

2020

Kentucky's Transition to Kindergarten Plan



KENTUCKY
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF
EARLY CHILDHOOD
READY TO GROW, READY TO LEARN & READY TO SUCCEED

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Introduction

Why are transitions so critical in early childhood?

During early childhood, young children and their families experience many transitions as a result of this period of rapid growth and development, changing family and child needs and the response of the early childhood system of services. Going through developmental stages prompt many changes and shifts within the home as well as the transitions children and families experience when moving from one program or setting to another. As children and families transition from one setting to another, they may experience new rules and expectations, routines, ways of learning, relationships with peers and adults and physical environment.

Transition is the process of a child moving from one program or setting to another.

Because transition is the process of a child moving from one program or setting to another, it requires the interactions of system partners and families because no one program or person is wholly responsible for the transition. It is a change process that requires communication, collaboration, coordination and alignment of early childhood system partners over time.

Smooth transitions foster positive and healthy engagement in learning. Research has found that activities to support transitions for children and families are associated with benefits in kindergarten including improved academic growth, increased family involvement and higher ratings of social and emotional competence.¹

Background and Overview

In 2019, Kentucky's Early Childhood Strategic Plan was released by the Early Childhood Advisory Council to provide a vision and plan for an early childhood system that will meet the needs of all young children and their families.² This Strategic Plan was developed based on needs assessment data which identified early childhood system gaps and needs. There are six goals with objectives and strategies outlined in the plan to be implemented over four years.

¹ Office of Head Start. (2014). *Planning for the Transition to Kindergarten*. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/transition-brief.pdf>

² Add link to strategic plan on web site

Strategic Plan Goals include:

- Advance comprehensive early care and education through strategic messaging.
- Grow and strengthen the early care and education workforce by providing a career pathway for advancement and professional learning opportunities.
- Increase coordination, program quality, and service delivery by fostering effective collaboration between agencies and stakeholders.
- Promote a comprehensive framework to effectively partner with families.
- Inform funding and resource allocations, policy recommendations, and programming by consistently applying data driven systems and processes.
- Secure new, diverse funding and utilize existing resources more effectively.

Vision: All children in Kentucky will have the foundation that enables school and personal success and are supported by strong families and communities.

One of the key objectives identified in the plan is to develop an early childhood transitions framework that enhances the experiences of young children and families as they transition from one setting to another. Strategies focus on how the early childhood system can work together to support transitions through the development of transition plans, best practices programming and cross-sector collaboration and communications.

Strategic Plan Objective: Promote an early care and education transition framework.

- Provide technical assistance to early childhood system professionals on the development of transition plans.
- Develop guidance and best practices on identifying and responding to transition experiences.
- Work with state and local partners to assist families in successfully transitioning children from early childhood and education programs to school entry.

Transitions and the Preschool Development Grant

Through the federal Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG), Kentucky has focused on transitions through robust stakeholder engagement, statewide coordination and the development of an action plan for the Transition to Kindergarten. A transitions work group has been convened as part of the Birth-Third Grade Alignment Subcommittee to facilitate a cross-sector planning. The transitions work group has provided a holistic approach to the work of transitions with a focus on developing a transition to kindergarten plan in 2019. For a full list of work group and subcommittee members who guided this work, please visit Appendix A.

Figure 1: PDG Transition Strategies



Purpose of the Transition to Kindergarten Plan

The purpose of the *Transition to Kindergarten* Plan is to provide a guiding document for Kentucky to promote a positive transitions approach throughout the early childhood system to foster family engagement and healthy child development. The TTK Plan is organized as follows:

- Vision for Transitions in Kentucky,
- Best Practices in Transitions,
- Kentucky Context,
- Framework,
- Action Steps, and
- Appendices.

Vision for Transitions in Kentucky

Kentucky has identified transitions as a critical foundation and framing for its early childhood systems capacity building. Transitions are not limited to the enrollment into kindergarten. Rather, transitions occur across early childhood and can reflect movement of children from home into non-parental or group settings as well as across group settings or age groups. This more holistic framing of transitions is

an opportunity for Kentucky to inform and enhance its work across service domains, inclusive of the training and professional development early childhood care and education professionals may need to provide high-quality services to children, families, and other professionals.

Based on this holistic vision for transitions, the Transitions Workgroup developed a guiding statement and guiding principles as well as establishing four critical early childhood transition points to focus on.

Transitions Guiding Statement: All children pre-natal through 3rd grade and their families will be empowered and supported as they transition consistently from one setting to another through a comprehensive support process that includes responsive communication, cross system collaboration and community partnerships

Transitions Guiding Principles:

Guiding Principles for transitions were developed to provide an overarching framing for the work of all early childhood systems partners. The following guiding principles are aligned with the Strengthening Families approach.

- ❖ Transitions occur at different points in child development and provide opportunities to support future success. Kentucky has identified four critical points of transition that include; Prenatal to Home, Home to Early Care and Education, Prekindergarten to Kindergarten and Kindergarten to Third Grade.
- ❖ Children and families are empowered by building on strengths to foster learning and development. Kentucky seeks opportunities to create, develop and maintain personalized partnerships with families.
- ❖ Transitions will be consistent and unified across all settings statewide. The transitions process is continually evaluated through multiple tools to build resiliency and utilize trauma-informed methods.
- ❖ Systems prioritize transitions as a key component of professional roles and responsibilities. Professionals will have the necessary tools and support to implement transition strategies.
- ❖ Successful transitions are the result of a collaborative, supportive team that represents the child, family, programs, schools and community. The team understands the role bias, racism, privilege and power can play in building a supportive team.
- ❖ Communication is responsive through engaging families and developing real understanding, reflecting a culturally sensitive environment that honors families and builds upon their strengths.

