

From Pre-K to Elementary School: Elementary Principal Leadership and Successful Transitions

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Outline

- 1) Background Studies (Early Childhood)
- 2) Return on Investment
- 3) Buffett Early Childhood/Gallup Research
- 4) Components of Effective Transition Plans
- 5) Elementary Principal Perceptions
- 6) Where to focus? Consider challenges...
- 7) AQuESTT (Tenets)
- 8) Transition Principles
- 9) Considerations
- 10) Sample Transition Forms
- 11) Conclusion

In the essences of full disclosure...

3 +1 Important ECE Studies

High Scope Perry (60s)

Abecedarian Study (70s)

Chicago Long. Study (80s)

Starting Schools Research
Project (Transition Focus)
(90s)



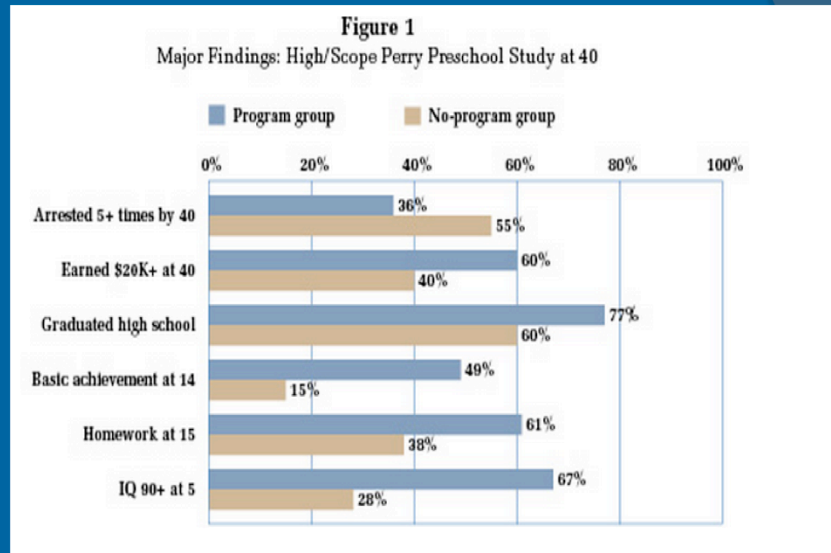
High/Scope Perry School Project, Abecedarian Project and the Chicago Longitudinal Study all focused on providing high-quality early childhood education programming. *(These models were different – the emphasis was on the program being implemented and not necessarily the actions of the school leader.)*

The Starting Schools Research Project, a University of Western Sydney study, conducted from 1998-2000, focused specifically on investigating, “the perceptions and expectations of all those involved in young children's transition to school” (Dockett & Perry, 2001, para. 7).

The results of the Abecedarian study reinforced those from the High/Scope Perry Preschool project in revealing that children of high risk who attended a high-quality preschool program showed higher cognitive test scores from toddler to 21 years of age and better academic achievement in the areas of math and reading from early elementary through young adulthood (Campbell, Ramey, Pungello, Sparling & Miller-Johnson, 2002).

Chicago Longitudinal Study (Reynolds, 1999) was conducted between 1985-1986 with 1,539 low-income minority children (predominantly African-American) who exhibited at-risk characteristics for future school success. All children in the study attended Title I, public school programs that were governmentally funded and were a part of

High/Scope Perry (1962-1967)

