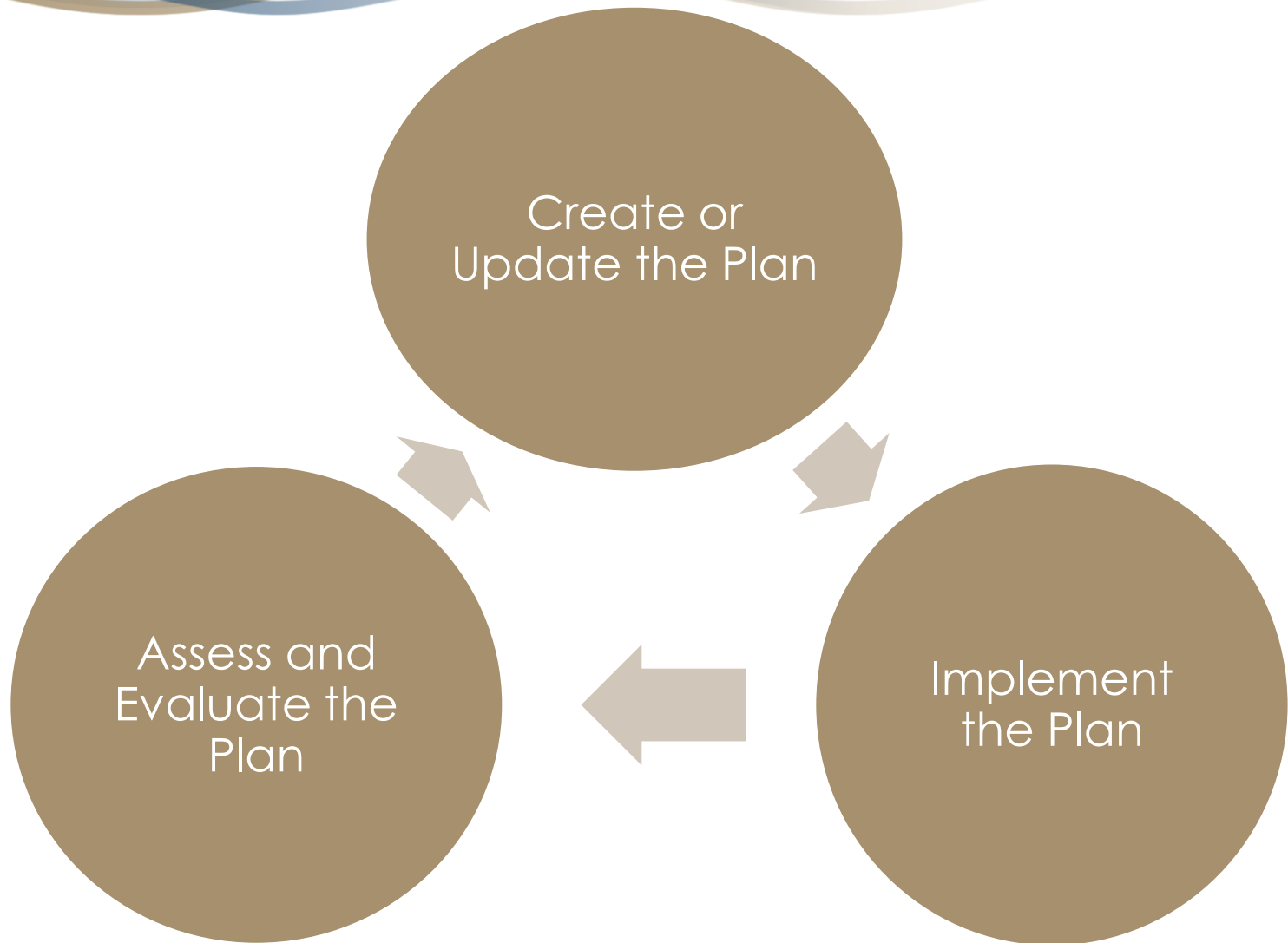
Types of Useful Data

- Informal observation
 - Team members can report on what they are currently experiencing, attendance records for events may provide additional data in conjunction with team testimonials
- Interviews
 - Staff from receiving and sending programs or family interviews
- Surveys
 - Staff from receiving and sending programs or family surveys
- Rating Scales
 - Surveys with rating scales could be provided to staff, families, and community members

Step 6: Implementation and Evaluation

- Once the goals and activities are identified, timelines are established, measurement tools agreed upon, and roles are distributed, the plan can be implemented
- Schedule regular follow-up meetings to track progress and review the plan
- The data will tell a story about the community needs and will inform the team when goals need to be modified and activities changed to support the goals

Transition Plan Continuous Improvement



Updating and Communicating

- Update the plan
 - Do timelines and deadlines need to be adjusted?
 - How will each new goal/action be measured?
 - Are assigned roles working?
- Communicate the updated plan and it's intended outcomes to all stakeholders, so they know their roles and why it is important that they participate.
 - Don't forget to include families, teachers, paraeducators, office staff, kitchen staff, cleaning staff, PTO, community organizations, or anyone that may be impacted by the plan.
 - People are so much more cooperative when they understand the benefits of their efforts.

For More Information

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

Resources
for
Providers

Resources
for
Educators

Transition
Plan
templates

Information
and tip-sheets
for sharing
with families

Link:

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

Questions?

Thoughts?

Digging
Deeper...



Thank you for your commitment to
the children and families of Maine.