Key Transitions Points

In early childhood there are many transitions for young children and their families and these touchpoints provide opportunities for support. The following are four critical transition points for young children and their families:

- **Prenatal to Home:** From conception, neonatal care and birth, there are multiple transitions where families may need support in the form of information, resources and family care.

Kentucky strives to support high quality prenatal to home support to expectant families, because informed and empowered families have better birth and transition to home experiences.

- **Home to Early Care and Education:** Most children go through a transition from in home care with a parent or guardian to an early care environment. This may be in the form of kinship care, in-home childcare or center-based childcare, including interventions. Families need assistance in researching options, planning for the transition and implementing the transition to care outside of the home.
- **Prekindergarten to Kindergarten:** Children entering kindergarten transition from several types of early care and education settings that include home-based childcare, center-based childcare, public preschool and Head Start programs. Effective transitions at this key point result in lower levels of stress, stronger academic performance, healthy emotional adjustments and consistent attendance and engagement in school.
- **Kindergarten-3rd Grade:** Successful transition to kindergarten results in better engagement and success throughout the later elementary grades.

Figure 2: Key Transition Points



Best Practices in Transitions

While there is research indicating the benefits of transition programs, tools and activities, the utilization of these strategies vary widely. Different types of transition activities have been studied, including communication and meetings with parents, kindergarten orientation and visits to classrooms, workshops, and the sharing of information about children.³ What a review of selected studies suggests is that successful kindergarten transition investments tend to be collections of activities (or, a transition program), rather than isolated events or strategies. This is, in part, a recognition that one-size may not fit all; different families may need or respond to different approaches or modes of communication.⁴ Pianta et.al. also discussed the importance of supporting different inter-relational aspects of transitions, including child level peer relationships, interactions between prekindergarten and kindergarten children, family connectedness, and communication among a child’s primary caregivers (including teachers, child care providers, and parents). The intensity, timing, and type of transition activities may often vary across location; optimal transition activities include outreach to families, as early as possible, and with sufficient intensity to meet the child’s and family’s needs.⁵

While more intensive and comprehensive services over time tend to have greater benefits, research suggests that schools continue to be much more likely to use low-intensity practices, such as sending information home to parents, rather than high-intensity practices, such as having a preschool class visit a kindergarten classroom. Further it is the “schools serving traditionally underserved student populations report using fewer transition activities, meaning that the students who could benefit most from such activities are the least likely to receive them.”⁶

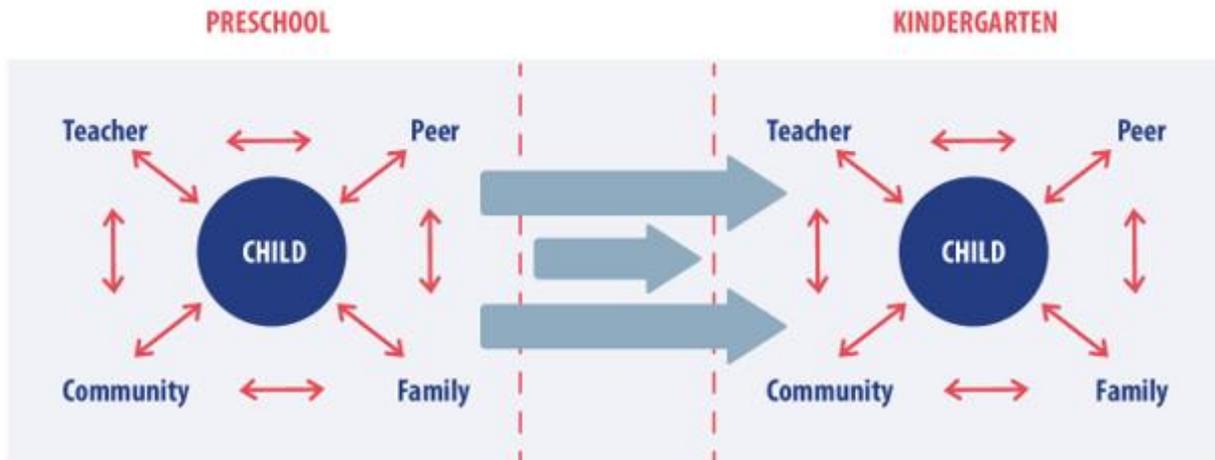
³ LoCasale-Crouch et al. (2008). Pre-kindergarten teachers’ use of transition practices and children’s adjustment to kindergarten. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 23, pp. 124–139. Rous et al. (2010). Practices that support the transition to public preschool programs: Results from a national survey. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 25, pp. 17–32.

⁴ Pianta et al. (2001). Collaboration in building partnerships between families and schools: The National Center for Early Development and Learning’s Kindergarten Transition Intervention. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 16, pp. 117–132.

⁵ Pianta et al. (1999). Kindergarten teachers’ practices related to transition into schools: Results of a national survey. *Elementary School Journal*, 100, pp. 71-86.

⁶ Little et al. (2016). *Facilitating the Transition to Kindergarten: What ECLS-K Data Tell Us about School Practices Then and Now*. AERA Open.

