

South Carolina Pre-K to Kindergarten Transition Plan: Family Engagement

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To the Early Childhood Advisory Council:

The Palmetto Pre-K workgroup was first convened in 2019 to establish a unified eligibility portal and one-stop search tool for families to determine which publicly funded 3-and- 4K their child might be eligible to attend. Original members of the Palmetto Pre-K workgroup included state- and local-level representatives from South Carolina First Steps, the South Carolina Department of Education, SC Department of Social Services, and the Head Start Collaboration Office.

In 2021 the Education Commission of the States awarded a technical assistance opportunity to South Carolina for the express purpose of developing guidance and planning for kindergarten transition, specifically in the area of family engagement. The Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup (Transitions Workgroup) grew out of Palmetto Pre-K and expanded to include representatives from The Carolina Family Engagement Center, Family Connection SC, Yvonne and Schuyler Moore Child Development Research Center, Share SC, SC Inclusion Collaborative, and the SC School Improvement Council. A major goal of the Transitions Workgroup was to create a consistent, multi-system approach to help parents know and understand the process of transitioning from home or care to school.

The Transitions Workgroup developed the Pre-K to Kindergarten Transitions Plan: Family Engagement as a framework to support families as they advance their children into five-year-old kindergarten. The plan includes a range of recommendations and opportunities identified to enhance, increase, and improve families' engagement with preschool and school-based professionals, leading to shared understanding and goals around school readiness.

Respectfully Submitted

Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup

Summary

Smooth transitions into kindergarten can foster a positive relationship between families and schools and can underpin the success of children in school settings. Many parents are unsure of the logistics and expectations of the child and family once the child is enrolled in kindergarten, or of the best activities to prepare their child for school. The Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup (Transitions Workgroup) developed this plan to help professionals and parents in facilitating a smooth transition to school. The plan was developed by evaluating existing transition policies at the state and federal level, then offering a set of tactics and best practices that align with and complement goals and strategies presented in “For Our Future: South Carolina’s Birth Through Five Plan.”

The plan presents a document review and findings from surveys and other data sources, work to date, and the plan itself. The appendices detail the array of resources reviewed and available to parents and child care and education professionals. The appendices also include the summary and results of a statewide Pre-K to 5K Transitions survey that solicited responses from both parents and teachers.

The plan focuses on activities or tactics that will be implemented by members of the Transitions Workgroup. The tactics will be implemented both individually and in collaboration among team members. The tactics are organized around For “Our Future: South Carolina’s Birth Through Five Plan” and address one or more of the following: 1) widespread public information campaigns; 2) outreach; 3) aligned and consistent programs and activities for families; 4) aligned and consistent professional development and data reporting; 5) resource development to support transitions work and systems.

“South Carolina Pre-K to Kindergarten Transition Plan: Family Engagement” demonstrates the state’s collective capacity and commitment to ensure every child and family has the resources to learn, flourish and thrive.

Introduction

Kindergarten readiness and a successful transition into kindergarten are influenced by many factors, but families are key to supporting their children’s educational attainment. In South Carolina, we value families and the vital role they play in their child’s education as their child’s first and earliest teachers. Parents and caretakers are partners in meeting the educational needs of their families.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a monumental impact on every facet of family life and added to difficulties families faced on many fronts. The demand on parents’ and caregivers’ time, energy, and resources is tremendous. As a system, the lessons of the pandemic are still being learned. Building additional supports that address learning and opportunity gaps and building upon South Carolina’s collective strengths are of greater importance than ever before.

The Transitions Workgroup, comprised of many state early childhood system leaders, state agency personnel, educators, administrators, community and family advocates, and other stakeholders, met through 2021 (see Appendix B for list of members and Appendix C for meeting dates and timeline of activities). Education Commission of the States, the technical assistance provider, assisted in

the synthesis of this information to develop a framework for the plan. The Workgroup inventoried current resources for families, reviewed literature and prior data collection efforts of researchers and education experts. It also conducted a survey to hear the voices of parents, educators, administrators, program leaders and service providers. Those voices are at the center of the plan.

In a statewide survey, parents were asked what they believed are the most important things they need to support their child showing up ready for Kindergarten. One parent's reply showed the importance of the kindergarten transition to every stage of life: "...letting her know that each year is different and fun. Life is about changes." Parents and teachers alike value strong relationships with open communication to support children. One parent said the most important thing to them was "active communication, participation and partnerships from school teachers/staff."

The South Carolina Pre-K to Kindergarten Transition Plan: Family Engagement (Transitions Plan) aligns with For Our Future: South Carolina's Birth through Five Plan and provides additional details about current efforts related to supporting Pre-K to K transitions for families. Further, the strategies outlined in the plan encompass both those of doing, and those of discovery. This plan identifies areas where additional research and information gathering is essential to build on current work.

The overarching goal of the Transitions Plan is to ensure that as a system—at both local and state levels—parents have the knowledge and skills to be excellent caregivers and are actively engaged in their children's development, health, learning, and transitions. (For Our Future: South Carolina's Birth Through Five Plan, Objective 2.1)

Background: Review of Statutes and Regulations

The Transitions Workgroup conducted a detailed review of three federal statutes and five state regulations to map the family engagement and transitions requirements or obligations of federal and state-funded programs for families. The federal statutes and their associated regulations were Head Start, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and Child Care Block Grant (CCBG) and the associated State Child Care Plan. The state policies reviewed were Child Early Reading Development and Education Program (CERDEP), Read to Succeed, First Steps enabling legislation, Early Childhood Advisory Council enabling legislation, and the SC Department of Education Early Learning Standards.

All documents included aspects of family engagement, inclusion, outreach and support. They also included information related to transition, or kindergarten readiness more generally. However, few of the documents contained specific obligations for family engagement pertaining to Kindergarten transition. For example, enabling legislation for South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness establishes the legislative framework for supporting kindergarten readiness. The State Child Care plan addresses the early education needs of children. However, neither the legislation or the plan

explicitly connects family engagement requirements with kindergarten transition and readiness. SC Code of Laws, Section 59-139-10, includes “the establishment of activities for assisting children and their parents with the transitions between various levels of phases of education.” However, this activity is listed as an option in the “development and implementation of a developmentally appropriate curriculum from early childhood education through grade three.” It is not a requirement and it is not specific to transition to kindergarten. Nonetheless, this option does present the opportunity for each school district to implement best practices that support children and families into Kindergarten.

Head Start regulations and performance standards offered the most robust plans and framework for supporting families through the transition to Kindergarten. Head Start statute requires developing and implementing “a systematic procedure for transferring, with parental consent, Head Start program records for each participating child to the school in which such child will enroll,” as well as “conducting outreach to parents and elementary school (such as kindergarten) teachers to discuss the educational, developmental, and other needs of individual children.” (U.S. Code Citation: 42 USC 9801 et seq. SEC. 642A.) Other specific elements include enhancing continuity for parental involvement, linking services received between Head Start and the Local Education Agency (LEA), teaching parents strategies for maintaining their level of involvement in the LEA, and helping parents understand other services provided by the school in which their child will enroll. Head Starts complete memorandums of understanding with LEAs in order to collaborate for these transition activities.

Parent respondents to the SC Pre-K to 5K Transitions Survey voiced a number of questions they had about transitions to kindergarten. They had specific questions about schedules, how and when to register, where they’re zoned to attend, who their child’s teacher will be, and what their child needs to know to be successful from the start in a kindergarten classroom.

A landscape analysis was conducted of the services, programs, and publicly-available information resources that are available to families or family-support professionals relating to readiness for and entrance into kindergarten. Search criteria included direct mention of transition to kindergarten, or readiness for kindergarten. One hundred twenty-eight resources were identified. The majority of resources are print materials or websites with information related to family engagement or kindergarten readiness. Very few address the specific questions asked by parents or specific activities that prepare families for beginning kindergarten.