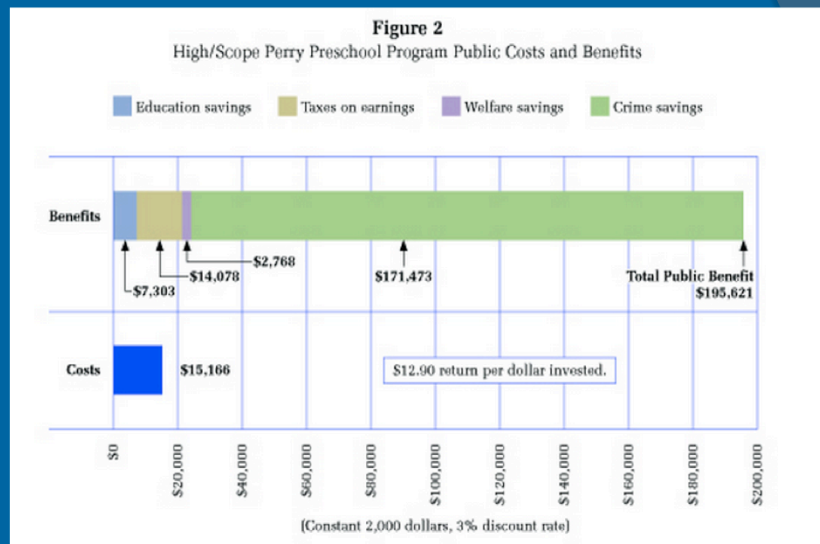


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From “Major Findings of the HighScope Perry Preschool Study,” by L. J. Schweinhart, J. Montie, Z. Xiang, W. S. Barnett, C. R. Belfield, & M. Nores, 2005, in *Lifetime Effects: The HighScope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40*, Ypsilanti, MI: HighScope Press, p. xv. © 2005 HighScope Educational Research Foundation. Used with permission. Retrieved on 17 August 2015, from: <http://www.highscope.org/content.asp?contentid=219>

The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study (Schweinhart, Barnes, & Weikart, 1993) provides an interesting perspective into the impact of a Pre-K education program on the lives of 123, African American, 3-4 year old children who were born into poverty and had parents with similar background characteristics between 1962-1967 in one Michigan school district. One group was provided with a preschool program and one group was not. The study followed and interviewed these participants throughout their life and one final time at the age of 40.

High/Scope Perry (1962-1967)

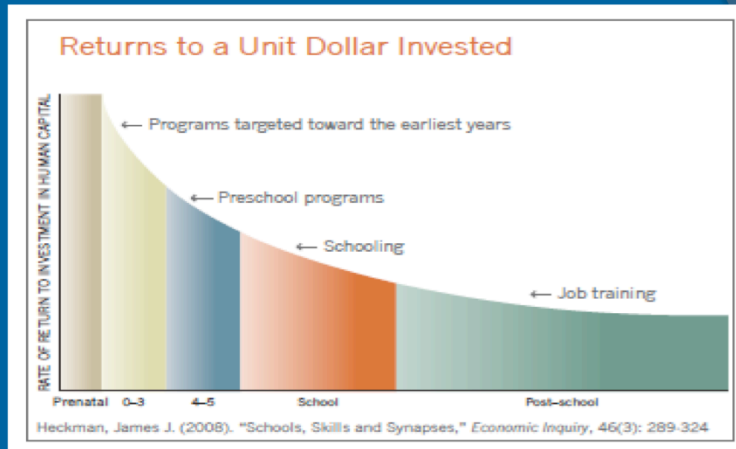


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Long-term study results indicated that children who attended the program “improved their educational performance, contributed to their economic development, helped prevent them from committing crimes, and provide(ed) a high return on taxpayer investment” (Schweinhart, 2003, p. 4). Findings are referenced in Appendix A (Major Findings: High/Scope Perry) and Appendix B (High/Scope Public Costs & Benefits).

Return on Investment



“Early childhood education is an efficient and effective investment for economic and workforce development. The earlier the investment, the greater the return on investment” (Dr. James Heckman, University of Chicago)

\$10-\$17 return on \$1 investment in 3 previously mentioned studies

Heckman Equation. (n.d.). *Invest in early childhood development: Reduce deficits, strengthen the economy*. Retrieved July 14, 2015, from <http://heckmanequation.org/content/resource/invest-early-childhood-development-reduce-deficits-strengthen-economy>

What Does the Research Say?

“...rigorous studies find that strong preschool education programs can meaningfully enhance early learning and development and thereby produce long-term improvements in school success and social behavior that generate benefits to individuals and the broader society far exceeding costs” (p. 3).