Figure 3: The Ecological and Dynamic Model of Transition⁷



Key Components for Fostering Smooth Transitions

The ecological model of transition in Figure 3 provides a visual representation of the relational components of the transitions. The key components for fostering smooth transitions require coordination, collaboration, communication and intentional planning to support the various relationships and interactions.

- ✓ Collaborative approach – engage all stakeholders
- ✓ Family partnership – foster positive relationships between children, families and schools
- ✓ Communication – clear, consistent and meets family needs
- ✓ Higher intensity strategies, offered over time
- ✓ Transition planning across systems
- ✓ Alignment across systems – standards, assessments, curricula⁸

⁷ Kraft-Sayre, M. & Pianta, R. (2000). *Enhancing the transition to kindergarten: Linking children, families and schools*. National Center for Early Development and Learning.

⁸ Atchison, B. & Pompelia, S. (2018). *Transitions and Alignment From Preschool to Kindergarten*. Education Commission of the States. <https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Transitions-and-Alignment-From-Preschool-to-Kindergarten-1.pdf>

Federal and state requirements

In response to the importance of fostering smooth transitions between settings, major early childhood policies and programs focus on facilitating transitions. While state and federal policies acknowledge the importance of transitions, there is variation on the specificity of what is required. Current policies may not be reviewed for alignment with what research tells us is best practice for transitions.

Federal

Major federal funding streams that include transitions language are: Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG), Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Head Start Act, Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Preschool Development Grant, Birth Through Five (PDG B-5), Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC). The New America Foundation paper, *Using Local, State, and Federal Dollars to Improve Pre-K to K Transitions*, provides an overview of federal requirements and funding streams that can be used to support transition planning and activities and recommends the following action steps for states: 1. Assess the current transition practices across the state 2. Develop guidance for LEAs and schools to strengthen transition efforts 3. Require LEAs to develop district transition strategies with the participation of stakeholders 4. Incentivize stronger transition efforts at the local level using public and/or philanthropic funds.⁹

State

In Kentucky, the state policies regarding transitions were reviewed by the Transitions Work Group and Birth-Third Grade Alignment Subcommittee (see Appendix B). State policies vary in their inclusion and support for transition practices. Kentucky Department of Education Comprehensive School Improvement Plan and the Revised Consolidated State Plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act focus transitions on older age groups (middle and high school). Specific programs, such as First Steps and Part C, reference supporting transition into elementary education. Kentucky All STARS provides an optional standard within Family and Community Engagement domain as a way to earn 2 points. The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan for Kentucky FFY 2019-2021 does not reference transitions.

A Snapshot of Transition to Kindergarten Activities in Kentucky

As part of Kentucky's needs assessment and the planning efforts through the PDG transitions work, an analysis of current services and gaps was completed. The Transitions Work group integrated feedback and input from families, administrators and educators in its planning work. Data was collected through 5 focus groups across the state with families, a community survey of 361 administrators and educators and a workshop session with more than 70 early educators.

⁹ Bornfreund, L., Ewen, D., & McDonald, D. (2019). Using Local, State and Federal Dollars to Improve Pre-K to K Transitions. New America Foundation. <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/using-local-state-and-federal-dollars-improve-pre-k-k-transitions/>

Local Transition Services – Survey Findings

Results from a recent statewide survey of kindergarten transition practices indicate a range of practices. Survey respondents reported parent and family, child, and professional strategies that varied by county or district and by type of respondent, with private child care providers less frequently reporting the use of transition practices (compared to Head Start and public preschool educators). It also is possible that respondents may not be aware of transition practices occurring within their county or district— leading to varied findings within counties or districts.

More than two-thirds of survey respondents (70%) indicated that their counties offer activities to promote or support rising kindergarten children and families. The most common activities reported were programs such as Born Learning Academies, Me and My School, Count Down to Kindergarten, Kindergarten Jumpstart. Other activities include field trips, open houses, classroom visits or school readiness camps.

*Transition Survey – May 2019
361 Survey Respondents –
Administrators, Preschool
Coordinators, Teachers, Providers*

*109 counties were represented by
at least one respondent*

Transition activities for **Families**:

- 85%: events to connect schools and families and children (such as kindergarten registration days or events),
- 65%: parent-teacher meetings, which may include parents of pre-kindergarten children, early care and education providers, and kindergarten administrators or teachers),
- 62%: web-based, internet or social media tools (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) designed to communicate information to parents of prekindergarten children,
- 55%: marketing and outreach materials about kindergarten transitions designed for distribution in your county, community, or school district,
- 44%: web blasts or email alerts about kindergarten registration materials and information,
- 5% reported another type of strategy, and 3% reported “none of the above.”

Transition activities for **Children**:

- 84%: chance for children to meet or talk to their kindergarten teacher(s) (e.g. "Meet the teacher night"),
- 64%: (a) kindergarten orientation and (b) kindergarten materials distributed within the community - backpacks, books, crayons, etc.,
- 56%: summer programming, such as short-term kindergarten club or camp offered summer before school,
- 21%: home visits by kindergarten teachers,

- 7% reported another type of strategy, and 2% reported “none of the above.”