Of the 128 resources identified in the landscape analysis, 14 are programs that support readiness and are available in many areas of the state. Another 24 products were created or endorsed by state Transition Workgroup partners. Documents such as Profile of the Ready Kindergartner and Ready, Set—Kindergarten are examples. Other resources were identified, such as web articles and toolkits provided the Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center, a Head Start technical support and assistance provider. While not specifically created by South Carolina agencies, these resources could be universally adopted and made available to meet specific needs and expectations of families.

Salient resources are listed in Appendix F.

Transitions: Work to Date and in Progress

South Carolina has been engaged in transition to kindergarten activities for a number of years. Below is an inventory of key transition efforts by South Carolina partners.

Carolina Family Engagement Center (CFEC): is one of 12 Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFECS) across the U.S. that are funded by the U.S. Department of Education under Every Student Succeeds Act. CFEC is beginning its 3rd year of a 5-year, nearly \$5 million grant and is housed in the offices of the SC School Improvement Council at the University of South Carolina's College of Education. The Office of Family and Community Engagement at the SC Department of Education is a lead partner. CFEC is focused on providing training and technical assistance to all education stakeholders to support family engagement and effective family-school-community partnerships. It serves families and educators of children from preschool – 12th grade. The focus is on families that are low income, currently homeless or migrant, foster families, ESL families, families of children with disabilities, and families that have historically been underserved, including African American and Latino families.

To support families with preschool children, CFEC published six guides for families (cfec.sc.gov) to help with readiness for kindergarten. The guides were produced in collaboration with the SC Department of Social Services (home to child care block grant funding and the state's early learning standards), SC First Steps, the SC Department of Education's Office of Early Learning and Literacy, and Clarendon School District 2. The series, titled, "Ready, Set – Kindergarten," addresses each of six areas of growth and development in children ages 3-5:

- Approaches to Play and Learning
- Emotional and Social Development
- Health and Physical Development
- Language Development
- Mathematical Thinking
- Cognitive Development

In Fall of 2020, CFEC began working with county First Steps offices where CFEC had partner schools to support family engagement in the transition to kindergarten (Chester, Anderson, Clarendon,



Richland, and Rock Hill). CFEC provided \$10,000 in funding for this work. First Steps provided CFEC representatives with training on CTK. CFEC's liaisons were active in helping to recruit new teachers and families to participate in transition programming. CFEC regional liaisons were also active in disseminating information about Palmetto Pre-K to families.

Family Connection SC is the state's Parent Training Information Center and a PDG-funded partner in expanding transition supports to parents of young children with special needs. Family Connection provides multiple forms of training, parent-to-parent support, parent leadership development, online developmental screenings, and resource guides related to transitions from IDEA Part C to Part B 619 and into kindergarten. Family Connection SC is also creating additional resource guides in support of Pre-K to K transition for families.

Family Voice Early childhood organizations are making space for parents to share their concerns and participate in leadership. Examples of engaging parents in leadership are the Head Start Policy Councils that have family representatives, School Improvement Councils, trainings and family groups convened by South Carolina Family Connection, leadership opportunities on First Steps partnerships' boards, advisory councils at the SC Department of Social Services, SC Children's Trust, and the Early Childhood Advisory Council's SC Family Voice Council.

First Five SC (first5sc.org) incorporates the tools from Palmetto Pre-K, in support of the whole child, and includes information about 60 publicly funded programs and services in the areas of parenting supports, health and safety, early intervention, food and nutrition, and early care and education. Parents can learn more about their child development, and quickly and easily screen their eligibility for 44 public early childhood programs. A parent resources section of the site, including transitions information, will be mapped to available options and resources in their area.

First Steps 4K: Since 2006, SC First Steps has administered full-day (as well as extended day/year) state-funded 4K according to state standards within private, non-profit, and faith-based settings for low-income children. Family engagement efforts include Ready Rosie, a web-based program that supplements Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum, the curriculum used by all First Steps 4K centers. Over the past year, First Steps 4K piloted two additional strategies with the support of participating local First Steps offices: an integration of Raising a Reader with Ready Rosie; and beginning January 2021 a pilot of HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters), an evidence-based home visitation model using First Steps AmeriCorps Members as parent educators.

First Steps' Countdown to Kindergarten: First Steps is a state-local network with local partnership organizations in every SC county that leverage state funds with other resources to fill gaps in services for children 0-5. School transition is one of the primary program areas that local First Steps partnerships support via Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK). CTK has two major components. The first component is a standards-based home visiting program for children with risk factors associated with early school failure, whereby the child's soon-to-be 5K teacher visits the child and family in the home five times the summer before kindergarten, with a 6th visit at the child's school. The second component is a statewide public awareness program that "counts down" the weeks before 5K. The campaign shares resources for families to ensure their child is prepared to enter Kindergarten.

Preschool Development Grant (PDG) and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) funding will expand CTK to additional schools and districts over the next two years, fund an independent evaluation of the home visiting program, and pilot a variation of CTK with non-English speaking families in collaboration with PASOs, the state's leading organization supporting Latino families.

Palmetto Pre-K. Created in 2019, Palmetto Pre-K is an Early Childhood Advisory Council initiative of all publicly-funded 3K and 4K programs in South Carolina, including school district 4K, state 4K within child care settings (First Steps 4K), Head Start, and child care subsidy. In its short existence, Palmetto Pre-K has created:

- **Web portal** for families (palmettoprek.org) to search for public 3K and 4K programs they are eligible for based on their location, income, and other factors. Future phases include development of real-time vacancy information and a common application process.
- **Shared professional development** for the state's public and private 3K and 4K teachers, regardless of program, to come together twice a year for high-quality learning opportunities through the Palmetto Pre-K Jamboree

Professional Development and Shared Tools: This year PDG funding will be used to help families and school professionals build knowledge and skills around transition to kindergarten, as well as create training for primary grades teachers and families that address key questions they have. Focus groups with teachers will provide information about key content areas and aspects of transition they feel should be included.

Profile of the Ready Kindergartner an updated and jointly adopted set of readiness characteristics published by SC First Steps and endorsed by the SC Department of Education, using a family-friendly poster and other collateral materials (<https://scfirststeps.org/resources/partnership-resources/profile-of-the-ready-kindergartner/>). PDG funding animate the Profile via a partnership with the state's public television network, SCETV.

South Carolina Child Care Inclusion Collaborative (SCIC) provides training, coaching, and consultation to child care programs to support the inclusion of children with disabilities in those programs. In addition, SCIC actively seeks collaboration opportunities with other agencies and entities engaged in work to support young children and their families. SCIC partners with Family Connection SC to develop materials for parents to understand their rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act, how to select high quality child care, and how to form partnerships with caregivers or teachers to promote positive outcomes for their children. Recently, SCIC developed materials for child care providers to understand the transition from Part C to Part B 619 and their role in supporting a positive transition.

SC Department of Education Office of Early Learning provides transition supports, including:

- Waterford UPSTART Program, a web-based program for supporting family engagement and at-home learning for families with children enrolled in state-funded 4K in public schools.
- Partnership with Carolina Family Engagement Center in support of families

- An online course for parents and caregivers
- Parent Friendly Early Learning Standards
- Developmental Milestone Videos
- Various resources from the US Department of Education
- The Profile of the Ready Kindergartner in collaboration with SC First Steps

SC Department of Education Office of Special Education provides transition resources for families with young children with special needs, including:

- Dissemination of the Profile of the Ready Kindergartner
- Partnership with Family Connection of SC (see below)
- The Advisory Council for Educating Students with Disabilities has a preschool committee focused on connecting with and engaging families of young children with disabilities.