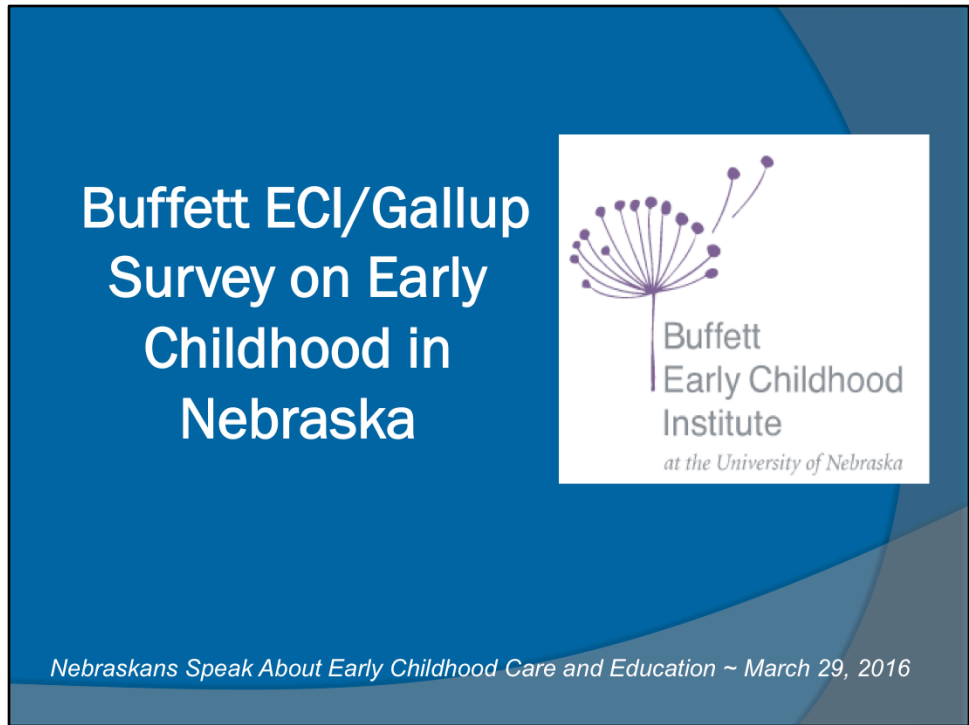
The National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER) and Dr. Steven Barnett (2013)

In terms of the impact of “high-quality early childhood education opportunities”.

Dr. Meisels, Buffett Early Childhood Institute - We have the data and research to support the positive impacts of early childhood education.”



The long-term impact research studies on the benefits of early education programs affirm that quality Pre-K programs can positively influence academic achievement for children, especially those most at-risk.



Buffett Institute/Gallup Survey Reports/Publications

<http://buffettinstitute.nebraska.edu/resources/reports-publications/gallup-survey>

More than 7,100 residents participated. Largest early childhood public opinion poll in Nebraska's history. One of the highest response rates Gallup has ever encountered for a mailed survey.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Study

<http://buffettinstitute.nebraska.edu/-/media/beci/docs/announcement--faq-3-24-16.ashx?la=en>

Buffett ECI/Gallup Workforce Survey – also conducted 2016

Key Takeaways

1 Nebraskans recognize the importance of early care and education.

- The vast majority (68%) of Nebraska residents say early care and education has a lot of impact on the long-term success of students in school and in life.
- Only 10% of Nebraska residents strongly feel that most young children in Nebraska are prepared to be successful in school when they start Kindergarten.

2 Nebraskans do not believe high-quality early care and education is available or affordable for all families in the state.

- Just 11% of Nebraska residents strongly agree that high-quality early care and education is available to every family in the state.
- Only 6% of Nebraskans strongly agree that high-quality early care and education is affordable for every family in Nebraska.
- Among several possible obstacles, more than a third (35%) of Nebraska residents say cost is the biggest challenge families face in obtaining high-quality care and education for their young children.

<http://buffettinstitute.nebraska.edu/-/media/beci/docs/announcement--buffett-gallup-survey-findings-report.ashx?la=en>

3 Nebraskans report deficiencies in early care and education in their area and in the state.

- Only 15% of Nebraskans are very satisfied with the quality of early care and education programs in the city or area where they live.
- Just 1% of Nebraska residents say that all children from birth to age 5 in Nebraska receive high-quality early care and education.

4 Nebraskans want a greater investment in quality early care and education.

- Two-thirds (67%) of Nebraskans strongly agree or agree that the state should make early care and education a higher priority than it is today.
- The majority of Nebraska residents (58%) believe the state is investing too little in early care and education, while only 6% think the state is investing too much.

5 Nebraskans support early care and education for children most in need.

- Only two in 10 residents (19%) strongly agree or agree that Nebraska is doing enough to help children from low-income families be ready for success in life.
- Half of Nebraskans strongly agree or agree that the state should provide early care and education for all children from low-income families who choose to use it.

GALLUP

3

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<http://buffettinstitute.nebraska.edu/-/media/beci/docs/announcement--buffett-gallup-survey-findings-report.ashx?la=en>

High Quality Early Childhood Programming

“The quality of a child care setting, whether center-based or home-based, rests largely on the knowledge and skills of the early childhood professionals who work there. Personnel costs are typically the largest expense for child care centers and providers.”

