



Introductory Packet

***Transitions:
Turning Risks into Opportunities for Student Support***

(Revised 2015)



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Preface

Students and their families are involved in important transitions every day and throughout the years of schooling. Interventions to enable successful transitions make a significant difference in how motivationally ready and able youngsters are to benefit from schooling.

Transitional failure can be viewed as stemming from factors related to the environment, person, or both. For example, school systems and individual schools are quite variable in the degree to which they are prepared to address the transitional needs of highly mobile students, recent immigrants and other newcomers. Thus, some new students enter friendly and inviting settings; others encounter settings are nonaccommodating or even hostile. And, of course, newcomers vary in terms of their capability and motivation with respect to psychological transition into new settings (e.g., some did not want to move, some are shy, some are uninterested in learning new ways).

Planning and implementing programs that support transitions for student, family, and staff provide an opportunity for school support staff to take a leadership role. This encompasses program development and raising awareness about the benefits of coordinating programs for prevention and interventions designed to address transition problems.

This introductory packet is designed to provide frameworks and practice tools for addressing transitions. When seen as a part of a comprehensive component for learning support, the potential risks stemming from transitions become opportunities to enhance learning support. Samples of tools, model programs, and evidence based interventions are provided as a way to stimulate thinking on how to maximize the opportunities of key transitions. In-depth resources are suggested for working on specific transitions.

As always, we are eager to hear from practitioners and policy makers on successes and challenges in providing mental health in schools so we can share the lessons learned with others.

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I. Addressing Transitions Is Critical to the Success of Students & Schools

- A. Supports for Transitions
- B. Change Can Disrupt or Promote Growth
- C. Interventions to Support Transitions: State of the Art
- D. General Facets and Intervention Tasks Related to Support for Transitions
- E. Mapping Transition Programs at a School
- F. Support for Transitions: A Self-Study Survey

A five year old begins kindergarten.

A six year old arrives early to the playground to wait for school to start.

A seven year old spends recess and lunch on the bench to prevent fights

An eight year old has “nothing to do” after school

A ten year old moves from elementary to middle school

An eleven year old is referred for summer school

A twelve year old moves mid year and changes school

A thirteen year old arrives from another country and enrolls in school

A special education student returns to a regular education class

A seventeen year old weighs decisions about college or work

A new teacher is hired

What do all of these transitions related to school have in common?

What role can schools play in addressing these transitions?

These and related questions are the focus of this introductory packet.



I. Addressing Transitions Is Critical to the Success of Students & Schools

A. Supports for Transitions

From: *Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System* (Chapter 5) – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/book/book.pdf>

Transitions are critical times; addressing transitions present opportunities to prevent problems and enable learning.

Starting school, changing schools, moving to the next grade level, encountering hassles before and after school, during lunch – students (and their families) are confronted with a variety of transitions every day and throughout each year of schooling. Transition stressors can be barriers to school adjustment and thus learning and teaching; they also can exacerbate other factors that interfere with learning at school. Such stressors can lead students and their families, especially those who are particularly vulnerable, to behave in counterproductive ways and can have life-shaping consequences. Transitional problems can be viewed as stemming from factors related to the environment, person, or both.

Many schools pay too little attention to providing supports for transitions. When this is the case, opportunities are missed for promoting healthy development, addressing barriers to learning, and preventing learning, behavior, and emotional problems.

A comprehensive approach to providing transition supports requires interventions within classrooms and school-wide and among schools sending and receiving students (see Exhibit 1). The activity overlaps the other five intervention arenas of a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports. The immediate goals are to prevent and address transition problems. In addition, transition periods provide opportunities to promote healthy development, enhance safety, reduce alienation, increase positive attitudes and readiness skills for schooling, address systemic and personal barriers to learning and teaching, and (re)engage disconnected students and families.

Exhibit 1

Key Transition Concerns and Examples of Supports for Transitions

Starting school and arriving new – new students and their families, new staff, volunteers, visitors (Examples: comprehensive orientations, welcoming signs, materials, and initial receptions; social and emotional supports including peer buddy programs; accommodating special concerns of those from other countries and those arriving after periods of hospitalization)

- **Daily transitions** -- before school, changing classes, breaks, lunch, afterschool (Examples: preventing problems by ensuring positive supervision and safety; providing attractive recreational, enrichment, and academic support activities; using problems that arise as teachable moments for enhancing social-emotional development)
- **Summer or intersession** (Examples: catch-up, recreation, enrichment programs, service and workplace opportunities)

Matriculation – grade-to-grade – new classrooms, new teachers; elementary to middle school; middle to high school; in and out of special education programs; school-to-career/higher education transition (Examples: information; academic, vocational, and social-emotional counseling and related supports; pathway and articulation strategies; mentor programs; programs to support moving to post school living and work)

Note: All this calls for broad involvement of stakeholders (e.g., students, staff, home, police, faith groups, recreation, business, higher education) and related capacity building.

Reports of early outcomes note reductions in tardies, vandalism, and violence at school and in the neighborhood. Over time, transition programs reduce school avoidance and dropouts, as well as enhancing school adjustment and increasing the number who make successful transitions to higher education and post school living and work. And, initial studies of programs for transition in and out of special education suggest the interventions can enhance students' attitudes about school and self and can improve their academic performance. It also is likely that transition supports add to perceptions of a caring school climate; this can play a significant role in a family's decision about staying or changing schools.

FRAMING AND DESIGNING SUPPORTS FOR TRANSITIONS

Exhibit 2 provides a guide for school improvement planning related to developing a comprehensive approach for addressing transition concerns.

Exhibit 2

Prototype Framework for Addressing Transition Concerns*

	Subsystem for Enhancing Development and Preventing Problems	Subsystem for Immediately Addressing Problems	Subsystem for Addressing Continuing Problems
Starting school & arriving new			
Matriculation Concerns			
Daily Transitions			
Summer or intersessions			

*Transition planning focuses on addressing concerns (a) in classrooms, (b) school-wide, (c) by a network of schools (e.g., a high school and its feeder pattern), and (d) in collaboration with the community.

While the nature and scope of transitions vary, there are common features in planning and implementing transition supports. As with every intervention, considerations about time, space, materials, and competence arise at every step of the way. Multi-year strategic development requires gap analyses and priority setting. And, as with all student and learning supports, the work is strengthened when there is broad involvement of stakeholders in planning for transitions and being responsible for effective implementation (e.g., students, staff, home; representatives from the police, faith groups, recreation, businesses, higher education, etc.). Given the substantial overlap involved in providing supports for transitions, coalescing resources from school, family, friends, peers, and community can enhance school capacity to handle the variety of transition concerns confronting students and their families and enhance cost-effectiveness. Garnering the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders enlarges the pool of potential volunteers.

WHAT ARE PRIORITIES IN ENHANCING SUPPORTS FOR TRANSITIONS?

In establishing priorities for system development, the emphasis is on strengthening the most important interventions and filling the most critical gaps. What follows are examples commonly identified as priorities for improving supports for transitions. For more specific examples, see the self-study survey at the end of this section of the packet.

Focus on Students Starting School and Newcomers

School systems and individual schools are quite variable in the degree to which they are prepared to address transitional needs. And, of course, newcomers vary in terms of their capability and motivation with respect to transitioning into new settings. As a result, a newcomer may perceive a setting positively (e.g., friendly, inviting, helpful) or negatively (e.g., unwelcoming or even hostile, nonaccommodating). Schools can reduce learning, behavior, and emotional problems by prioritizing strategies for addressing newcomers' transitional needs and enhancing their positive perceptions.

Welcoming and Social Support for Everyone. Many schools are trying to enhance a positive school "climate." A good place to start is by enhancing welcoming and social supports for all newcomers. This includes using the first weeks after arrival as a time to monitor and follow-up with personalized supports (e.g., social-emotional, academic, job-related) for those having difficulty adjusting to the new situation.

Particular attention must be given to addressing the complex transitional needs of highly mobile students and recent immigrants. The greater the numbers and rate of student and staff mobility and of families arriving from other countries, the greater the priority for pursuing strategies to enhance welcoming and social support.

A positive welcome is desirable at each initial encounter between school staff and a new student and family, a new colleague, and all visitors. Each point of contact represents an opportunity and a challenge to positively assimilate newcomers into the school – welcoming and orienting them, linking them with appropriate social supports, assisting them to make successful transitions. It is risky business for a school not to have programs that fully orient new students, family, and staff, connect them with social supports (e.g., peer buddies, mentors), orchestrate their entrance into ongoing groups and activities, and so forth (see the Center's resource entitled: *What Schools Can Do to Welcome and Meet the Needs of All Students and Families* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/welcomeguide.htm>).

Immediately Addressing Adjustment Problems to the New Setting. Every school needs early warning and response procedures that

- quickly identifies any new student, family, or staff who is having adjustment problems
- provides supports that aid those with minor adjustment problems
- initiates special assistance when necessary to those who have major adjustment problems

Such supports attend to both motivation and capability concerns.

Daily Transitions

Many schools have significant problems with tardies, bullying, substance abuse, and other forms of out-of-classroom behavior that contribute to poor student performance and a negative school climate. To prevent such problems, a common priority is to focus on strategies to address before, during, and after school transitions. During such transitions, the aims are to ensure positive school-wide supervision and safety, increase the range of attractive recreational, enrichment, and academic support activities, and enhance social-emotional development.

With specific respect to social-emotional development, every school has goals that emphasize a desire to enhance students' personal and social functioning. Some schools pursue these goals through curriculum-based approaches to promote social-emotional learning and incorporate character education. Some have programs that pair students with mentors or engage students in helping peers or encourage participation in "service learning" activity, and so forth. Daily transitions provide natural opportunities to use various events as teachable moments and for following-up in personalized ways to enhance social-emotional development.

Enhancing Before, During, and After School Recreation, Academic Support, & Enrichment, Programs. Well-designed and structured recreation and enrichment activities are basic elements in preventing problems and encouraging proactive behavior. Offered before school, they lure students to the campus early and thus reduce tardies. Offered at lunch, they can reduce the incidence of harassment and other negative interactions. After school, they provide alternatives to antisocial interactions in the community, and paired with positive opportunities for enriched and personalized academic support, they offer renewed hope for those who have learning problems.

School-wide Supervision and Follow-up Focused on Social-Emotional Development. Unstructured times at school are “dangerous,” especially for vulnerable students. Recess and lunch often result in office referrals for behavior problems and calls home expressing concern over inappropriate social and interpersonal behaviors. These are times when social groups (including gangs) gather together and provoke or intimidate others. When problems arise outside the classroom, those monitoring the situation have natural opportunities to use events as a teachable moment for personalized social-emotional learning. And, as feasible, they can arrange for follow-ups that deepen the learning.

Summer or Intersession Programs

Research findings stress that student's skills and knowledge often deteriorate when students are not in school for significant periods of time (summer, intersessions). This is a particular concern with students from low-income families and thus might be a high priority in schools enrolling students from such families.

Addressing the problem requires enhancing school and community opportunities for maintaining and increasing abilities and positive motivation and enabling struggling students to catch-up. This calls for approaches that are designed to provide students with well-rounded experiences that look and feel different from the usual school day. Teachers and community collaborators need to ensure activities are personalized, emphasize whole-child development, and involve not only academic learning, but also arts, recreation, sports, and a range of other enrichment opportunities, including service and workplace experiences. These are particularly valuable times for schools to collaborate with libraries, parks and recreation, local facilities where service learning can take place, and local businesses that can provide jobs and internships.

Matriculation Concerns

Articulation Programs. Students frequently have significant difficulty making the transition from grade-to-grade and going from elementary to middle school or from middle to high school. Indeed, many “dropouts” occur during transitions to high school. Priorities here include

- providing all students with opportunities to prepare themselves psychologically for such changes
- identifying and intervening on behalf of any student having difficulty during the actual period of transition
- offering follow-up opportunities, as feasible, to support those moving to post school living and work.

Comparable interventions are useful in helping family members address articulation concerns.

Counseling. Schools are unlikely to ever have the type of student-counselor ratio that is advocated. Therefore, an early priority often is the recruitment, training, and supervision of interested personnel and volunteers/mentors to fill certain gaps (e.g., to provide basic information relevant to students’ academic and vocational futures). Such supports can free up counseling personnel to provide more social-emotional counseling and related supports to those in need.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

In reviewing school improvement plans, school staff need to ask:

- *How are new students and families welcomed and positively assimilated into the school?*
- *What is done when a student is not adjusting well to a new school or a new class?*
- *How are behavior problems minimized before and after school? at lunch?*
- *Do articulation and related counseling programs provide more than orienting information and simple skills?*

Schools must plan, develop, and maintain a focus on ways to address the variety of transition concerns confronting students, their families, new staff, and others who come to the school. As effective transition supports are implemented, the concerns become opportunities to enhance healthy development and address barriers to learning and teaching. And, they play a critical role in the emergence of a positive school climate.

For more specific examples of ways to enhance *Supports for Transitions*, see the self-study survey in Appendix C. (Also accessible at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/toolsforpractice/transitionssurvey.pdf>)

For Free and Easily Accessed Online Resources Related to *Supports for Transitions*

See our Center's Quick Find on
Transition Programs/Grade Articulation/Welcoming
> http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2101_01.htm

Also see related topics listed on the Quick Find menu
> <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/quicksearch.htm>

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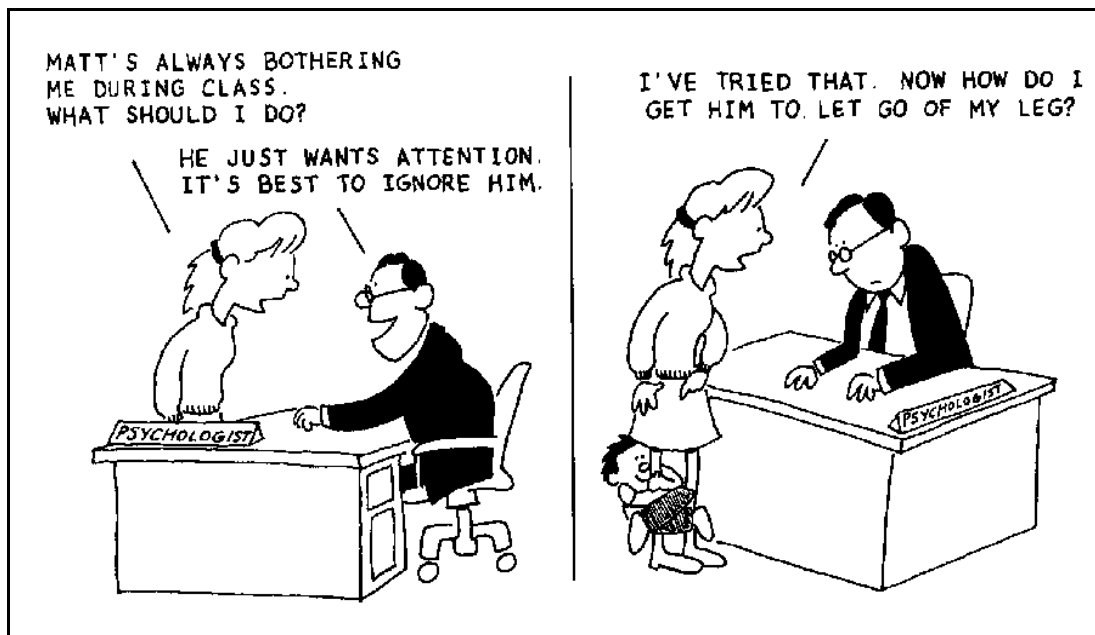
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I. Addressing Transitions Is Critical to the Success of Students & Schools

B. Change Can Disrupt or Promote Development and Learning

Research points to a variety of familial, cultural, job, social class, communication, and attitude as factors that hinder successful transitions. Barriers can be categorized as institutional, personal, or impersonal. Each type includes negative attitudes, lack of mechanisms and skills, or practical deterrents. For instance, *institutional* barriers encompass a lack of policy commitment to welcoming, inadequate resources (money, space, time), lack of interest or hostile attitudes on the part of staff, administration, and community and failure to establish and maintain necessary mechanisms and skill to ensure program success. *Impersonal* barriers include the neglect in addressing transitions, a rapid influx of new students that overwhelms the schools ability to respond, lack of resources in the school and home to smooth transitions. *Personal* barriers include attitudes on the part of individual staff that addressing transitions is not worth the effort and is not the responsibility of schools and acquired negative attitudes of specific students and parents that the new school will be no better than the last one.

Some Excerpts from the Research Literature

From: **Student Mobility and Academic Achievement**, by R.W. Rumberger, **ERIC Digest** (2003)
(<http://www.ericdigests.org/2003-2/mobility.html>)

RESEARCH ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Numerous studies have examined the impact of mobility on several aspects of academic achievement: test scores, grades, retention, and high school completion. As with all research studies, there are limitations to what these studies tell us. Most important, because mobile students may have personal and family problems that contribute to their mobility, studies should take into account those prior characteristics in order to determine whether mobility itself is the cause of subsequent achievement and other problems in schools...

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

The answer to this question depends on how one views this phenomenon. Some mobility is viewed largely as a strategic activity initiated by students and their families to serve their own interests and educational preferences. And there may be little that can be done to prevent mobility when mobility is a result of families' decisions to change jobs or residences. In this case, the only response is perhaps to better inform students and parents about the possible problems that can result from changing schools and how to mitigate them. However, at least some mobility is neither strategic nor related to moving. Rather, both students and schools initiate student transfers in response to social as well as academic concerns...

CONCLUSION

Although a substantial body of research suggests that students may be affected psychologically, socially, and academically from changing schools, the impact of mobility depends on such factors as the number of school changes, when they occur, the reason for the changes, and the student's personal and family situation.

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From: **Academic Vulnerability and Resilience during the Transition to High School: The Role of Social Relationships and District Context** by A.G. Langenkamp. *Sociology of Education* (2010) vol. 83, 1-19. <http://soe.sagepub.com/content/83/1/1.abstract>

The transition to high school is a critical stage in students' academic trajectories and can be especially difficult for middle school students who struggle academically. Starting high school on a low academic track and with low academic performance often leads to dropping out of high school. This study investigates what might protect academically vulnerable students during the transition to high school by exploring the potential effects social relationships and changing context have on academic outcomes in high school. As students move from middle school to high school, their social relationships are transformed. The degree to which social relationships change is in part a function of the way school districts are organized. The results suggest that middle school social relationships are protective against low academic outcomes in the first year of high school, but not for low-achieving middle school students. In addition, a district context characterized by greater reconfiguration of peer social relationships is not associated with math course placement but protects against course failure, especially among low-achieving middle school students. These results suggest implications for the way districts organize students and how contexts of school transitions have the potential to provide resilience.

(cont.)

From: **Comprehensive support for peer relationships at secondary transition** by A. Keayab, J. Lang. & N. Frederickson (2015). *Educational Psychology in Practice: Theory, Research and Practice in Educational Psychology*, 31, 279-292.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02667363.2015.1052046?journalCode=cepp20>

Peer relationships represent a major source of concern to children transitioning to secondary school. They also offer a potentially important source of support to adjustment and academic progress. However, strategies to support peer relationships at secondary transition have received little attention in previous research. This semi-structured interview study obtained accounts of current practice from staff in a small but nationally representative sample of English secondary schools. A theoretical approach to thematic analysis indicated substantial use of evidence-based strategy types, while a complementary inductive analysis highlighted issues in work with parents. There were many similarities across schools in the content of their support for peer relations at transition, however important process differences were found between high and low support schools in the quality of strategy implementation. A framework is presented to support this aspect of educational psychologists' work with schools in promoting successful transition to secondary school.

I. Addressing Transitions Is Critical to the Success of Students & Schools

C. Intervening to Support Transitions: State of the Art

In order to succeed in their goals, schools find they must face up to the importance of establishing transition programs. Interventions to enable successful transitions can strengthen problem solving skills and enhance resilience. These interventions make a significant difference in how motivationally ready and able students are to benefit from schooling.

Combining research from various sources highlights the potential impact of a systematic focus on supporting transitions in schools.

- > Available evidence supports the positive impact of early childhood programs in preparing young children for school. The programs are associated with increases in academic performance and may even contribute to decreases in discipline problems in later school years.
- > There is enough evidence that before- and after-school programs keep kids safe and steer them away from crime, and some evidence suggesting they can improve academic performance.
- > Evaluations show that well-conceived and implemented programs can successfully ease students' transition between grades
- > Preliminary evidence suggests the promise of programs that provide welcoming and social support for children and families transitioning into a new school.
- > Programs that aid in the transition in and out of special education need better implementation and related evaluation.
- > The available reports do suggest such interventions will enhance students' attitudes about school and self and will improve their academic performance.
- > Finally, programs providing vocational training and career education are having an impact in terms of increasing school retention and graduation and show promise for successfully placing students in jobs following graduation.

As the above indicates, a beginning has been made, but there is much more that must be done. In this respect, it has been suggested that school improvement policies can only succeed if effective transition programs are developed and are fully integrated into a comprehensive learning support component at every school.

Note: These conclusions are based on a review of outcome based transition programs. This information is summarized in the Center's Technical Assistance Sampler "*A Sampling of Outcome Findings from Interventions Relevant to Addressing Barriers to Learning*," which can be accessed at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>.

I. Addressing Transitions Is Critical to the Success of Students & Schools

D. General Facets & Intervention Tasks Related to Support for Transitions

While the nature and scope of transitions vary, there are common features in planning and implementing interventions to support transitions. And, as with every intervention, considerations about time, space, materials, and competence arise at every step of the way.

