

Transition Alert

Improving the transition process for young children, their families and the professionals who work with them through an examination of factors that promote successful transitions between infant/toddler programs, preschool programs, and public school programs for young children with disabilities and their families.

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Ready Schools

Ongoing concern about school readiness has focused on the preparation of individual young children to succeed in the tasks that elementary school attendance will require. In 1998, the National Educational Goals Panel (NEGP) asserted a companion concern regarding the readiness of schools to receive and successfully educate the variety of young children who enroll in kindergarten each fall. The NEGP published *Ready Schools*, a report that delineated the broad attributes of a Ready School (Shore, 1998).

Most work to date has focused on prekindergarten efforts to promote effective transitions. The NEGP report was significant in that it stresses actions that elementary schools can initiate in collaboration with prekindergarten programs to smooth the way for children at risk of academic failure. Ten Keys to Ready Schools suggest principles to guide the transition of all children – including those with disabilities -- and to promote their success in the early grades:

1. Ready schools smooth the transition between home and school.
2. Ready schools strive for continuity between early care and education programs and elementary schools.
3. Ready schools help children learn and make sense of their complex and exciting world.
4. Ready schools are committed to the success of every child.
5. Ready schools are committed to the success of every teacher and every adult who interacts with children during the school day.
6. Ready schools introduce or expand approaches that have been shown to raise achievement.
7. Ready schools are learning organizations that alter practices and programs if they do not benefit children.
8. Ready schools serve children in communities.
9. Ready schools take responsibility for results.
10. Ready schools have strong leadership.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), in collaboration with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is supporting six states to develop models of Ready Schools. Participating states are Arkansas, Connecticut, Indiana, Oregon, Washington, and West Virginia. At least one school in each state has used the *Ready Schools Assessment*, under development by High Scope in Ypsilanti, MI, to analyze its strengths and needs related to the above 10 principles. This assessment tool was found to be helpful to bring various stakeholders together, to provide a common language for them to use to discuss their local issues related to school improvement, and to move the local planners toward greater specificity about their priorities and action steps. Results from the assessment showed that the two areas of greatest need were accommodating diverse families and transition to kindergarten, the latter, presumably, because it relates to almost all of the other Ready Schools' principles.

Each participating state has developed and is implementing an action plan to create at least one model Ready School in a low income community. All six states also have added additional schools, for a current total of 25 participating schools. In some cases, entire school districts will conduct the *Ready Schools Assessment* and develop and

Available Products

NECTC is working on several products that may be of interest to families and professionals who work with young children with disabilities. Most products are available on the website. Additional products will be posted on a regular basis.

Project Information Annual Report Summaries – Years 1 & 2 Overviews of Year 1 and Year 2 activities and successes.

Briefing Paper

An in-depth overview of the National Early Childhood Transition Center activities.

Orientation to NECTC

Brief and expanded information about the activities of NECTC in a PowerPoint format.

NECTC Brochure

A general overview of NECTC activities



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implement action plans to accomplish the principles of Ready Schools. A goal is for each participating school to incorporate the Ready Schools principles into school improvement plans and to develop accompanying specific action steps.

Initially, none of the 10 pilot schools addressed transition in their school improvement plans. The aim is for each participating elementary school to develop a transition plan that links the school to pre-kindergarten programs and community agencies and to define specific outcomes for children, families, staff, and administrators.

NECTC supports the goals of the CCSSO's Ready Schools Initiative. As an example of this support, a member of the NECTC research team presented the keynote address to the Ready Schools program staff at the initial gathering of the six participating states.

The Ready Schools report is located at:

<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/earlycld/ea7lk43.htm>. For additional information, contact Susan Taylor at susant@ccsso.org.

Resources

PowerPoint Presentations Ready to be Downloaded

Presentations used at conferences on various transition topics are available.

- ◆ Critical Incident Technique: A Means to Understand What Really Matters
- ◆ Current IDEA Regulations Related to Early Childhood Transition
- ◆ Family and Practitioner Perspectives on Quality Transitions Practices and Strategies
- ◆ Opening Doors to Success: The Status of State Transition Policies and Practices
- ◆ State Level Influence on Transition: Results From a National Survey
- ◆ What We Know and More We Need to Know About Transition

Transition Stories

We invite professionals and parents to share information about transition practices and strategies that have been effective or ineffective. Submit stories online (<http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/nectc>) or download the form and submit hard copies to the project office at the address on the front of this Transition Alert.

Transition Materials

A materials acquisition brochure is available on our website. Materials will be included in our **Online Database**, a searchable database of transition resources and materials.

Previous Transition Alerts

Transition Alerts announcing NECTC activities and related transition information. Accessible at

http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/NECTC/p_transitionalerts.asp

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For more specific information on the activities of the Center, go to <http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/nectc> or contact the project office at 859-257-2081 or toll free at 866-742-4015.