Dr. Samuel Meisels ~ Buffett Early Childhood Institute
Omaha World Herald, Aug. 28th, 2016

http://www.omaha.com/opinion/samuel-j-meisels-the-rising-cost-of-child-care-demands/article_70ff6ddc-6f20-55f5-b695-9b59867562ed.html

Early childhood education programming is an essential component in closing the achievement gap.

A main component of the high-quality programming will come through effective transition practices.

We need to consider how we are ensuring those who are charged with preparing our young learners to come to kindergarten have the necessary training and information to provide the foundation for a successful transition.

Our children come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences prior to entering Kindergarten.

A successful transition relies heavily on the experiences and planning of the “transition team” – those involved in the process (family, child, staff, other support members, etc.)



About preparation for the “long run”.

Building lasting relationships...

What is a transition plan?

Generally speaking...

Transition plans promote the preparation of children for the change from a Pre-K setting to that of kindergarten.

Effective transition guidelines have been developed by Sue Dockett and Bob Perry (2001), Dockett & Perry (2014), Robert Pianta and Marcia Kraftt-Sayre (2003), among others.

Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2001) Starting school: Effective transitions. *Early Childhood Research and Practice*, 3(2).

Retrieved on July 27, 2015, from <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v3n2/dockett.html>

Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2014). *Continuity of learning: A resource to support effective transition to school and school age care*. Canberra, ACT: Australian Government Department of Education.

Pianta, R. C., & Kraft-Sayre, M. (2003). *Successful kindergarten transition: Your guide to connecting children, families, and schools*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Transition Plan Commonalities...

Establish and foster positive and collaborative relationships with all stakeholders (built on respect and trust)

Actively involve stakeholders in the process through open and ongoing two-way communication

Facilitate a program that honors family strengths while also focusing on the strengths of the individual child

Identify and access resources (financial and human) to meet funding and resource needs

All suggested guidelines maintain a focus on the overall importance of the **transition program's need to remain flexible and responsive.**

Effective transition guidelines have been developed by Sue Dockett and Bob Perry (2001), Dockett & Perry (2014) Robert Pianta and Marcia Kraftt-Sayre (2003), among others and are not new to the world of education.

“If we can just get them here...”



Most administrators find value in the school-based/district supported PreK programs within their district.

The variance outside of these programs can often pose unique challenges and barriers depending upon a number of factors: rural v. non-rural, training, expectations, etc...

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/seattleparks/16044643722>

Perceptions of transitions (Elem. Principals)...

Effective Transition Programs:

- Promote school readiness (routines & procedures, expectations, basic skills)
- Prepare children for school structure (academically & behaviorally)
- Promote communication & collaboration (child, family, teacher, administration)

Effective Transition Program definition - a program that promotes school readiness by exposing children to routines, expectations and basic skills, prepares children for what kindergarten will look like -- academically and behaviorally, and promotes communication/collaboration between all parties in the transition process (student, teacher, administration, families).

Partnership Drawbacks - "lack of time" and the size of the community, resulting in a large number of potential contacts to make. More drawbacks within suburban and urban (non-rural) areas as opposed to rural areas (generally)

Perceptions of transitions (Elem. Principals)...

Partnerships:

- School to Home
- School to School (PreK to kindergarten)
- Within the School (Internal)
- School to Community

Effective Transition Program definition - a program that promotes school readiness by exposing children to routines, expectations and basic skills, prepares children for what kindergarten will look like -- academically and behaviorally, and promotes communication/collaboration between all parties in the transition process (student, teacher, administration, families).

Partnership Drawbacks - "lack of time" and the size of the community, resulting in a large number of potential contacts to make. More drawbacks within suburban and urban (non-rural) areas as opposed to rural areas (generally)

Connecting...

A principal's role in the process of developing positive partnerships and executing successful transition practices for children from Pre-K to kindergarten is an **essential one**.



(NAESP, 2014, p. 6)

Role of the Elementary Principal

https://c1.staticflickr.com/3/2859/9580068088_2fcd61419e_b.jpg

Where to focus ?

“It is a community experience, involving a wide range of people (family and community)” and “effective transition programs focus on relationships” (Dockett & Perry, 2001, para. 14).



