

Right from the start: Transition strategies for establishing a strong preK-3 continuum ^[1]

Author: American Federation of Teachers

Source: American Federation of Teachers

Format: Report

Publication Date: 17 Jan 2012

AVAILABILITY

Report in pdf ^[2]

ABSTRACT:

Right from the Start presents many ways to think about the preschool to third-grade (P-3) continuum. It is based on a presentation given by Harvard University P-3 expert Kristie Kauerz at the 2011 American Federation of Teachers TEACH Conference in Washington, D.C.

This publication expands on the presentation, featuring examples from across the country of what communities are doing to improve these transitions for children, as well as the ways that early childhood educators, elementary school teachers, parents, child care program administrators, elementary school principals and unions, can be involved in promoting and advancing stronger transition practices and policies that lay the crucial foundation for P-3 alignment.

EXCERPTS:

Historically, there has been little alignment or integration, or even any connections, between the early learning programs in the child care settings or preschool programs children attend before kindergarten, and the elementary schools they enter at ages 4, 5 or 6. A center-based early childhood educator can only hope for the best as she watches her students disperse to various elementary schools in the area. An elementary school kindergarten teacher often may wish he could contact a child's preschool teacher to have a conversation about the child's learning styles. And a parent may seek in vain for an opportunity to share information about her child's preschool experience with her child's new kindergarten teacher.

We are learning, however, that there is a better way for children, and their parents, to transition from the early years into the early grades. Creating opportunities for educators from the early childhood field and the elementary grades to learn together and communicate about their practices can improve school experiences for children. Gradually introducing young children to the teachers and the classrooms they will have in the coming year can help them feel less anxious about what is to come.

Collaborative, thoughtful and intentional transitions to assist children leaving pre-K and entering kindergarten have been found to be especially beneficial to disadvantaged or at-risk children. If achievement gaps exist even before children enter kindergarten, then clearly efforts to close those gaps also should begin during the preschool years.

Region: United States ^[3]

Tags: kindergarten ^[4]

curricula and pedagogy ^[5]

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