Transition activities for **Professionals**:

- 66%: sharing of information between parents, early care and education providers and kindergarten administrators or teachers.
 - May include health information, developmental information or screening results, child portfolios, or other materials or communications,
- 46%: kindergarten transition and family engagement training or workshops for early care and education providers, kindergarten teachers, or school staff,
- 35%: transition planning or advisory team for your county that includes early care and education providers or teachers, kindergarten teachers, administrators, parents, and stakeholders from other community agencies (such as Head Start),
- 32%: joint professional development for early care and education teachers and kindergarten teachers to align knowledge and strategies,
- 25%: planning events to align curriculum and approaches between early care and education and K-12 systems,
- 15% reported “none of the above,” and 10% reported some other form of activity or service for professionals.

Targeted transition supports:

Of the 361 surveys completed, 217 (60.1%) respondents representing 95 counties answered a question about targeted transition supports for children who are vulnerable or underserved, in rural, and/or have special learning or developmental needs. Overall, more than half (60.8%) of those responding to the

question noted that there are supports for children with special learning or developmental needs and slightly less than half (49.3%) indicated that there are transitions supports in their counties for children who are vulnerable or underserved. More than one third of those responding indicated that either they are unsure (34.6%) whether

	%
Children with special learning or developmental needs	61%
Children who are vulnerable or underserved	49%
Unsure if there are targeted transition supports	35%
Children in rural areas	33%
There are no targeted transition supports	3%

supports are available and 3.2% said that no targeted transition supports are provided in their counties. Overall, 33.2% of all respondents (including 23.1% of respondents representing rural or partially rural counties) said that targeted supports are provided for children in rural areas.

Opportunities to support Transition to Kindergarten in Kentucky

Collaboration and alignment across systems – Survey respondents noted the need for improving cross-sector communication across public preschool, Head Start and private child care providers. Early educators identified the lack of alignment between early education and elementary education systems as being a significant barrier for transitions, with early education being more focused on social and emotional skills and play based learned and elementary education having a more rigid schedule and academic approach.

Consistency – Among survey respondents and early educators participating in a transitions workshop, great variability in transition practices was reported even within the same county. There is a need for greater consistency in services and communications for greater access and clarity for families and educators.

Transition Planning – One guiding practice for kindergarten transitions is the development and use of a Kindergarten Transition plan; 67 of 281 respondents (24%) reflecting 40 counties (Exhibit 219) reported that their county has a written plan. Of note, 159 respondents (57%) reported that they were unsure.

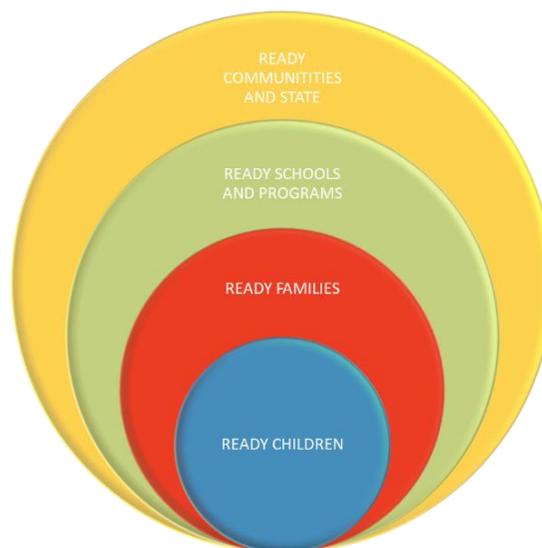
Outreach to children and families not enrolled in early education – Parents participating in the focus groups identified their child’s preschool teacher as their greatest resource for transition information. Stakeholders have consistently recognized the need for additional strategies and outreach for families whose children are not enrolled in formal early education settings.

Targeted supports to meet the needs of families – Stakeholders reported the need for additional supports and strategies for communicating with parents for whom English is a second language and parents with limited access to the internet.

Transitions Framework

When a child is transitioning to kindergarten, their development and experience is the result of living within the context of their family and early caregiving relationships as well as their neighborhood which is within the broader context of their community and state.

A child’s developmental status at kindergarten is not an innate ‘readiness’ the child possesses but rather that child’s development that is part of a broader continuum that is situated within and interacted by their family and close



relationships, program and schools and community and state. Using this ecological framework to think about and plan for transitions is helpful in developing strategies and outcomes for these different layers. Each layer or level is critical in the interactive and evolving process that is the transition to kindergarten.

The transitions framework includes and involves these key players: children, families, programs and schools including professionals, communities and the state. Using this framing, strategies and outcomes should be focused on each player in the transitions process.

Child

Child Outcomes:

- Children are familiar with the classroom setting and engage with adults, peers and activities.
- Children feel positive and confident in activities as they transition into kindergarten.
- Children adapt, both socially and physically, to new schedule, structure and environment.
- Children exhibit continuous growth and development as part of good attendance and participation in the new setting.

Child-Focused Strategies:

- Child visits kindergarten classroom and school tour includes bathroom, cafeteria, office and bus.
- Children participate in home visits with teachers and start to develop relationship.
- Children and families attend school wide events and get to meet other incoming kindergartners.
- Children have access to early learning resources and opportunities before kindergarten.

Family

Family Outcomes:

- Families access community services and resources to support them in caring for their children.
- Families have increased knowledge about their child's development and school expectations.
- Families participate meaningfully in the new environment both at the class and program level.
- Families understand that attendance is important to their child's long-term educational success.
- Families engage in daily reading and reading-related activities that focus on kindergarten.