When speaking of making a real estate purchase we often use “location, location, location” to describe a “good” purchase.

This process...Transition hinges on...RELATIONSHIPS, RELATIONSHIPS, RELATIONSHIPS

The relationships an elementary principal establishes and maintains during the transition process is essential to getting parents, students, teachers, central office administrators, community members on the same page.

Pre-K to kindergarten transitions...



Considerations, challenges,
barriers...

Turn & Talk

What are some common challenges or barriers you encounter?

Are these challenges/barriers relative to your school community (urban, suburban, rural, mobility, financing, human resources, etc.)?

Are these challenges/barriers things we can improve with a specific focus? Vision of programming or practice?

Common barriers, challenges from my study were (2015 Snyder):

School Readiness (Academic & Social); **Partnerships/Collaboration** (School to Home, School to Private sector, Staff to Staff); **Financial, Facility & Human Resources** (Limited Access to Programs, Transportation, Staff Availability, No School-based Program); **Pre-K Programming** (Program Focus, Program Quality); **Communication** (English Language Learners)

AQuESTT for Nebraska

Accountability for a **Quality** Education **System** Today and Tomorrow

The Nebraska Department of Education has reflected this importance in its Performance Framework for Principals (2011) under Standard 3: “Instructional Leadership - The Principal provides leadership to ensure the implementation of a rigorous curriculum, the use of effective teaching practices, and accountability for results” (NDE, 2011, p. 2).

AQuESTT Six Tenets

Student Success and Access

~Positive Partnerships, Relationships, and Student Success

~Transitions

~Educational Opportunities and Access

Teaching and Learning

~College and Career Ready

~Assessment

~Educator Effectiveness

<http://aquestt.com/tenets/>

(NDE) Three of the tenets specifically outlined in AQuESTT linked directly to this study (Positive Partnerships, Relationships & Student Success, Transitions, and Educational Opportunities and Access). This study supported that to effectively instill these three tenets within the day-to-day operations of school, school leaders must have the knowledge base necessary to develop Positive Partnerships, manage Transition processes and increase Educational Opportunities and Access.

Positive Partnerships, Relationships, and Student Success ~ AQuESTT

The State Board believes that student engagement through positive partnerships and relationships is fundamental to successful schools and districts.

Individualized or Personalized Learning Plans
Attendance and Participation
Family Engagement
Community and Support Services

The State Board seeks to support schools and districts to implement best practices in student, family, and community engagement to enhance educational experiences and opportunities.

NDE will be adding a **Positive Partnerships, Relationships and Student Success** component to the AQuESTT EBA (Evidence Based Analysis) which will be rubric scored.

Buffett Institute ~ Superintendent's Plan

“And all built on a foundation of family partnership and engagement. With the idea of school as the hub. Not necessarily a place that does everything. But at least as a place that families come to feel a sense of belonging and that helps gain them access to other opportunities and resources that would be of interest to them.

~Dr. Christine Maxwell, September 6th, 2016

"First, we're looking at what it means to have schools really feel a collective sense of responsibility for children starting at birth. And, second, it's not about schools doing it alone. Family partnerships are at the foundation of all of this." Christine Maxwell (Summer Institutes purpose...)

“...an approach that starts with home visiting for children ages 0 through 3 or prenatally, and that builds into preschool which then leads into aligned, rigorous, high-quality PreK through Grade 3 and beyond.”

<http://buffettinstitute.nebraska.edu/news-and-events/news/schools-embark-on-second-year-of-superintendents-early-childhood-plan>

Transitions ~ AQuESTT

The State Board believes that quality educational opportunities focus on supports for students transitioning between grade levels, programs, schools, districts, and ultimately, college and careers.

Early Childhood–Elementary

Elementary–Middle School
Middle School–High School
High School–Post High School

NDE will be adding a **Transitions** component to the AQuESTT EBA (Evidence Based Analysis) which will be rubric scored.

Pianta & Kraft-Sayre Transition Principles (2003)

Developmental Model of Transition

...what children bring with them to school (*how this is influenced by others -- change & development over time*)

The **developmental model** focuses on skills children bring with them to school, the influences of the teacher, family, peers and community and their influence on each other and the child, while emphasizing the change and development over time (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2001)

Transition Guidelines (suggested)...