Think in Terms of Three Overlapping Facets:

In planning and implementing each of the following facets, a major concern is addressing barriers that make it hard for students in transition to function effectively.

1. Broad-band practices (often designated universal approaches) to ensure support is in place for each identified transition where intervention is indicated.
2. Enhanced personalization to accommodate minor differences (watching for those having minor adjustment problems and providing just a bit more personalized assistance, e.g., aid in overcoming minor barriers to successful adjustment, a few more options to enable effective functioning and make participation more attractive).
3. Special assistance (identifying as early as feasible those who have not made an effective adjustment or who remain uninvolved due to major barriers, an intense lack of interest or negative attitudes, and/or lack of capability). This facet requires continued use of personalized approaches, as well as intensive outreach and special assistance.

Key Intervention Tasks

Each intervention facet encompasses four major intervention tasks:

1. Establishing a mechanism for prioritizing development, planning, implementation, and the ongoing evolution of the needed transition programs.
2. Developing specific strategies and activities related to each transition program (e.g., social supports, enhancing motivational readiness for involvement, capacity building)
3. Initiating each transition program
4. Ongoing maintenance and creative renewal of all programs designed to support transitions

Mapping Transition Programs at a School

As a school sets out to enhance the usefulness of education support programs designed to address barriers to learning, it helps to clarify what is in place as a basis for determining what needs to be done. Special attention must be paid to

- what is in place
- what needs improving
- what is missing

This provides a basis for resource analysis. Such analysis decides what is worth continuing as is, what is not worth continuing, how resources can be deployed to strengthen current activity, and what the priorities are for developing additional programs.

In the process, recommendations can be made about (a) what procedures are in place for enhancing resource usefulness and (b) how to improve coordination of resources and better integrate activity.

The following self-study survey provides a starting point for such efforts.

Each item is rated in terms of

- whether the intervention currently exists
- if so, whether it needs enhancement
- if it doesn't exist, whether it is something that should be established

Based on the self-study, staff, families, and communities are in a better position to establish priorities and plan and implement essential supports for transition. In doing so, the emphasis is not to establish another piecemeal “add-on” or special project. The point is to take another step in developing a sustainable, comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approach that addresses major barriers to students learning and teaching teaching effectively.

About the Self-Study Process to Enhance the Component for Addressing Barriers to Student Learning

This type of self-study is best done by teams.

However, it is *NOT* about having another meeting and/or getting through a task!

It is about moving on to better outcomes for students through

- working together to understand what is and what might be
- clarifying gaps, priorities, and next steps

Done right it can

- counter fragmentation and redundancy
- mobilize support and direction
- enhance linkages with other resources
- facilitate effective systemic change
- integrate all facets of systemic change and counter marginalization of the component to address barriers to student learning

A group of school staff (teachers, support staff, administrators) could use the items to discuss how the school currently addresses any or all of the areas of the component to address barriers (the enabling component). Members of a team initially might work separately in responding to survey items, but the real payoff comes from group discussions.

The items on a survey help to clarify

- what is currently being done and whether it is being done well and
- what else is desired.

This provides a basis for a discussion that

- analyzes whether certain activities should no longer be pursued (because they are not effective or not as high a priority as some others that are needed).
- decides about what resources can be redeployed to enhance current efforts that need embellishment
- identifies gaps with respect to important areas of need.
- establishes priorities, strategies, and timelines for filling gaps.

The discussion and subsequent analyses also provide a form of quality review.

Supports for Transitions

Students and their families are regularly confronted with a variety of transitions – changing schools, changing grades, encountering a range of other daily hassles and major life demands. Many of these can interfere with productive school involvement.

A comprehensive approach to providing transition supports requires interventions within classrooms and school-wide and among schools sending and receiving students. The immediate goals are to enhance success during transitions and prevent transition problems. In addition, transition periods provide opportunities to promote healthy development, reduce alienation and increase positive attitudes toward school and learning, address systemic and personal barriers to learning and teaching, and re-engage disconnected students and families.

The focus is on concerns related to

Starting school and newly arriving – students and their families, new staff, volunteers, visitors (e.g., comprehensive orientations, welcoming signs, materials, and initial receptions; social and emotional supports including peer buddy programs; accommodating special concerns of those from other countries and those arriving after periods of hospitalization)

Daily transitions -- before school, changing classes, breaks, lunch, afterschool (e.g., preventing problems by ensuring positive supervision and safety; providing attractive recreational, enrichment, and academic support activities; using problems that arise as teachable moments related to enhancing social-emotional development)

Summer or intersession (e.g., catch-up, recreation, enrichment programs, service and workplace opportunities)

Matriculation – grade-to-grade – new classrooms, new teachers; elementary to middle school; middle to high school; in and out of special education programs; school-to-career/higher education transition (e.g., information; academic, vocational, and social-emotional counseling and related supports; pathway and articulation strategies; mentor programs; programs to support moving to post school living and work)

The activity overlaps the other five intervention arenas of a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports in contributing to the degree to which youngsters benefit from schooling.

Intended outcomes include reducing alienation, enhancing readiness, motivation, and involvement in school and learning activities, and enhancing safety. Early outcomes that have been reported include reductions in tardies, vandalism and violence at school and in the neighborhood. Over time, articulation programs reduce school avoidance and dropouts, as well as enhancing school adjustment and increasing the number who make successful transitions to higher education and post school living and work. And, initial studies of programs for transition in and out of special education suggest the interventions can enhance students' attitudes about school and self and can improve their academic performance. It also is likely that transition supports add to perceptions of a caring school climate; this can play a significant role in a family's decision about staying or changing schools.

Supports for Transitions

Use the following ratings in responding to items 1-5.

DK = don't know; 1 = not yet; 2 = planned; 3 = just recently initiated; 4 = has been functional for a while; 5 = well institutionalized (well established with a commitment to maintenance)

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| 1. Is there a stated policy for enhancing Supports for Transitions? | DK 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. Is there a designated leader or leaders for enhancing Supports for Transitions? | DK 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. Do personnel involved in enhancing Supports for Transitions meet regularly as a workgroup to evaluate current status and plan next steps? | DK 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. Is there a written plan for capacity building related to enhancing Supports for Transitions? | DK 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. Are there written descriptions available to give all stakeholders regarding current Supports for Transitions? | DK 1 2 3 4 5 |

Use the following ratings in responding to the next items.

DK = don't know

1 = hardly ever effective

2 = effective about 25 % of the time

3 = effective about half the time

4 = effective about 75% of the time

5 = almost always effective

With respect to enhancing Supports for Transitions, how effective are each of the following:

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| >current policy | DK 1 2 3 4 5 |
| >designated leadership | DK 1 2 3 4 5 |
| >workgroup monitoring and planning of next steps | DK 1 2 3 4 5 |
| >capacity building efforts | DK 1 2 3 4 5 |

Supports for Transitions (cont.)

Indicate all items that apply.

I. Starting School & Newly Arriving

	Yes	Yes but more of this is needed	No	If no, is this something you want?
A. Supportive Welcoming				
1. Are there welcoming materials?	___	___	___	___
2. Are there welcome signs?	___	___	___	___
3. Are welcoming information materials used?	___	___	___	___
4. Is a special welcoming booklet used?	___	___	___	___
5. Are materials translated into appropriate languages?	___	___	___	___
6. Is advanced technology used as an aid (e.g., a video or computerized introduction to the school and staff)?	___	___	___	___
B. Orientation and Follow-up "Induction"				
1. Are there orientations?	___	___	___	___
2. Are there introductory tours?	___	___	___	___
3. Are introductory presentations made?	___	___	___	___
4. Are new arrivals introduced to special people such as the principal and teachers?	___	___	___	___
5. Are special events used to welcome recent arrivals?	___	___	___	___
6. Are different languages accommodated?	___	___	___	___
C. Is there special assistance for those who need help registering?	___	___	___	___
D. Social Supports				
1. Are social support strategies used?	___	___	___	___
2. Are peer buddies assigned?	___	___	___	___
3. Are peer parents assigned?	___	___	___	___
4. Are special invitations used to encourage family involvement?	___	___	___	___
5. Are special invitations used to encourage students to join in activities?	___	___	___	___
6. Are advocates available when new arrivals need them?	___	___	___	___
E. Other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___

II. Daily Transitions

Which of the following are available

1. safe routes to school assistance	___	___	___	___
2. before school supervised recreation opportunities	___	___	___	___
3. subsidized breakfast/lunch	___	___	___	___
4. lunchtime				
>supervised recreation opportunities	___	___	___	___
>interest groups (e.g., music, drama, career)	___	___	___	___
>service clubs	___	___	___	___
5. afterschool				
>supervised recreation opportunities	___	___	___	___
>interest groups (e.g., music, drama, career)	___	___	___	___
>service clubs	___	___	___	___
>sports	___	___	___	___
>drill team	___	___	___	___
>organized youth programs ("Y," scouts)	___	___	___	___

Supports for Transitions (cont.)

	Yes	Yes but more of this is needed	No	If no, is this something you want?
6. academic support in the form of				
>tutors	_____	_____	_____	_____
>homework club	_____	_____	_____	_____
>study hall	_____	_____	_____	_____
>homework phone line	_____	_____	_____	_____
>email and web assistance	_____	_____	_____	_____
>homework center	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. supervision and support for moving from one campus location to another	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. other (specify) _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

III. Summer and Intersessions

Which of the following programs are offered during
vacations and/or intersessions?

1. academic support	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. recreation	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. formal enrichment opportunities	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. youth groups	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. sports	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. student and family special assistance	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. service opportunities	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. workplace opportunities	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. other (specify) _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

IV. Matriculations

A. Grade-to-grade and Program-to-program Articulation

Which of the following transition programs are in use?

1. Are orientations to the new situation provided?	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Is transition counseling provided?	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Are students taken on "warm-up" visits?	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Are "survival" skills taught?	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Is the new setting primed to accommodate the individual's needs?	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Is there an early warning and support system for students having problems adjusting?	_____	_____	_____	_____

B. Transitions to Higher Education/Career

Which of the following are used to facilitate transition
to higher education and post school living?

1. vocational counseling	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. college counseling	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. a mentoring program	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. college prep courses and related activity	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. job training	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. job opportunities on campus	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. a work-study program	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. life skills counseling	_____	_____	_____	_____

C. Other? (specify) _____

_____	_____	_____	_____
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Supports for Transitions (cont.)

V. Capacity Building to Enhance Support for Transitions

	Yes	Yes but more of this is needed	No	If no, is this something you want?
A. Are resources budgeted to enhance supports for transitions?	_____	_____	_____	_____
B. Are steps taken to enhance broad stakeholder involvement in transition activity?	_____	_____	_____	_____
C. Is there ongoing personnel preparation related to supports for transitions for				
1. teachers?	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. student and learning supports staff?	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. administrators?	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. office staff?	_____	_____	_____	_____
D. Is there an ongoing focus on preparing peer buddies?	_____	_____	_____	_____
E. Which of the following topics are covered in educating staff and other key stakeholders?				
1. ensuring successful transitions				
>before school	_____	_____	_____	_____
>after school	_____	_____	_____	_____
>during school	_____	_____	_____	_____
>for those having problems adjusting	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. developing systematic social supports for students, families, and staff	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. creating a psychological sense of community	_____	_____	_____	_____
F. Other (specify) _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Indicate below other things you want the school to do in providing support for transitions.

Indicate below other ways the school provides supports for transitions.

Note: Other matters relevant to *Supports for Transitions* are included in the other self-study surveys.

Additional Self-study Surveys

The Support for Transitions survey is one of a set designed to aid school staff as they try to map and analyze their current programs, services, and systems with a view to developing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable approach to addressing barriers to learning.

In addition to a *General Overview of Student/Learning Supports Activities, Processes, Mechanisms*, there are self-study surveys to help think about ways to address barriers to student learning by enhancing

- *Classroom-based Approaches to Enable and Re-engage Students in Classroom Learning*
- *Crisis Assistance and Prevention*
- *Supports for Transitions*
- *Home Involvement, Engagement, and Re-engagement in Schooling*
- *Community Outreach and Collaborative Engagement*
- *Student and Family Assistance*

II. Key Transitions and Related Intervention Strategies

**For our purposes here,
we will focus on the following key transitions:**

- A. Starting School: Transitions to Kindergarten**
- B. Daily Transitions**
 - >Before School**
 - >Recess and Lunch**
 - >After School**
- C. Yearly Transitions**
 - >A New School Year; a New Class; a New Building**
 - >Vacations and Intersession**
- D. Mobility – Moving, Moving, Moving**
 - >Impact of Student Mobility on Learning & Behavior**
 - >Special Concerns of Students from Other Countries**
- E. From High School to Higher Education and Employment**
- F. Special Needs Students and Transitions**

II. Key Transitions and Related Intervention Strategies



Students, families, and school staff experience a great many transition concerns. Starting school is certainly a major one. So are the moves from grade to grade and especially from elementary to middle school and from middle to high school. Although many students make these transitions with little apparent difficulty, it is evident that significant numbers do not. Any youngster may experience academic, social, and emotional challenges in negotiating transitions. And, failure to cope effectively with such challenges can have life-shaping consequences. For example, dropouts (pushouts?) occur with too great a frequency in the transitions between middle and high school and even between elementary and middle school. Support for transitions calls for well-designed transition interventions.

For a range of evidence based programs to support the transitions, again see the Center Technical Assistance Sampler entitled: *A Sampling of Outcome Findings from Interventions Relevant to Addressing Barriers to Learning*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

II. Key Transitions and Related Intervention Strategies

A. Starting School: Transitions to Kindergarten

Starting kindergarten is a major event for most children and often for their parents as well. For many, the transition goes smoothly and the child rapidly gets immersed in the excitement of the daily interactions and learning opportunities and even finds the experience to be fun. This seems especially so for those who have been in day care programs and experienced them as positive. Some youngsters and their families, however, experience the transition as an extremely stressful and anxiety generating time. This can be especially the case for those who have not gone through the process of separating from parents.

“Starting school is a major milestone for children and parents. School is a place away from home where a child will have some of his or her greatest challenges, successes, failures, and embarrassments. Because school is beyond the control of parents, it can be stressful for both the child and the parents....”

From: American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Fact Sheet: *Starting School* (March 2002)

<http://www.aacap.org/publications/factsfam/82.htm>

Supporting Development and Learning During the Transition to Kindergarten: A Challenge and an Opportunity

The Harvard Family Research Project provides a nice overview of research and practice. Following are excerpts from a 2002 report entitled: *The Transition to Kindergarten: A Review of Current Research and Promising Practices to Involve Families* (by M. Bohan-Baker & P. Little – online at <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/fine/resources/research/bohan.html>).

The report stresses that transition research indicates “schools need to take a more proactive approach to involving and engaging families prior to the start of school.” Specifically, it is suggested that

. . . schools need to base transition practices on three interrelated principles:

1. Reaching out. Schools reach out and link with families and preschools in order to establish relationships and engage in two-way communication about how to establish effective transition practices.

2. Reaching backward in time. Schools establish links particularly with families before the first day of school.

3. Reaching with appropriate intensity. Schools develop a range of practices with varying intensity (i.e., low intensity-flyers or pamphlets, high intensity-personal contacts or home visits).

Further, transition activities implemented prior to kindergarten entry must be sustained once the child enters school in order to ensure continuity...

While specific approaches vary across communities, some promising practices to "reach out" and "reach back" to families beyond talking to parents once their child enters kindergarten are listed below...

Periodic contact with families of preschoolers, either via a telephone call or face-to-face, to begin sharing information about the child and their routines, and their school setting

(cont.)

Periodic contact with the children themselves to begin to develop a relationship prior to school entry

Invitations to visit the kindergarten in the spring of the child's preschool year

Preparation and dissemination of home-learning activities, including providing summer book lists and other literacy activities for the summer months prior to kindergarten entry

Family meetings prior to the onset of kindergarten to discuss teacher expectations

Partner with local parent-teacher association to inform parents how they can be involved in their child's kindergarten setting and connect new families with families currently enrolled in the school

Dissemination of information to parents on the transition to kindergarten, including kindergarten registration guidelines, kindergarten options in the community, information on specific schools once placements have been made, and health and nutrition information to ensure that children enter school healthy

Home visits before and after children enter kindergarten

Support groups for parents as their children transition to kindergarten

Facilitate early registration for kindergarten so that families have time to prepare children for their new setting and so specific teachers can "reach back" to their prospective students well before the first day of school

In areas with a large percentage of limited English proficiency families, staff early care and education and kindergartens with bilingual teacher aides...

Some of the references from this article:

- Child Trends. (2000). *School readiness: Helping communities get children ready for school and schools ready for children*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Education Commission of the States. (2000). *Easing the transition to kindergarten*. Denver, CO: Author.
- Kagan, S. L., & Neuman, M. J. (1998). Lessons from three decades of transition research. *The Elementary School Journal*, 98(4). 365-379.
- Kraft-Sayre, M. E., & Pianta, R. C. (2000). *Enhancing the transition to kindergarten: Linking children, families, and schools*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, National Center for Early Development & Learning.
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- Ramey, C. T., & Ramey, S. L. (1999). *Beginning school for children at risk*. In *The Transition to Kindergarten*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.

***How might a school plan and implement the transition to kindergarten?
See the following discussion.***



PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

Why it Matters
and How to
Promote
Success



WINTER 2014



THE NATIONAL CENTER ON
Quality Teaching
and Learning



CHILDREN'S KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION EXPERIENCES ARE ESSENTIAL TO THEIR SCHOOL SUCCESS.

The transition to kindergarten is a time that presents changing demands, expectations, and supports for children and their families. When children experience discontinuities between preschool and kindergarten, they may be at greater risk for academic failure and social adjustment problems. Thus, building and implementing a seamless kindergarten transition can make a significant difference for children's early education experience.

WHY

IS A QUALITY TRANSITION IMPORTANT?

Multiple large-scale research studies have found that transition activities for children and families are associated with these gains in kindergarten: ^{i,ii,iii,iv,v,vi,vii}

- Reduced stress and higher ratings of social emotional competence at the beginning of the school year
- Improved academic growth and increased family involvement over the year
- Stronger benefits for children living in poverty



WHAT

DOES A QUALITY TRANSITION INVOLVE?

Evidence from research and the field suggests these key elements:

- Positive relationships between children, parents, and schools
- A transition team of Head Start and kindergarten administrators and teachers, parents, and community members
- Assessments, standards, and curriculum that align between preschool and kindergarten
- Joint professional development between preschool and kindergarten personnel
- Information and communication that is shared with parents and the community at large

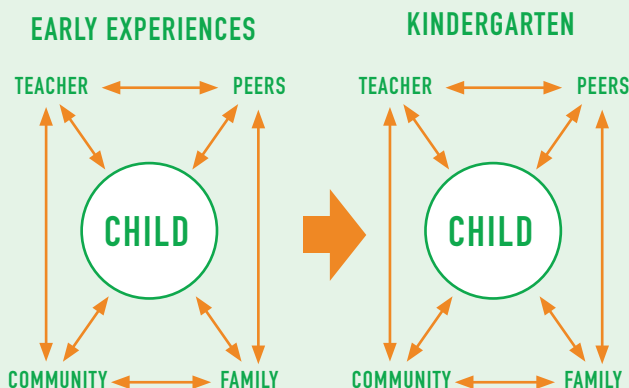
HOW

DO WE IMPROVE CHILDREN'S TRANSITION?

Educators can use these key principles: ^{viii}

- Approach transition collaboratively
- Involve all key stakeholders in the process
- Align children's experiences across systems (i.e., preschool and kindergarten classrooms)

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO TRANSITIONS



(Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000)



USING A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Successful kindergarten transitions are a result of supportive relationships that are focused on children's development—the relationships between schools, families, and preschool and kindergarten teachers and their classrooms.^{ix}

The child, family, school, peer, and community factors are interconnected^x and they are all influential in helping a child prepare for, and be successful in school. Effective transition practices involve reaching out to families and influential community members, with a strong sense of purpose, prior to the time a child actually moves into a new classroom.^{xi}

INVOLVING ALL KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Children benefit most when all parties involved in the process work together to support the transition. For example, improved kindergarten readiness^{xii,xiii} is associated with preschool teachers who communicate with kindergarten teachers about curricula, children's development, and children's educational needs. Also, when families participate in more transition experiences, their school involvement is higher over the kindergarten year, and this is a key indicator of children's long-term social and academic success.^{xiv,xv,xvi,xvii}

HELPFUL RESOURCES

ARTICLES

Ferguson, C., & Wood, L. (2005). Easing the transition from preK to kindergarten: What schools and families can do to address child readiness. National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools. Austin, TX. Retrieved from <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/rb/rb6-readiness.pdf>

Patton, C., & Wang, J. (2012). Ready for success: Creating collaborative and thoughtful transitions into kindergarten. Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE) Newsletter, 4(1). Retrieved January 17, 2014 from <http://www.hfrp.org/content/download/4287/116636/file/ReadyForSuccess.pdf>

BOOKS

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

Sullivan-Dudzic, L., Gears, D. K., & Leavell, K. (2010). Making a difference: 10 essential steps to building a preK-3 system. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

“ Making time to sit down with everyone at the table has made all the difference for our kids. They are coming to school ready to learn ...”

WHY

– Kindergarten Teacher

ALIGNING CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES ACROSS SYSTEMS

Aligned preschool and kindergarten experiences allow children to build on what they have learned and be prepared for what they will be learning next.^{xviii} The longer children are involved in a consistent and stable learning environment, including curricula and support services that are aligned, the more they benefit cognitively, academically, and socially.^{xix}

PRACTICAL GUIDES

Bowman, B. T., & Cottone, P. A. (2005). Transition: Change with continuity: A handbook for teachers. Chicago Public Schools Office of Early Childhood Education.