Family Engagement: Promising Developments

Most, if not all, organizations that make up South Carolina's system of Pre-K services also are involved in family engagement activities, recognizing that a parent is a child's first and most important teacher. Yet there is limited coordination or consistency across programs. Each program implements its own family engagement activities. However, family engagement work is evolving. Several developments within the early childhood system champion not only more opportunities for family engagement, but also stronger coordination and collaboration across system partners:

- Proviso legislation encouraging increased parent engagement within state-funded 4K programs and providing greater flexibility in the use of state funds for parent engagement activities
- Preschool Development Grant- Birth through Five funding to create and expand evidence-based transition programs. Funding supports easily accessible portals of information and service entry

- to increase parent knowledge, choice, and engagement in their child's development and school readiness
- Carolina Family Engagement Center, a multi-year federally funded project led by the state's School Improvement Council organization
- Significant investments in COVID-19 relief programming have supported the expansion of home visiting programs, as well as the opportunities to disseminate information about kindergarten readiness and provide enriching home educational experiences for young children
- Strengthening of South Carolina's Early Childhood Advisory Council (staffed by SC First Steps) as a hub for system-level coordination

South Carolina's Transitions Plan

The transition from preschool, childcare, and home into a 5K classroom in the K-12 system is one that impacts a number of areas in a family's functioning—into every detail of their daily life and routine, such as commute, meals, schedule—and requires a great deal of information beyond a child's kindergarten readiness and development of cognitive and social skills. A coordinated strategy for family engagement that supports the Pre-K to K transition across all publicly-funded programs, and bringing it to scale, is a long-term effort. This plan presents a unified family engagement strategy aimed specifically at involving families of pre-K students in their children's transition to kindergarten.

The South Carolina Family Engagement K-12 Framework is the SC Department of Education's official framework that teachers and parent engagement coordinators use in public 4K and Kindergarten. This framework guides the Transitions Plan. Further, the plan is organized around Objective 2.1 of For Our Future: South Carolina's Birth through Five Plan, "Parents have the knowledge and skills to be excellent caregivers, and are actively engaged in their children's development, health, learning, and transitions." Each strategy in this objective is listed, then background. Tactical opportunities are presented that relate specifically to family engagement and pre-K to Kindergarten transition.

Expand proven home visiting programs (with transitions components) so more families can participate (Strategy 2.1.1)

Having a trusted, competent, and knowledgeable home visiting professional allows for families to have individualized attention at a level of intensity that can help connect them to other resources, as well as provide information and deliver programs that build skills and are shown to benefit children entering Kindergarten.

Evidence-based home visiting programs, if universally available statewide, regardless of county, would ensure families could access respectful and supportive professionals who can assist in communicating the information families find useful about their child and the kindergarten experience.

Home visiting models in SC include differing levels information about school transition. Head Start has home visiting with transitions components. There are other home visiting models in SC that work with 4-year-olds and have the opportunity to expand upon transitions information: Parents as Teachers (PaT), HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters), and Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK).

CTK is a home visiting model created specifically to address family engagement in kindergarten transition, by allowing the child's kindergarten teacher to visit his or her students over the summer and provide activities through an evidence-supported curriculum. CTK begins the relationship between the parent and the teacher, helps the child prepare to start the school year.

PaT and HIPPY do not include specific content about kindergarten transition, but do work with preschool age children and their parents on activities that support school readiness. The relationship between home visitor and family could provide additional opportunities to share supports and information about transitions-related activities. HIPPY is organized primarily for 4-year-olds who are enrolled in First Steps 4K, and is supported through an AmeriCorps grant for parent support professionals. First Steps is recognized as the state office for PaT. PaT is offered by not only First Steps, but also other partners and programs, and is funded through state and federal resources.

Of the 46 counties in SC, HIPPY is in 13 counties, PaT is in 36 counties, and CTK is in 26 counties. Many counties have all three models, such as Barnwell, Clarendon, and Florence. Several counties offer one of the three models, such as Anderson, Georgetown and Greenwood. Four counties do not have any of the three models: Allendale, Cherokee, Dillon, and Oconee Counties. Head Start is available to families in SC at or below 100% of the federal poverty level in almost all counties of the state.

Opportunities

- ☑ Leverage public-private partnerships and braid resources to coordinate funding into high-needs areas. Target areas with few parenting programs but with high community when expanding home visiting. In areas where several models currently operate, increase openings for enrollment.
- ☑ Consider that (COVID-19) relief funds are currently expanding the availability of programs across SC into 2023. However, long-term funding and capacity building to support local home visiting partners to develop and administer programs is necessary.
- ☑ Home visiting is a model included in Head Start programming. Home visitors work with Head Start and local school districts to provide curriculum to parents about supporting their child's learning. As Head Start programs work with local school districts to develop child-specific transitions plans, home visiting plays an important role in modeling transitions activities for families, both in policy and in practice. Head Start federal regulations contain robust implementation guidance specifically around these supports for transition and family engagement. This guidance is detailed in Appendix A. Head Start practices around transition,

specifically child specific transition plans, are replicable to other parent-serving programs. In some areas of SC, Head Start also partners with other home visiting models, and in those situations, it is recommended for implementing agencies to make sure these partnerships are clear for families and other providers.

Expand access to information and resources that promote children’s health and safety and strengthen families’ ability to participate more fully in the development of their children (Strategy 2.1.2)

Community-level education campaigns that build knowledge about child development ensures parents have ways to get answers to questions about their child’s health and learning. Information about kindergarten transitions is also important for providers, to educate them about the array of resources available to parents and families, to further support their work.

In the statewide “Transitions from Pre-K to 5K Survey” conducted by the Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup in May - June 2021 (see Appendix H), families said they want information about the skills their child needs so they can help them be ready.

Parents also wanted to know details about the kindergarten experience, their child’s new school, and what was expected of them as partners in their child’s education so they could prepare. Early care and education professionals shared that being able to help parents by giving them this information was vital for a successful launch from child care to Kindergarten.

Opportunities

- ☑ Expand community-level education campaigns by using resources and materials such as Profile of the Ready Kindergartner, and Ready, Set—Kindergarten!
- ☑ Create targeted messaging that answers common questions parents have about the kindergarten experience and share statewide in early care and education settings. Target audiences include: family childcare providers; children not enrolled in early care and education; programs for children with or without disabilities; dual language learners. Messaging could be through text services to families.
- ☑ Offer specific guidance documents that address the answers to questions parents want to know with details about kindergarten such as: how to know if my child is ready, how to share information with the teacher, how and when to request an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), what does a day look like in kindergarten, and how do I know if my child is in a least restrictive environment? (See Appendix H for results of the statewide “Transition from Pre-K to 5K Survey”)
- ☑ 4K teachers can create a portfolio of a student’s information, including the child’s progress reports, that can be shared with parents and can be given to the child’s 5K teacher.

- ☑ Create a universal guidance document or template that can be completed with early care and education providers and parents that reflects a child's skills, educational needs, and areas for additional growth that can be shared with the kindergarten teacher, such as a "child resume."
- ☑ Learn more about parents' expectations for Kindergarten and create ways to incorporate their leadership into improving both the transition experience and the resources to meet their needs and expectations. This can be achieved through surveying and focus groups, and through existing family voice inclusion efforts.
- ☑ Expand upon agreements for further action and strategy implementation at local levels.
- ☑ Share information and communications with various child and family service providers to inform them about types of early learning settings, and transitions resources available from Local Education Agencies (LEAs) or other sources.
- ☑ Create an additional video module for families from the Early Learning Standards parent guide with information targeted specifically to bridging into Kindergarten.
- ☑ Regional Learning Engagement Coaches at the SC Department of Education can incorporate information about kindergarten transition into trainings they do to support families and communication between families, teachers, and schools.
- ☑ A collection of transitions materials could be given to parents at kindergarten registration. The existing Kindergarten orientation handbooks offer an opportunity to include information for families that support the transition once Kindergarten begins.
- ☑ LEAs can expand agreements to include additional activities and efforts with partners.
- ☑ Every year there is a study of First Steps 4K curriculum; a future opportunity is to evaluate ways that teachers prepare students for new settings if they're not currently in a public 4K setting.
- ☑ Transitions related documents and materials can be added as a navigational overlay to Palmetto Pre-K and First Five SC (www.palmettoprek.org and www.first5sc.org).