Family-focused Strategies:

- Families have multiple opportunities to visit and engage in activities in the kindergarten setting which meet their needs in terms of schedule, ability and language.
- Families have access to information in a variety of formats about policies and school expectations before, during and after the transition to kindergarten.
- Families have access to at-home, no-cost resources to increase family/child engagement.
- Families are equipped with the tools to effectively advocate for their child's learning and community resources that support good physical and mental health.
- Families have access to community resources that support their role and recognize the strengths and abilities unique to their own family.

Schools and Programs

School and Program Outcomes:

- Schools and programs foster resiliency by developing and maintaining positive relationships with families and children.
- Schools and programs recognize and honor individual differences in language, culture and prior experiences and reflect those characteristics in the classroom environment.
- Programs and elementary schools provide consistent and clear communications to all families.
- Curriculum in kindergarten and the early grades builds on prior learning.

School and Program-Focused Strategies:

- Schools and districts create transition teams with community stakeholders to develop intentional transition plans with a focus on outreach to families with children not enrolled in early education.
- Early education programs and schools use common transition forms.
- Early education programs and schools coordinate professional development opportunities.
- Early education programs and schools develop process to share data across all sectors.
- Early education programs and schools encourage develop and support teacher-to-teacher connections and conferences at least once a year that guide the transition process.
- Kindergarten teacher visits preschool classrooms to gain an understanding of setting, observe curriculum and methods and share information and expectations with preschool staff.

Community and State

Community Outcomes:

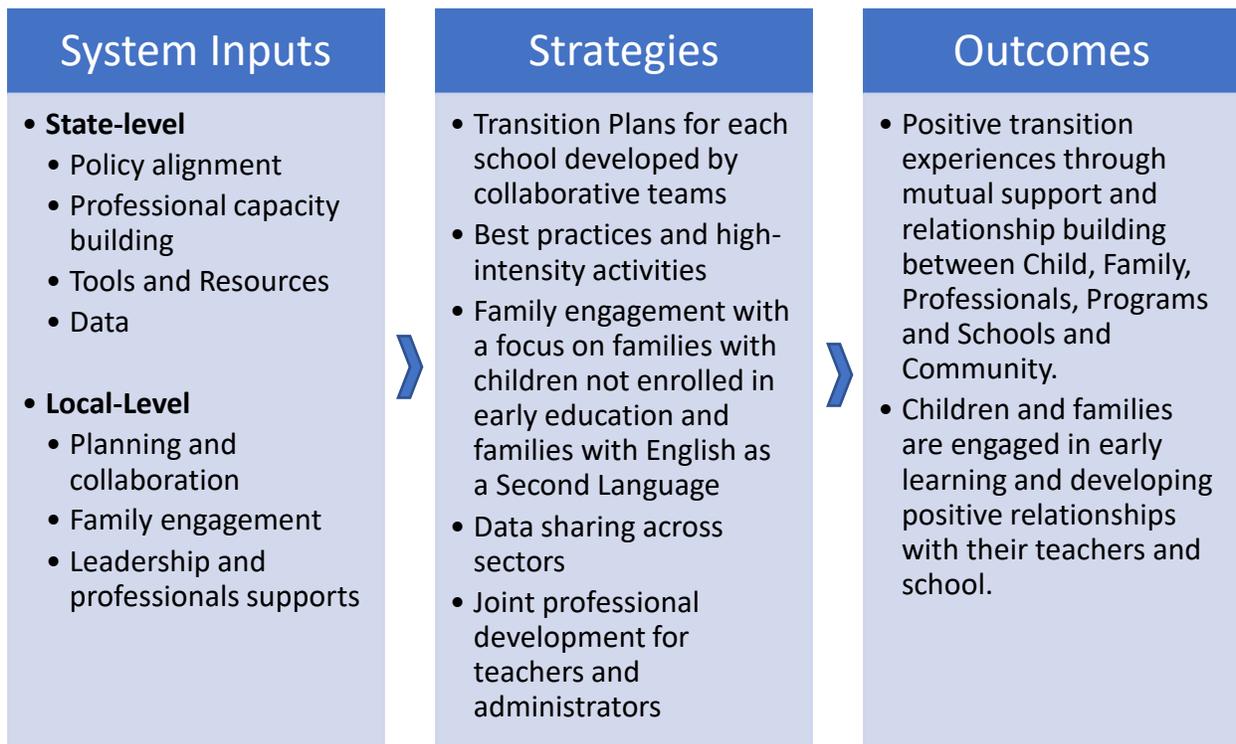
- Communities support transition strategies for all children and families in Kentucky.
- Communities develop transition teams that foster collaboration with families, schools, and partnering organizations.
- Communities develop public awareness of the importance of early childhood education and quality programming and share Early Childhood Profile data.
- Community partners support early care and education programs and work to eliminate barriers to successful transitions.
- Community partners collaborate with families to support a community-wide transition plan.

Community-focused Strategies:

- Communities host events for families like Parent Cafés, CECC's or Born Learning Academies.
- Communities provide resources and services that address the cultural needs of all children.
- Community Transition Teams evaluate transition plans regularly.
- Community partners provide support to families to practice and model self-help and independence skills with children through multiple media and technology options.
- Public awareness campaign promotes engagement and attendance in early childhood education.

Action Plan

In alignment with Kentucky’s Early Childhood Strategic Plan, an action plan is developed to promote an early childhood transition framework. This action plan builds off needs identified through needs assessment and transition planning process, best practices in the field and strategies for children, families, professionals, programs, schools, community and the state. The following figure provides an overview of how system inputs and investments can promote intentional and comprehensive transitions plans and activities that will result in outcomes for children and families.