National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement & National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning. (2013). *Family engagement in transitions: Transition to kindergarten*. Retrieved January 17, 2014 from <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/transitions-kindergarten.pdf>

University of Pittsburgh, Office of Child Development. (2012). Ready Freddy: Pathways to Kindergarten Success. Retrieved from <http://www.readyfreddy.org/>

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Capistrano Unified School District. From kindergartener to kindergartener: "What's important for you to know." Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMf1mveot3I>

Head Start: National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning. Transitions from the children's perspective. Retrieved from <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/center/transition>

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- ^{xiii} Ahtola, A., Silinskas, G., Poikonen, P., Kontoniemi, M., Niemi, P., & Nurmi, J. (2011). Transition to formal schooling: Do transition practices matter for academic performance? *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 26, 295–302.
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<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/docs/transition-brief.pdf>



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WINTER 2014

Spotting Problems in the Transition to Kindergarten and Responding Quickly with the Least Intervention Needed

From: Head Start, An Office of the Administration for Children & Families,
Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC)

Accommodating All Children in the Early Childhood Classroom

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/Disabilities/Program%20Planning/Accessibility/AccommodatingALL.htm>

Accommodating a child with specific needs is a continual process that involves each child's collaborative team. Teaching staff can create an inclusive environment for children with special needs by implementing the following adaptations.

The activities and materials used in most early childhood classrooms are designed to meet the needs of many children with or without disabilities. When they do not meet the specific needs of a child, they can be adapted or expanded to accommodate that child's individual needs. The purpose of an adaptation is to assist children in compensating for intellectual, physical, or behavioral challenges. They allow children to use their current skills while promoting the acquisition of new skills. Adaptations can make the difference between a child merely being present in the class and a child being actively involved.

Developing adaptations and accommodations for a child with special needs is a continuous process that involves each child's collaborative team. The first step is to assess the child's abilities and the environment where the child will be spending time. Once the goals and objectives are identified and expectations for the child's participation in that environment are established, the team selects or creates adaptations and accommodations that address those needs. Once implemented, their effectiveness should be assessed on an ongoing basis and revised, as needed.

To meet the specific needs of a child, changes may need to be made in one or more of the following instructional conditions. Remember, when the child can participate in an activity, as it is, no changes need to be made.

- Instructional groupings or arrangements – For any given activity there are a number of instructional arrangements from which to choose: large groups, small groups, cooperative learning groups, peer partners, one-to-one instruction, and/or independent tasks.
- Lesson format - The format of a lesson may be altered to meet the needs of a child by including more opportunities for whole class discussions, games, role playing, activity-based lessons, experiential lessons, demonstrations, and/or thematic lesson organization.
- Teaching strategies - A change in teaching strategies can influence a child's ability to participate. Examples include: simplifying directions, addition of visual information, use of concrete materials/examples, sequencing learning tasks from easy to hard, repeated opportunities to practice skills, changes in the schedule of reinforcement, elaboration or shaping of responses, verbal prompts and/or direct physical assistance.
- Curricular goals and learning outcomes - To match the needs of a child within the context of an activity, it may be appropriate to individualize the learning objectives. This can often be accomplished using the same activities and materials. If children are working on a classification concept by sorting blocks, a child with a disability could participate in the same activity but focus on reaching, grasping, and releasing skills.
- Adaptations to the method for responding - Sometimes children may understand a concept yet need

an adaptation in the way they demonstrate that knowledge. Use of augmentative communication systems, eye gaze, and demonstrations may better allow a child to demonstrate his/her skills.

- Environmental conditions - The environmental arrangement is an important aspect of any early childhood setting. Changes in lighting, noise level, visual and auditory input, physical arrangement of the room or equipment, and accessibility of materials are important considerations.
- Modification of instructional materials - It is sometimes necessary to physically adapt instructional or play materials to facilitate a child's participation. Materials can be physically adapted by increasing: stability (Dycem™ or Velcro™ on materials), ease of handling (adding handles, making materials larger), accessibility (developing a hand splint to hold materials, attaching an elastic cord or string to objects so they can be easily moved or retrieved), visual clarity or distinctiveness (adding contrast or specialized lighting), or size.
- Level of personal assistance - A child's need for assistance may range from periodic spot checks to close continuous supervision. Assistance may vary from day to day and be provided by adults or peers.
- An alternative activity - This curricular adaptation should be used as a last choice when the above conditions cannot be used to meet a child's needs.

Resources:

Curricular Adaptations: Accommodating the Instructional Needs of Diverse Learners in the Context of General Education. (1993). Kansas State Board of Education.

Thompson, B., Wickham, D., Wegner, J., Ault, M., Shanks, P., & Reinertson, B. (1993). Handbook for the inclusion of young children with severe disabilities. Lawrence, KS: Learner Managed Designs, Inc.

Villa, R. A. & Thousand, J.S., Ed. (1995). Creating An Inclusive School. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, VA.

Accommodating All Children in the Early Childhood Classroom. University of Kansas, Circle of Inclusion Project. 2002. English.

There are a number of Center resources that can be helpful in specifically planning programs for the transition to kindergarten. Begin by going to our website at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>, locate the Quick Find search and click on the menu topic:

Early Childhood Development

This Quick Find provides ready access to the following Center documents:

- > *Early Development and Learning from the perspective of Addressing Barriers*
(an Introductory Packet)
- > *Early Development and School Readiness from the Perspective of Addressing Barriers to Learning* (a Center Brief)

It also provides direct links to a host of other relevant centers and documents.

II. Key Transitions and Related Intervention Strategies (cont.)

B. Daily Transitions

Throughout a school day there are many transition times when students need support (e.g., before school, during recess and lunch, after school).

Some of these, such as after school, have received increasing attention.

Other daily transition times and places go relatively unattended to despite the need and opportunities they provide for promoting healthy development and addressing barriers to development and learning.

1. Before School

Before school experiences differ for students.

For some, it is a long school bus ride to school.

Others leave homes which have been unable to provide an adequate breakfast.

In some neighborhoods, students who walk to school report being bullied on the way. Some are challenged by gang members and exposed to extreme violence.

Arriving on the school grounds, many are confronted with further peer harassment.

Many arrive late.

Students who don't feel safe, haven't eaten, and/or come late are less likely to start the school day motivationally ready and able to benefit from classroom instruction. Indeed, they often appear uninterested and distracted. Moreover, such students are likely candidates for a cycle of events that leads to behavior, learning, and emotional problems and departure from school before high school graduation.. A survey of school policies, for example, indicates that most schools respond to tardies in punitive ways, with consequences becoming more and more severe as students move through secondary school. And, the research literature indicates that frequent tardies and absences are early indicators of "dropouts."

"...Principals are faced with a conundrum. They are continually under pressure to improve academic achievement and to be held accountable for their students' test scores. At the same time – while they understand the value and importance of nutrition, health, and physical activity as central to a student's growth and development – they are not encouraged nor are they rewarded for providing leadership in these areas. In effect, boards of education, legislators, and policy makers need to rework their policy priority and legislative mandates to ensure that principals receive a clear message that education is a holistic process and that nutrition and physical education must be central components of a school's program, and that they appreciate the inextricable link of a healthy student to student achievement..."

National Association of Elementary School Principals <http://www.naesp.org/>

Supporting Healthy Development and Learning Each Day Before School

One Principal noted: *“It seems that no matter how early I get here, there are students waiting for the school to open.”*

Some students arrive early to see friends; others are there because parents have early work schedules. Some students have eaten breakfast, some haven't. Some arrived on early buses. Some hope to finish homework assignments. Others look forward to before school clubs and sports.

Before school programs have a large and diverse set of advocates, programs, and funding sources. Stakeholders focusing on before school as a time for well-designed interventions include those concerned with child care, adolescent supervision, nutrition, fitness, and those interested in creating a welcoming and supportive school climate. Those concerned with students problems during this daily transition time include stakeholders (e.g., student support staff) who must deal with before school misbehavior, reducing tardies, and enhancing students' readiness to learn at school each day.

All these stakeholders need to work together to develop a multifaceted and cohesive set of before school activities.

Examples of Before School Programs that Schools Can Use to Address Transition Concerns

School Breakfast Programs

From: No Kid Hungry, Center for Best Practices –
<http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/school-breakfast/program-details>

The School Breakfast Program (SBP) operates in schools and residential child care institutions. At the federal level, it is administered by the USDA Food and Nutrition Services. State education agencies or agriculture departments typically administer the program at the state level, while local school food authorities operate it in schools. Established in 1966 as a pilot program, the SBP was permanently authorized in 1975.

The School Breakfast Program operates much like the National School Lunch Program. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the Federal poverty level are eligible for free meals; those from families with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals. USDA reimburses schools for breakfasts served. Reimbursement rates for school year July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015 are found here
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/NAPs14-15chart.pdf>.

Schools that qualify as “severe need” receive an additional \$0.30 for each free or reduced-price breakfast served. Reimbursable meals must meet federal nutrition standards. USDA recently updated these nutrition standards and these changes go into effect for school breakfast in the 2013-14 school year.

USDA/FNS School Breakfast Program Fact Sheet – <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/fact-sheet>

Alternative Breakfast Models

One of the most effective ways to significantly boost school breakfast participation is to make it part of the school day. Traditional school breakfast programs often operate too early for students to participate, particularly if bus or carpool schedules do not enable them to get there on time. Alternative models that have proven to be successful in expanding access to school breakfast are described below. Many schools operate a hybrid model that combines certain elements of the models described below.

Breakfast in the Classroom

Breakfast in the Classroom is a service delivery model where students eat breakfast in their classroom after the official start of the school day. Students or staff may deliver breakfasts to classrooms from the cafeteria via coolers or insulated rolling bags, or school nutrition staff can serve breakfast from mobile carts in the hallways. Breakfast in the Classroom typically takes 10 – 15 minutes and can happen during morning tasks such as attendance or it can be integrated with other instructional activities. Some schools encourage teachers to participate in the program and eat with their students.

Grab n' Go

Grab n' Go is a service delivery model where students pick up conveniently packaged breakfasts from mobile service carts in high traffic areas, such as hallways, entryways or cafeterias, when they arrive at school or between classes. Students can eat in the cafeteria, the classroom or elsewhere on school grounds. The Grab n' Go model is often used in middle and high schools because it is so flexible and can accommodate varying schedules and students who are on the move.

Second Chance Breakfast

Second Chance Breakfast refers to a meal service model where students eat breakfast during a break in the morning, often after first period or midway between breakfast and lunch. Schools can serve breakfast in the same manner as they would with traditional Grab n' Go breakfast. This model can be particularly effective for older students who may not be hungry first thing in the morning or may opt to hang out with friends. Second Chance Breakfast may be referred to by a variety of names, such as Breakfast After First Period, School Brunch or Mid-Morning Nutrition Break.

Breakfast Vending

Breakfast Vending allows students to access breakfast foods through vending machines. This model is most often implemented in high schools and vending machines are usually only available prior to the start of the school day.

For more information: USDA School Breakfast Expansion Strategies at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/expanding-your-school-breakfast-program>

Other Before School Social Support Programs

For many students, a school breakfast program is a time to be with friends. For all students schools need to provide opportunities for students to interact with each other in positive ways to build their social and emotional skills and to promote a sense of community in the school. Well-designed semi-structured before school activities enable students to connect with peers and staff in ways that promote social-emotional development and help address barriers to such development.

Even the school bus experience can be turned into an opportunity for positive social interaction and learning. The National Education Association has an analysis of the risks and opportunities that face students and bus drivers each day. They note: “Drivers do not have a classroom, but they do have a unique environment in which communication with the children they transport is both an educational issue and a health and safety issue.” Providing training for drivers, training students as mediators, providing learning enrichment activities on the bus are all ways to strengthen this often overlooked extended school setting.

Before School and Readiness to Learn Each Day

Minimally, playground aids and paraprofessionals should be provided with the training and resources to ensure that the first hour of school results in students who are ready to learn.

Some teachers enhance readiness by opening their classrooms early and inviting students to help set up and prepare for the school day.

More comprehensively, open libraries, homework rooms, access to supplies, computers, videos, enrichment activities, and other learning and practice opportunities can all send the message that the beginning of the school day is a good time to be at school and enables students readiness for formal classroom instruction.

An Example of Relevant Policy for Before School Programs

In 2001, the California legislature amended the After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program to become know as the *Before and After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program*.

<http://www.thechildrensinitiative.org/worddocs/aspfactsheetapr02.doc>

The before school program must operate for a minimum of one and one half hours per day. The program leaders work with the school principal and staff to integrate with the school's curriculum, instruction, and learning support activities. The program must consist to two components:

- (1) An educational and literacy component to provide tutoring or homework assistance.
- (2) An educational enrichment component, which may include but is not limited to recreation and prevention activities. Such activities might involve the arts, music, physical activity, health promotion, and general recreation; work preparation activities; community service learning; and other youth development activities based on student needs and interests.

Something Special for “At Risk” Students

Check & Connect is an example of a program that can be used before school to provide support for at risk students. It was developed for urban middle school students with learning and behavioral challenges and was designed to promote students’ engagement in school and to reduce and prevent dropping out. (See <http://ici.umn.edu/checkandconnect/model/default.html>)

The aim is to fuel the motivation and foster the development of life skills needed to overcome obstacles. The primary goal is to promote regular school participation and to keep education a salient issue for students, parents and teachers. A staff member is designated as responsible for facilitating a student’s connection with school and learning. The role can be characterized as a cross between a mentor, advocate, and coordinator of services. The monitor extends the school’s outreach services to the youth and family in an effort to better understand the circumstances affecting their connection to school and to persistently work with the youth and family to overcome barriers that have kept them estranged from school.

Key Facets of the program include:

- Relationship Building
- Routine monitoring
- Individualized and timely interventions
- Long term commitment
- Persistent Plus
- Problem Solving
- Affiliation with school and learning.

The focus is on prevention, with intensive interventions for students who manifest significant problems. Examples of elementary intensive interventions include calling the student and parents in the morning to be sure they are getting ready for school, helping students apply organizational skills, ensuring students access academic tutors. Examples of secondary intensive interventions include encouraging students and parent participation in transition planning, enhancing social/behavioral competence, negotiating with school staff alternatives to suspension and transfers.

II. Key transitions and related intervention strategies

B. Daily Transitions (cont.)

2. Recess and Lunch

Students and staff need a break, nutrition, exercise – Sounds simple and straightforward, but . . .

Unstructured times at school are “dangerous” for vulnerable students. Recess and lunch often result in referrals to the office for behavior problems, visits to the nurses office for scrapes, calls home to parents expressing concern over inappropriate social and interpersonal behaviors.

Recess

With respect to recess, such problems have led some to ask: “*Do we really need recess? Maybe we should just use the time for more instruction.*” Let’s see what the research says.

Excerpt from: ***School recess offers benefits to student well-being***
Stanford Report, February 11, 2015

A Stanford study shows that recess is a profoundly important part of the school day. Well-organized recess programs engage students in meaningful play and prepare them to learn once back in the classroom.

A high-quality recess program can help students feel more engaged, safer and positive about the school day, according to Stanford research.

In fact, recess can yield numerous benefits to an elementary school's overall climate, said Milbrey McLaughlin, the David Jacks Professor of Education and Public Policy, Emerita, founding director of Stanford's John W. Gardner Center, and a co-author of the journal article.

"Positive school climate has been linked to a host of favorable student outcomes, from attendance to achievement," the study noted.

In an interview, McLaughlin said, "Recess isn't normally considered part of school climate, and often is shortchanged in tight fiscal times, but our research shows that can be a critical contributor to positive school climate in low-income elementary schools."

McLaughlin's co-authors are Rebecca London (lead author), formerly of Stanford and now a researcher at UC Santa Cruz; Lisa Westrich, a former Stanford research and policy analyst; and Katie Stokes-Guinan, a former Stanford graduate student researcher.

Benefits of recess – A positive school climate has been linked to a host of favorable student outcomes, from attendance to achievement, according to the study. It includes four key elements for students – physical and emotional safety at school; positive relationships with peers and adults; support for learning; and an institutional environment that fosters school connectedness and engagement.

Excerpt from: *Is Recess a Frivolous Waste of Time with no Apparent Outcomes?* by Rhonda Clements (2007). Teachers College Record. (<http://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentID=13499>)

Is elementary school recess a frivolous waste of time, or is it a means to enhance the child's development? School policymakers need to broaden their thinking before reaching a conclusion...

When considering the emotional and social benefit of recess, policymakers should also remember that the schoolyard is a setting for increased group interaction, language development, and emotional growth. This is especially true when the child plays with peers of different ethnic backgrounds, physical abilities, and age groups. Unlike the classroom setting that organizes children according to the same chronological age for learning, the schoolyard allows mixed age groups to interact in a social context. Children can develop an appreciation and tolerance for each other's differences by sharing cultural games, hand-clapping chants, and other ethnic understandings. Small group games can also foster a child's self-control, perseverance, and feelings of loyalty.

In addition, recess serves as an outlet for releasing stress. Young children regularly experience disappointment, gloominess, and dejection. The young child's ability to cope with these feelings is less developed than the adult who has learned to manage feelings of frustrations by resorting to vigorous workout sessions, or seeking advice from other adult friends or colleagues...

Lunch

Lunch periods are controversial and often unruly times at schools. What should kids be eating? What are appropriate activities? Who supervises?

The tendency has been for the adults to argue among themselves about such matters. Some, however, have suggested that student voices need to be heard and that students need to be part of the resolution of the controversies and problems. Student planning groups, student leaders, student monitors – all can provide for greater involvement of youngsters in both making decisions and implementing solutions. This can reduce student reactivity to decisions and enhance motivation and a positive school climate and sense of community.

The need is to work with students and other stakeholders to design a lunch hour that is a good transition between morning and afternoon instruction. And, of course, both the process of planning and effective implementation of a positive approach can be important learning experiences in and of themselves. Student support staff can play an important role in facilitating the process and ensuring that implementation of programs is done in an integrated and effective manner.

Whatever the process, here are some major matters that need to be addressed:

What's to Eat? A major controversy related to school lunches is what food should be available. Nutritionists link the rise in childhood obesity to the fat content of meals served to students; school boards, parents, and students argue about fast food on campus; soft drink companies pay schools to have their product accessible to students.

Why is lunch so early? Why does it take so long to get food? In some large schools, staggered lunch hours begin at 10:30 in the morning. In many schools, students complain about the time it takes to get their food.

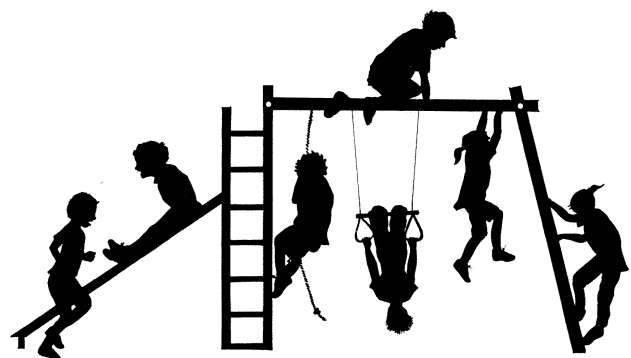
Lunchtime Activities – what's available? Who Supervises? In some schools, the range of recreational equipment and options available during recess and lunch is too limited. Older students particularly want a range of options including sports and recreation, social activities (e.g., clubs and lunch time dances), and open facilities (e.g., the library, computer and music rooms). All this requires expanded supervision beyond teachers, administrators, playground aids and paraprofessionals; it means outreaching to bring in community resources (including volunteers) and teaching and using students who show leadership (e.g., teaching skills in conflict resolution and mediation and using them as recreation leaders, conflict mediators, and playground peace keepers).

What are the alternatives to punishment during lunch and recess? Students who misbehave often are asked to pick up papers, go to and stay in the office or the in-school detention room, and so forth. In contrast to such punitive actions, some schools are exploring ways to work with such students to enhance their engagement in learning and their motivation to do their best at school. Examples of interventions intended to enhance (rather than reduce) motivation for behaving and learning include mentoring, service learning activities, assisting in the cafeteria and on the playground, etc..

How can predictable problems be anticipated and prevented and school safety enhanced? First and foremost, it is essential to do something about those school “hangouts” that are hard to supervise places on the school campus. Bathrooms, locker rooms, the far side of the school yard, behind the last building, at the fence, etc., etc., etc. Everyone knows where the supervision is the lightest and where students looking for trouble will gravitate.

Another major concern is what to do with social groups (including gangs) that form during the lunch and recess and provoke or intimidate others.

A third concern is how to provide special assistance to individual students who need more support and guidance during recess and lunch.

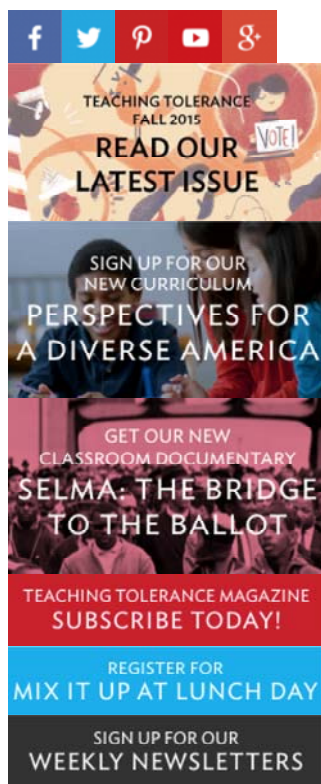




TEACHING TOLERANCE

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Six Steps to Mixing It Up at Lunch

Here are the essential six steps for Mix It Up at Lunch Day:

1. [Create a planning group](#)
2. [Determine a lunchtime activity](#)
3. [Make it festive](#)
4. [Publicize the event](#)
5. [Capture the day with pictures and video](#)
6. [Evaluate, debrief and follow up](#)

1. Create a planning group

You cannot – and should not – plan a Mix It Up at Lunch campaign alone. The “mixing up” should begin at the outset. Create a diverse group, not just the usual players. And include others – administrators, counselors, cafeteria workers, custodians, parents and community members – in the plan. The most effective Mix It Up campaigns bring supportive adults together with student leaders.

