

Section 1: Overview of Transition in Pennsylvania and Nationally

Transition to school is one of the most important steps in a young child's life. Children must learn to navigate academic, behavioral and social expectations that might be different from the expectations at home or in the early learning setting. Parents might feel discomfort and fear about sending their child into this new experience. Well planned, collaborative transition models build trust and relationships among children, families, teachers and the school community. Systematic strategies and common understanding of terms and approaches among stakeholders can increase the success of transition practices.

Robert Pianta and others at the National Center Early Development and Learning (NCEDL) describe an effective approach to enhancing children's transition into Kindergarten. This well-researched method provides a network of "social and information linkages that support children and families during the transition to school" (p.ix, Pianta and Kraft-Sayre, 2003). Effective transition plans should not be a one size fits all approach, but rather tailored to the needs of the individual communities.

The following documents outline Pianta's suggested approach:

- A. An Approach to Enhancing K Transition (Kraft-Sayre and Pianta)
 - An overview of the NCEDL Kindergarten Transition project listing specific strategies
<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ncedl/pdfs/spot17.pdf>
- B. National Center for Early Development and Learning: Transition to Kindergarten
 - A NCEDL Fact Sheet outlining needed policy changes
<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ncedl/PDFs/TransFac.pdf>
- C. Transition Basic Steps
 - Suggestions of effective strategies for all stakeholders in the transition process

Pennsylvania uses the NDECL model as a guide for its suggested approach to transition to Kindergarten. The list includes documents from PDE/OCDEL presentations and materials from the PA Governor's Forum: Linking Ready Kids to Ready Schools, a statewide transition conference held December 4 & 5, 2008.

- A. Introduction to Pennsylvania's Transition Framework
 - PowerPoint slides that present an overview of Pennsylvania's collaborative transition approach including Pianta and Sharon Lynn Kagan's framework

- B. Transition: Ready Schools and Ready Children
 - PowerPoint slides that focus on continuity of transition practices and the connection to the Early Learning Standards and embed the language of the National Education Goals Panel's Ready Schools initiative

- C. Community Engagement and Action on Transition from and between Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education: From Theory into Action - PA Governor's Forum: Linking Ready Kids to Ready Schools
 - Results of the Governor's forum supporting community involvement and engagement in transition including helpful examples from Pennsylvania Community Engagement Groups