

Your Child's Move from Preschool Special Education to Kindergarten

Watch a video of this Learning Guide

Center for Leadership and Learning, Oklahoma Health Sciences Center

The transition to kindergarten is an important time in your and your child's life and you want to be as prepared as possible. Learn about kindergarten requirements, expectations, and routines before your child is enrolled. Work with the preschool program staff and ask for their support to access key information and participate in kindergarten transition strategies. Engaging in transition planning activities will help you to be more prepared to support your child's and your family's adjustment to the new kindergarten setting in your local school.

Learning Guide: Preparation Is Key to Participation in Transition Planning

- Find out how preschool program staff can support your child's transition to kindergarten. Ask how they prepare children and their families for enrollment in kindergarten. Ask if preschool staff coordinate meetings with the kindergarten teacher once staff assignments are finalized to support discussions about your child's interests, strengths, and any concerns before and after school begins.
 - Participate in developing a transition plan for you and your child. Work with the preschool and kindergarten staff to share key records and coordinate participation in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting. Share information about your child's interests, abilities, and needs. Work in collaboration with school staff to identify the services and supports that will be provided to address your child's goals in the new setting.
 - Find out if your elementary school schedules visiting days, parent meetings, or a family orientation before the school year starts. Do they set up buddy systems for new children? When do they develop class lists so that you can meet with your child's future teacher?
 - Arrange to visit a kindergarten classroom in the elementary school your child will attend. Ask for time to meet with the principal and kindergarten teacher.
- At the visit, observe and become familiar with kindergarten activities and routines. Identify the types of communications and information from the school that will be useful to you at home. Find out how you can be involved in the school.
- Engage in activities at home that help prepare your child for the new setting. Help your child learn what kindergarten is like by talking about kindergarten activities, reading books about going to kindergarten, or having him or her watch internet videos about kindergarten activities and routines. Provide your child new experiences in a variety of settings. Encourage your child to voice his or her questions about going to kindergarten. Then take your child to visit the new classroom to see the activities and materials, experience the schedule and routines, and meet the teacher and other kindergarten children.
 - Create a portfolio about your child's interests, abilities, and needs. Include findings from your child's assessments and the most recent IEP, if your child is receiving special education services. Share the portfolio with the kindergarten teacher and others working with your child in the new classroom.

A Quick Peek

Luis and Carla have been very busy working with the Head Start and Preschool Special Education staff to prepare for enrolling their twin daughters, Lily and Luisa, in kindergarten. Their school district has a transition team that provided them a packet of information about kindergarten enrollment requirements, approaches to learning and curricula, and kindergarten orientation options. The packet included a list of children's books about starting school that they could borrow to read to the girls. They learned about free online resources, too. They attended an open house and orientation event at the school, and they have scheduled a day to meet the kindergarten teacher and visit her classroom with their daughters. An IEP meeting is scheduled to determine services and supports for Lily in the kindergarten setting. Luis and Carla appreciate how the preschool staff are working with them to implement their transition plan and ensure a smooth transition to kindergarten.



You'll know the practice is working if ...

- Your child interacts with adults, peers, and activities in the new classroom
- Your child adjusts to the schedule and expectations of the new setting
- Your child learns new things as part of participation in the new setting

For additional information about supporting you child's transition to kindergarten, you might find these online resources helpful:

- [A Parent's Guide to a Successful Kindergarten Transition](#) from the National Education Association
- [Transition to Kindergarten](#) web page of Head Start/ECLKC