At the elementary level:

- Two or three teachers from varied grade levels can serve as the planning group.
- Assign tasks to various grade levels. Older students can write conversation starters while younger students make decorations.

At the middle and high school level:

- Enlist an existing group to lead the planning. There are obvious choices, such as a diversity group, student government or service club. Also consider less-obvious choices, such as foreign language clubs, athletic teams or arts groups.
- Who has influence at your school? Is there a particular teacher, coach or student leader who can help build momentum for the event? Get that person on board.

Download a [planning checklist](#) for Mix It Up at Lunch.

2. Determine a lunchtime activity

Keep it simple, especially if this is your first year, by staying focused on the two main goals of Mix It Up:

- Get students to sit with someone new at lunch; and
- Engage them in positive conversations.

The focus is to help students make connections across boundaries. “Aha!” moments are a sign of success, when students who don’t normally interact say, “Oh, you like that, too!”

Mixing It Up

- Hand out something to each student – color-coded cards, small candies, playing cards, alphabet letters, shapes or symbols – as lunch begins.
- Decorate tables with matching colors or symbols, so students know where to go.

Conversation starters

- Have starter questions on the tables, either posted or on slips of paper. Offer enough questions to avoid conversational lulls.
- Conversation prompts should be open-ended, not yes-or-no questions. “What’s your favorite ... (song, movie, children’s book, Harry Potter character, school subject, sport, TV show, restaurant, etc.)?”
- Another good word for conversation prompts is “Describe,” as in, “Describe your ideal day” or “Describe your perfect vacation.”

Facilitators

- At the elementary level, have adults on hand – assigned by table or roaming – to get the conversation started and keep it moving if it hits a lull. The adults can be drawn from throughout the school staff. Or consider reaching further: Invite school board members, community leaders, service club members or others to take on this role for the day.
- At the middle and high school level, students from the planning group can take on this role. Remember that the goal is to get the discussion started; once it's going, the facilitator should be a less active participant.

3. Make it festive

An important goal for Mix It Up at Lunch is to have students remember it as a fun day. So work to make it festive.

A brainstorming session among key planners can generate some good ideas. Here are a few to get you started:

- Consider having a theme, then decorate accordingly. (One of our Model Schools chose "LifeSavers" as a theme, handing out LifeSaver candies to determine table assignments and hanging giant LifeSavers on the walls.)
- Rearrange the tables in the cafeteria. This can be a real "wow" factor as students arrive.
- Having conversation starters on slips of paper is fine, but consider something a little more creative. One school put the questions on Popsicle sticks. Another attached them to balloons.
- Ask students to mix up their clothing for the day, wearing unexpected color combinations, mixed patterns, shirts on backward, etc. Or have teachers do this, unannounced, marching into the cafeteria after students are seated. (The teacher idea can be especially entertaining for elementary students.)
- Have music, live or taped.
- Have some sort of entertainment. (One school had jump-ropers perform.)
- Offer prizes for students who can name everyone at the table and say something specific about each one. ("That's Alicia, and she likes to ride horses.")
- Create an activity to wrap up the lunch event. (One high school started a conga line at lunch, snaking it around campus as it grew longer and longer.)

What about a flashmob?

Consider a flashmob in the cafeteria, the week before the event.

At the elementary level, teachers and other staff members could perform the flashmob.

For middle and high schools, involve choirs or bands for a flashmob, then hand out fliers letting students know that Mix It Up at Lunch is coming next week.

(If you do a flashmob, capture it on video and post it on our [Facebook page!](#))

4. Publicize the event

Letting everyone know that Mix It Up at Lunch Day is coming is essential to success.

Employ all avenues to reach multiple populations – students, teachers, administrators, other school employees, parents and community members. Consider all the ways information is spread throughout your school and community – email, calendars, newsletters, morning announcements, posters, fliers, reminders, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and so on. Use as many as possible.

Let your local media—both TV and newspaper—about the event ahead of time, and invite reporters to attend the event. It's easy when you use our [draft media advisory](#).

Then consider other ways to spread the word. The planning group, for example, could create a skit to perform at a school assembly, something depicting the mixed-up lunchtime interaction. Capture the skit on video and post it on YouTube to further spread the word.

You can be straightforward, explaining when the event will be, why it's being planned and so on. Or you can build a bit of mystery, starting with posters or fliers that pique interest ("Are you ready to Mix It Up?"), slowly revealing details about the event.

Publicity should begin at least three weeks in advance of the event.

We can help with publicity. Go to www.mixitup.org and click on "Downloads/Posters" to use our free resources.

5. Capture the day

In addition to having someone (more than one person, ideally) capture still photographs and video of the event, consider posting a few camera people at the cafeteria exits to ask students what they thought of the event. You'll get some wisecracks and negativity, of course, but you'll also get some strong comments from students who understand and appreciate the power of what they just experienced.

These images will help you capture the success of Mix It Up. They also will be useful tools for planning follow-up activities in the coming year or promoting Mix It Up at Lunch Day next year.

Consider using the video to raise more awareness about the issue of social boundaries. Try to get a spot on the school board agenda, for example, to show the video to elected officials. Or have student ambassadors show the video at local civic group meetings.

At the elementary level, alert your local media – TV and newspapers – about the event by calling or emailing the assignment editors or reporters who cover education. Colorful images of kids doing something new at lunch should be a good draw. (Here's a [draft press release](#) to help you get started.)

The same holds for middle and upper grades, with an addition: If you have a school newspaper or photography/video/film class, invite them to cover it as well.

Don't forget to share the pictures and press coverage with us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)!

6. Evaluate, debrief and follow up

Evaluate

Create some sort of evaluation process as a way to get feedback from all participants.

At the elementary level, ask for a show of hands in each class after the lunch activity, asking, "Should we do this again?" – then collect results.

For middle and high school students, consider an instant poll on the school website.

A more elaborate approach (paper evaluations handed out at the event, or [SurveyMonkey](#) questions) also can be used.

Debrief

Have the planning group meet after the event (with survey data in hand, plus their own thoughts and observations) to make a list of "lessons learned." This meeting is essential, and should be done soon after the event, when everything remains fresh in mind. Record thoughts and issues so your next Mix It Up event is even more successful.

Follow up

During the past decade we have learned that schools experience deeper impacts from Mix It Up when they plan at least two follow-up activities during the year to sustain the message.

Another national campaign is a natural ally for this work and can help with timing the follow-up activity: [No Name-Calling Week](#).

Also, consider a Day of Service where you carry out a community project (cleaning up a park, helping a local nonprofit, etc.). Working together for a greater good, while crossing those social boundaries, is another way to diminish prejudice and reduce biases. (It's also another chance for positive media coverage involving young people!)

Or, you can simply Mix It Up at Lunch again, on other days through the year. (Some schools now Mix It Up at Lunch on a monthly or even weekly basis!)

What are your plans for follow-up activities? Share them with us on [Facebook](#).

[Login or register to post comments](#)

From: *Let's do (school) lunch: lessons in social and emotional development can never replace the real thing* by Ed Baines and Peter Blatchford

<https://ioelondonblog.wordpress.com/2012/07/24/lets-do-school-lunch-lessons-in-social-and-emotional-development-can-never-replace-the-real-thing/>

School lunchtimes are often overlooked as a key time during children's lives for socialising with peers and friends of their own choosing. In a programme of research studies we ... found that breaktimes, and particularly lunchtimes, are a main site for meeting with friends and engaging in enjoyable activities in relative safety without the close intervention or control of an adult. In contrast, children in class are quietened and hurried along by teachers anxious to make the most of the curriculum time available. Our surveys also have shown that out of school there are reduced opportunities for socialisation and outside play – largely brought on by parental concerns about transport and stranger danger.

School lunchtimes therefore provide one of the main opportunities for free social interaction with friends and peers and – worryingly – for some it might be the only time. Despite the huge attention given to incidences of bullying, our surveys of pupil views also show that for the vast majority of children, for the large majority of the time, school lunchtimes are important times for developing relationships and social skills.

Children engage in extended conversations on topics of their own choosing, learn about small talk and share enjoyable experiences, plan activities together with friends and acquaintances and support each other when life is not so rosy, develop early forms of social capital and learn the give and take of social relationships. School lunchtimes therefore offer a wealth of social, emotional and moral opportunities – but they are overlooked as occasions for the learning of important lessons, largely because teaching does not take place and they are not part of the formal curriculum.

What is more, whether we are talking about eating a meal or opportunities for outside play and social engagement, are times that the substantial majority of children in our surveys report being very happy indeed. So from the perspective of recent efforts to measure and to improve national happiness and wellbeing one could do much to try and preserve these social occasions for children.

However, our national surveys of school breaktimes, funded by the Nuffield Foundation, have made it clear that the length of school lunchtimes have been shortened over the past 20 years. The main reasons cited are worries about covering the curriculum and pupil behaviour. Secondary schools in particular seem to see lunchtimes in functional terms as times to have a break and eat, and shorten them accordingly. Many offer only 35 minutes for lunch before students are expected to head back to the classroom for another dose of instruction.

It may be that such reductions are at the expense of time for social activity and play rather than eating time. Our surveys suggest that children and adolescents are happy with the amount of time they have to eat but feel they should have more time to interact with friends and peers outside of the dining room. We worry that there is a general absence of understanding about these times, how they are organised, what takes place and their social and emotional value.

When thinking about school lunchtimes we should not forget that these times are principally social events. It may even be the case that the recently identified positive benefits associated with meal times (for example, on classroom engagement) may be as much to do with improved opportunities to socialise with friends and peers as the food and opportunity for a break.

When challenged, policy makers and schools might be excused for thinking that break and lunchtimes are disposable. They are often cited as occasions for negative behaviour and there are concerns about health and safety and taking time away from school work. It might also be argued that social and emotional skills are often taught as part of the school curriculum.... While these lessons are good opportunities for reflecting on and thinking about social relationships and behaviour, they are not, and can never be, replacements for the real thing.

II. Key transitions and related intervention strategies

B. Daily transitions (cont.)



3. After School

Afterschool Programs Keep Kids Safe, Engage Kids in Learning and Help Working Families (2014)

http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/National_fact_sheet_04_03_13.pdf

A powerful convergence of factors—including a lack of federal, state and local funding, and families and communities beset by tight budgets—leaves 15.1 million school-age children alone and unsupervised in the hours after school. Afterschool programs are essential to keep kids safe, engage children in enriching activities, and give peace of mind to moms and dads during the out-of-school hours. There are approximately 8.4 million school-age children in afterschool programs. This includes 1.6 million kids who attend 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC), programs that serve children living in high-poverty areas and attending low-performing schools. At a time when families and communities are struggling financially and kids are falling behind academically, afterschool programs are needed more than ever.

Afterschool Programs Offer a Range of Benefits:

Afterschool programs not only keep kids safe, they also help improve students' academic performance, school attendance, behavior and health, and support working families:

- An analysis of 68 afterschool studies found that students participating in high-quality afterschool programs went to school more, behaved better, received better grades and performed better on tests compared to non-participants. (Weissberg, R.P., et.al, 2010)
- A study of nearly 3,000 low-income students at 35 high-quality afterschool programs across the U.S. found students who regularly attended programs over the course of two years, compared to their peers who were routinely unsupervised during the afterschool hours:
 - Made significant improvements academically and behaviorally;
 - Demonstrated gains in their standardized math test scores; and
 - Saw reductions in teacher-reported misconduct and reduced use of drugs and alcohol. (Vandell, D.L., et. al., 2007)

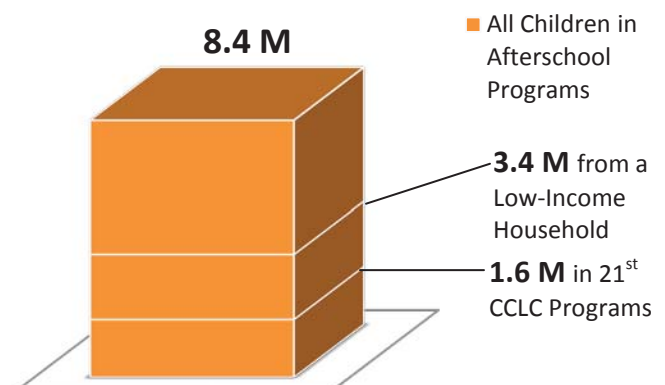
Need for Afterschool Programs by the Numbers:

18.5 million kids would participate in an afterschool program if one were available to them.

15.1 million kids on their own in the hours after school.

23 million parents of school-age children work outside of the home full time.

Children in Afterschool Programs
(in millions)



- Students who attended 21st CCLC programs made significant improvements in their classroom behavior, completion of their homework and participation in class. Gains were also made in students' math and English grades. (Learning Point Associates, 2011).
- Evaluations of LA's BEST revealed that participation in the afterschool program improved students' regular school day attendance. Students also reported higher aspirations regarding finishing school and going to college. (Huang, D., et.al., 2005)
- A study found that—after controlling for baseline obesity, poverty, race and ethnicity—the prevalence of obesity was significantly lower for children participating in an afterschool program when compared to nonparticipants. (Mahoney, et. al., 2005)
- An evaluation of New York City's Out-of-School Time Programs found that 74 percent of parents agreed that afterschool programs made it easier to keep their jobs, and 73 percent agreed with the statement that they missed less work now compared to before their child became involved in the program. (Russell, C.A., et. al., 2009)

Students who drop out of school and do not obtain a high school diploma are more likely to live in poverty, be unemployed and earn less when in the workforce.

In a longitudinal study, researchers at UCLA found that dropout rates among LA's BEST students were significantly lower than the overall district dropout rate.

State of Federal Funding for Afterschool Programs:

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative is the only federal funding source dedicated exclusively to before-school, afterschool and summer learning programs. Investment in 21st CCLC programs helps ensure children from high-poverty and low-performing schools have access to a safe and supervised space; keeps kids involved in interest-driven academic enrichment activities that put them on the road to become lifelong learners; and helps support working families. Currently, 22 million kids across the country are eligible to participate in a 21st CCLC program. However, just 1.6 million kids attend a 21st CCLC program due to lack of federal funding.

A Closer Look at 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)

- The 21st CCLC initiative is authorized to be funded at \$2.5 billion for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013. The current amount appropriated is less than half of the authorization level, at \$1.1 billion.
- Over the last 10 years, \$4 billion in local grant requests were denied because of the lack of adequate federal funding and intense competition.
- More than 4,000 additional grants could be awarded if full funding for 21st CCLC were available.

Estimated Number of Children Participating in 21 st CCLC Programs*	
2011	1,154,000
2012	1,152,000
2013	1,094,090
*Numbers are based on the cost of \$1,000 per child	
2013 figure incorporates the 5% sequester cut	



Number of Kids Served:
1.6 million

Percentage of Kids Served from Low-Income Households:
73%

Number of Communities Served:
11,665

Local Grant Requests Awarded:
1 out of 3

For examples of effective afterschool programs and how to establish them,
see the Center Quick Find entitled:

Expanded Learning Opportunities -- After-School & Summer Programs

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/afterschool.htm>

Relevant resources from our Center and other sources can be directly accessed from the
Quick Find. For example, see

After-School Programs and Addressing Barriers to Learning

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/afterschool/afterschool.pdf>

Despite the problems that can be addressed and positive evaluations for a range of outcomes, the federal budget for after school programs was cut almost in half in 2003. Moreover, the emphasis for the remaining budget was on ways to enhance achievement test scores (e.g., more tutoring, less enrichment and recreation).

Ironically, the focus on federal funding and after *school* program development tends to obscure the reality that in many poor communities there are only a few formal programs for out of school time (including those that are school-based) and only a small portion of youngsters are enrolled in such programs. This raises a much broader set of equity issues related to society's support for development and learning.

For schools where many students are deprived of invaluable opportunities to use daily out of school time productively, the need is to play a greater role in enhancing transition after school programs (including afternoons, evenings, and week ends). To this end, student support staff need to help schools meet the challenge through program development that outreaches to community resources and braids school and community resources together.

When after-school programs are well-designed and integrated into a comprehensive continuum of interventions, such programs have the potential to ***strengthen students, schools, families, and neighborhoods.***

As an after-school program develops, it provides safe and enriched child care, access to adult education training and vocational programs, and much more. When after-school programs are fully integrated with the school-day program (at school site and district-wide), the potential for increasing ***equity of opportunity for all students*** is enhanced and this ***benefits the school*** in many ways.

As the program evolves, it can be a force in ***strengthening families and communities*** by training and recruiting adults in the local community for positions in the after-school program, at the school during the day, and in the larger workplace. Beyond these first rungs on a career ladder, the program can establish training links with higher education to support aides and junior staff in moving toward more advanced positions (e.g., certificate and diploma programs -- including teaching).

Of course, all this underscores why it is so essential for schools and communities to move from pilots and projects to a focus on policy and systemic change in order to scale-up.

Moving from Projects to Community-Wide Programs

After-school times are among the most natural periods for connecting and enhancing school-community connections. And, school and community collaborations and partnerships (with families playing a major role) are a powerful tool for systemic change.

After-school programs can and need to be much more than another add-on effort in which community and school staff and programs compete with each other for sparse resources that are tied to a few time-limited projects. Projects and demonstrations are only the *first step* toward ensuring equity of access and opportunity.

AND . . .

This means enhancing efforts to maintain and evolve what has been established and use these projects and demonstrations as a foundation upon which to develop programs community-wide over time in keeping with a strategic plan for scale-up.

Toward a Scale-up Agenda: Pulling Partnerships Together for Policy and Resource Support

As has been widely stressed, there is a need for “glue money” to facilitate effective collaboration braiding school and community resources so that existing and new programs are linked into a community-wide system. This is seen as essential to achieving greater cost-effectiveness and accessibility. (At the federal level, the *21st Century Community Learning Centers* initiative has provided policy direction and glue money -- <http://www.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/index.html> .)

Clearly, the need for after-school programs continues to be widespread, the potential benefits of well-designed and implemented programs are considerable, and the policy climate for moving forward is present. The challenge is to avoid setting in motion another set of fragmented programs, and instead to use the opportunity to help fill gaps in school-community efforts to create a unified, comprehensive, and equitable approach to promoting healthy development and addressing barriers to learning, development, parenting, and teaching.

Afterschool Activities – from Youth.gov
<http://youth.gov/youth-topics/afterschool-programs/afterschool-activities>

Afterschool activities can vary widely depending on factors including age, background, and the community of participating youth. Research on afterschool programming finds that the most effective activities adapt to individual and small group needs. Furthermore, programming should be as engaging as possible, incorporating hands-on activities and connecting with students' interests and experiences (Beckett et al., 2009).

Different types of afterschool activities include:

Academics and Enrichment. These types of activities are intended to build on and enhance student learning outside of class time. They can take the form of more traditional instruction, complete with assessments, or more interactive activities intended to actively engage youth. These activities should be well aligned with what students are learning during the school day. The U.S. Department of Education's You for Youth site provides strategies for connecting afterschool activities to the school day.

Community Service Projects. Community service projects provide an enriching experience for youth that connect them to their community and instill feelings of empowerment. Furthermore, these activities can provide valuable work experience, particularly for youth from disadvantaged backgrounds (Spring, Dietz, & Grimm, 2007). The Corporation for National and Community Service provides resources to help plan community service projects for afterschool programs, including the Resource Center for Volunteer and Service Programs and the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (link is external).

Field Trips. Field Trips are an exciting way to enrich a child's life outside of the normal classroom environment. They can include trips to museums, parks, zoos, aquariums, or any other local attraction that youth might find engaging and interesting. If there are no suitable locations in your area, many federal sites, such as the Smithsonian (link is external) and the National Zoo (link is external), offer virtual tours and other online resources that could be enriching for your program.

Physical Activity and Nutrition. Afterschool programs are in a unique position to improve youth health outcomes, as they often serve populations most at risk for adverse health outcomes and occur at a time of day when many youth are traditionally inactive (Afterschool Investments Project, 2006). Such activities can help youth make better nutritional decisions and promote physical activity while increasing self-confidence and emotional well-being.

Beckett, M., Borman, G., Capizzano, J., Parsley, D., Ross, S., Schirm, A., & Taylor, J. (2009). *Structuring out-of-school time to improve academic achievement*. Institute for Education Sciences. http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practice_guides/ost_pg_072109.pdf

Spring, K., Dietz, N., & Grimm, R. (2007). *Youth helping America. Leveling the path to participation: Volunteering and civic engagement among youth from disadvantaged circumstances*. Corporation for National and Community Service. http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/07_0406_disad_youth.pdf

The Afterschool Investments Project. (2006). *Promoting physical activity and healthy nutrition in afterschool settings: Strategies for program leaders and policymakers*. https://www.century21me.org/staticme21/resources/fitness_nutrition

See more at:

<http://youth.gov/youth-topics/afterschool-programs/afterschool-activities#sthash.1r5JH21z.dpuf.pdf>

Service Learning

Excerpted from discussions by S.H. Billig

“... service learning is a teaching strategy that links community services to classroom instruction...”