Help parents support successful transitions from home to early childhood programs and to school entry (Strategy 2.1.3)

Programs and activities that support successful movement from home or early childhood programs to school promotes shared understanding between parents and education professionals. State materials such as Profile of a Ready Kindergartner and other tools such as CFEC's Ready, Set—Kindergarten! promote shared understanding between parents and education professionals about the kindergarten experience.

Opportunities

- ☑ Offer events with educators and family support professionals that support whole child development.
- ☑ Families build a plan for their child's transition with the early care and education provider set goals that are tailored to their child's needs. Share this plan with the child's receiving kindergarten teacher. Include information about their abilities and skills, as well as areas for further development (as a part of the child resume)
- ☑ 50% of pre-K children are from single parent households. Encourage programs, activities, and resource sharing with co-parents who do not live in the same household and other important adults in children's lives.
- ☑ Offer teacher meetings and school tours to all children entering kindergarten so these activities are available at each school.
- ☑ Coordinate meetings in child care settings with parents, child care providers and Kindergarten teachers to discuss Kindergarten experiences and expectations.
- ☑ Provide tours of classrooms, orientation, open houses, and meet and greets with Kindergarten teachers.
- ☑ Offer summer programming aimed at preparation for Kindergarten entry.
- ☑ Support districts collaborating with ECE programs in their catchment areas to provide information to families that will be enrolling at their school
- ☑ Ensure families are invited into the classrooms before enrollment, on the first days of school, and have opportunities for frequent communication with the teachers and other school staff during the beginning of the year to build relationships.
- ☑ Provide information that meets the child's specific learning needs. Include information for special populations such as children with disabilities and dual language learners.
- ☑ Assure that each child or family is connected to navigators and or other services and programs if they are needed to support the child's ability to flourish. This would also ensure that families are connected with agencies such as Family Connection of SC for information on transitioning between IDEA part C and B and connected with appropriate developmental screenings.

- ☑ Develop a toolkit for child and family program providers, including home visitors, ECE professionals and LEAS. The toolkit would include tips for implementing transition activities into existing programs, templates for child/family transition plans, and links to research, best practices, and other resource materials.

Teacher Training and Professional Development Opportunities

- ☑ Create a continuum of information and knowledge for professionals that allows for the implementation of best practices in kindergarten transitions programming.
- ☑ Build relationships between local education agencies and local early care and education providers that supports joint programming, data sharing, and measurement in order to facilitate continual improvement that benefits children and families
- ☑ Create trainings for 5K teachers about early childhood education and align with the curriculum of Countdown to Kindergarten and other light touch information campaigns. This information can be offered to early childhood program directors and school administrators. This training curriculum would include information on the different types of pre-K.
- ☑ Develop and expand relationships with SC Association of Colleges and Employers (<https://www.gospace.org/>) and other professional organizations involved with elementary K-3 education to ensure teacher education on transitions related issues and integrated professional development opportunities.
- ☑ Explore the creation of a micro-credential stack available through the University of South Carolina CrED (<https://carolinacred.org/what-we-do/mcred/micro-credentials/>), centered on family engagement and kindergarten transition.
- ☑ Expand training about purposeful play, lap reading, developmentally appropriate discipline, self-regulation, cognitive and social learning, and transition best practices in ways that are trauma-informed and culturally sensitive, for pre-K teachers. Training could be offered through Palmetto Pre-K Jamboree, SC Department of Education's Office of Special Education Services' supports for districts, and through SC Endeavors.
- ☑ Continue to support the alignment of early childhood and early elementary student level data and build ways for teachers and parents to share information about the child's educational needs.
- ☑ Formalize collaborations and joint programming through agreements, policies, and procedures to avoid disruptions in program continuity caused by personnel turnover at agencies and programs.
- ☑ Continue to offer resources and recommendations that support the implementation of a unified student assessment system. Include opportunities for observational analysis and routine feedback from families about their experiences and the best ways to connect and review data.
- ☑ Promote and increase the availability of professional development about the specific domains of kindergarten readiness and early learning standards to all early care professionals. These trainings inform early care and education professionals to become more familiar with expectations so they can prepare students and families (Analysis of KRA Results, Fall 2020).

Structure and Process of Plan Development

This plan was developed by the Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup, which met monthly to identify, align, and build strategies to address gaps in the availability of transitions supports. The group collectively agreed upon a number of comprehensive recommendations and opportunities that support families in South Carolina as they advance their children into 5-year-old kindergarten.

A number of activities were conducted by the group and the technical assistance provider in developing the plan. Members shared laws, policies, regulations and requirements pertaining to their programs. These items were reviewed for content that specifically addressed family engagement and transition. Then, all documents, programs, training, and other resources were reviewed as part of a landscape analysis. We then assessed where resources, programs and services were available in each part of the state. To assure family and provider needs and interests were heard, the Transitions Workgroup administered a survey. Data from the survey were included in developing the plan.

We compared available resources against statutory and regulatory requirements to determine areas where gaps may exist and identified opportunities for advancement of policies and practices where feasible. From this analysis, the plan was developed.



Plan Timeline

Milestones

January 15, 2021

Initial meeting with TA provider and Education Commission of the States (ECS) staff

January 25, 2021

TA provider feedback to discuss next steps

February-October 2021

Palmetto Pre-K and PDG team meetings include family engagement and kindergarten transition strategy work as part of monthly meeting agendas

June and September 2021

Participation in ECS Policy Symposium

August and September 2021

Present plan strategies at Palmetto Pre-K Jamboree, and Home Visiting Consortium for stakeholder feedback; revise plan drafts with Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup, Early Childhood Advisory Council Interagency Collaboration Committee

October 2021

Status update shared with the state's Early Childhood Advisory Council

November 2021

ECS Technical Assistance project ends

December 2021

Draft Plan completed

January 2022

Workgroup continues to convene monthly to drive forward joint projects

March and April 2022

Final Plan completed, and shared with the SC Early Childhood Advisory Council.

From February through April 2021, the workgroup and TA provider identified and analyzed federal and state laws, policies, procedures and practices of early childhood programs for children with and without disabilities (e.g., Head Start, CCBG, IDEA 619). The documents were reviewed for specific reference to family engagement and obligations to engage families in children's pre-k to k transition. The Transitions Workgroup included the early childhood programs that represented the federal and state-funded early childhood programs serving children who will transition from pre-k to kindergarten. Family engagement obligations and requirements of programs were cross checked to identify duplicated requirements, overlapping requirements and to determine whether, and to what extent, gaps existed. Individual administrators of various federal and state-funded early childhood programs across the SC early childhood system confirmed that the information collected, analyzed and represented is valid and reliable.

From April through early August, the TA provider and workgroup identified and analyzed state-specific documents, resources and information related to family engagement and family involvement in the transition from pre-k to kindergarten to fully assess the depth of information and resources available statewide. During this period, the Transitions Workgroup also administered the Transitions from Pre-K to 5K Survey statewide via email from May 11, 2021 - June 14, 2021 in English and Spanish. The summary report is presented in Appendix G.

In August through October, workgroup members and various stakeholders reviewed the information collected to ensure it was comprehensive and accurate. From this review, we also built consensus and commitments for next steps to strengthen and build additional supports and services for families.