Continuity of Learning ~ Dockett & Perry (2014)

CATEGORY: Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships

CATEGORY: Partnerships

CATEGORY: High expectations and equity

CATEGORY: Respect for diversity

CATEGORY: Ongoing learning and reflective practice

Continuity of Learning – Australia Early Childhood Framework

Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2014). *Continuity of learning: A resource to support effective transition to school and school age care*. Canberra, ACT: Australian Government Department of Education.

Pianta & Kraft-Sayre (2003)

- (a) foster relationships as resources;
- (b) promote continuity from preschool to kindergarten;
- (c) focus on family strengths;
- (d) tailor practices to individual needs; and
- (e) form collaborative relationships

Elementary Principal Perceptions...

Nebraska Study reveals:

Significant Differences

Rural vs. Non-Rural

Title I vs. Non-Title I

Above Avg. vs. Below Avg. Free & Reduced

- Secure, Respectful and Reciprocal Relationships*
- Partnerships*
- High Expectations & Equity*
- Ongoing Learning and Reflective Practices*

Are there differences in elementary principals' perceptions for Pre-K transition plans, knowledge of research, and availability of resources between: "Rural vs. Non-Rural"; "Title I vs. Non-Title I"; and "Free and Reduced Lunch Status."

Discussion and qualitative responses indicated the development of these "specific areas" was more likely in rural settings. More opportunities for "community" building and interaction between school and community. There was a partnership and all stakeholders were more likely on the same page.

Also interesting to note the significant differences between schools with "higher levels" of poverty than those with less. Survey and interview respondents from high poverty areas mentioned the necessity of maximizing the resources they have within their school community. The importance of giving students a jumpstart on school and developing school readiness skills was important.

Questions for consideration...

Secure Respectful and Reciprocal Relationships

Are we (all stakeholders) committed to one another in this process? The success of our relationship will depend upon this.

Partnerships

Are the right people on the bus? Have you accounted for all those invested in the process?

High Expectations and Equity

Do we truly value the experiences of each team member?

Secure Respectful and Reciprocal Relationships. The success of the relationships and transition plan depends on the commitments of all stakeholders (children, families, educators, community members, etc.) to one another.

Partnerships. The right type of partners, those with an invested interest in the transition plan process, focuses the team on developing collaborative relationships while maintaining the common goal of implementing a successful transition plan and developing a child-centered learning environment.

High Expectations and Equity. The different experiences and initial expectations each team member brings to the table should not be seen as a detriment to the team, and should instead be viewed as an opportunity to engage in productive discussion that centers on the transition process and a successful transition for both child and family.

Questions for consideration...

Respect for Diversity

Do we value diversity? Do we value the strengths of our children and families?

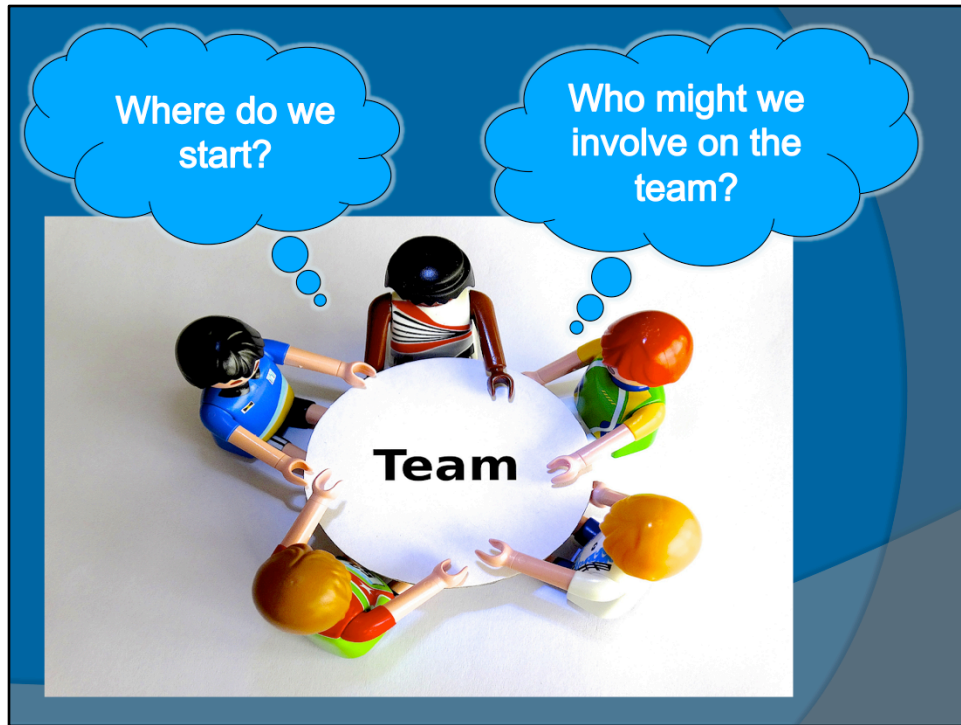
Ongoing Learning & Reflective Practice

Are we committed to ongoing learning? Do we engage in reflective practice? Reflection “in-action” and “on-action”?