“Service learning is not always easy to explain because it can take so many forms. For example, it can involve working with the homeless, senior citizens, young children, the environment, or the school. Students can work on increasing recycling, reducing childhood obesity, developing museum displays, repairing playgrounds, tutoring, building nature trails, restoring cemeteries, teaching computer skills to senior citizens, addressing transportation policies, and other activities designed to meet community needs and, in fact, change the world.”

“...high-quality service learning includes:

- * thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet authentic community needs;
- * structured time that allows students to talk, think and/or write or otherwise reflect about the service experience; and
- * activities that enable students to engage in planning service in collaboration with community members, specifically giving students an opportunity to make decisions and solve problems...”

“As a whole, however, the body of evidence is compelling. Service learning has an impact on its participants in terms of personal and social development, academic achievement, development of civic responsibility and career exploration.”

“Like other instructional approaches, service learning needs to be addressed in administrator and teacher professional development so that facilitators can learn the benefits of implementation, what works, and how to sustain practice. Leaders need to work with the community to both formulate strong partnerships and increase public support for students working outside the school walls. Leaders also need to implement policies for student safety and transportation and may need to procure the services of a paid or volunteer coordinator; many sites use AmeriCorps volunteers for this purpose.”

“Service learning, which is being adopted in countries throughout the world, adds a lot of value to schools and is a relatively easy and inexpensive way for schools to realize both their academic and civic missions.”

Billig, S. H. (2009). Does quality really matter? Testing the new K–12 service-learning standards for quality practice. In B. E. Moely, S. H. Billig, & B. A. Holland (Eds.), *Advances in service-learning research: Vol. 9. Creating our identities in service-learning and community engagement* (pp. 131–157). Charlotte, NC: Information Age.

Furco, A., & Root, S. (2010). Research demonstrates the value of service learning. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 91(5), 16–20.

For more information, go to the Corporation for National and Community Service or the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse.

II. Key transitions and related intervention strategies (cont.)

C. Yearly transitions

*I don't want to go back to school.
The teachers are mean and the kids don't like me.*

*I'm sorry but you have to go back;
you're the Principal!*

1. A New School Year; a New Class; a New Building

The above is an old joke. But it captures a sad truth for many students and staff beginning a new school year – a sense of dread in facing problems left behind when summer or intersession breaks comes along.

Transitions to something new can be both exciting and stressful and sometimes it is a bit scary. And, this is true not only for youngsters, but parents, and school staff. Many handle all this without significant problems. Others need schools to do something to make the transition go smoothly. And, even those who handle the transition could benefit from proactive transition programs designed to make them feel welcome and well-oriented to the new setting. Such programs are an indispensable facet of creating a positive school climate and sense of community.

With specific respect to articulation programs, some are designed for all students; others target those seen as likely to have difficulty making the transition. Some are designed for a relatively short period just before the transition (e.g., 1-2 weeks). Others begin the process at mid year. A few continue the process into the new setting. All approaches involve some form of activity to reduce anxiety by addressing concerns and enhancing ability.

Key elements of such transition programs include:

- providing information and transition counseling, including making orientation and “warm-up” visits when feasible;
- teaching “survival” skills;
- training and helping teachers and support staff identify potential transition problems quickly and redesign classroom and school-wide transition tasks so they are not barriers;
- ensuring social support, such as student-to-student and family-to-family “buddy” programs; (This may involve linking students who are making the transition and/or, in the case of transitions to middle or high school, providing an older peer buddy in the new setting. Also, for middle and high school transitions, homerooms have been used to provide support networks and supportive guidance and counseling.)
- ensuring the family is prepared to provide transition support for the student – including seeking assistance as soon as there is an indication that the transition is a problem.

An even broader approach involves working on the whole school environment to make it more welcoming, caring, and supportive of all newcomers and especially those who are having difficulty.

Finally, some efforts focus on priming new settings to accommodate the needs of specific students and monitoring transitions to detect transition problems and then providing special assistance.

Two Major Things a School Should Do

- >Create a welcoming environment that provides students, families and staff with a **sense of community**

A perception of community is shaped by daily experiences and is engendered when all involved feel welcomed, supported, nurtured, respected, liked, connected to others, and feel they are valued members who contribute to the collective identity, destiny, and vision.

- >Ensure that in the first months of the new year, students have made a **good transition**

Some student experience difficulties adjusting to new classes, new schools, new teachers, new classmates. If these difficulties are not addressed, student motivation for school dwindles and behavior problems increase.

Because schools have a yearly rhythm — changing with the cycle and demands of the school calendar — each month the Center features on our website some ideas and activities for use in enhancing support for students, their families, and the staff at a school. The feature entitled: *Ideas for Enhancing Support at your schools* is organized around themes.

The following are examples relevant to the two matters highlighted on the preceding page:

September: Welcoming Strategies for Students & Their Families

Included are strategies for providing office staff with training and resources so they can create a welcoming supportive atmosphere for everyone who enters the school

October: Ensuring students have made a good adjustment to school

Included are ways to address transition problems, enhance engagement in learning, and how to work as a team to prevent problems from escalating

And, thinking ahead, there are steps to take in the spring in anticipation of next year.

May: Time to Help Students and Families Plan Successful Transitions to a New Grade or a New School

Included is a focus on providing closure related to what the student is leaving behind and enhancing articulation between the old and the new.

Go to the Center website homepage (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>) and click on *Ideas for Enhancing Support at your schools* to access the recommended practices. Each month is archived.

Is the School Year Off to a Good Start?

Another school year begins, and the intent is to increase achievement, close the achievement gap, reduce student (and staff) dropouts, ensure schools are safe, enhance well-being, and much more.

With these goals in mind, this is the time to review school improvement action plans with an eye to whether what is planned is sufficient and how well plans are being implemented. In doing so, it is especially important to do the review through the lenses of

- ensuring all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school
- addressing barriers to learning and teaching
- engaging and re-engaging students in classroom instruction

Using these lenses, consider the following *five* major concerns that require particular attention at the beginning of a school year. A quick monitoring will indicate how well a school is attending to each.

(1) Welcoming and Ongoing Social Support

Starting a new school is a critical transition period and, as with all transitions, specific supports often are needed. Those concerned about student, family, and staff engagement and well-being can play important prevention and therapeutic roles by helping a school establish a welcoming program and mechanisms for ongoing social support.

There must be capacity building (especially staff development) so that teachers, support staff, and other stakeholders can help establish (a) welcoming procedures, (b) social support networks, and (c) proactive transition supports for family members, new staff, and any other newcomers.

Special attention must be directed at providing office staff with training and resources so they can create a welcoming and supportive atmosphere to everyone who enters the school

A couple of useful resources:

> *What Schools Can Do to Welcome and Meet the Needs of All Students and Families* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/WELMEET/welmeetcomplete.pdf>

> *Understanding & Minimizing Staff Burnout* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Burnout/burn1.pdf>

(2) Addressing School Adjustment Problems

It is only a matter of weeks (sometimes days) after students enter a new school or begin a new year that it is clear to most teachers which students are experiencing difficulties adjusting (e.g., to new content and standards, new schools, new teachers, new classmates, etc.). It is particularly poignant to see a student who is trying hard, but is having problems. If

the problems are not addressed, student motivation dwindles and behavior problems increase.

The start of the year is the time to be proactive. This is the time for staff development to focus on strategies for responding quickly to address the problem. This is the time for student support staff to work with teachers in their classrooms to intervene before problems become severe and pervasive and require referrals for out-of-class interventions.

A few useful resources:

> *Addressing School Adjustment Problems* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/adjustmentproblems.pdf>

> *Enabling Learning in the Classroom* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/enabling.htm>

> *Re-engaging Student in Learning* –
<http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/quicktraining/reengagingstudents.pdf>

> *Support for Transitions* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/transition_tt/transitionindex.htm

> *Enhancing Classroom Approaches for Addressing Barriers to Learning* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/transition_tt/transitionindex.htm

For more, see the Center's Online Clearinghouse Quick Find on the topic of *Transitions* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2101_01.htm

(3) Responding as Early After Problem Onset as Feasible

Some students may make a reasonable start, but a month into the school year it becomes evident that they have significant learning, behavior, and/or emotional problems. Schools have long been accused of a “waiting for failure” policy. Clearly needed are strategies for effectively intervening as soon after problem onset as is feasible. Such strategies can be readily build on the foundation of interventions established to address school adjustment problems. Of particular concern for such students is that the focus is broadened to ensure specific attention to addressing a wider range of factors interfering with (re)engaging the student at school and particularly in classroom activity. Three policy and practice initiatives support responding early after problem onset: (a) the focus on *Response to Intervention*, (b) the emphasis on *Early Intervening in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, and (c) the imperative to develop a more comprehensive *system to address barriers to learning and teaching* at a school.

In addition to the resources noted above, see:

- > *Response to Intervention* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Newsletter/fall06.pdf>
- > Quick Find on *Response to Intervention* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/responsetointervention.htm>
- > *The Implementation Guide to Student Learning Supports: New Directions for Addressing Barriers to Learning* (2006) by Adelman & Taylor –

(4) Planning to Address Common Concerns that Arise from the School Calendar

Schools have a yearly rhythm – changing with the cycle and demands of the school calendar. There is the “Season of Hope” as the school year starts; then comes homework discontent, conferences of concern, grading and testing crises, newspaper attacks, worries about burnout, and the search for renewal. In keeping with all this, the Center has put online a set of month-by-month themes and strategies to enhance support for students, their families, and staff, along with links to other resources for more in-depth follow up. See:

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/schoolsupport.htm>

This material also is available as a resource aid entitled: *Improving Teaching and Learning Supports by Addressing the Rhythm of a Year* which can be downloaded – at

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/rhythm.ms.pdf>

(5) Establishing a Work Group to Design a Unified, Comprehensive, & Equitable System of Learning Supports

It doesn’t take too much monitoring to determine how well a school improvement plan focuses on enhancing student outcomes by comprehensively addressing barriers to learning and teaching. For many students, such a focus is essential to (re)engaging them in classroom instruction and enabling classroom learning. And, such (re)engagement is essential to increasing achievement, closing the achievement gap, reducing student (and staff) dropouts, ensuring schools are safe, and enhancing well-being.

The straight forward psychometric reality is that in schools where a large proportion of students encounter major barriers to learning, test score averages are unlikely to increase adequately until barriers are effectively addressed. So, it is time for schools to establish a work group to focus on designing and developing the type of comprehensive system for addressing barriers that can enable them to be more effective.

A few resource aids:

- > *Steps and Tools to Guide Planning and Implementation of a Comprehensive System to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/stepsandtoolstoguideplanning.pdf>
- > *A Toolkit for Rebuilding Student Supports into a Comprehensive System for Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm>

Addressing School Adjustment Problems

It is only a matter of weeks (sometimes days) after students enter a new school or begin a new year that it is clear to most teachers which students are experiencing difficulties adjusting (e.g., to new content and standards, new schools, new teachers, new classmates, etc.). It is particularly poignant to see a student who is trying hard, but is disorganized and can't keep up. If these difficulties are not addressed, student motivation for school dwindles, and behavior problems increase.

This is the time to be *proactive* and to address any problems in the earliest stages. This is the time for *staff development* to focus on the type of strategies stressed in this guidance. This is the time for *student support staff to work with teachers in their classrooms* to intervene before problems become severe and pervasive and require referrals for out-of-class interventions.

This guidance focuses on

- >addressing transition problems
- >enhancing engagement in learning
- >working as a team to prevent problems from escalating.

Also, included are links to in-depth prevention and early intervention strategies.

SOME GUIDELINES:

- Through enhanced personal contacts, build a positive working relationship with the youngster and family.
- Focus first on assets (e.g. positive attributes, outside interests, hobbies, what the youngster likes at school and in class).
- Ask about what the youngster doesn't like at school.
- Explore the reasons for "dislikes" (e.g., Are assignments seen as too hard? as uninteresting? Is the youngster embarrassed because others will think s/he does not have the ability to do assignments? Is the youngster picked on? rejected? alienated?)
- Explore other possible causal factors.
- Explore what the youngster and those in the home think can be done to make things better (including extra support from a volunteer, a peer, friend, etc.).

SOME BASIC STRATEGIES

Try new strategies in the classroom – based on the best information about what is causing the problem. Enhance student engagement through (a) an emphasis on learning and enrichment options that are of current greatest interest and which the student indicates (s)he wants to and can pursue and (b) a temporary deemphasis on areas that are not of high interest.

If a student seems easily distracted, the following might be used:

- identify any specific environmental factors that distract the student and make appropriate environmental changes
- have the student work with a group of others who are task-focused
- designate a volunteer to help the student whenever s/he becomes distracted and/or starts to misbehave, and if necessary, to help the student make transitions
- allow for frequent "breaks"
- interact with the student in ways that will minimize confusion and distractions (e.g., keep conversations relatively short; talk quietly and slowly; use concrete terms; express warmth and nurturance)

If a student needs more direction, the following might be used:

- develop and provide sets of specific prompts, multisensory cues, steps, etc. using oral, written, and perhaps pictorial and color-coded guides as organizational aids related to specific learning activities, materials, and daily schedules
- ensure someone checks with the student frequently throughout an activity to provide additional support and guidance in concrete ways (e.g., model, demonstrate, coach)
- support student's efforts related to self-monitoring and self-evaluation and provide nurturing feedback keyed to the student's progress and next steps

If the student has difficulty finishing tasks as scheduled, the following might be used:

- modify the length and time demands of assignments and tests
- modify the nature of the process and products (e.g., allow use of technological tools and allow for oral, audio-visual, arts and crafts, graphic, and computer generated products)

TO ACCOMPLISH THE ABOVE: Enhance use of aides, volunteers, peer tutors/coaches, mentors, those in the home, etc. not only to help support student efforts to learn and perform, but to enhance the student's social support network. Encourage structured staff discussions and staff development about what teachers can do and what other staff (mentors, student support staff, resource teachers, etc.) can do to team with teachers in their classrooms to enable school adjustment.

WHAT IF THE ABOVE STRATEGIES DON'T WORK?

- If the new strategies don't work, *talk to others* at school to learn about approaches they find helpful (e.g., reach out for support/mentoring/coaching, participate with others in clusters and teams, observe how others teach in ways that effectively address differences in motivation and capability, request additional staff development on working with such youngsters).
- After trying all the above, add some tutoring designed to enhance student engagement in learning and to facilitate learning of specific academic and social skills that are seen as barriers to effective classroom performance and learning.
- Only after all this is done and has not worked is it time to use the school's referral processes to ask for additional support services. As such services are added, it, of course, becomes essential to coordinate them with what is going on in the classroom, school-wide, and at home.

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THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES WILL BE HELPFUL FOR STRUCTURED STAFF DISCUSSIONS:

- Enabling Learning in the Classroom – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/enabling.htm>
- Re-engaging Student in Learning – <http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/quicktraining/reengagingstudents.pdf>
- Support for Transitions to Address Barriers to Learning (Training Tutorial)
- Enhancing Classroom Approaches for Addressing Barriers to Learning – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/transition_tt/transindex.htm
- Quick Finds: links to resources on Classroom Focused Enabling and on Motivation

Other resources also can be readily found and accessed by topic through our Quick Find Online Clearinghouse -- see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/websrch.htm> All Center materials are available for downloading, copying, and sharing on the Center website.

And, if you can't find something you need, contact us directly:
By email — Ltaylor@ucla.edu



“Getting a new school year off to a good start can influence children’s attitude, confidence, and performance both socially and academically. The transition from August to September can be difficult for children and parents. Even children who are eager to return to class must adjust to the greater levels of activity, structure, and, for some, pressures associated with school life.... [It is important to] acknowledge anxiety over a bad experience the previous year. Children who had a difficult time academically or socially, or were teased or bullied may be more fearful or reluctant to return to school....”

Excerpted from:

Back-To-School Transitions: Tips for Parents

by T. Feinberg & K. Cowan

National Association of School Psychologists

http://www.naspcenter.org/home_school/b2shandout.html

This article provides many suggestions for parents
to help ease the transition.

Some New Ways Schools Are Using to Ease the Transition to a New Year

School reform and improvement strategies are beginning to address ways to minimize the numbers of times students have to face the newness of a new year.

- >>Rather than waiting until the middle of the first semester, teachers have *initial conferences* with students to get to know them and their interests to begin to build a working relationship in the first weeks of the school year.
- >>Rather than an open house for parents focused on the rules and expectations, parents are invited to attend initial *family conferences* to share their hopes and concerns and how they can work to support the classroom and school.
- >>In elementary schools, the concept of “*looping*” calls for a teacher to move with the students to the next grade, rather than sending them to another teacher. Potential benefits reported include improved student achievement, increased time on task, more opportunities for bonding between teacher and students (and their families), diminished apprehension about a new school year, more positive peer relationships, increased support for students, enhanced sense of school as a “community”. (For more on this, see “Looping: Adding Time, Strengthening Relationships” by D. Burke, ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, <http://eric.ed.gov> – ERIC#=ED414098)
- >>In secondary schools this concept is encompassed in efforts to make big schools into “*small schools*.” The idea is to group a cohort of students (say 100) with a cohort of teachers (say 5) who stay together over a number of years with the teachers working as a team providing among them the full curriculum. For example in middle school, this arrangement may allow the cohort of students and teachers to remain together for the three years of middle school. This reduces the sense that a new year means new teachers and new classmates. Rather, there is a strong and building connection between the cohort of students and with their team of teachers. Some of the reported benefits are higher achievement, lower achievement gaps across races, lower dropout rates, lower suspension rates, and increased participation. (For research on the academic and social benefits, see “Restructuring Big Schools,” by the National Commission on Teaching & America’s Future).
- >>Calls for *New Directions for Student Support* emphasize the importance of student support staff assuming new roles and functions to address the full range of transitions and to play a role in helping schools make major changes in school design. (For more on this, click on “Summits on New Directions” on our Center’s homepage – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>)

Supporting Successful Transition to Ninth Grade

Starting ninth grade is not just another grade transition. For most students it is a major life change. Some don't even survive the transition and become early "push outs." For too many others, the emotional toll is high, and this exacerbates behavior and learning problems.

Besides the obvious changes related to school setting and instructional content, processes, and outcome standards, the move to ninth grade usually is accompanied by notable changes in role and status and interpersonal relationships. These yield significant shifts in self-perceptions and expectations and in what is valued by the youngster.

Thus, from a developmental and motivational perspective, eighth and ninth grades are critical times for transition supports designed to assure *all* students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school. Such interventions must encompass programs to

- promote and maintain positive attitudes during the transition
- anticipate and prevent problems
- provide special assistance to those whose problems make it highly likely that the transition will be difficult to negotiate
- monitor transitions in order to respond at the first indications a student is having transition problems

Successful ninth grade transition programs are built on the foundation of good schooling through the eighth grade. Eighth grade provides the opportunity for a variety of specific activities aimed at enhancing positive motivation about and capabilities for making the ninth grade transition. This obviously includes traditional broad-band orientation programs for students and their parents (e.g., packets, tours, and discussions clarifying basic info and dispelling myths). But a comprehensive focus on supporting the transition encompasses much more.

With full appreciation of what the ninth grade transition experience entails, support for transition also includes programs designed to deepen students' knowledge and skills, increase social and emotional problem solving capabilities, and enhance student feelings of competence, self-determination, and connectedness with supportive others.

As with all good interventions, transition support should aspire to creating a good "match" or "fit" with students. This means attending to diversity among students with particular respect to how differences are manifested in terms of motivation, developmental capability, and actions.

Examples

Special course and use of natural opportunities: Offering a transition course in eighth grade and using natural opportunities throughout the school day to enhance specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to the transition.

Peer buddies: Connecting eighth graders to ninth grade peer buddies during the last month before the transition or at least from day one in ninth grade. Such buddies would be trained to participate in orienting and welcoming, provide social support for the period of transition, and introduce the newcomer to peers and into activities during the first few weeks of transition.

Personalized programs for those already identified as likely to have difficulty with the transition: Such programs need to be designed no later than the middle of eighth grade. They should be designed to develop an individual transition plan, with specific objectives related to both motivational and capability concerns.

Special assistance for those who don't transition successfully: Ninth grade teachers usually are painfully aware of students who are not making a successful transition. The school's learning supports' component should include a system for responding as soon as a teacher identifies such a student. Such a system should be prepared to develop personalized transition supports and specialized assistance as needed.

Environments also should be redesigned to maximize opportunities to enhance competence, self-determination, and connectedness to valued others and to minimize threats to such feelings. Particular attention needs to be paid to enhancing opportunities for social support, counseling, and advocacy by designated school staff (e.g., a homeroom teacher, a member of the school's support staff) and to strategies for eliminating victimization.

Successful transitions are marked by students who feel a sense of connectedness and belonging, who are engaged in classroom learning, and who are able to cope with daily stressors.

II. Key transitions and related intervention strategies

C. Yearly Transitions (cont.)

2. Vacations and Intersessions

For school staff and students vacations are a welcome time for rest and relaxation.

They can also be a time for enrichment, practicing for mastery, exploring new learning, and strengthening motivation for learning – for students and for staff.

Because this is such an important opportunity for strengthening learning supports, it is included in the *Monthly Themes in Ideas for Enhancing Support at your School* on our website. See:

January: **Re-engaging Disconnected Students** –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/rhythms.pdf#page=28>

Most student vacations occur during the summer with a brief break mid-winter. In large urban districts with year round multi-track schools, the vacation (called intersession) can occur at any time the track goes off for a brief break.