Specific recommendations are grouped into several action areas: Coordination and Alignment, Policy, Professional Capacity Building, Family Engagement, Tools and Resources, and Data. Each action area contains steps that state and local partners can implement in order to advance constructive and successful transitions. Some actions are appropriate for state-level attention, while others can be implemented by communities or school districts, as shown. Whenever possible, local and state stakeholders should take advantage of opportunities to coordinate and collaborate, to ensure alignment and consistency of plans and activities across the state.

Action Area: Coordination and Alignment

State

1. The Early Childhood Advisory Council's (ECAC) Prenatal-Third Grade Subcommittee will provide oversight and guidance of the state's Transition to Kindergarten (TTK) plan. This includes the development and implementation of policy, program coordination, professional development, tools and resources, and data strategies related to the TTK plan.

Community or District

2. Form TTK Collaborative planning teams to develop and implement community and school transition to kindergarten plans with specific strategies and activities identified.

State-Community Coordination

3. Develop feedback loops to facilitate communication and better link state systems partners with local communities and families.
4. Engage in collaborative planning to ensure alignment of state and community plans.

Action Area: Policy

State

1. Review and revise key early childhood policies and guidance documents to include TTK Plan best practices and planning suggestions. The following services, standards, and policy areas will be included in this review and revision process:
 - Kentucky All STARS;
 - Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) Strategic Plan;
 - Grant Management Application and Planning System;
 - Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan;
 - Child Care Development Block Grant State Plan;
 - Community Early Childhood Council Requirements;
 - Early Childhood Standards;
 - Comprehensive District Improvement Plan;
 - Comprehensive School Improvement Plan; and
 - Professional Development Framework.
- Consider the cross-sector implications or opportunities of the statewide TTK Plan.

Community or District

- Use collaboration planning teams to develop written, community- or district-level, TTK Plans. Teams should consist of community stakeholders representing private child care, public preschool, Head Start, special education, families, directors and administrators.

Action Area: Professional Capacity Building

State

Transition to Kindergarten Plan

1. Develop and implement trainings and technical assistance on how to develop and implement a TTK plan

Transition to Kindergarten Best Practices

2. Develop and implement trainings and technical assistance on core content in best practices of transition to kindergarten.
3. Develop trainings that provide professional credits within KDE and the Division of Child Care.
4. Provide professional support on family engagement and outreach with families of children not enrolled in early education.
5. Host school readiness and/or transition summits to provide planning and professional supports.
6. Review preservice education standards – Review and revise preservice education standards for teachers such as the Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education (IECE) to incorporate and emphasize transition to kindergarten practices.

Local capacity building

7. Provide support for communities or districts in hosting local transition planning activities or events such as summits and joint professional development for early educators and kindergarten teachers.

Administrator and Director capacity building

8. Develop and implement professional development trainings and tools for early care and education program administrators or directors.
9. Develop and provide trainings, technical assistance, or other forms of professional development on using the Strengthening Families framework to understand the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACES) on transitions and to facilitate constructive and successful transitions.
10. Use existing conferences and professional development events to provide trainings to Superintendents, Principals, and other stakeholders.

Community or District

11. Ensure critical partners or stakeholders participate and receive follow-up on trainings and technical assistance.
12. Host at least one (but ideally multiple) transition planning activities, events such as summits and joint professional development for early educators and kindergarten teachers.
13. Ensure outreach to families with young children, with specific strategies for families of children not enrolled in early education.

Action Area: Family Engagement

State-Community Coordination

1. Develop opportunities for families to identify questions, concerns, and solutions for constructive and successful transitions as well as evaluate existing transitions efforts.

2. Use the Strengthening Families framework to understand the impact of ACES on transition to kindergarten, to foster promotive and protective factors and to build relationships with families.
3. Coordinate with Kentucky Collaborative for Families and Schools.
4. Develop targeted communication strategies to meet the needs of families, where they are and based on family communications preferences.

Action Area: Tools and Resources

State

Transition to Kindergarten Plan

1. Create a TTK Plan template and associated guidance using the framework of Ready Children, Ready Families, Ready Schools and Programs, and Ready State and Communities.
2. Emphasize outreach and activities focused on children not enrolled in formal early education.
3. Create a toolkit of guidance and templates to support the implementation of the TTK Plan.

Portfolio Tool

4. Explore the development of a digital portfolio app/tool for early educators, families and elementary educators to use during the transition to kindergarten to share information.
5. Develop a plan to pilot a digital portfolio, evaluate effectiveness and strategies for expansion.

Video library

6. Develop tools to support communities in creating a local video library with short videos shared with families on a variety of transition topics such as registration, routines, tour of the school, drop off and bus procedures.

Superintendents toolkit

7. Update the Superintendent's toolkit to include information on TTK Plan, guidance on best practices, how to use early childhood profile data and how to support teachers in fostering successful transitions.

Action Area: Data

State

1. Support communities in using early childhood profile data to identify community needs, track trends, and develop strategies to meet the needs of vulnerable populations.
2. Develop a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the TTK Plan strategies. Use the findings to inform Continuous Improvement processes.
3. Review and identify strategies to utilize attendance data to support families and improve child learning opportunities.

Community

1. Utilize disaggregated, local data to identify marginalized populations to inform decision making and communications and outreach strategies to reach families.