Workgroup members reviewed national resources and exemplars in order to inform the strategies and best practices represented as opportunities for our state. We would especially like to express gratitude to the work of the Illinois Kindergarten Transition Committee for their report. Elements of the Illinois Kindergarten Transition Committee Report have been adapted for South Carolina's plan.

We would also like to express our gratitude to the Education Commission of the States and their technical assistance providers for their work in reviewing policy, completing the resource analysis for our state, and their ongoing support in advancement of kindergarten transition best practices.

Throughout 2022, the Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup will continue to meet monthly work together to implement specific tactics and opportunities and support statewide information campaigns.



Appendices

Appendix A: Reference List of Resources Reviewed and Links to Resources In South Carolina

Federal Policies

Head Start Statute	U.S. Code Citation: 42 USC 9801 et seq. SEC. 642A. Head Start Transition and Alignment With K-12 Education
Head Start Statute	Sec. 642 Powers and Functions of Head Start Agencies
Head Start Performance Standards	Code of Federal Regulations: 45 CFR Chapter XIII 1302 Subpart F—Additional Services for Children with Disabilities 1302.61 Additional services for children 1302 Subpart G—Transition Services 1302.71 Transitions from Head Start to kindergarten.
IDEA Statute	U.S. Code Citation: 20 Chapter 33, Subchapter II et seq.
IDEA Regulations	Code of Federal Regulations: 34 CFR Part 300
Child Care Block Grant Act/Statute	Child Care and Development Block Grant Act and section 418 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 618), as amended, provide the statutory authority for implementation of the CCDF program
Child Care Block Grant Regulations	Code of Federal Regulations: 45 C.F.R., parts 98 and 99

State Policies

(can be viewed at <https://www.scstatehouse.gov/query.php?search=FIRST&searchtext=&category=CODEOFLAWS->)

Child Early Reading Development and Education Program (CERDEP)	SC Code of Laws: Title 59: Education Chapter 156
Read to Succeed Act	S.C. Act 284Title 59: Education, Chapter 155
First Steps to School Readiness	South Carolina Code of Laws: Title 59: Education Chapter 152
First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees	Chapter 11 Children Services Agencies
Early Childhood Development and Academic Assistance	S.C. Title 59: Education, Chapter 139
Early Childhood Development and Academic Assistance	S.C. Title 59: Education, Chapter 1

South Carolina Department of Education Family Engagement K-12 Framework

<https://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/student-intervention-services/family-community-engagement/family-and-community-engagement/school-information/scde-family-engagement-k-12-framework/#:~:text=The%20South%20Carolina%20Family%20Engagement,implement%20strategies%20for%20engaging%20families.&text=The%20mission%20of%20the%20SCDE,students%20graduate%20prepared%20for%20success.>

South Carolina Waterford UPSTART Family Engagement Program 2019-2020 School Year Outcomes

[https://ed.sc.gov/scdoe/assets/File/instruction/early-learning-literacy/SC%20-%20UPSTART%20Family%20Engagement%20Program%20Report%20\(May%202020\)%20V2.pdf](https://ed.sc.gov/scdoe/assets/File/instruction/early-learning-literacy/SC%20-%20UPSTART%20Family%20Engagement%20Program%20Report%20(May%202020)%20V2.pdf)

SC ETV, Carolina Classrooms, Then Comes Kindergarten

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3rpMYHnrDE>

SC First Steps Countdown to Kindergarten Tips

<https://www.scfirststeps.org/news-resources/countdown-to-kindergarten-tips/>

Every Child Ready, SC First Steps Strategic Plan 2020-2025

<https://www.scfirststeps.org/media/itrluenr/strategic-plan-2020-2025.pdf>

South Carolina Profile of the Ready Kindergartner

https://www.scfirststeps.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/English-Poster_print.pdf

Carolina Family Engagement Center, Ready, Set – Kindergarten!

<https://cfec.sc.gov/ready-set-kindergarten>

Appendix B: Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup Membership

Laura Baker Communications Coordinator Early Childhood Advisory Council	Ablean Hanna Education Associate Read to Succeed Office of Early Learning and Literacy SC Department of Education	Morgan Massenburg Outreach Manager Early Child Care and Education Division SC Department of Social Services
Sally Baker Director of Education and Family Support Family Connection of SC	Theresa Harrison Project Manager Carolina Family Engagement Center SC School Improvement Council	Jenny May (formerly) 619 Coordinator IDEA Part B 619 Office SC Department of Education
Michele Bowers Director of Early Care and Education SC Department of Social Services	Rachal Hatton-Moore Two-Generation Coordinator Early Childhood Advisory Council	Georgia Mjartan Executive Director SC First Steps Early Childhood Advisory Council
Arthur L. Brewton, Ed.D. Head Start-Early Head Start Director Piedmont Community Action ELC	Amy Holbert Executive Director Family Connection of SC	Vasanthi Rao Assistant Director Yvonne & Schuyler Moore Child Development Research Center
Wendy Burgess Early Learning Team Lead SC Department of Education	Janice Kilburn Program Officer Countdown to Kindergarten SC First Steps	Cynthia Sosebee Community Partnership Facilitator Share SC
Mary Lynne Diggs Director SC Head Start Collaboration Office SC Department of Social Services	Lisa O. Kershaw Education Associate: Autism Spectrum Disorder Office of Special Education Services	Martha Strickland 4K State Director SC First Steps
Heather Googe Director and Acting Chair SC Inclusion Collaborative SC Partnerships for Inclusion	Jena Martin Director of Special Populations Family Connection of SC	Karen Utter Project Director Carolina Family Engagement Center and Assistant Director SC School Improvement Council

Appendix C: Workgroup Meeting Schedule and Activities

January

January 11, 2021

Education Commission of the States (ECS) and Maria Synodi with SC First Steps, Carolina Family Engagement Center, and SC Department of Education

January 20, 2021

ECS and Maria Synodi with SC First Steps, Carolina Family Engagement Center, and SC Department of Education

February

February 3, 2021

ECS with SC First Steps, Carolina Family Engagement Center, and SC Department of Education

February 16, 2021

Palmetto Pre-K Meeting and Transitions Workgroup established

March

March 4, 2021

ECS technical assistance meeting

March 16, 2021

Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup meeting

March 22, 2021

ECS technical assistance meeting

April

April 14, 2021

Palmetto Pre-K Transitions workgroup meeting to finalize statewide survey

April 20, 2021

Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup meeting

May

May 11, 2021

ECS technical assistance meeting

May 14, 2021

Pre-K to Kindergarten Transitions Statewide Survey opens

May 18, 2021

Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup meeting

June

June 4, 2021

Palmetto Pre-K Transitions workgroup meeting to begin plan development

June 10, 2021

ECS Policy Meeting

June 15, 2021

Palmetto Pre-K Transitions workgroup meeting

July

July 12, 2021

ECS technical assistance meeting

July 20, 2021

Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup meeting

August

August 4, 2021

Presented plan elements for feedback from Pre-K teachers at Palmetto Pre-K Jamboree

August 17, 2021

Palmetto Pre-K Transitions workgroup meeting

August 18, 2021

ECS technical assistance and presented to SC Home Visiting Consortium

August 25, 2021

Presented at SC Home Visiting Making Connections Call

September

September 7, 2021

Presentation of plan elements to Early Child Advisory Council's Interagency Collaboration Committee

September 13, 2021

ECS technical assistance meeting

September 21, 2021

Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup meeting

September 22, 2021

Presentation of plan elements at ECS Policy Meeting

October

October 11, 2021

ECS technical assistance meeting

October 21, 2021

Submitted information to the Early Childhood Advisory Council report

October 18, 2021

Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup meeting

October 28, 2021

ECS technical assistance meeting

November

November 8, 2021

Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup meeting

November 15, 2021

Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup meeting

December

December 3, 2021

Submitted plan to Early Childhood Advisory Council for review

December 13, 2021

Work group meeting to finalize full South Carolina's Pre-K to Kindergarten Transition Plan: Family Engagement document

Appendix D: Terms and Definitions

The Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup acknowledges the importance of common terms and language in discussing concepts. It should be noted that in some instances, specific uses of terms must be considered because of program requirements and may differ across agencies. Every effort has been made to be consistent where possible, and any variance has attempted to be noted.