For many students, vacations mean camp, travel, reading, time with family. For some students it means limited opportunity for learning. For others it means remedial programs to strengthen skills. We are especially interested in the last two groups: students who aren't in family/neighborhoods that provide enriched learning opportunities. What can learning supports staff provide during these transitions that would result in better outcomes for students and schools?

Summer also is a time to move forward in developing a Learning Supports system. Three overlapping concerns for work over the summer are

>Summer Learning >System Development >Staff Development

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/rhythms.pdf#page=52>

Enhancing Summer Learning*

From a recent report from RAND: "Research has shown that student's skills and knowledge often deteriorate during the summer months, with low-income students facing the largest losses." (See: "Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning" – <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG1120.html>)

Following-up on this concern, we sent a request to folks across the country for information about

(1) programs currently in play, in addition to summer school, for countering summer set-backs (e.g., cross age peers, volunteers, business internships)

(2) mechanisms that locales can use to organize social and human capital in addressing the concerns, such as collaboratives that help pull together community-school resources into a potent program (e.g., the resources of libraries, parks, schools, malls, community centers, youth groups, community-based and service organizations, businesses, etc.).

Specifically, we asked about:

>any examples of what communities are doing to counter summer set-backs and other problems experienced by youngster over the summer

>any ways communities and schools have come together to create an organized and cohesive initiative that is designed to attract and benefit youngsters who are of the greatest concern.

For communities and schools that have not done much, we also asked for thoughts about who (what organization/position) is in a position to stimulate interest in developing an organized and cohesive initiative.

This Information Resource presents a representative sample of what we learned from others and also some distinctive programs Center staff found on websites. Appended are excerpts from two major policy reports (one from the Harvard Family Research Project and one from the National Center on Time & Learning and the Education Commission of the States).

Shared Information

What Community Organizations Are Doing

(1) "Our family support services program provides a year long program life skills program for teens. During the school calendar we have group meetings and follow a curriculum that covers many topics including community resources. Teens also have a one to one advocate session once a week to practice those skills in their community. During the summer the one to one sessions continue. One of the goals is for the teens to explore resources in their communities, including free and low cost activities. This carries over to the families. Teens individual needs are supported, i.e., specific challenges they are having in school are worked on. Within this program and other FSS we work with clinicians, supported case managers, Intensive Case Managers and Waiver coordinators to link and refer to community offerings. To a large degree, what is afforded for summer programs, is largely dependent on individual community tax base. Our communities range from fairly rural to very rural, which also lends to differences in services/opportunities available.

There is one very rural community that seems to be the exception, not a wealthy district, but they consistently made available a wide range of programs open to all children. They team up a community resources, i.e., library, volunteers and paid staff to have full day summer programs at no cost to families that include learning opportunities, a low key type of summer school with

the addition of recreational activities. The structure this provides is a tremendous benefits to the children and their families. Those at risk of regression have exposure to a degree of academic activities and recreational activities. Their isolation is greatly diminished from this experience. As well, those with social skills needs are in programs where they have opportunity to work on these skills in a relaxed, yet supported environment.

A number of our smaller towns are able to maintain half day recreational type programs. While not supporting the academic needs, the children are still exposed to valuable skill development. There has been an unfortunate trend, due to budgeting constraints for schools who did offer summer programs, whether they be ESY programs or more informal, speech improvement or reading/math skill 'camps', to cease offering these programs. In addition, to the already limited ESY programs it seems harder to 'prove' substantial regression for those in need."

(2) "I think this is one of those areas where "Let 1,000 flowers bloom" might be the underlying philosophy. If you have a sparkplug in your area, then you probably have some kind of program going. Some thoughts...Check out "Winston Area Community Partnership". This group formed in 1999 in rural Southern Oregon after back-to-back youth firearms tragedies. Like most places, individual citizens, businesses, and social agencies were doing a patchwork quilt of programs intended to support positive youth development. Those two deaths got people intentionally working on coordinating projects, identifying areas of need, planning new initiatives.

I was a part of the "Build Our Kids" project (<http://www.buildourkids.org/index.cfm>). We got this off the ground right about the time the economy tanked, so our fundraising efforts came in way short of what we needed to implement the full project. However, businesses, schools, service groups & others pulled together to identify and provide support. Focus groups I conducted with middle school students identified areas such as "adults don't care about us", "adults don't spend time with us", "nobody helps us with our homework", "we don't feel connected to our schools", and "nothing to do between end of school and when our parents get off work" that formed the basis of many of the activities. I wrote the initial scripts for all of the videos on <http://www.buildourkids.org/index.cfm?nav=video> (except for "spark") and did several workshops for adults throughout the area.

Oregon has a system of county-based agencies called "Commission on Children & Families". As I understand the organization, the State felt that local people were likely to make better decisions about what to do than legislators in the State Capitol. So funds flow from the State to 36 local, appointed Commissions that pretty much function as catalysts to bring together community partners." See http://www.oregon.gov/OCCF/about_us.shtml

(3) "Our Summer Science Series fulfills a need for educational and enrichment programming for low-income Asian youth who struggle with language and academic achievement. It targets youth who have limited access to summer education and are less likely than their higher-income peers to do well in school and graduate from high school. The program hopes to reduce the summer gap by providing youth the opportunity to practice English and math embedded in science curriculum. This program provides a continuity of learning through a multidisciplinary science program combining enrichment, community exploration, leadership development, and academic supports to fourth, fifth, and sixth graders for four weeks. Morning workshops emphasize team work in designing projects, Field trip Fridays explore the city, and afternoon recreation includes sports, art, and cooking."

Distinctive School District Programs

(1) Positive Achievement for Learning Success (PALS) is funded by 21st Century Learning Centers Grant. The program supports after-school enrichment and summer enrichment for 1st through 8th graders in Sabine Parish. The program began in 2003. Since this time, the program has increased to 6 sites and various academic and recreational activities.

This summer we have components in gardening, Adventure Bases Counseling, Art, Fishing

Tournament, Geocaching, Iron Man (running, canoeing, biking) music performance and Nature Explore classroom at the Hodges State Park and then each site has all kinds of activities going on when they are not at Hodges.

From a recent note sent to staff:

We touched the lives of over 1300 kids this year. I know that this program is extra work on administrators, community partners, lead teachers, teachers, student support staff and agency staff, however if you could have seen the 870 plus kids, parents and teachers interacting in such a positive way today at Hodges Gardens State Park I know that you would all agree that this work, time and money is well worth it.

We saw kids who at the first of the year were attacking teachers serving those same teachers dinner and entertaining them at family night activities. We saw school sites known for behavior problems show the upmost respect, care and concern for each other, their teachers and others in the community. We saw kids who didn't think that they had talents perform their hearts out for friends and family. We saw rival sites coming together to support each other in sporting events with friendly but fierce competition and cooperation. We saw some kids come out of their shells and a few that learned how to go back in when they needed to. We saw teachers going into unsafe neighborhoods to retrieve kids who needed to be in program. (I didn't send them) WE SAW MANY ENGAGED FAMILIES!

I must say that this has been the most successful year that I have experienced with PALS and it is all because of a committed professional team that cares about kids and families and a larger community that gets it. The PALS staff is the best! Principals, thank you for letting us use your schools and staff to do this work. Lead Teachers, please pass this email on to all of your staff. Administrators, DOE, OJJ, State Parks, Project Celebration, thank you for partnering with us to make all of this happen. Please send this email on to anyone in your shops that may want to hear about barriers being removed for students. If you want to see for yourself, you can go to www.sabine.k12.la.us/PALS

Some Distinctive Programs Center Staff Found on Websites

(1) *Children's Defense Fund Freedom School*

[Excerpt from director, Marian Wright Edelman's 7/8/11 newsletter]

"In many school districts across the country summer vacation is getting into full swing. But for a lucky group of nearly 10,000 children in 87 cities and 27 states around the country, it's not just summer, it's the Children's Defense Fund Freedom School.

Proudly rooted in the Civil Rights Movement, the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer Project, and the efforts of college students to make a difference, the *CDF Freedom Schools* program trains college-aged young people to provide quality summer and after-school enrichment through a model Integrated Reading Curriculum that supports children and families around five essential components: high quality academic enrichment; parent and family involvement; civic engagement and social action; intergenerational leadership development; and nutrition, health, and mental health supports. We partner with public schools, community organizations, faith congregations, colleges and universities, and juvenile justice facilities who sponsor and host their local Freedom School. About 90,000 children have had a *CDF Freedom Schools* experience since 1995 and 9,000 college teacher-mentors have been trained to serve them.

In the *CDF Freedom Schools* program children are engaged in activities that develop their minds and bodies and nurture their spirits. Children, parents, and staff are introduced to a superb collection of books that reflect their own images and are part of the integrated reading curriculum in which books, activities, field trips, and games all relate to and reinforce each other. The college servant leaders use this curriculum to teach the children conflict resolution and critical thinking skills, engage them in community service and social action projects, and

inspire them not only to explore the problems facing their communities, but also to become active in working toward solutions. Children are encouraged to dream, set goals for themselves, and cultivate positive attitudes and high expectations. We are forging a new vision for what can be done with and for our children. We want every child to know they can and must make a difference.

Research has shown the *CDF Freedom Schools* program is making an impact. In June 2011, Harvard Family Research Project released a report called “Year-Round Learning: Linking School, Afterschool, and Summer Learning to Support Student Success.” The *CDF Freedom Schools* program was one of 14 innovative national programs highlighted that have “demonstrated success in providing quality learning opportunities for youth.” Late last year, a two-year study of children enrolled at *CDF Freedom Schools* sites in Charlotte, N.C. and Bennettsville, S.C. reported that 90 percent of the children tested did not suffer summer learning loss, and 65 percent improved or showed gains in independent reading by the end of the program. An earlier three-year study conducted for the Kauffman Foundation reported in 2008 that students enrolled in Kansas City’s summer Freedom Schools program demonstrated significant improvement in reading.

In June, the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and CDF hosted *A Strong Start: Positioning Young Black Boys For Educational Success*, a symposium that brought together leading educators, researchers, and policy experts to confront the crisis facing the 3.5 million Black boys from birth to age nine and to highlight programs that are making a difference in closing the achievement gap. One of the best practices shared during the symposium was the *CDF Freedom Schools* program. This summer, ETS is sponsoring a unique new Freedom School site in Newark, N.J. through a grant to Communities in Schools of New Jersey that is designed specifically for Black boys in grades three through eight.

We know the *CDF Freedom Schools* program is about to make an important difference this summer for these boys and the children at each of the other sites across the country. It’s critical that many more children have the opportunity to experience the *CDF Freedom Schools* program in the future. We have a goal of at least doubling the program over the next five years, including opening more sites on Black college campuses to put college rather than prison into children’s vision and in youth detention facilities to support re-entry and new beginnings. We are encouraging more of our college servant leaders, especially Black and Latino males, to become teachers to fill as many of the expected one million teacher openings over the next four to six years as possible (only two percent of public school teachers are Black males). Bringing proven models like the *CDF Freedom Schools* program to scale is one solution to closing the achievement gap and finishing the unfinished business of the Civil Rights Movement for all children: a quality education for every child.”

(2) ***Summer Food and Fun*** [reported in the Tuscaloosa News 6/9/11]

“Summer Food and Fun is a project designed to work in conjunction with the food program to provide health and wellness education. The program is being hosted at the McDonal Hughes Community Center. The Summer Food and Fun project is sponsored by the Alabama Perinatal Association, a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to provide structured activities at no cost to at-risk young people during the summer. The program welcomes children from ages 3 to 18 for a free lunch during the summer. The children also can attend a two hour play session before each day’s lunch. Activities include arts and crafts, reading, health and nutrition education and career life skills. The public health department encourages adults to volunteer. If any of the participating children were affected by the April 27 tornado, they will receive counseling, if needed.”

(3) ***Reading Programs at Shopping Malls***

- Announcement from the Gene Leahy Mall, Omaha, NE – “Kick off the Summer Reading Program and celebrate Antarctic culture as we continue our One Work, Many Stories

journey. Learn about penguins and snow by watching a movie in a dome, then visit the craft bazar, sample an ethnic treat. Fund more Omaha Public Library events.”

- Announcement – “Queens Center employees provide reading program – The mall and the local school collaborate on a read aloud program. All grades of students participant. Employees who work in either the management of the mall or the security for the mall visit the school to read for grade K-2, but the children in grades 3 to 5 take a trip to the mall to hear the mall employees read in the common area.”

(4) *School District Programs*

- Berkeley County School District, SC – “The district offers free summer immersion camps in the areas of science, technology, engineering, math, academics and fine arts. The district’s special Talented Enrichment Program serves artistically gifted and talented fourth through eighth graders. Students select courses in choral and instrumental music, dance, drama, and visual arts. New this year, a “Young Writers Institute.” The district’s Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Camp will introduce third through fifth graders to these career fields in a fun filled way by exploring the Wonders of the Lowcountry. Campers will take related field trips to local places of interest. New this year if a partnership with Google and the Governor’s School for Science and Mathematics.”
- Central Valley After school, Clovis, CA – “The Central Enrichment Summer Adventures Programs is designed to create a new vision for summer learning. It includes technology, wilderness survival class, rockets, music video, stop-motion animation films, literacy campfire, civic and cultural connections day (an eight station tour of downtown Fresno), Millerton Lake and Recreational Center, Adventure Race at Woodward Park. A partnership among the County Office of Education, Packard Foundation, Children’s Partnership, After school, City of Fresno, CA state parks, Center for Multicultural Cooperation.”
- Boone Schools, OH – “Summer bridge program to help fight summer learning loss. For students entering first through sixth grades, the district has summer bridge books available. They offer 15-20 minutes of refresher information that students and parents can do together that will keep last year’s learning from disappearing. The books cost \$10 through a partnership between the district and Carson-Dellosa Publishing.”
- Los Angeles, CA – “At Camp Akela kidergartners read about rainbow fish, others study volcanoes, create travel journals, dance, and play in a portable pool. The students are also learning literacy, math facts and science and are honing writing skills. Melding education with typical summer fun, the program is part of a statewide campaign of Partnership for Children and Youth. The Packard Foundation launched an eight year summer learning initiative aimed at reaching 100,00 children in ten regions throughout CA.”
- Six urban districts study effectiveness of summer programs – “The Wallace Foundation has a three year project to determine long tem effects of summer learning programs. Grants to Boston, Cincinnati, Dallas, Rochester, Pittsburgh, and Duval County will collect longitudinal data that will allow researchers to track cumulative academic progress, summer learning loss, behavior and transitions into middle school. Programs will include intensive reading, math, science and enrichment. Some programs will have sessions on hiking, biking, kayaking, and theater.”

(5) *Baltimore City's Program*

“Baltimore kicks off ‘grand Prix’ summer school. Students will be building soapbox cars with a focus on math and science. The program will serve 15,000 elementary, middle, and high school students. About 1,000 elementary students will also participate in a reading program funded by the Abell Foundation. Middle School will continue to team with the Michael Phelps Swim School. Advanced middle school students will be offered a chance to study Chinese or Arabic.”

For resources related to summer learning, see
National Summer Learning Association – <http://www.summerlearning.org>

Finally, the following comments are representative of concerns shared by many who responded:

“We believe the summer programs absolutely important and positive and some situations essential. Everyone, communities as a whole and schools are facing budget cuts that impact programs available. ... Opportunities for summer programs is such a benefit in closing the academic gaps and helping to keep at bay psychosocial problems that occur with lack of engagement with positive peers and activities. Agree with the report from Rand, that low-income students face the largest losses. One example is the loss of funding for Headstart programs. Without the summer supports, these children lose opportunities that help them close the gaps and start kindergarten with deficits that make it hard for them to be successful.

Some children only receive ‘counseling’ during their school programs and the lack of continuity definitely has a negative impact. Budget concerns have also meant a loss of summer job training programs. As far as who is in a position to stimulate initiatives, I think school board members need to educate themselves in regards to what the cost is of not having these services. Short term budget cuts in these areas, often end up costing communities more in the long run. A collaboration of town supervisors with school administration to work on needs assessment and greater communication with politicians to highlight needs/concerns would help all understand the importance of summer programs. State representatives need to hear the voice of county Youth Commissions and Youth Bureaus. Historically, in our communities, these organizations have made sure our youth with MH needs and those at risk have been included in their programs, helping develop skills and confidence that carryover to school and community settings. However, with budget cuts these opportunities are no longer available.”

Excerpts from Major Reports

Excerpts from: *Year-Round Learning: Linking School, Afterschool, and Summer Learning to Support Student Success* (2011) by Sarah Deschenes & Helen Janc Malone, Harvard Family Research Project. <http://www.hfrp.org/var/hfrp/storage/fckeditor/File/YRL-ExecSummary-062311-FINAL-1.pdf>

“.... Broadening our ideas about where, when, and how learning happens helps communities to create richer learning pathways that have the potential to

- Include more youth development opportunities to help young people gain the skills necessary for lifelong learning and a healthy adulthood.
- Offer a seamless learning environment that can help promote school success and stem summer learning loss.
- Efficiently use resources outside of schools to help close the achievement gap.

... Because examples of various ways to achieve a policy goal are often useful in the early stages of discussion, this brief describes one possible approach—year-round learning—and highlights promising initiatives underway.

Year-round learning consists of intentional, community-based efforts to connect school, afterschool, and summer learning. Institutions involved in these efforts are committed to working together to support positive youth outcomes, develop continuous learning pathways, and provide equitable opportunities for both students and families. This approach provides youth—often in distressed areas—with access to quality learning environments across settings, as well as across the year. We offer examples of year-round learning efforts from 14 initiatives across the K–12 system, with many focusing on middle school and high school and some continuing into college. ...

Principles of Year-round Learning

Four key principles emerge for supporting children and youth through year-round learning:

1. Removing barriers to learning and increasing access to learning supports and enrichment opportunities
2. Being student-centered and family-centered
3. Building on organizational commitment, capacity, and flexibility
4. Engaging and being active in the local community

Removing barriers to learning and increasing access to learning supports and enrichment opportunities

- Acknowledging and working with the effects of disadvantage. The 14 initiatives in this study are trying to remedy some of the disparities affecting their participants through providing experiences and opportunities on par with what is offered in more privileged areas.
- *Increasing access to services.* In order to alleviate disadvantages to improve student learning, initiatives provide access to a variety of health and social services for both students and families and help families navigate the college testing and application landscape.
- *Exposing youth to new learning environments.* These initiatives provide youth with learning opportunities that they do not access during the regular school day, such as field trips, college visits, or activities like music or photography.

- *Aligning work with school and district standards and curriculum.* While several community-based programs actively work with schools to align curricula, in many cases the alignment happens through teachers and staff who either act as liaisons between schools and programs or are on staff as teachers, mentors, or coaches after school.

Being student-centered and family-centered

- *Providing key supports to help students get and stay on a pathway to high school, college, and beyond.* Programs that are implementing year-round learning can create pathways that lead to acceptance into competitive high schools and colleges, and the attainment of successful careers. This strategy includes building close relationships with school- or community-based role models, and providing internship opportunities and projects that build the critical thinking, life, and career skills needed to succeed.
- *Encouraging and tracking participation across the year and over time to ensure youth stay involved and engaged.* Being student-centered means paying attention to when and how youth participate; initiatives cannot support students if they are not attending programs.
- *Involving families in learning in order to keep youth engaged and help reinforce academic and developmental messages at home.* Initiatives are working to understand how to involve the participants' families in learning to create consistency between various learning environments and help families become successful learning partners.

Building on organizational commitment and capacity

- *Planning and implementing for year-round learning.* Initiatives that offer year-round programming have arrived at this approach over time. Some initiatives have grown out of a long conversation with the community about its needs and wishes while others expand from success of more limited programs.
- *Having a champion.* These initiatives often have a champion—someone who is leading the charge for reshaping a community's understanding of what the education system can be.
- *Establishing common goals and outcomes, often using shared data.* Conversations between afterschool and summer providers and school teachers about their respective goals can help all parties to see that they exist to support students and can help each other by working together. Using data to identify student needs and progress is one way to support these shared goals.

Engaging and being active in the local community

- *Being participant-driven.* Many initiatives rely on local decision-makers, such as schools and parents and students, to determine the scope of their programming, thus ensuring that they are providing services that youth and the community need and want.
- *Understanding and being involved in the local community.* To truly relate to the local context, people involved with the initiatives need to be part of the community fabric. For example, program staff can make intentional efforts to understand youth's interests and realities outside of the school and program hours. Initiatives can also make sure that multi-site programs are flexible enough to tailor their work to local environments.
- *Leveraging existing local resources to offer comprehensive services and learning opportunities.* Effective year-round learning requires many stakeholders to share responsibility for learning outcomes. This entails creating partnerships among youth organizations, school districts, parent groups, and public youth-serving agencies.

Full report online at www.hfrp.org/Year-Round-Learning

Except from: *Time in America: Trends to Reform the American School Calendar – A Snapshot of Federal, State, and Local Action* (2011) by the National Center on Time & Learning and the Education Commission of the States. <http://www.timeandlearning.org/learningtimeinamerica/learningtimeinamerica.html>

With respect to this report, Jennifer Davis, president & CEO of the National Center on Time & Learning states: “Today’s standard school calendar of 180 six-hour days simply isn’t enough to give children – particularly disadvantaged children – the education they need for success in the 21st century. That’s why it’s so important that schools across the country, with crucial support from pioneering district and state leaders as well as the federal government, are expanding school time and improving educational outcomes for students. These schools are models for any state or district that is considering reducing learning time to find short-term budget savings.”