Conclusion

The development of Kentucky's Transition to Kindergarten represents a critical step in fostering supported and aligned transition experiences for children, families and educators. Implementation of this plan statewide will require state and local commitment to collaboration, communication, family engagement, professional capacity building, using data to inform strategies and intentional transition planning. The transition to kindergarten planning efforts can serve as a guide to inform future planning around additional transition points such from hospital to home, home to early education setting and elementary transitions.

Appendix A

Birth through Third Grade Alignment Subcommittee Membership:

Bill Buchanan, Co-Chair, Kentucky Department of Education
Tom Lottman, Co-Chair, Children, Inc.
Jessica Abner, Infant and Toddler Coordinator
Karen Cheser, Fort Thomas Schools
Andrea Day, CHFS Division of Childcare
Amanda Ellis, Kentucky Department of Education
Brooke Gill, Prichard Committee
Brenda Hagan, Transitions Coordinator, Kentucky Governor's Office of Early Childhood
Linda Hampton, Kentucky Governor's Office of Early Childhood, Executive Director
Amy Hood, Western Kentucky University
Carla Malone, Boyd County Schools
April Mounce, Pulaski County Schools
Elizabeth Renner, Save the Children
Joe Roberts, Preschool Development Grant Project Manager, Governor's Office of Early Childhood
John Roden, ECAC Chair, Preschool Development Grant Project Manager, Governor's Office of Early Childhood
Anna Shepherd, Transitions Coordinator, Floyd County Schools, GOEC
Sally Shepherd, Kentucky Governor's Office of Early Childhood, Deputy Executive Director
Anne Southwood, Lake Cumberland Community Action Partnership
Marion Sowders, Superintendent, Casey County Schools
Rebecca Atkins-Stumbo, Kentucky Department of Education
Kathryn Tillett, Kentucky Department of Education
April Trent, Save the Children
Kari Whitt, KY STATS

Transitions Work Group Membership:

Brenda Hagan, Transitions Coordinator, Kentucky Governor's Office of Early Childhood
Anna Shepherd, Transitions Coordinator, Floyd County Schools, GOEC
Jessica Abner, CHFS Division of Childcare
Christina Benassi, KDE Division of School and Program Improvement
Angela Casey, New Vista
Karen Cheser, Superintendent, Fort Thomas Schools
Andrea Day, CHFS Division of Childcare
Krista Hall, Kentucky Department of Education
Michelle Johnson, University of Kentucky
Sherrie Martin, CHFS FRYSC
Joe Roberts, Preschool Development Grant Project Manager
John Roden, ECAC Chair, Preschool Development Grant Project Manager
Jennifer Samudio, OVEC
Donna Taylor, OVEC

Appendix B

State Transition Policies

Policy/Program	Transitions Language
<p>Kentucky All STARS Standards of Quality</p> <p>https://kentuckyallstars.ky.gov/Documents/RatingSystem.pdf</p>	<p>Transition supports included in optional standard within Family and Community Engagement domain as a way to earn 2 points.</p> <p>Optional Standard: Implements transition supports for children and families.</p>
<p>Comprehensive School Improvement Plan/CDIP</p> <p>https://education.ky.gov/school/csip/Pages/default.aspx</p>	<p>Transition is included in required school goals for high schools only.</p> <p>Requirements for Building an Improvement Plan There are six (6) required district goals: proficiency, separate academic indicator, achievement gap, graduation rate, growth, and transition readiness.</p> <p>The required school goals include the following:</p> <p>For elementary/middle school, these include: proficiency, separate academic indicator, achievement gap, and, growth.</p> <p>For high school, these include: proficiency, separate academic indicator, achievement gap, graduation rate, and transition readiness.</p> <p>Goals include long-term three to five year targets based on the required school level goals. Elementary/middle schools must have goals for proficiency, separate academic indicator, achievement gap, and growth. <u>High schools</u> must have goals for proficiency, separate academic indicator, achievement gap, graduation rate, and <u>transition readiness</u>. Long-term targets should be informed by The Needs Assessment for Schools.</p> <p>Goal 5: Transition Readiness</p>
<p>Kentucky Department of Education Title I, Part A Handbook</p>	<p>PRESCHOOL AND TITLE I ESSA Sections 1112, 1114 and 1115</p> <p>If a district opts to use Title I funding for early learning, a strategy must be developed and</p>

<p>https://education.ky.gov/federal/progs/tia/Documents/Title%20I%20Part%20A%20Handbook.pdf</p>	<p>described in their Title I plan. This description should include how the district will support, coordinate, and integrate Title I services with early childhood education programs at the district or school level. The plan should also include details on transitioning children from early childhood education to elementary school.</p>
<p>Commonwealth of Kentucky Revised Consolidated State Plan Under The Every Student Succeeds May 27, 2019 https://drive.google.com/file/d/1O2KEmrjHbPssNOF4R8IeOEBQyVX4syE7/view</p>	<p>Transition focus is on middle and high school with goal of preventing drop out.</p> <p>School Transitions</p> <p>(ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(D)): Describe how the State will support LEAs receiving assistance under Title I, Part A in meeting the needs of students at all levels of schooling (particularly students in the middle grades and high school), including how the State will work with such LEAs to provide effective transitions of students to middle grades and high school to decrease the risk of students dropping out.</p> <p>Each public school student in Kentucky has an Individual Learning Plan (ILP), which is defined in 704 KAR 19:002.</p> <p>Enacted in 2000, KRS 158.146 required the establishment of a comprehensive statewide strategy to provide assistance to local districts and schools to prevent students from dropping out of school.</p> <p>The Kentucky State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) is part of the IDEA Part B SPP/APR that focuses on Results Driven Accountability (RDA).</p>
<p>Compliance Record Review Document Monitoring KDE Division of Learning Services Pg. 14 Preschoolers Transitioning from Part C https://education.ky.gov/specialed/excep/forms/Documents/Compliance Record Review Document 2018.pdf</p>	<p>Preschoolers Transitioning from Part C 34 CFR 300.124, 300.323 and 300.101 707 KAR 1:300 Section 1(3) and 707 KAR 1:320 Section 3(6)</p> <p>Items 30-31b</p> <p>For preschoolers transitioning from Part C (First Steps), a district representative participated in transition conferences arranged by First Steps.</p>

