

Slide Handouts: Transition – Ask the Expert



Recommended Practices Modules

Module 2

Module 2: Lesson 1

Transition: Ask the Expert

The image shows a sequence of four silhouettes of a child at different stages of development: crawling, sitting, standing, and walking. The silhouettes are arranged from left to right, showing the progression of the child's physical abilities. The background is white, and the silhouettes are dark blue.

Welcome to Module 2: Lesson 1. Transition: Ask the Expert.

Lesson Objectives

- To describe transition and transition practices
- To identify key characteristics of recommended practices which support transition

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The objectives of this lesson are to describe transition and transition practices, and to identify the key characteristics of recommended practices which support transition.

Introduction

- What are the transition practices?
- What does the research say about effective transition practices?
- What are the implications for how we work with young children- particularly young children with disabilities and their families- as they experience transitions between different early childhood programs or settings?

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This lesson will help you understand why transition practices are important in your work with children by considering the following questions: What are the transition practices? What does the research say about effective transition practices? What are the implications for how we work with young children—particularly young children with disabilities and their families—as they experience transitions between different early childhood programs or settings?

tran-si-tion: / tran-zish-uh n:

“movement, passage, or change from one state to another”

What are transition practices?

Transition practices are an intentional set of activities that promote communication between sending and receiving practitioners, engage families in collaborative planning, and support the preparation and adjustment of children and families to a change in settings or programs. Central to these practices is a close, positive relationship between the child and family and the teacher/practitioner in the receiving program.

(Rous, Hallam, Turnbull, Buysse, & Winton, 2010)

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DEC Recommended Practices



TR1: Practitioners in sending and receiving programs exchange information before, during, and after transition about practices most likely to support the child's successful adjustment and positive outcomes.

TR2: Practitioners use a variety of planned and timely strategies with the child and family before, during, and after the transition to support successful adjustment and positive outcomes for both the child and family.

Practices


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DEC recommends the following practices associated with transition. Review the recommended practices before continuing. You may download a list of the practices by clicking the "Practices" button.

ASK THE EXPERT

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About the Expert

Beth Rous, Ed.D., is professor and chair in the Department of Educational Leadership Studies, College of Education and director of the Kentucky Partnership for Early Childhood Services, Human Development Institute, at the University of Kentucky. Her research focuses on early childhood cross sector systems development in the areas of quality, transition, and professional development.

She is principal investigator of the Kentucky Quality Rating and Improvement Technical Assistance System and Child Care Resource and Referral State Network and Kentucky Early Childhood Data System. She is past president of the national Division for Early Childhood (DEC).

Read Now

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So, we have reviewed the DEC definition and recommended practices for transition. Now let's ask an expert. Dr. Beth Rous answers questions about program transitions. Click "Read Now" to download the transcript. When you finish reading, click "Continue" to move forward.

Dr. Beth Rous answers questions
about program transitions

What Does the Research Say?

Transitions can occur across two dimensions (Kagan 1991): vertical movement through chronological age and development (e.g., from early intervention to preschool special education); and horizontal movement across settings within the course of a given day (e.g., between child care and a preschool special education classroom).

Research suggests transition practices, particularly those for children at risk of school failure, should address interconnections of the child, family and community (Pianta, Rimm-Kauffman, 2006).

This emphasis on social context is also present in the early childhood special education literature, particularly alignment and continuity of services for families and their children and support of family and child adjustment to situations and settings using a family-centered approach.

Research documents the importance of collaboration among early childhood staff and programs, skills needed by the child to support their success in a new setting or program, and supporting positive family and practitioner experiences throughout the transition process.

Specific child level skills found to be predictive of a more successful adjustment after transition include those in the areas of social, communication and adaptive development, more so than academic skills (Lin, Lawrence, & Gorrell, 2003; Wesley & Buysee, 2003). Using this research as a foundation, many resources to support children's successful transition to kindergarten and first grade have been developed (Rous & Hallam, 2006).

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How has the Research Informed the Development of Strategies Identified in the Literature?

With the significant investments in early care and education, there has been an increased focus on both the quality of programs and coordination across programs. This has led to a renewed emphasis on identification of practices to support both vertical and horizontal transitions for children and families. These practices take into consideration the timing of the practice (does it support children's preparation for and/or adjustment to new settings and programs), as well as the practitioner role in supporting the practice and the impact of the practice on children's outcomes.

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Critical components of a successful transition include continuity of child (and family) experiences between and across programs and settings and alignment of requirements, expectations, and practices across programs in which children (and families) participate.

Strategies that identify and minimize child and family disruptions within and across settings are a critical component to transition planning. This includes alignment of instructional approaches, and appropriate training and support for staff. For example, alignment across programs of what children are expected to know and do (standards) with instructional approaches (curricula), and how children are evaluated on skills and knowledge (assessment) support both successful transitions and positive child outcomes.

As national attention continues to be focus on school readiness, both academically and socially, contextual factors of the child, family, classroom and community should be considered.

Why Is This Important for Children with Disabilities?

Young children with disabilities may have multiple vertical transitions between birth and age five; from the hospital neo-natal intensive care unit (NICU) to home, from early intervention to preschool special education, and from preschool special education to kindergarten. Associated with each of these new programs are people, settings, routines and expectations. The extent to which they align has an impact on how the child and family will experience the transition into the new program.

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Communication and collaboration with parents and other practitioners is critical to ensuring continuity and alignment of services and supports for children and families. Using a family-centered approach to transition is an effective means to support their adjustment. This involves preparing the family as well as the child for anticipated changes resulting from a move into a new program or setting. Strategies such as making introductions to new personnel and fostering those relationships with the family, sharing information about the new schedule, the environment the child will be transitioning into and the potential and/or expected role of family members in that new setting (e.g., expectations for when family members can visit the classroom), identifying the preferred form of communication for the family member(s) and the new practitioner/teacher.

The Bottom Line

The research on program transition has shown alignment across programs supports positive child outcomes, Collaboration with families and supporting families and practitioners through the transition are critical to ensuring a successful transition process.

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Summary

Research on program transition has shown that:

- alignment across programs supports positive child outcomes
- collaboration with and supporting families and practitioners through transitions are critical practices in ensuring a successful transition process



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In this lesson, we learned what research tells us about transition practices. The research on program transition has shown that alignment across programs supports positive child outcomes. In addition, collaboration with and supporting families and practitioners through transitions are critical practices in ensuring a successful transition process.

Now let's take a moment to check what you've learned.

Check Your Knowledge



Maria, a child with developmental disabilities, is transitioning from a center-based preschool program to kindergarten next month. Her new teacher, Miss Shauna, has already met Maria's parents once to complete some paper work and provided them with a tour of the school and classroom.

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References and Resources

Handout 2.1: [Ask the Expert](#)

Handout 2.2: [Research Supporting the DEC Recommended Practices on Transition](#)

References

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Thank you for participating. This concludes Module 2, Lesson 1. To learn more, see the resources listed here. After downloading, you can close this window.