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OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING

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## Transition: Ready Schools and Ready Children

Because every child is Pennsylvania's future



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## What is Transition?

*Transition Defined:*  
Transition is a **process** of **changing** from one form, state, activity, or place to another.

*Transition in ECE:*

1. Moving from one activity or location to another within a classroom
2. Moving into and out of grade (age levels): into pre-k from infant-toddler; into kindergarten from pre-k

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## Transition is a Process

- It occurs over time, as an ongoing element of a pre-kindergarten and kindergarten year
- It requires intentional planning and reciprocity



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## Transition in Early Childhood

A bridge that begins before pre-kindergarten and continues until children reach first grade.



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## Transition as a Journey

Advance planning makes all the difference!



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## Transition from a Global Perspective

Ready States  
Ready Communities  
Ready Schools  
Ready Families  
Ready Children



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## Ready States



- Create infrastructure
- Build comprehensive and coordinated systems
- Make policy decisions that require coordination
- Provide technical assistance and resources

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## Ready Communities

- Create a common vision and strategies support parents' and children's familiarity with the school setting and expectations
- Change motivation and values
- Involve school district personnel
- Ensure quality provision of services
- Develop partnerships and collaborations that emphasize shared resources and leveraging of funding opportunities

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## Communities That Make the Connections...

- Change motivation and values
- Involve school district personnel
- Develop a transition plan
- Create a transition team
- Jointly host programs
- Allocate resources to support transition
- Facilitate shared planning between pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers
- Consider incentives
- Model collaborative provision of services



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## Ready Schools

- Parent Involvement Component



- Transition Plan based on continuity between pre-kindergarten and kindergarten

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## Schools that Build Connections Have..

- A welcoming school environment
- Strong school leadership
- Connections to the early childhood community
- Connect linguistically and culturally with all children
- Demonstrate a high level of parental involvement
- Partners with community
- Uses developmentally and culturally appropriate assessments are for individual instruction for children
- A written quality improvement plan

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## Schools that Build the Connections...

- Connect the pre-kindergarten child with the kindergarten teacher
- Help the child become familiar with kindergarten by inviting them to special functions
- Practice kindergarten rituals in preschool
- Incorporate pre-kindergarten rituals into the kindergarten year
- Help pre-kindergarten teachers stay in touch during the kindergarten year
- Invite kindergarten teachers to visit pre-kindergarten classrooms



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## Ready Families



Parent-teacher relationships are as important for school readiness as academic and social competence.

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## Schools that Connect Families ....

- Contact families early and maintain periodic contact
- Assess their needs and connect them with community resources
- Provide families with opportunities for participation in at-home learning and school/classroom activities
- Communicate with families through regular meetings and newsletters and provide frequent opportunities for information sharing. Hold a parent orientation.



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## Research tells us...

Most widely-used Strategies

- Letters home to parents at the beginning of the school year
- Open houses before school starts
- Sending brochures home

Least Used Strategies

- Home visits prior to school
- Phone calls home


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## Common Barriers



- Teachers don't have information on ways to enhance transition services
- Parents don't read information sent home
- No compensation for work completed in the summer

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## Ready Children

Approximately half of the children who enter kindergarten experience some level of difficulty with the transition.



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## Ready Children

Helping upcoming kindergarteners develop relationships with peers promotes social competence – a much needed school readiness skill.



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## Schools that Connect Children...

- Link children with peers who will be in the same school
- Link children with peers in the neighborhood
- Promote connections during the pre-kindergarten year and the summer
- Create relationships between kindergarten and pre-kindergarten students




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## What's the grade?



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## Continuity is key

- Building bridges for the transitions young children and their families must naturally make.
- Occurs in communities where there are partnerships from birth through age 8
- Consider both horizontal and vertical continuity

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## Horizontal Continuity

- Ongoing connections between families and service providers
- Rules and expectations should be linked with each other
- Cultural links between home and service settings
  - Links in culture and home language allow families to join in the partnership

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## Vertical Continuity

- Services should be available during pregnancy, at birth and through early childhood years
- No one period of development should receive attention to the exclusion of others
- Services should provide links for the various transitions that occur during development

*From Continuity in Early Childhood by the Regional Educational Laboratories' Early Childhood Collaboration Network.*

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## 8 elements of continuity

1. Family
2. Shared leadership and decision-making
3. Services that focus on full range of family needs
4. Home culture and language consideration
5. Open communication that is respectful of confidentiality
6. Partners understand capacity of available services
7. ECE services are DAP
8. Evaluation is used to improve program, policies and practices

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## Standards and Continuity

- We often think of transitions in terms of linkages across programs/systems.
  - Agreements between programs
  - Coordination of services
  - Familiarizing children with new settings when they transition
- Effective transitions require more than coordination of services.

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## Standards and Continuity

- Vertical alignment of standards across age/grade levels is an essential element of a transition policy framework.
  - Standards are the core of what is taught.
  - Alignment promotes continuity.

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## Pennsylvania's Alignment Study

OCDEL commissioned a study to discover...

- To what extent are our early childhood standards aligned with our chosen assessments (Ounce and Work Sampling System)?
- To what extent are our learning standards aligned with each other – showing a sequence of skills or continuum of learning?
- To what extent are the early learning standards aligned with the third grade standards and the PSSAs?

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## The Parameters - BALANCE

- Do the documents exhibit the same balance across the five domains?
- Are some domains more/less emphasized in one document than in the other?
- Do the documents cover the different domains sufficiently?