Early Childhood System – interconnected policies, programs, services, and relationships between organizations and agencies that work together to serve children and families in areas of their health, well-being, and development.

Family – all persons living in the same household, and the child’s authorized caregiver or legally responsible party.

Family Engagement – a partnership between parents and education entities built on respectful interaction for the purpose of supporting education and addressing comprehensive needs.

Family Involvement – including a student’s family in decisions about their education, and informing them about the child’s education.

Home Visiting – a type of service that includes a professional visiting the homes of families with the aim of improving health, education, and well-being. There are many types of programs with different structures, purposes, and content.

Lap Reading – engaged reading time in which a child and adult share a book and build important literacy skills. Can include

K-12 System – the array of federal, state, and local education agencies that span from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Kindergarten Readiness – a child’s developmental levels in many domains (typically social and emotional, language/literacy, mathematics, and physical well-being) that contribute to a child’s ability to excel in a kindergarten classroom.

Kindergarten Transition – the experiences and activities a family experiences as a child moves from early childhood environments to the kindergarten classroom and school setting.

Parent/Caregiver – the adult in the child’s life who assumes the primary parenting duties and care responsibilities.

Professional Development – activities and experiences that increase the training, skills, knowledge, and competence of all levels of workers in the early childhood system with the ultimate aim of being as effective and supportive as possible to support families through best practices and evidence-based strategies.

Program – organized and structured activities repeated with participants intended to advance a public need.

Resource – a supply of materials, supports, information, and assets available to use toward achieving goals.

Social Emotional Learning – a process through which children acquire skills in managing emotions and establishing supportive relationships.

Appendix E: Values and Principles

For Our Future: South Carolina's Birth-Five Plan 2022-2027

Guiding Principles

- **All children and families deserve a fair chance at a good life.**
We envision universal access to strategies that work, and in this five-year plan we are starting where there are known disparities: by family income, race, geography, home language, and for adults and children with disabilities.
- **A focus on equity proactively addresses disparities and levels the playing field.**
Addressing disparities ensures all children have the opportunities and resources to be successful.
- **Parents are a child's first and most important teachers.**
Parents, including all adult caregivers in parenting roles, need and want to connect with their infants and young children in positive ways that help children grow, thrive, and achieve their full potential.
- **Children do better when they are raised in healthy, stable, and attached families.**
Our work to improve outcomes for children must also include efforts to help families thrive and prosper.
- **Policies and programs are more effective when inclusive, developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, and delivered with excellence and respect.**
We must meet children and families where they are, be respectful and compassionate, and deliver the highest quality programs possible.
- **Policies and programs become more effective when we authentically reflect the voices of families, including their ideas, concerns, and aspirations.**
Families understand what they need and want better than anyone else.
- **South Carolina has an excellent opportunity to build on and reinforce our strong state and local infrastructure to better support and serve children and families.**
Our impact is greatest when we align initiatives, work collaboratively, and focus on the areas that lead to healthy and thriving children, families, and the places where they live.

Additional Values of the Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup that Specifically Address Kindergarten Transition

- South Carolina's mixed-delivery system has value in promoting family choice, and this creates differing sending and receiving entities.
- South Carolina's early childhood system has a duty to help parents understand what resources are available to their family.
- The values of the early childhood system transfers to Kindergarten, in honoring voices, experiences and expertise of early childhood teachers so we can grow in the same direction to best support children and families.
- Our work in supporting families through kindergarten transitions shall be data-informed and evidence-supported.
- In all areas possible, we will adopt common language between entities and use clear language in our work with families and parents to eliminate confusion.

Appendix F: Literature Review

Kindergarten Transitions Resources for Parents and Families

American Federation of Teachers, National Center for Learning Disabilities: Getting to Know My Child
https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/t2k_gettingtoknowmychild.pdf

Institute of Education Sciences, The Ready Family: An Important Component of Preparing a School-Ready Child

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/infographics/pdf/REL_SE_The_Ready_School_The_Ready_Family.pdf

National Association for the Education of Young Children, Transitioning to Kindergarten

<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/transitioning-to-kindergarten>

Kindergarten Transitions Resources for Teachers, Home Visitors, and Family Engagement Specialists

American Federation of Teachers, Transitioning to Kindergarten: A Toolkit for Early Childhood Educators
<https://www.aft.org/earlychildhood/resources/transitioning-kindergarten-toolkit-early-childhood-educators>

Boston Public Schools, Countdown To Kindergarten Toolkit

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iEm2oGxGE-ydsmvUjnsOnR6GwmEm8R9m/view>

Early Learning Network, Engaging families during the pre-K to kindergarten transition

<https://earlylearningnetwork.unl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/200903-Family-Engagment-Practice-Guide-for-Educators.pdf>



Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center, Family Engagement and Transition to Kindergarten
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/transitions/article/family-engagement-transition-kindergarten>

Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, Practice Improvement Tools: Transition
<https://ectacenter.org/decrp/topic-transition.asp>

Florida Transition to Kindergarten Toolkit Resources
<http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/vpk/transition-to-kindergarten>

Illinois State Board of Education, Transition Prekindergarten to Kindergarten Suggestions for Transition Plan Sample
https://www.isbe.net/Documents/prek_k_transition.pdf

Institute of Education Sciences, Regional Education Laboratory Program, Resource Roundup: The Transition to Kindergarten
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/blogs/resource-roundup-transition-to-kindergarten.aspx>

National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning: Transition to Kindergarten A Brief: Why It Matters and How to Promote Success
https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/transition-brief.pdf?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=

New America: A Toolkit for Effective and Supportive Transitions for Children, Families, and Educators in Fall 2021 and Beyond
<https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/a-toolkit-for-effective-and-supportive-transitions-for-children-families-and-educators-in-fall-2021-and-beyond/>

Kindergarten Transitions Resources for Administrators and Education Systems Professionals

Alabama Transition to Kindergarten Toolkit
<https://children.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Alabama-Transition-to-Kindergarten-Toolkit-2021.pdf>

Administration for Children & Families, Supporting Smooth Kindergarten Transitions: A report on PDG B-5 Renewal Grant Applications
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ecd/supporting_smooth_kindergarten_transitions_508_compliant.pdf

Connecticut Department of Education, ESSA Student Transition Resources—PreK to Kindergarten
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/ESSA-Student-Transition-Resources-PreK-to-Kindergarten>

Connecticut Department of Education, Transitioning to Kindergarten: The Why, What, and How of this Important Milestone for Connecticut Students
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/ESSA/TransitioningToKindergarten_WhyWhatHow.pdf

Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center: Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center, School Readiness
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/school-readiness>

Education Commission of the States, State Policies to Enhance Transitions into Kindergarten
<https://www.ecs.org/state-policies-to-enhance-transitions-into-kindergarten/>

Education Commission of the States, Transitions and Alignment from Preschool to Kindergarten
<https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Transitions-and-Alignment-From-Preschool-to-Kindergarten.pdf>

Education Commission of the States, Transition and Alignment: Two Keys to Assuring Student Success
<https://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/84/07/8407.pdf>

Education Commission of the States, Transition to Kindergarten: Findings from Recent Research
<https://custom.cvent.com/EFDD57E636EB43808D682830E5D72AA7/files/b5fdaa76a65548238ab47ebcc5292167.pdf>

Final Report: Illinois Kindergarten Transition Advisory Committee

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Documents/Kindergarten%20Transition%20Advisory%20Committee%20Report%20Sept%202018.pdf>

