



MENU OF KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION PRACTICES

Use this menu to help find helpful ways to support your child's needs as they transition into kindergarten. This is not a complete list - the possibilities are endless! Every child is unique, and you know your child best. Feel free to adapt these ideas and create your own too.

Preschool & Early Preparation

- Read books about kindergarten and talk about what to expect.
- Practice self-help skills such as using the bathroom, opening lunch containers, and following simple directions.
- Visit the school's website to look at pictures of the classroom, teachers, and school spaces.
- Introduce sensory-friendly school supplies (Ex: noise-canceling headphones, weighted lap pads) if helpful.
- Encourage your child's preschool teacher to talk about kindergarten routines in class to build familiarity.
- Schedule an individual transition meeting with preschool staff before the last day of school to discuss your child's strengths and needs (use this plan to help!) This transition meeting is especially important if your child does not have IEP meetings.
- Ask for meetings with your child's therapy team (Ex: OT, PT, Speech) to develop school-readiness goals.
- Seek early intervention services or additional support if your child has specific needs.
- Arrange playdates with preschool friends who will attend the same kindergarten (a "buddy system").



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

CENTER ON EDUCATION AND
TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT

The Summer Before Kindergarten

- Attend school-sponsored kindergarten orientations or open house events.
 - Take a walk or drive by the school to help your child get familiar with the location.
 - Practice transitioning between activities at home to support flexibility.
 - Talk about making new friends and role-play introducing themselves to classmates.
 - Begin a morning routine that will match your child's kindergarten schedule. Practice waking up at the same time, getting dressed, and doing activities like packing their backpack.
 - Visit the playground at the kindergarten school to help your child feel more comfortable.
 - Ask preschool and kindergarten teachers to work together to make sure they have the same expectations for your child (Ex: email both teachers to get their conversation started).
 - Schedule an individual meeting with the kindergarten teacher before school starts (if possible) to discuss your child's strengths and needs and write this plan together.
 - Request a meeting with the special education team to ensure any necessary accommodations are in place before school starts.
 - Arrange a private school visit for your child to explore their classroom, meet their teacher, and get comfortable in the space.
 - Enroll your child in a kindergarten readiness program or summer camp.
 - Introduce visual schedules, timers, or first-then boards if your child benefits from structured routines.
 - Connect with other kindergarten families through school-organized groups or social media.
 - Work with a speech therapist or other specialists to create a social script for making friends and communicating needs in school.
-



Starting Kindergarten

- Meet with your child's new educational team if you have not yet to continue to write and share this transition plan.
 - Read teacher welcome letters or watch any school introduction videos.
 - Establish a consistent morning and drop-off routine to best support your child through this transition.
 - Give your child a comfort item to bring to school (if allowed) to give them some reassurance during the school day (Ex: a favorite stuffed animal or action figure).
 - Talk about school rules at home and practice them through play.
 - Help your child learn classmates' names and encourage them to reflect or talk about their day by asking specific questions.
 - Create a communication plan to support your child's transition (page 6).
 - Talk with the teacher about flexible seating options (Ex: wobble stools, cushions, standing desks) to support sensory and motor needs.
 - Explore different ways to help your child communicate, like picture boards, speech devices, or simple sign language, if they don't use many words to talk.
 - Work with school staff to arrange additional supports as needed (Ex: buddy system, additional check-ins).
 - Attend early parent-teacher meetings to discuss strengths and concerns.
-

Additional Ideas:





The contents of this document were developed under a Statewide Family Engagement Center grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Department). The Department does not mandate or prescribe practices, models, or other activities described or discussed in this document. The contents of this presentation may contain examples of, adaptations of, and links to resources created and maintained by another public or private organization. The Department does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of this outside information. The content of this presentation does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department. This publication is not intended to represent the views or policy of, or be an endorsement of any views expressed or materials provided by, any Federal agency. [[89 FR 70333](#), Aug. 29, 2024]