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## Balance: Percentage of Indicators within Each Domain

Domain	Infant-Toddler Standards (0-3 Months)	Ounce Scale Assessment (4 Months)
Physical Development and Motor Skills	38%	38%
Social and Emotional Development	30%	30%
Approaches to Play and Learning	6%	6%
Language and Communication	20%	15%
Cognitive Development and General Knowledge	6%	8%

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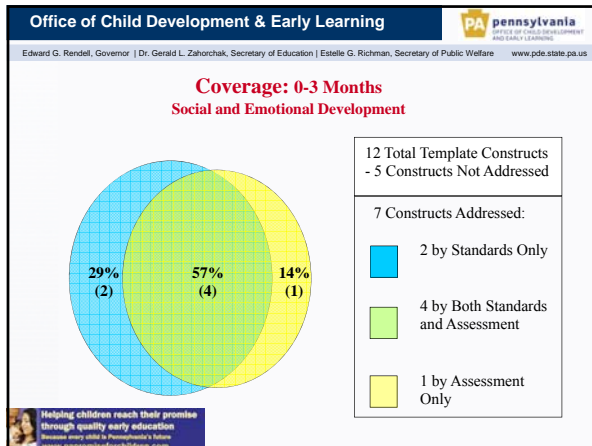
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## The Parameters - COVERAGE

- Do the documents cover the same developmental constructs?
- Are there constructs absent from one or both documents that should be considered for inclusion?

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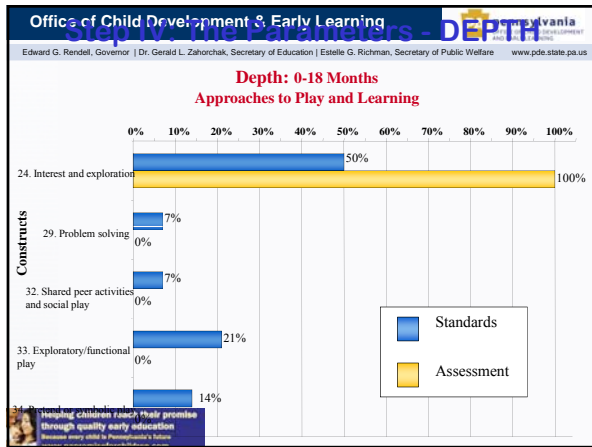
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**The Parameters - DEPTH**

- To what extent do the documents address individual constructs?
- Do the documents emphasize constructs to the same degree?
- Do the documents cover the constructs with sufficient thoroughness?

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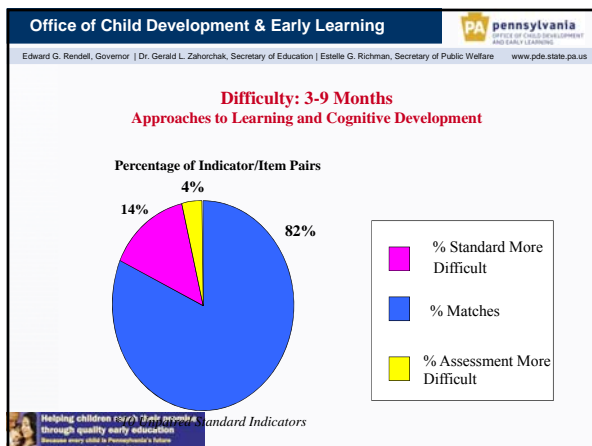
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**The Parameters - DIFFICULTY**

- Does the level of difficulty of indicators/items in the documents match?
- Do the documents represent a general progression of difficulty over time?

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**Summary:**

- There's a high degree of alignment between the Pre-K standards and the Work Sampling assessment.
- When disjuncture occurs, it often stems from the standards having more indicators that are more broadly distributed, and sometimes more difficult than the assessment.

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## Summary

- In most cases, pairs of indicators across ages reflected a progression of difficulty from younger to older.
- Small number of pairs in which indicator at younger age appeared more difficult than indicator at older age.
- In remaining pairs, indicators were roughly equivalent in difficulty.
- “Unpaired indicators”: substantial number of indicators did not have a corresponding indicator.

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## Summary

- In the Cognitive domain, there is more depth in subject areas than in cognitive processes.
- Lack of attention to children learning English as a second language.
- Uneven coverage of constructs across age groups (stops and starts).
- Greater attention needs to be given to the role of play as the appropriate vehicle for children’s learning.

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## Implications

- Pennsylvania will know with a greater degree of detail and certainty than ever before, the degree to which alignment exists for young children.
- Pennsylvania will have the empirical basis to revise documents accordingly.
- Pennsylvania will be able to make more cogent policy decisions regarding assessment, given this new information.
- Pennsylvania will be a first-in-the-nation state in early childhood education:
  - Integrated Structural Approach
  - Integrated Pedagogical Approach

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## Standards and Transitions Promote Continuity

- Standards are an essential element of a transition policy framework because they describe what children should learn in each setting.
- Establishing standards requires deep thinking about the nature of what children experience as they move from one setting to another.
- Little is more important to anyone thinking about transitions than assuring continuity in what children are learning.
- Alignment of expectations across age/grade levels promotes continuity in what children learn at different ages and facilitates effective transitions.
- Misalignment of standards contributes to discontinuity between settings.

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## Creating Continuity and Connections

- Consider the components of readiness
  - State, Community, Schools, Families, Children
  - What strategies can you design to support ready children and schools?
- Consider the elements of continuity
  - How have you utilized these in your transition plans?

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Indicators	Practices in Need of Change	Effective Practice
Your Community Partnership's Practice		

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