Grindal, T., Smith, S., Nakamura, J., Granja, M. Early childhood education during the COVID-19 pandemic: The experiences of Arkansas educators. February 2021

https://www.nccp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/ARISE-Memo_Early-childhood-education-during-the-COVID-19-pandemic_04132021_with-Appendices.pdf

Learning Policy Institute, Building a National Early Childhood Education System That Works

https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/early-childhood-education-system-2021-brief?utm_source=Events+Combined+starting+with+10%2F21%2F2019+event&utm_campaign=c51ce96e89-LPIMC_ECEpolicy-post-webinar-20210608&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_b5d892f3bc-c51ce96e89-74146121

Learning Policy Institute, Early Childhood Essentials: A Framework for Aligning Child Skills and Educator Competencies

https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/early-childhood-essentials-framework-factsheet?utm_source=Events+Combined+starting+with+10%2F21%2F2019+event&utm_campaign=c51ce96e89-LPIMC_ECEpolicy-post-webinar-20210608&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_b5d892f3bc-c51ce96e89-74146121

North Carolina early childhood family engagement and leadership framework

https://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/resources/38612?utm_source=Research+Connections&utm_campaign=634aad3a40-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2021_05_24_08_20&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_76ff1f1ad8-634aad3a40-40358487

Raise Up Oregon: A Statewide Early Learning System Plan 2019-2023

<https://oregonearlylearning.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Raise-Up-Oregon-Web-corrected.pdf>

Rhode Island Department of Education Pre-K to Kindergarten Transition Guidance

<https://exceed.ri.gov/Docs/RIDE%20Pre%20K%20to%20K%20Transition%20Guidance%20Statewide.pdf>

Sheridan, S., Koziol, N., Witte, A., Iruka, I., Knoche, L. Longitudinal and Geographic Trends in Family Engagement During the Pre kindergarten to Kindergarten Transition. Early Childhood Education Journal

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-019-01008-5>, accessed August 4, 2021.

<https://earlylearningnetwork.unl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/191123-Sheridan-UNL-ECE-Journal.pdf>

State Agency Collaboration on Early Childhood Education/Preschool to Kindergarten Transition Pilot Phases I, II, and III B-3 Interagency Council Meeting October 16, 2019

<https://www.b3council.nc.gov/pdf/2019/B3-Materials-PreK%20to%20K%20Transition%20Pilot%20Presentation-Oct1619.pdf>

Appendix G: Transitions Survey Results and Report

Transitions from Pre-K to 5K Survey

report by Rachal Hatton-Moore to Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup July 2021

Survey Administration

The Palmetto Pre-K's Transitions Workgroup administered the Transitions from Pre-K to 5K Survey statewide via email from May 11 - June 14, 2021 in English and Spanish. One respondent completed in Spanish. Of the 46 counties in South Carolina, there were respondents representing 27 counties in South Carolina, and there were 19 counties with no respondents. There were 386 unduplicated completed responses.

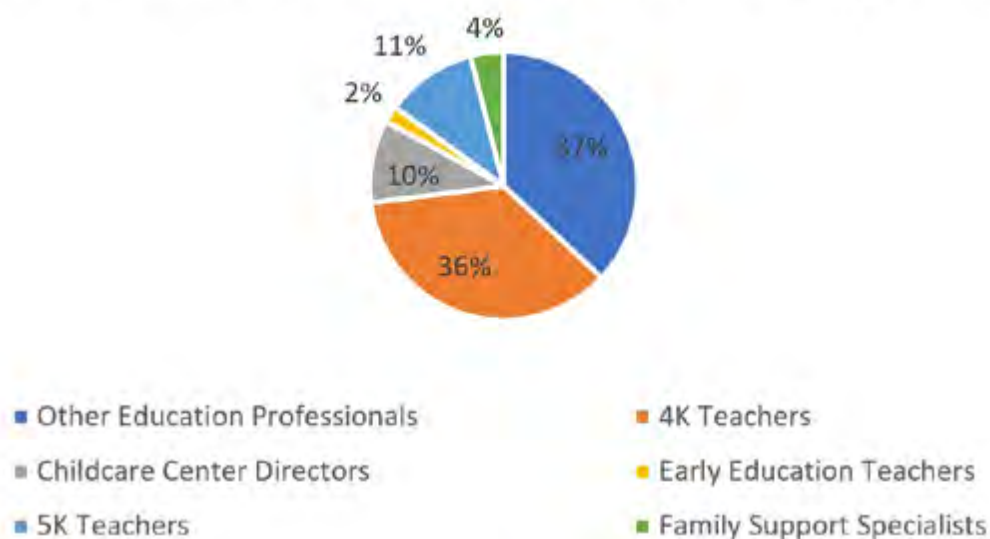
Transitions Survey Results

- 584 initial survey responses; 386 fully completed and unduplicated respondents for a 66% completion rate
- 167 professionals completed (43% of total respondents); 45 gave permission to contact for more information (27% of professional respondents)
- 219 parents/caretakers completed (57% of total respondents); 77 gave permission to contact for more information (35% of parent/caretaker respondents)

Survey results will be shared with the respondents who provided their contact information, and there will be a follow-up in order to ask additional questions about their experiences with Kindergarten transition.

Early Childhood Education Professionals' Responses

Early Childhood Education Professionals Responding



- Of 167 respondents 60 are 4K Teachers (36%), 19 are 5K Teachers (11%), 17 are Child Care Administrators (10%), 3 are Early Education Teachers (2%), 7 are family support specialist (4%), and 61 are other education professionals (37%)
- 66% (111 of 164) of professionals give a flyer or handout to families about kindergarten readiness, and this was ranked as being the third highest as being helpful in supporting a child's kindergarten transition (23 of 164 ranked as first choice).
- 62% (103 of 164) of professionals expressed that they use a document that describes the child's skills that can be taken to 5K. A document that describes the child's skills & educational needs take to 5K was also ranked highest among professionals as being helpful in supporting a child's

kindergarten transition (51 of 164 ranked as first choice).

- 39% (65 of 164) of professionals report having meetings with the family and/or other teachers before the child enters 5K, and this was identified as being perceived as the second most helpful in supporting a child's transition (39 of 164 ranked as first choice)
- 59% of 4 and 5K teachers (47 of 79) say their work incorporates transition to 5K very much

Professionals' most common responses about what they believe parents want to know about the transition to Kindergarten center on the meaning of kindergarten readiness for their children and the specific expectations of readiness for children entering kindergarten. Secondly, they feel parents will want to know specific things about kindergarten logistics such as routine, registration process, school schedule, and which school their child will attend.

Early childhood education professionals also wanted system leaders to know that they feel it is extremely important to encourage summer learning activities for families through avenues such as literacy and programs for parents and children. Secondly, they believe in building relationships with Kindergarten, encouraging parent tours of schools, and meeting the professionals who will work with their child in Kindergarten.

Early Childhood Education Professional's Comments

"I believe that if families were provided with some activities they could complete during the summer months, this would be helpful. This would mean families would not have to try and figure out what would be best for their student...I also believe having a standardized rubric that could be passed on to the student's 5k teacher would be helpful for all teachers."

(Regarding parents/caretakers) "First and foremost, they need to be recognized and praised as their child's first/most important teacher."

"I believe that its helpful for parents to know that children should remain learning throughout the summer because it's easy to forget what they've learned."

Parent and Caretaker Responses

Parents and caretakers most plan to use meetings with the child's 5K teacher prior to their child entering school (126) followed by visiting their child's new school (101), and developing a transition plan for their child (66).

Parents and caretakers rank documents describing their child's skills and learning to take to the 5K teacher the most helpful resource, and rank second highest having meetings with the 5K teacher.

Parents and caretakers most frequently stated in their responses regarding what they feel is important in supporting their family's transition to kindergarten that they need to know what skills their child should have in order to succeed in kindergarten. They would like to know what they and their children will be expected to do in kindergarten (69 of 219 responses).