	<p>For preschoolers transitioning from Part C, the IFSP was considered in developing the IEP.</p> <p>For children exiting Part C, documentation shows the IEP was developed and implemented by the child's third birthday.</p>
<p>Kentucky Preschool Evaluation System/Grant Management Application and Planning</p> <p>https://drive.google.com/file/d/13dUpfpad-P7jA7V98IgcZKcqLsjFVull/view?usp=sharing</p>	<p>Special Education - 707 KAR 1:002 to 707 KAR 1:380. Regulation</p> <p>The district has an effective transition process in place for helping children transition from First Steps into the preschool program.</p> <p>Parent/Family Involvement - 704 KAR 3:410 Section 6 and 7 . Regulation</p> <p>Program implements transition supports for children and families.</p>
<p>Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan For Kentucky FFY 2019-2021</p> <p>https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dcbs/dcc/Documents/stplan_pdf_2019%20revised%2010.31.18.pdf</p>	<p>CCDF Plan for Kentucky does not specifically reference transition(s).</p>

Appendix C

Review of States Transition Strategies

1. Colorado has a system called Results Matter. One of the barriers they are facing is how to make information like portfolios digitally transferred. They also have a unique program called Little Cubbies, which is specifically designed to help children transfer from private home/family caregiving environment to school. It has opportunities for these children to visit their future school for regular enrichment activities throughout the year prior to entry. <https://earlylearningco.org/>
2. Georgia understands that the transition into Kindergarten is an important time in children's lives. The entrance into Kindergarten from home or from a pre-school program may be a point of considerable change for families, children and staff. Transition practices attempt to bridge and overcome issues that arise during this time. School transition is a process – not just two or three activities – and it involves communications and partnerships among four groups: schools that are ready for children; community participation and support; family knowledge and involvement; and preschools and childcare settings committed to preparing children. They have developed videos and documents available for download to support a transition plan that addresses these components. <https://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement>
3. Operating under the core value, "Every child in Hawai'i is our child and deserves our commitment to their care, learning and wellbeing." Hawai'i has developed a comprehensive approach to early learning. Hawai'i is one of the top 10 least affordable states for center-based childcare in the nation. In addition, only 1 out of 37 children are being served in infant toddler programming, and current preschool and prekindergarten programs serve less than 60% of eligible children. Hawai'i in response to these needs is committed to the following principles: Diversity and Multilingualism, Multigenerational Approaches, Equity, Integration of Health, Wellbeing and Education, Well-Supported Workforce, Family and Community Partnerships, Continuous Improvements in Positive Transitions and Choice and Effective Collaborations. <https://earlylearning.hawaii.gov/>
4. Illinois has a time line for planning with tasks that schools and communities need to plan for month-by-month. https://www.isbe.net/Documents/prek_k_transition.pdf
5. Maryland has created a Child Care Director Credential that has a specific criteria for transitions in that credential. Professional Activity Unit (PAU) refers to the number assigned to an activity depending on the number of hours spent, level of effort, or commitment to the activity. Unit Professional Activity Definition Documentation 1 Transition Plan Activities to support the children during transition from home to program, within the program, and program to school. Includes individualized plans for children with disabilities and special health.

<https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/3/msdeiichildcare090215.pdf>

6. Minnesota offers a leadership series for principals, and requires the alignment of standards of expectations.
<http://mnprek-3.wikidot.com/principal-leadership>
<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/early/prek/>
7. Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh) has developed a series of videos designed to help families navigate the Transition to Kindergarten process. Quality transition to Kindergarten will bring lifelong benefits to a child. The Ready Freddy Program is unique in that it works to bring together all the necessary elements and participants for a quality transition.
<http://www.readyfreddy.org/>
8. Oregon has identified several key activities in its 2019-2024 Strategic Plan. Support professional learning teams that consist of early learning and kindergarten to third grade educators with statewide and regional professional development, including elementary school principals and ECE directors. Ensure family voice in system design and implementation. Strengthen data-driven community planning, and include business leaders to the science of early childhood development and the impact of public investment. Integrate early learning data into the statewide longitudinal data system with an early learning system dashboard with cross-sector accountability for outcomes for young children and their families.
<https://oregonearlylearning.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Raise-Up-Oregon-Web-corrected.pdf>
9. West Virginia mandates that each county have a collaborative transition team that writes a transition plan. These teams are a group of people in every county who work together to ensure smooth transitions for young children, their families and the agencies partnering with them. While the membership varies from one community to another, typical team members include representatives of families, WV Birth to Three, Early Head Start/Head Start, Public School system, Childcare and other community partners such as Family Resource Networks (FRNs), Starting Points, Health Department, Right From The Start, etc...
<http://www.wvearlychildhood.org/>