The report recommends that policymakers align resources with the diverse needs of students -- at the federal level, “strengthening the School Improvement Grant program to build more planning time and require a minimum increase of 300 hours for all students in participating schools; and expanding the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CLC) program to support both voluntary afterschool and summer programs (as it does now) as well as models that redesign schools to expand time (by at least 300 hours) for all students. States should grant greater flexibility to districts to innovate with expanded-time models that are both educationally valuable and cost-effective. And districts can take advantage of already proven cost-effective models of building more time into schools, exploring ways to combine federal, state, and philanthropic funds to support sustainable models of expanded-time schools.”

With specific respect to summer, here’s a brief excerpt from page 26

Rethinking Vacation Time

Not only is the school calendar of 180 days fairly standard across the country, so, too, is the fact that these 180 days typically fall between the months of September and June (or August through May in some states). The long summer vacation has been a staple of the school calendar for at least a century. Yet, research shows that over the course of the summer, students from all socioeconomic groups lose ability in mathematics, and children from lower - income strata lose ability in reading, as well. 66 Other research suggests that the learning loss experienced over the summer, in fact, contributes to the achievement gap between high - poverty students and their more affluent peers.

To counter the ill effects of summer vacation on academic learning, many urban districts have made a concerted effort to provide learning opportunities to their students, especially struggling students, for at least some weeks during the summer months. Unlike past school district programs that often focused strictly on remediation, a number of recent efforts - like ones in Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and Dallas , as well as the 84 districts that participate in a program called Freedom Schools - are designed to provide students a more well - rounded experience. The National Summer Learning Association maintains that these types of programs hold promise because

*Summer presents an untapped opportunity-a time of year when youth and families seek programs that look and feel different from the traditional school year; teachers have the flexibility to be innovative and creative in their teaching and assessment; and community partners with specialized expertise in arts, recreation, sports, and youth development abound.**

In addition, some districts (and individual schools) have found that using school breaks in the middle of academic years offers a viable opportunity to enroll struggling students in intensive support classes.

*This quote is from Brenda McLaughlin and Jeffrey Smink (2010), “Why Summer Learning Deserves a Front-Row Seat in the Education Reform Arena,” *New Horizons for Learning Journal* 8, 45.

For more about engaging students in learning during summer and all year round, see the following Center Materials and Resources at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

>>Quick Finds:

- *After School Programs
- *Classroom Focused Enabling
- *Environments that support learning
- *Mentoring
- *Motivation
- *Youth Development

>>After School Programs and Addressing Barriers to Learning
(a Technical Aid Packet)

>>Enhancing Classroom Approaches for Addressing Barriers to Learning: Classroom Focused Enabling
(Continuing Education Modules)

>>Classroom Changes to Enhance and Re-engage Students in Learning
(A Training Tutorial)

>>Re-engaging Students in Learning
(A Quick Training Aid)

II. Key transitions and related intervention strategies (cont.)

D. Mobility – Moving, Moving, Moving

Many students move during a school year; some move quite frequently. Sometimes the move only involves going to a new school; sometime it also involves moving to a new city and even a new country.

1. Impact of Student Mobility on Learning and Behavior

As the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry stresses:

Moving to a new community may be one of the most stress-producing experiences a family faces. Frequent moves or even a single move can be especially hard on children and adolescents. Studies show children who move frequently are more likely to have problems at schools....

Moves interrupt friendships. To a new child at school, it may at first seem that everyone else has a best friend or is securely involved with a group of peers. The child must get used to a different schedule and curriculum, and may be ahead in certain subjects and behind in others. This situation may make the child stressed, anxious or bored....

In general, the older the child, the more difficult he or she will have with the move because of the increasing importance of the peer group....

The more frequently a family moves, the more important is the need for internal stability. With the proper attention from parents, and professional help if necessary, moving can be a positive growth experience for children, leading to increased self-confidence and interpersonal skills.

Excerpt from: *Children and Family Moves*
<http://www.aacap.org/publications/factsfam/fmlymove.htm>

A study reported to the Pediatric Academic Societies (5/4/03) indicates that

- Children who frequently change schools are more likely than those who don't to have behavioral health problems.
- School mobility is an independent predictor of behavioral problems regardless of one's race, income, or maternal education level.

According to one of the investigators (Mona Mansour of the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center) "Transitions can be so disruptive to children that parents need to weigh the potential academic benefit they may get versus the academic, social and emotional impact of making the transitions."

The study found that 14% of the children in the national sample of 3,285 were mobile (i.e., two or more elementary schools for 5 to 9 year olds; three or more schools for 9 to 14 year olds.) The children were also more likely to have non-married mothers, mothers with lower levels of school involvement, and mothers with symptoms of depression.

“For students, the long-term effects of high mobility include lower achievement levels and slower academic pacing, culminating in a reduced likelihood of high school completion. For residentially unstable students, such as homeless, migrant and foster care children high mobility is another barrier, among others, to an adequate education. Low-income and minority students are more likely to experience excessive classroom mobility, and the deleterious effects of this transience are most severe for such students ... the vast majority of school mobility is the result of housing instability....”

Excerpt from *Addressing the Causes and Consequences of High Student Mobility: The Role of School Systems and Communities* American Youth Policy Forum. <http://www.aypf.org>

For a detailed look at student mobility, see the above reference and:

>>>The General Accounting Office report “*Elementary School Children: Many Change Schools Frequently, Harming their Education*” Report GAO/HEHS-94-45.

>>>*Rural Student Mobility*

(<http://www.ncrel.org/policy/pubs/html/rmobile/executiv.htm>)

>>>*The Educational Consequences of Mobility for California Students and Schools* (<http://pace.berkeley.edu>)

>>>*Engaging Highly Transient Students*

by D.R. Sanderson (2003). Education 123(3), 600-605

(http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3673/is_200304/ai_n9232402)

>>>From: *Mobility and Achievement Gap*. by H. Skandera & R. Sousa (2002).

Hoover Digest Research and Opinion on Public Policy.

(<http://www.hoover.org/publications/digest/4488356.html>)

>>>From: *The Impact of Mobility on Academic Achievement: A review of the Literature*.

by K. Kaase. (2005). Wake County Public School System: Research Watch Evaluation and Research Department. No. 04.39.

(http://www.wcpss.net/evaluation-research/reports/2005/0439mobility_review.pdf)

>>>*School mobility and achievement: a meta-analysis*. by M. Mehana & A.J. Reynolds. (2004). *Children and Youth Services Review* 26(1): 93-119. (

http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6V98-4BD5GN0-5&_user=4423&_coverDate=01%2F31%2F2004&_alid=680665336&_rdoc=1&_fmt=full&_orig=search&_cdi=5892&_sort=d&_docanchor=&view=c&_ct=1&_acct=C00059605&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=4423&md5=14e61559ed989506382447e9f3c1ec15)

Mobility Has an Impact on Non-mobile Students Too

Researchers at the Center for School Improvement at the University of Chicago found that student mobility in Chicago was primarily localized: 80% of mobility was within the district. Students appear to move within networks of schools. These networks are made up of schools that are highly similar in terms of student racial and income composition. As a result of high student mobility, teachers spend more time with new students to orient them and materials are reviewed repeatedly for new students, leading to fewer topics covered over the course of a school year. Thus student mobility influences the education of both mobile and stable students. Findings indicate that by 6th grade, highly mobile students fall behind about 2/3 of a year, but by 6th grade stable students in schools which experience high student mobility fall behind about 1/2 year. To address the problem, the school district has instituted “Staying Put: A multi-level campaign to increase awareness about the effects of mobility on student achievement.”

Welcoming Strategies for Newly Arrived Students & Their Families

Starting a new school can be scary. Those concerned with mental health in schools can play important prevention and therapeutic roles by helping a school establish a welcoming program and ways to provide ongoing social support.

Special attention must be directed at providing Office Staff with training and resources so they can create a welcoming and supportive atmosphere to everyone who enters the school. And, of course, there must be workshops and follow-up assistance for teachers to help them establish welcoming procedures and materials.

Start simple. For example, assist teachers in establishing a few basic ways to help new students feel welcome and part of things, such as

- giving the student a *Welcome Folder*

A folder with the student's name, containing welcoming materials and information, such as a welcome booklet and information about fun activities at the school.

- assigning a *Peer Buddy*

Train students to be a special friend
>to show the new student around
>to sit next to the new student
>to take the new student to recess and lunch to meet schoolmates

Some parents are not sure how to interact with the school. Two ways to help new parents feel welcome and a part of things are to establish processes whereby teachers

- invite parents to a *Welcoming Conference*

This is meant as a chance for parents to get to know the teacher and school and for the teacher to facilitate positive connections between parent and school such as helping the parents connect with a school activity in which they seem interested. The emphasis is on *Welcoming* -- thus, any written material given out at this time specifically states WELCOME and is limited to simple orientation information. To the degree feasible, such material is made available in the various languages of those likely to enroll at the school.

- connect parents with a *Parent Peer Buddy*

Identify some parents who are willing to be a special friend to introduce the new parent around, to contact them about special activities and take them the first time, and so forth.

The following list are additional examples of prevention-oriented welcoming and social support strategies for minimizing negative experiences and ensuring positive outreach.

- (1) FRONT DOOR: Set up a Welcoming Table (identified with a welcoming sign) at the front entrance to the school and recruit and train volunteers to meet and greet everyone who comes through the door.

- (2) FRONT OFFICE: Work with the Office Staff to create ways to meet and greet strangers with a smile and an inviting atmosphere. Provide them with welcoming materials and information sheets regarding registration steps (with appropriate translations). Encourage the use of volunteers in the office so that there are sufficient resources to take the necessary time to greet and assist new students and families. It helps to have a designated registrar and even designated registration times.

- (3) WELCOMING MATERIALS: Prepare a booklet that clearly says WELCOME and provides some helpful info about who's who at the school, what types of assistance are available to new students and families, and offers tips about how the school runs. (Avoid using this as a place to lay down the rules; that can be rather an uninviting first contact.) Prepare other materials to assist students and families in making the transition and connecting with ongoing activities.

- (4) STUDENT GREETERS: Establish a *Student Welcoming Club* (perhaps the student council or leadership class can make this a project). These students can provide tours and some orientation (including initial introduction to key staff).

- (5) **PARENT/VOLUNTEER GREETERS:** Establish a General Welcoming Club of parents and/or volunteers who provide regular tours and orientations (including initial introduction to key staff). Develop a Welcoming Video.
- (6) **WELCOMING BULLETIN BOARD:** Dedicate a bulletin board (somewhere near the entrance to the school) that says **WELCOME** and includes such things as pictures of school staff, a diagram of the school and its facilities, pictures of students who entered the school during the past 1-2 weeks, information on tours and orientations, special meetings for new students, and so forth.
- (7) **CLASSROOM GREETERS:** Each teacher should have several students who are willing and able to greet strangers who come to the classroom. Recent arrivals often are interested in welcoming the next set of new enrollees.
- (8) **CLASSROOM INTRODUCTION:** Each teacher should have a plan to assist new students and families in making a smooth transition into the class. This includes ways to introduce the student to classmates as soon as the student arrives. (Some teachers may want to arrange with the office specified times for bringing a new student to the class.) An introductory Welcoming Conference should be conducted with the student and family as soon as feasible. A useful Welcoming aid is to present both the student and the family member with Welcoming Folders (or some other welcoming gift such as coupons from local businesses that have adopted the school).
- (9) **PEER BUDDIES:** In addition to the classroom greeter, a teacher can have several students who are trained to be a special buddy to a new student for a couple of weeks (and hopefully thereafter). This can provide the type of social support that allows a new student to learn about the school culture and how to become involved in activities.
 - A. OUTREACH FROM ORGANIZED GROUPS:** Establish a way for representatives of organized student and parent groups (including the PTSA) to make direct contact with new students and families to invite them to learn about activities and to assist them in joining in when they find activities that appeal to them.
 - B. SUPPORT GROUPS:** Offer groups designed to help new students and families learn about the community and the school and to allow them to express concerns and have them addressed. Such groups also allow them to connect with each other as another form of social support.
 - C. ONGOING POSITIVE CONTACTS:** Develop a variety of ways students and their families can feel an ongoing connection with the school and classroom (e.g., opportunities to volunteer help, positive feedback regarding participation, letters home that tell “all about what's happening”).

We are confronted with insurmountable opportunities.

-Pogo

2. Special Concerns of Students from Other Countries

Youngsters entering a new school and neighborhood are confronted with multiple transitional challenges. These are compounded when the transition also involves recent arrival in a new country and culture. In the short-run, failure to cope well with these challenges can result in major learning and behavior problems; in the long-run, the psychological and social impact can be devastating.

“Many of these children have to overcome poor academic preparation in their country of origin and nearly all have to learn English and new institutional and cultural customs and norms. As a result, there are growing concerns about how these children are performing in U.S. schools...and in turn about the new set of demands they are placing upon these institutions. These concerns are exacerbated by the increasing diversity of languages and cultures that these students bring with them and their high concentration in a few areas of the country....”

RAND report “How Immigrants Fare in U.S. Education”
<http://www.rand.org>.

For more information on transitions for immigrant students, see

“Promoting Secondary School Transitions for Immigrant Adolescents”
(Provides guidance on intake centers and newcomer schools)
<http://eric.ed.gov> – ERIC#=ED402786

“Secondary Newcomer Programs: Helping Recent Immigrants Prepare for School Success”
<http://eric.ed.gov> – ERIC#=ED419385

“Qualities of Effective Programs for Immigrant Adolescents with Limited Schooling”
<http://eric.ed.gov> – ERIC#=ED423667

Harvard Immigration Projects: Immigration Resources
<http://www.gse.harvard.edu>

New teachers and other new staff coming to a school are in transition too. They need to be welcomed and oriented and provided with immediate social support.

“Biculturation Groups”

The increased influx of immigrants to the U.S. has resulted in renewed attention to the problem of facilitating effective transitions. For students, schools have introduced programs to address specific transitional skill and counseling needs.

At one school these groups are called “Biculturation Groups.” As newly enrolled students visit the nurses office for immunizations, a prerequisite to school enrollment, she uses the opportunity to screen those who may need psychological transition support. Essentially, the screening focuses on whether or not the individual currently has an effective social support network (e.g., a home situation where acculturation problems are discussed and problems pursued). Thus most who join the groups are individuals in need of a social support network. In coming to the U.S. not only may they have left parents and other close relatives behind, they currently may be living with people they do not really know. (Ironically, in some cases, the youngster has left a cherished relative to rejoin a parent who they haven’t lived with for many years.) Moreover, they seldom have friends to turn to for help.

In initiating and maintaining biculturation (and other) groups, the emphasis is on ensuring that youngsters experience immediate and ongoing benefits. During group discussions, students commonly indicate feeling isolated and unhappy. Some of their concerns are related to acculturation problems (not knowing how to deal with the school and community, grief reactions for what has been lost in moving here, a desire to return home because the student didn’t want to come or it isn’t working out). However, some concerns are related to common problems of growing up, which can be exacerbated by the student’s immigrant status (e.g., conflicts with parents, guardians, school staff, peers; financial or job worries, academic problems personal isolation and alienation). Also there are a variety of concerns stemming from preimmigration problems (e.g., childhood physical and sexual abuse, war related trauma, ongoing grief reactions).

As the above concerns suggest, the group leader can draw on an understanding of the problems found among adolescents, in general, and among those attending a specific school. At the same time, however, it is important to acquire a sense of additional transition problems immigrants and other newcomers encounter. This requires an appreciation of the general nature of such transitions and how the specific school and community may be making the process easier or more difficult. Finally, one must be especially sensitive to what the newcomer may also have experienced in the way of previous traumatic events.

Students tend to terminate as they establish satisfying support mechanisms at school or at home. For those who leave the group without other sources of support, it is wise to recontact them after a few weeks to evaluate how things are going and to invite them back if they need ongoing support.

In general, it seems clear that, for newcomers, the period of transition can, like a crisis, be a time of dangerous opportunity. A transition group can help minimize the danger and maximize opportunity.

Easing the Impact of Student Mobility: Welcoming & Social Support

Youngsters entering a new school and neighborhood are confronted with multiple transition challenges. The challenges are compounded when the transition also involves recent arrival to a new country and culture. In the short run, failure to cope effectively with these challenges can result in major learning and behavior problems; in the long run, the psychological and social impacts may be devastating.

Cárdenas, Taylor, Adelman (1993)

From the perspective of addressing barriers to learning, welcoming and social support are essential facets of every school's transition programs. Estimates suggest 20-25% of students change schools each year. The figures are greater in school districts with large immigrant populations. While some make the transition easily, many find themselves alienated or "out-of-touch" in new surroundings.

Youngsters entering a new school and neighborhood are confronted with multiple transition challenges. The challenges are compounded when the transition also involves recent arrival in a new country and culture.

Youngsters vary in capability and motivation with respect to dealing with psychological transition into new settings. Students entering late in a school year often find it especially hard to connect and adjust. Making friends means finding ways to be accepted into a complex social milieu. School-wide strategies to ensure school adjustment of newly entering students and their families can reduce adjustment problems, ease bicultural development, enhance student performance, and establish a psychological sense of community throughout the school.

Welcoming and Social Support as Indicators of School Reform

Welcoming new students and their families is part of the broader reform goal of creating schools where staff, students and families interact positively and identify with the school and its goals.

Programs and related mechanisms and processes are needed to foster smooth transitions and positive social interactions facilitate social support provide opportunities for ready access to information and for learning how to function effectively in the school culture encourage involvement in decision-making.

How well a school welcomes and involves new students and families are basic signs of program quality and staff attitudes. As such, these indicators probably are good predictors of a school's overall impact.

Of course, for efforts to make welcoming and social support at schools more than another desired but unachieved set of reform aims, policy makers at all levels must take action. It is patently unfair to hold specific schools accountable for yet another major systemic change if they are not given the backing necessary to accomplish it. In an era when new sources of funding are unlikely, it is clear that such programs must be assigned a high priority, and funds must be reallocated in keeping with the level of priority. To do less is to guarantee the status quo.

Phases of Intervention

Interventions for welcoming and involving new students and families are as complex as any other psychological and educational intervention. This is especially so since the focus must not only be on those entering at the beginning of a term but on all who enter throughout the year. Clearly, the activity requires considerable time, space, materials, and competence. Specific strategies evolve over three overlapping phases:

(1) The first phase is broadly focused – using general procedures to welcome and facilitate adjustment and participation of all who are ready, willing, and able.

(2) Some people need just a bit more personalized assistance. Such assistance may include personal invitations, ongoing support for interacting with others and becoming involved in activities, aid in overcoming minor barriers to successful adjustment, a few more options to enable effective functioning and make participation more attractive, and so forth.

(3) More is needed for those who have not made an effective adjustment or who remain uninvolved (e.g., due to major barriers, an intense lack of interest, or negative attitudes). This phase requires continued use of personalized contacts, as well as addition of cost intensive outreach procedures as feasible.

In pursuing each phase, a major concern is overcoming barriers that make it hard for newcomers to function in the new community and school. Research points to a variety of familial, cultural, job, social class, communication, and school personnel attitude factors that hinder transitions. Barriers can be categorized as institutional, personal, or impersonal. Each type includes negative attitudes, lack of mechanisms and skills, or practical deterrents. For instance, institutional barriers encompass a lack of policy commitment to welcoming, inadequate resources (money, space, time), lack of interest or hostile attitudes on the part of staff, administration, and community, and failure to establish and maintain necessary mechanisms and skills to ensure program success.

Key Intervention Tasks

In pursuing each intervention phase, there are four major intervention tasks:

1. Establishing a mechanism for planning, implementing, and evolving programmatic activity
2. Creating welcoming and initial home involvement strategies (e.g., information and outreach to new students and families; a school-wide welcoming atmosphere; a series of specific "New Student/New Parent Orientation" processes)
3. Providing social supports and facilitating involvement (e.g., peer buddies; personal invitations to join relevant ongoing activities)
4. Maintaining support and involvement – including provision of special help for an extended period of time if necessary

Task 1: A Program Mechanism

Like any other program, efforts to welcome and involve new students and families require institutional commitment, organization, and ongoing involvement. That is, the program must be school-owned, and there must be a mechanism dedicated to effective program planning, implementation, and long-term evolution.

One useful mechanism is a Welcoming Steering Committee. Such a committee is designed to (a) adopt new strategies that fit in with what a school already is doing and (b) provide leadership for evolving and maintaining a welcoming program. The group usually consists of a school administrator (e.g., principal or AP), a support service person (e.g., a dropout counselor, Title I coordinator, school psychologist), one or more interested teachers, the staff member who coordinates volunteers, an office staff representative, and hopefully a few dedicated parents.

Task 2: Creating Welcoming and Initial Home Involvement Strategies

It is not uncommon for students and parents to feel unwelcome at school. The problem may begin with their first contacts. Efforts to enhance welcoming and facilitate involvement must counter factors that make the setting uninviting and develop ways to make it attractive. This can be viewed as the welcoming or invitation problem.

From a psychological perspective, welcoming is enmeshed with attitudes school staff, students, and parents hold about involving new students and families. Welcoming is facilitated when attitudes are positive. And, positive attitudes seem most likely when those concerned perceive personal benefits as outweighing potential costs (e.g., psychological and tangible).

A prime focus in addressing welcoming is on ensuring that most communications and interactions between the school and students and families convey a welcoming tone. This is conveyed through formal communications to students and families, procedures for reaching out to individuals, and informal interactions.

An early emphasis in addressing the welcoming problem should be on establishing formal processes that:

1. convey a general sense of welcome to all
2. extend a personalized invitation to those who appear to need something more.

