



Family Engagement

Vision - Adapted from NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading

Early childhood systems are family family-driven and equitable, serving children in the contexts of families and communities. Systems deeply engage with and learn from families by supporting them in advocating for their children and requiring these systems and programs to use strategies that intentionally engage and learn from families, connecting those strategies across systems and programs.

Why it Matters

Families are children's first and most important teachers. Family, school and community partnerships can build the foundation for children's success in school. Research shows that family engagement in children's education improves their outcomes in preschool, kindergarten, and early elementary school.ⁱ

- Investing in babies by educating and engaging families early helps prepare children for school both academically and more broadly for healthy development.ⁱⁱ
- Within high-quality early child care and education programs, meaningful family engagement can help narrow achievement gaps at kindergarten entry and deliver long-term benefits to children, their families, and society as a whole.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Family, school and community partnerships may be especially important for English-language learners, students from low-income families^{iv} and children whose family members have less formal education.^v
- When family members are involved in their education, children start feeling better about reading and like reading more, which improves their reading performance.^{vi}
- Strengthening family/teacher partnerships can improve children's academic and social-emotional skills and outcomes.^{vii} Improved communication between teachers and families increases student engagement, measured by whether they complete homework, stay on-task and participate in class.^{viii}
- Family engagement has been found to enhance school leadership, as family members get more involved in school decisions.^{ix}
- Families from all backgrounds can learn how to be more engaged with their children in reading and math activities.^x They need good, clear information about how to do that.^{xi}
- Doing learning activities at home, having family members involved in the school building, doing school outreach to families, and families providing general parenting support (outside of direct support for reading and math) all improve children's outcomes.^{xii}
- An overall positive school context, including factors like focusing on child and family strengths, providing supports and services, investing in staff, and outreach by teachers, results in higher levels of family involvement, which in turn increases reading proficiency for students.^{xiii}

Examples of benchmarks for 2019.

- 1) Agencies and organizations serving young children agree to develop in partnership with families a common definition of and principles for family engagement to be used by local agencies serving young children. (Need to discuss how this aligns with state efforts.)
- 2) Agencies and organizations serving young children agree to develop in partnership with families shared goals for family engagement (outcomes for families).
- 3) Organizations, programs, and agencies identify complementary strategies for achieving the shared goals.

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- ⁱ Van Voorhis, F. et al. The Impact of Family Involvement on the Education of Children Ages 3 to 8: A Focus on Literacy and Math Achievement Outcomes and Social-Emotional Skills. 2013. Available online at: https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/The_Impact_of_Family_Involvement_FR.pdf.
- ⁱⁱ Garcia, E. et. al., Economic Policy Institute, Education inequalities at the school starting gate: Gaps, trends, and strategies to address them. 2017. Available online at: <https://www.epi.org/publication/education-inequalities-at-the-school-starting-gate/>
- ⁱⁱⁱ Garcia, E. et. al., Economic Policy Institute, Education inequalities at the school starting gate: Gaps, trends, and strategies to address them. 2017. Available online at: <https://www.epi.org/publication/education-inequalities-at-the-school-starting-gate/>
- ^{iv} Thigpen, D. et. al., EdSource and New America Media. The Power of Parents: Research underscores the impact of parent involvement in schools. 2014. Available online at: <https://edsourcesource.org/wp-content/publications/Power-of-Parents-Feb-2014.pdf>
- ^v Weiss, H., Harvard Family Research Project. 2008. Available online at: <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/08/05/family-involvement-and-childrens-literacy>
- ^{vi} Weiss, H., Harvard Family Research Project. 2008. Available online at: <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/08/05/family-involvement-and-childrens-literacy>
- ^{vii} Bierman, K., et. al., Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Parent Engagement Practices Improve Outcomes for Preschool Children. 2017. Available online at: http://www.readingrockets.org/research/topic/parent_engagement
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- ^x Van Voorhis, F. et al. The Impact of Family Involvement on the Education of Children Ages 3 to 8: A Focus on Literacy and Math Achievement Outcomes and Social-Emotional Skills. 2013. https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/The_Impact_of_Family_Involvement_FR.pdf
- ^{xi} Epstein, J. and S. Sheldon. Johns Hopkins University Center on School, Family, and Community Partnership National Network of Partnership Schools. Moving Forward: Ideas for Research on School, Family, and Community Partnerships. 2006. Available online at: <http://nnps.jhucscs.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Literature-Review-Epstein-and-Sheldon-06.pdf>
- ^{xii} Van Voorhis, F. et al. The Impact of Family Involvement on the Education of Children Ages 3 to 8: A Focus on Literacy and Math Achievement Outcomes and Social-Emotional Skills. 2013. https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/The_Impact_of_Family_Involvement_FR.pdf
- ^{xiii} Weiss, H., Harvard Family Research Project. 2008. Available online at: <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/08/05/family-involvement-and-childrens-literacy>



Transitions

Vision - Adapted from the Birth to 3rd Grade Interagency Council

All young children birth through third grade and their families are engaged and supported as they transition between home, early care and education programs, and schools. Early care and education programs and schools collaborate so that they are ready to support all children effectively and engage with families and each other within the context of the community to plan transitions that meet the diverse needs of all children and families.