Secondly, parents feel that having a strong relationship with open and frequent communication with teachers and the school is important in their child's success in the kindergarten.

- Parents of children with special needs 42
- Unsure of child's special needs 13
- Parents of children with no special needs 157

Parent and Caretaker Comments

"Just clear communication from the school and her teacher. She was in a well-structured program for Pre-K, so I do not worry too much about the transition, more so about making sure we, as the parents, know what we are supposed to be doing."

"[Parent feels it's most important to have] a clear understanding of the expectations and learning objectives being worked on at school so I can help her at home."

"For the teachers to be aware of my child's development in 4K and to let me know where she should be at developmentally at the start of 5K."

Similarities in Parent/Caretaker and Early Childhood Education Professionals Responses

There were seven possibilities of identified best practices that Parents/Caretakers and Early Childhood Education Professionals could rank on those they found most helpful for preparing children for Kindergarten. The top two ranked choices for parent/caretaker and early childhood education professionals were exactly the same: highest ranked was a document that describes the child's skills and educational needs to take to the 5K teacher and second highest was meetings with family and pre-K and 5K teachers before entering 5K.

There was insufficient response size to fully determine gaps in availability of team meetings and documents as a method of supporting transition to kindergarten state-wide, however, the survey asked about the supports provided at the workplaces of early childhood education professionals, and many are supporting transition by providing print information to families about Kindergarten readiness, and fewer (39%) are having meetings with families about kindergarten readiness for their children. The Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup is reviewing the availability and content of materials, training, and meetings between parents, pre-K and K teachers specifically regarding transition needs and the child's Kindergarten readiness.

Perceptions on Pre-K to K Transitions May - June 2021



Survey Administration

The Palmetto Pre-K's Transitions Workgroup administered the Transitions from Pre-K to 5K Survey statewide via email from May 11, 2021- June 14, 2021 in English and Spanish. 59% of the counties in South Carolina were represented in the responses.

386 Responses | **219** Parents/Caretakers | **167** ECE Professionals

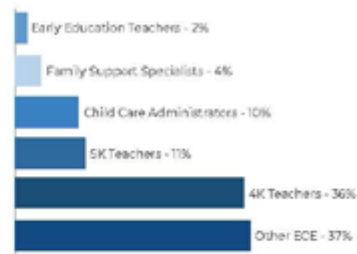


Figure 1 Make-up of ECE Professionals

Early childhood education professionals and parents/caretakers agree on the most helpful strategies for supporting children's transition to 5K.

There were seven best practices identified that respondents could rank from most to least helpful for preparing children for kindergarten.

1. A document that describes the child's skills and educational needs to take to the 5K teacher
2. Flyer or handout for families about kindergarten readiness
3. Meetings with family and Pre-K and 5K teachers before entering 5K
4. Trainings about supporting transitions to 5K
5. 5K teachers visiting 4K classrooms
6. "Playing kindergarten" with students before entering 5K
7. Developing individual child transition plans with family and teachers based on child's needs

Early childhood education professionals and parents/caretakers both ranked (1) a document to describe the child's skills and educational needs to take to the 5K teacher and (3) meetings with family and Pre-K and 5K teachers before entering 5K as the most helpful for preparing children for entering kindergarten.

ECE professionals say their current work incorporates transition to 5K.

62% report using a document to describe the child's skills that can be taken to 5K

39% report having meetings with the family and/or other teachers before the child enters 5K

“I believe that if families were provided with some activities they could complete during the summer months, this would be helpful. This would mean families would not have to try [to] figure out what would be best for their student...I also believe having a standardized rubric that could be passed on to the student's 5k teacher would be helpful for all teachers.”

Parents/caregivers want to know what skills their child should have to succeed.

58% of parents plan to have meetings with the child's 5K teacher prior to their child entering school

46% of parents plan on visiting their child's new school

“[Parent feels it's important to have] A clear understanding of the expectations and learning objectives being worked on at school so I can help her at home.”

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South Carolina
**Early Childhood
Advisory Council**

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Appendix I: Full Statewide Transitions Survey

Transitions from Pre-K to 5K Survey

Parents and caretakers of young children and the professionals who work with families are experts on the supports and resources available in communities around South Carolina. It is our job as state leaders to listen to you all.

The “Transitions from Pre-K to 5K” survey is from the interagency Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup, and we aim to learn more about what’s available around our state to support families in the transition into 5-year-old Kindergarten. We would be incredibly grateful if you would share your thoughts. Please take a moment to complete a very brief survey (about 5 minutes). If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Rachal Hatton-Moore, Two-Generation Coordinator, at rhatton@scfirststeps.org

1. What is your role?

- Early education teacher birth-3
- 4-year-old early education teacher
- 5-year-old kindergarten teacher
- Family support specialist
- Child care center director
- Other education, childcare staff, or administrator
- Parent or Caretaker
- Other (please specify)

(Questions 2-6 were skipped for respondents who selected “parent or caretaker” as their role)

2. How much does your work incorporate supporting families through a child’s transition to 5K?

- Not at all
- Some
- Very Much
- I don’t know / unsure

3. Please rank the following types of resources in order of those you find most helpful to supporting a child’s transition to 5K (1 being the most helpful, 7 being the least helpful)

- Document that describes the child’s skills and educational needs to take to the 5K teacher
- Flyer or handout for families about kindergarten readiness
- Meetings with family and Pre-K and 5K teachers before entering 5K
- Trainings about supporting transitions to 5K
- 5K teachers visiting 4K classrooms
- Playing kindergarten” with students before entering 5K
- Developing individual child transition plans with family and teachers based on child’s needs

4. What transition supports are available at your school or center? (select all that apply)

- Document that describes the child’s skills and educational needs to take to the 5K teacher
- Flyer or handout for families about kindergarten readiness
- Meetings with family and Pre-K and 5K teachers before entering 5K
- Trainings about supporting transitions to 5K
- 5K teachers visiting 4K classrooms
- Playing kindergarten” with students before entering 5K
- Developing individual child transition plans with family and teachers based on child’s needs

- I don't know
- Other (please specify)
- None of the above

5. What do you believe are the top questions families have about preparing their child for 5K? (open ended response)

6. Is there anything else you believe would be helpful for teachers, parents/caretakers, or children in supporting a child's transition to 5K? (open ended response)

(Parents and caretakers were asked questions 7-10)

7. As you prepare your child to enter 5K, which, if any, of the following options below do you plan to use? (Select all that apply)

- Document that describes your child's skills and educational needs to take to the 5K teacher
- Flyer or handout about kindergarten readiness
- Meetings with your child's 5K teacher before entering school
- General meeting with your child's class and other parents about 5K
- Role modeling / "playing kindergarten" with your child before 5K
- Developing a transition plan with your child's teachers that addresses your child's needs
- Visiting your child's new school before school starts
- I don't know / Unsure
- Other (please specify)

8. Rank the following in order most helpful to you in supporting your child's transition to 5K (1 being the most helpful, 7 being the least helpful)

- Document that describes the child's skills and educational needs to take to the 5K teacher
- Flyer or handout for families about kindergarten readiness
- Meetings with family and Pre-K and K teachers before entering 5K
- Trainings about supporting transitions to 5K
- 5K teachers visiting 4K classrooms
- Playing kindergarten" with Pre-K students
- Developing individual child transition plans with family and teachers

9. What do you believe are the most important things you need to support your child's transition to 5K? (open ended response)

10. Does your child have special educational or health needs?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

11. In what county do you work or live? (the 46 counties in South Carolina were listed in a scroll box)

12. Do you have interest in possibly speaking more with us, receiving future communications and information, and possibly participating in focus groups to help us learn more? If yes, please enter your email address below.



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