Respect for Diversity. Establishing and further nurturing an environment that values such diversity is indicative of a community of trust and respect. In such environments, the strengths of children, families and other adults are accentuated.

Ongoing learning and reflective practice. Educators who are committed to and engage in a process of continuous learning are more likely to “take greater responsibility for the educational outcomes of all children” (Dockett & Perry, 2014, p. 70). Reflective practice is as important as committing to habits of ongoing learning. Schon (1983) identified two types of reflection: reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Reflection-in-action refers to being aware of the decision-making process and paying special attention to why these decisions are being made, in the moment. Reflection-on-action refers to reflecting on decisions that have already been made and evaluating the outcomes of those decisions.

Schon, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.



The Nebraska Department of Education has reflected the importance of developing a community of learners in the Performance Framework for Principals (2011) under Standard 7: “Developing Relationships - The Principal promotes and supports productive relationships with students, staff, families, and the community” (NDE, 2011, p. 4).

Sample Transition Planning Documents/Resources...

Sample Transition Plan

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/docs/transition-plan-example.docx>

Transition Resources

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/transition>

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/transition>

Suggested Policy Changes to Support Child & Family During Transitions from PreK to Kindergarten

- 1) Facilitation of Communication
- 2) Formation of Transition Planning Team
- 3) Teacher Training on Building Relationships with Families & Stakeholders
- 4) Ensure Kindergarten Programs are “High Quality” & Meet the Needs of All Students

Dr. Robert Pianta and Dr. Martha Cox (2002, p. 3)

Pianta, R., & Cox, M. (2002). *Transition to kindergarten*, 2(2). National Center for Early Development and Learning. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC, 1-6. Retrieved on August 1, 2015, from <http://leadershiplinc.illinoisstate.edu/researchcompendium/documents/transitiontokindergartenresearchPolicybriefs.pdf>

Suggested policy changes or focuses to best support the child and family involved in a transition process for children moving from Pre-K to kindergarten:

Pre-K to kindergarten...

“The transition to kindergarten is a complex process that involves coordination and collaboration on many levels” (NDE, 2010, p. 27).

Effective transition guidelines have been developed by Sue Dockett and Bob Perry (2001), Robert Pianta and Marcia Kraftt-Sayre (2003), among others.

The commonalities between these guidelines is focused on establishing and fostering positive and collaborative relationships with all stakeholders that are built on respect and trust, actively involving stakeholders in the process through open and ongoing two-way communication, facilitating a program that honors family strengths while also focusing on the strengths of the individual child, and identifies and accesses resources (financial and human) to meet funding and resource needs.

These guidelines maintain a focus on the overall importance of the transition program’s need to remain flexible and responsive. When in place, guidelines such as those suggested can lead to positive results for students and families when transitioning from Pre-K to kindergarten classrooms.

Flexibility with Purpose

Transition plans are most effective when they meet the needs of the individual child and family being served. Transition plans will vary to meet the needs of each child and family and therefore will not be consistent across all schools and school districts.

One size DOES NOT fit all!

The Nebraska Department of Education (2013b), when speaking of the adult's role in the learning environment, stated, "The role of the adult is to promote and stimulate children's development and facilitate their learning" (p. 3). The adult's role is crucial to the success of the student and the effectiveness of the instructional framework being implemented. The role of the adult, as suggested by the Nebraska Department of Education (2013b) is to "guide learning experiences using strategies that encourage children to think creatively, problem-solve, make decisions, and expand their thinking skills" (p. 3).



Reflection: Where have we been? Where are we now? Where are we going?
Where do we want to go?

Now is the time to invest in the process, invest in the knowledge base of elementary principals, invest in high-quality early childhood experiences for all children and their families, and invest in the future of all Nebraska children.



Thank
You!

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