Why it Matters

Kindergarten is a critical year for young children, when they are learning core academic and social skills that build the foundation for later school success. The transition from preschool or home to kindergarten can be disorienting—classes are larger, instructional time is focused more on academic skills, and children are expected to sit still and pay attention for longer stretches of time.ⁱ Research shows that using intentional transitional activities as children move from preschool to kindergarten and during the kindergarten year can improve outcomes.

- Providing transition activities for children and families reduces children's stress, improves social-emotional skills at the beginning of the school year,ⁱⁱ and reduces problem behaviors.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Transition activities are linked to improved academic growth and increased family involvement over the course of the kindergarten year.^{iv}
- These benefits are particularly strong for children living in low-income families.^v Yet schools serving higher percentages of students from low-income families, students of color and English-language learners report using fewer transition activities, meaning that the students who could benefit most from such activities are the least likely to receive them.^{vi}
- The more transition practices that are used during the fall of kindergarten, the higher children's academic achievement is at the end of the year, regardless of family income and other demographic factors.^{vii}
- Research suggests several critical elements to successful transition activities: positive relationships between schools, children, and their families; cooperation and joint professional development between preschool and kindergarten teachers and administrators; assessments, standards and curriculum that align between preschool and kindergarten; and effective communication with parents and the wider community.^{viii}

Example of Benchmarks for 2019

- 1) Agencies and organizations serving young children in the district create coordinated and collaborative plans to support all children transitioning into kindergarten. They create a MOU that identifies the role each partner plays in implementation.
- 2) Each district has a MOU with Head Start that speaks specifically to transitions, family engagement and aligned professional development.
- 3) Agencies and organizations serving young children work together to provide professional learning opportunities to create and support successful transitions.

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- ⁱ National Center for Early Development and Learning, Early Childhood Research and Policy Briefs: Transition to Kindergarten. 2002. Available online at: https://fpg.unc.edu/sites/fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/reports-and-policy-briefs/NCEDL_Brief2_2.pdf and Little, M. et al., Facilitating the Transition to Kindergarten: What ECLS-K Data Tell Us about School Practices Then and Now. 2016. Available online at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2332858416655766>
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- ^{iv} The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning, Planning for the Transition to Kindergarten: Why it Matters and How to Promote Success. 2014. Available online at: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/transition-brief.pdf>
- ^v The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning, Planning for the Transition to Kindergarten: Why it Matters and How to Promote Success. 2014. Available online at: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/transition-brief.pdf>
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- ^{vii} Shulting, A. et. al., The Effect of School-Based Kindergarten Transition Policies and Practices on Child Academic Outcomes. 2005. Available online at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2757260/>
- ^{viii} The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning, Planning for the Transition to Kindergarten: Why it Matters and How to Promote Success. 2014. Available online at: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/transition-brief.pdf>



Professional Development

Vision - Adapted from NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading and Birth to 3rd Grade Interagency Council

North Carolina's children, especially those with the most roadblocks to opportunity, have well-trained, high-quality, diverse birth-through eight educators and leaders. Professional development for birth through third grade teachers and administrators is aligned and supports all aspects of children's development, including literacy and language development, cognition, approaches to learning, physical well-being and social-emotional development. Birth through third grade educators, administrators and principals have opportunities to learn together.

Why it Matters

National organizations focused on best practices for building effective, integrated birth-through-age-eight education systems stress the importance of aligned professional learning systems across roles (i.e., teachers, assistant teachers) and sectors (early care and education and K-3). Key practices include:

- Promoting access to consistent quality and content in professional learning for all education professionals who work with children birth through age eight.
- Promoting joint participation in professional learning activities across settings and professional roles for birth-through-age-eight educators.
- Incentivizing greater consistency and parity in learning opportunities across settings and roles for birth-through-age-eight care and education professionals by sharing resources among agencies and settings to better coordinate professional learning systems.ⁱ

Research on effective P-3 (preK through third grade) educational systems suggests that joint professional development between early care and education teachers and K-3 teachers is important for aligning standards, curricula and assessments, aligning instructional practices to ease transitions, and sharing effective practices between the two sectors.ⁱⁱ

Examples of benchmarks for 2019.

- 1) Agencies and organizations serving young children develop a coordinated professional development calendar for all birth-through-eight teachers and make programs available to all, regardless of where the program originates.
- 2) Agencies and organizations serving young children s identify through a data-driven process an area of focus for birth-through-eight capacity building and create a cross-systems, birth-through-eight professional development plan to strengthen those skills.

ⁱ Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council of the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine, Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation. 2015. Available online at: <https://www.nap.edu/read/19401/chapter/1>

ⁱⁱ Center for the Study of Educational Policy, From Birth to Graduation and Beyond: Aligning Best Practices in Educational Systems to Improve Learning Outcomes. 2012. Available online at: <https://education.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/linc/LincReport10-28-12%20pdf.pdf>