Communications and invitations to students and their families can be done in two forms:

1. general communications (e.g., oral and written communications when a new student registers, classroom announcements, mass distribution of flyers, newsletters)
2. special, personalized contacts (e.g., personal conferences and notes from the teacher).

For those who are not responsive to general invitations, the next logical step is to extend special invitations and increase personalized contact. Special invitations are directed at designated individuals and are intended to overcome personal attitudinal barriers and can be used to elicit information about other persisting barriers.

Task 3: Providing Social Supports and Facilitating Involvement

Social supports and specific processes to facilitate involvement are necessary to:

- (a) address barriers
- (b) sanction participation of new students/families in any option and to the degree each finds feasible (e.g., initially legitimizing minimal involvement and frequent changes in area of involvement)
- (c) account for cultural and individual diversity
- (d) enable those with minimal skills to participate
- (e) provide social and academic supports to improve participation skills.

In all these facilitative efforts, established peers (students and parents) can play a major role as peer welcomers and mentors.

If a new student or family is extremely negative, exceptional efforts may be required. In cases where the negative attitude stems from skill deficits (e.g., doesn't speak English, lacks social or functional skills), providing special assistance with skills is a logical and relatively direct

approach. However, all such interventions must be pursued in ways that minimize stigma and maximize positive attitudes.

Some reluctant new arrivals may be reached, initially, by offering them an activity designed to give them additional personal support. For example, newcomers can be offered a mutual interest group composed of others with the same cultural background or a mutual support group (e.g., a bicultural transition group for students or parents -- Cárdenas, Taylor, & Adelman, 1993; a parent self-help group – Simoni & Adelman, 1990). Parent groups might even meet away from the school at a time when working parents can participate. (The school's role would be to help initiate the groups and provide consultation as needed.) Relatedly, it is important to provide regular opportunities for students, families, and staff to share their heritage and interests and celebrate the cultural and individual diversity of the school community.

Task 4: Maintaining Involvement

As difficult as it is to involve some newcomers initially, maintaining their involvement may be even a more difficult matter. Maintaining involvement can be seen as a problem of:

- (a) providing continuous support for learning, growth, and success (including feedback about how involvement is personally beneficial)
- (b) minimizing feelings of incompetence and being blamed, censured, or coerced.

A critical element in establishing a positive sense of community at a school and of facilitating students school adjustment and performance is involvement of families in schooling. This is why parent involvement in schools is a prominent item on the education reform agenda. It is, of course, not a new concern. As Davies (1987) reminds us, the "questions and conflict about parent and community relationships to schools began in this country when schools began" (p. 147). Reviews of the literature on parents and schooling indicates wide endorsement of parent involvement.

With respect to students with school problems, parent involvement has been mostly discussed in legal terms (e.g., participation in the IEP

process). There has been little systematic attention paid to the value of and ways to involve the home in the efforts to improve student achievement. (The term, parent involvement, and even family involvement is too limiting. Given extended families, the variety of child caretakers, and the influence of older siblings, the concern would seem minimally one of involving the home.)

To involve the home, a staff must reach out to parents and others in the home and encourage them to drop in, be volunteers, go on field trips, participate in creating a community newsletter, organize social events, plan and attend learning workshops, meet with the teacher to learn more about their child's curriculum and interests, and establish family social networks. It is imperative that the only contact not be when they are called in to discuss their child's learning and/or behavior problems. When those in the home feel unwelcome or "called on the carpet," they cannot be expected to view the school as an inviting setting.

Steps in Welcoming: Key Elements and Activities

In pursuing strategies for enhancing welcoming and home involvement a first concern is to ensure a positive welcome at the various initial encounters school staff have with a new student and family (see attached Exhibit).

Each point of contact represents an opportunity and a challenge with respect to welcoming new students and families, linking them with social supports, assisting them to make a successful transition, and identifying those who do not so that individual school adjustment needs can be addressed.

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We need to exert our efforts to make the school a place where differences, between and among people, are not merely tacitly accepted but are celebrated as a national blessing.

W. L. Smith

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- Simoni, J., & Adelman, H. S. (1993). School-based mutual support groups for low income parents. *The Urban Review*, 25, 335-350.

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For more resources in addressing the transition of mobile students, see Center resources at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

>> *Welcoming and Involving New Students and Families* (a technical aid packet)

>> *Cultural Concerns in Addressing Barriers to Learning* (an introductory packet)

Quick Finds on:

- >> *Cultural Competence*
- >> *Homeless children and youth*
- >> *Immigrant Students and Mental Health*
- >> *Support for transitions*

Exhibit. Outline of Welcoming Steps and Activities

1. Family Comes to Register

Staff/volunteer designated to welcome and provide information to all family members

Provides information (in primary languages) about:

- (a) needed documents
(e.g., Information card)
- (b) how to get help related to getting documents
- (c) directions for newcomers
- (d) making a registration appointment

2. Registration Appointment

Ensure that the registrar has time to welcome, register, and begin orientation Orientation staff
and
peers take over and

Do a Welcome Interview that can clarify newcomer interests and other information they desire

Provide information about:

- (a) How the school runs each day
- (b) Special activities for parents and students
- (c) Community services they may find helpful
- (d) Parents who are ready to help them join in
- (e) Students ready to meet with new students to help them join in
- (f) How parents can help their child learn and do well at school

Conduct a tour – Make initial introductions to teacher/principal/others

Based primarily on teacher preference (but also taking into consideration parent and student interests), student might stay for rest of school day or start the next day.

3a. Student Begins Transition-in Phase

Teacher introduces student to classmates and program

Peer "buddy" is identified (to work with in class, go to recess/lunch with at least for first week)

Teacher or peer buddy gives student welcoming "gift" (e.g., notebook with school name)

Teacher gives peer buddy "thank you gift" (e.g. notebook with school name, certificate, etc)

Designated students introduce and invite new student to out of class school activities

3b. Parent Begins Transition-in Phase

Designated staff or volunteer (e.g., a parent) either meets with parents on registration day or contacts parent during next few days to discuss activities in which they might be interested

Designated parent invites and introduces new parent to an activity in which the new parent has expressed interest or may find useful

At first meeting attended, new parent is given a welcoming "gift" (e.g., calendar with school name; coupons donated by neighborhood merchants)

(cont.)

Exhibit. *Outline of Welcoming Steps and Activities* (cont.)

4a. Student Becomes Involved in School Activities

Over first 3 weeks staff monitors student's involvement and acceptance if necessary, designated students are asked to make additional efforts to help the student enter in and feel accepted by peers.

4b. Parent Becomes Involved in School Activities

Over the first 1-2 months, staff monitors involvement and acceptance.

If necessary, designated parents are asked to make additional efforts to help the parents enter in and feel accepted

5. Assessment at End of Transition Period

Three weeks after the student enrolls, interview:

(a) the teacher to determine if the student has made a good or poor adjustment to the school (Poor school adjusters are provided with additional support in the form of volunteer help, consultation for teacher to analyze the problem and explore options, etc.)

(b) the student to determine his or her perception of how well the transition-in has gone and to offer encouragement and resources if needed

(c) the parents to check their perception of how well the transition-in has gone for the student

and

for themselves and to offer encouragement and resources if needed

6. Follow-up Intervention

A. Problem analysis: This step involves going back to the person or persons who indicated dissatisfaction and asking for more specifics (e.g., what the specific problem is and what the person(s) think needs to be changed). It may also be appropriate and necessary to check with others (e.g., teacher, parent, student).

B. Intervention plan: Based on the information gathered, plans can be made about what to do and who will do it. What to do may range from connecting the student/family with others for social support to helping to identify specific activities and ways to facilitate student/family involvement. Who can do it? Maybe a volunteer, a teacher, an outreach coordinator, etc.

C. Intervention written summary: Once such an intervention is carried out the Extended Welcoming -- Summary of Intervention form can be filled out and given to the a case manager or other designated person who monitors follow-through related to interventions.

D. Extended welcoming follow-up interview: A week after the extended intervention is completed, another (modified) follow-up interview should be carried out respectively, with the student, parent, and teacher. If a problem remains, additional intervention is in order -- if feasible.

II. Key transitions and related intervention strategies (cont.)

E. From High School to Higher Education and Employment

“The senior class is graduating ... our work is done....” Or is it?

The outcomes for which schools and communities are held accountable look beyond graduation to the successful engagement of young adults into the community as productive citizens. For some students this includes higher education; for some students the next step is employment. Schools need to focus on this important transition from the beginning. The emphasis below is mainly on the many opportunities secondary schools have to support successful transitions to higher education and employment. As Rosenbaum (2002) stresses:

“...As the last societal institution attended by all youths, high schools must prepare all young people for adulthood. If they fail, youths will have difficulty becoming self-sufficient adults. The labor market is often a cruel teacher, and, if youths have bad job experiences, government help comes in the form of job training programs that may stigmatize and hurt their careers worse than if they got no training. While college-educated reformers think that college is necessary to get good jobs, and they often urge that all high school seniors should have the chance to become doctors and lawyers, these are not realistic options for all seniors, and they are not the only good jobs in society....

While educators worry that career-related education shuts off college options, research indicates that many vocational education students get college degrees, and “college and career” programs may prepare students to do even better. While educators worry about premature career decisions, high school is not too early for students to begin assessing what they've accomplished and their likely career options. For students several years behind grade level, discussing noncollege options does not limit their careers, it helps them become aware of realities and options, so they make informed decisions. Self-assessment may encourage students to improve their efforts and to plan multiple options....”

“Beyond Empty Promises: Policies to Improve Transitions into College and Jobs”
<http://eric.ed.gov> – ERIC#=ED465094





CTE TODAY!



What is Career and Technical Education?

- Encompasses 94 percent of high school students and 15 million postsecondary students¹
- Includes high schools, career centers, community and technical colleges, four-year universities and more
- Educates students for a range of career options through 16 Career Clusters® and 79+ pathways
- Integrates with academics in a rigorous and relevant curriculum
- Features high school and postsecondary partnerships, enabling clear pathways to certifications and degrees
- Fulfills employer needs in high-skill, high-wage, high-demand areas
- Prepares students to be college- and career-ready by providing core academic skills, employability skills and technical, job-specific skills

CTE Works for High School Students

High school students involved in CTE are more engaged, perform better and graduate at higher rates.

- 81 percent of dropouts say relevant, real-world learning opportunities would have kept them in high school.²
- The average high school graduation rate for students concentrating in CTE programs is 93 percent, compared to a national adjusted cohort graduation rate of 80 percent.³
- More than 75 percent of secondary CTE investors pursued postsecondary education shortly after high school.⁴

CTE Works for College Students and Adults

Postsecondary CTE fosters postsecondary completion and prepares students and adults for in-demand careers.

- 4 out of 5 secondary CTE graduates who pursued postsecondary education after high school had earned a credential or were still enrolled two years later.⁵
- A person with a CTE-related associate degree or credential will earn on average between \$4,000 and \$19,000 more a year than a person with a humanities associate degree.⁶
- 27 percent of people with less than an associate degree, including licenses and certificates, earn more than the average bachelor's degree recipient.⁷

Today's cutting-edge, rigorous and relevant career and technical education (CTE) prepares youth and adults for a wide range of high-wage, high-skill, high-demand careers.

CTE Works for the Economy

Investing in CTE yields big returns for state economies.

- In Connecticut, every public dollar invested in Connecticut community colleges returns \$16.40 over the course of students' careers. That state's economy receives \$5 billion annually in income from this investment.⁸
- In Washington, for every dollar invested in secondary CTE programs, the state earns \$9 in revenues and benefits.⁹
- In Tennessee, CTE returns \$2 for every \$1 invested. At the secondary level, CTE program completers account for more than \$13 million in annual tax revenues.¹⁰

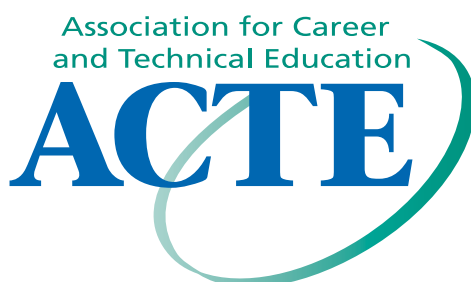
CTE Works for Business

CTE addresses the needs of high-growth industries and helps close the skills gap.

- The skilled trades are the hardest jobs to fill in the United States, with recent data citing 806,000 jobs open in the trade, transportation and utilities sector and 293,000 jobs open in manufacturing.¹¹
- Health care occupations, many of which require an associate degree or less, make up 12 of the 20 fastest growing occupations.¹²
- STEM occupations such as environmental engineering technicians require an associate degree and will experience faster than average job growth.¹³
- Middle-skill jobs, jobs that require education and training beyond high school but less than a bachelor's degree, are a significant part of the economy. Of the 55 million job openings created by 2020, 30 percent will require some college or a two-year associate degree.¹⁴

Endnotes

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Notes on Transition Planning for College

All students can benefit from well-designed transition planning for college. With specific reference to those students identified for special education, middle and high schools have a responsibility under IDEA to focus on a range of transition interventions (see *Transition 101* on the website of the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities – <http://www.nichcy.org/resources/transition101.asp>).

In general, family stakeholders in a community need to work together to ensure the middle school and high school do all that they can to provide an effective transition-to-college program. (In this respect, there are various resources to draw upon – see a couple examples cited at the end of these notes.)

And, either through such middle and high school programs or through other resources, each family needs to ensure that an individual transition plan is developed and effectively implemented.

Given this, it falls to the student and the family to ensure that the college selected is a good fit for the student's current motivation and capabilities and that transition plans for after high school graduation are implemented and regularly modified as necessary. It is particularly important to map out the personal, interpersonal, and academic supports, accommodations, and services that will be available and can be readily accessed by the student.

Below are examples of steps related to college transition planning for the student.

(1) *Develop an Individual Transition Plan.* Student works up an individualized transition plan with the support of those with whom s/he has a good working relationship (e.g., a family member, high school counselor, therapist, peer support group, etc.). In developing the plan, it will help to contact the college (e.g., email the student counseling center, disability office, etc.) to determine what that institution provides to facilitate effective transition and to garner advice about facilitating a successful transition. It is important in developing the plan to anticipate specific problems that will arise and write up how to address them.

(2) *Easing Anxieties and Strengthening Specific Coping and Self-advocacy Attitudes and Skills.* To increase the likelihood that the transition plan is successful, additional time should be devoted to working with the student to (a) anticipate and alleviate worries about the transition and (b) enhance specific coping and self-advocacy attitudes and skills related to the type of personal, interpersonal, and academic challenges s/he will likely encounter during the period of transition.

(3) *Ensuring Availability and Access to Relevant Support Mechanisms.* Some will be available on campus; others will have to be accessed off campus. It is essential to be certain that the student will have ready access to tutoring, counseling, continued treatment, etc. There also needs to be a regular schedule for student family communication.

(4) *Easing into College Demands.* In high school, advanced placement courses provide an initial sampling of what to expect. Well-orchestrated visits to and orientations at the college are imperative. These should include a focus on both the physical plant and resources and on social and cultural facets. If feasible, this is a good time to connect the student with someone who agrees to be the student's college mentor/advisor/counselor/coach. After graduation, a summer college course can be a next transition experience. For some students, community college is a useful transition step to university enrollment. During the first term at college,

many students need to avoid taking too heavy a course load. For those with special needs, all necessary accommodations should be established upon enrollment. And, this is the time to ensure the student is effectively connected to someone on the staff who can do some mentoring, advising, counseling, and coaching and is involved with some peers who can facilitate access to social activity and support networks.

(5) *Minimizing Financial Concerns.* Specific attention needs to be paid to financial concerns, including care in budgeting, how to access financial aid/loans/scholarships, and likely problems that will arise if a student has to supplement income by taking a part time job.

(6) *Monitoring, Problem Solving, and Celebrating Successes.* Obviously, there must be a means for monitoring the student's reactions to college and general life stressors and providing relevant support and enhanced coping and problem solving strategies as necessary. Special emphasis needs to be given to critical times in the college schedule and calendar (e.g., enrolling in classes, dealing with major assignments, mid term and final exams, vacation periods). From a psychological perspective, it is important to watch for and take steps to minimize threats to feelings of competence, self-determination, and interpersonal relationships with significant others. And, it is important not to forget about taking time to celebrate each significant accomplishment.

(7) *Revamping Plans and Supports.* In addition to difficulties that may arise in successfully implementing the transition plan, provision must be made for regular evaluation and adjustment of plans and supports. This is essential not only to react to problems, but to address natural developmental changes in students during the first year in college. It is common, for example, for students to go through considerable changes in their goals, peer group and intimate interpersonal relationships, and values (e.g., they change majors, rethink career goals, fall in love, etc.).

For more, you might start with the publications and resources on the website for the ***Transition Coalition*** at the University of Kansas. See
<http://www.transitioncoalition.org/cgiwrap/tcacs/new/resources/index.php>

Among their many publications on this topic, you might start with: *The Community Transition Program: Experiences Starting a Community-Based Program for Students Aged 18-21*. "This manual is based on the development and operation of one community-based transition program in Lawrence, KS called Community Transitions (C-Tran). The teachers of C-Tran reveal their insights and share many of their resources, programming, and curricula to help others develop community-based transition programs."

They also have links to various other resources.

Also see, Chapter 7 on "Transition to Postsecondary Education" in *Transition Education and Services for Students with Disabilities* by P/L/ Sitlington & G.M. Clark (4th edition, 2006) published by Pearson (Allyn & Bacon).

Some Strategies to Facilitate a Smoother Transition From High School

1. *Developing Multiple Plans.* Many young people leave high school with a narrow plan of action and with few alternatives. They fully expect to be successful with the plan and are not prepared to face any barriers. Developing flexibility in career planning requires a sense of purpose, problem solving skills, and several plans....

2. *Self-Advocacy and Marketing.* As young people move towards further education, or into the labor market, it is critical for them to market and advocate for themselves. With scarce opportunities and confusing bureaucracies, there is a need to develop communication skills, self-confidence, organizational adaptability, and effectiveness in human relations. This requires activities such as mentoring, role-played practice, and ongoing economic, emotional, and informational support.

3. *Managing Changing Relationships.* The emotional and social changes adolescents experience can challenge young people as they try to cope with barriers in the education system and labor market. Friends provide emotional support, but this is a time when friendship patterns are changing. Parents are needed for emotional, material, and information support, but, at the same time, they need to allow young people sufficient room to develop their own sense of identity. Coping with relationship issues can be facilitated through communication, human relationship training, and problem solving, which blurs most of the traditional distinction between career and personal counseling.

4. *Meeting Basic Needs.* Young people have a strong need for community. Other central needs include having a sense of meaning in life, physical and emotional security, and basic structure in relationships and living. As young people move beyond high school, many of these basic needs require reevaluation. In addition to changing relationships, questions emerge as to how to make a living, how to plan meaningful activities, and how to effectively manage time. To facilitate these changes, young people need to establish a sense of purpose and understand how they are meeting their current and future needs...

5. *Coping with Stress.* Adolescence is a period of considerable stress. While much of the stress can be minimized through support, persistence, and active decision making and planning, there still will be times when young people find themselves in difficult situations. Coping with stress is associated with various competencies such as organizational adaptability, human relations, problem solving, and self-confidence....

6. *Coping with Loss.* We were surprised at the extent to which young people were influenced by various personal losses. These losses involved death in the family (usually grand parents) and the experience of parental separation and divorce....

7. *Bridging Programs.* Many young people lack "hands-on" experience as they attempt to enter the world of work. Many also are unfamiliar with, and fearful of, moving into post-secondary education. To address this concern, counselors need to develop work experience and co-op education programs to help young people acquire the necessary experience. Post-secondary education entry programs can also play an important role in easing transition difficulties.

8. *Information and Information Access.* The challenge in the information age is not only how to gather information, but how to turn information into personally relevant knowledge. Young people need up-to-date information on careers, education programs, and market trends. They must also develop skills to assess the relevance of information. Acquiring these skills involves both theoretical and applied knowledge. Counseling strategies within this domain include helping young people develop research, interviewing, and critical analysis skills....

II. Key transitions and related intervention strategies (cont.)

F. Special Needs Students and Transitions

While all of the supports for transition discussed in this document apply to students with special needs, each of the following moves usually require extra supports and resources for such students.

Transitioning from

a special preschool program into kindergarten

one special program to another

hospital or residential programs back to school

segregated special classes to inclusion in regular education programs

high school to work or higher education

There is a great deal of information and resources available for designing transition interventions for special needs students. The following discussion highlights some major matters and provides links to various resources.

#####

Making a Smooth Transition to School by Beth Katz

<http://www.specialeducationguide.com/pre-k-12/the-parent-teacher-partnership/making-a-smooth-transition-to-school/>

Veteran special education teachers know that the students who suffer the most anxiety are often the ones who are making some sort of transition. This transition can be from the home to a classroom environment for the first time, from one classroom to another or from one school to another. These transitions are hard for even the most capable students, so they are understandably even more difficult for students with special needs. As a parent or a teacher, you will never be able to eliminate all of a child's anxiety or fears, but by being proactive, you can help to ease them. Here are a few guidelines for helping students with transitions.

Find Special Education Degree Programs

Arrange an IEP Meeting Before the First Day of School

Most school districts require special education teachers to hold an IEP transition meeting when a student is moving into a new program or school. Such a meeting must be held sometime in the second semester of the school year and should include the student's new teachers and service providers. For the sake of time, many districts try to hold the annual review (AR) and the transition meeting at the same time. If your child's AR is due in June, that is just fine; however, if it is due in January, your student will likely forget the friendly faces that he or she meets by the time he or she makes the transition. If the latter is the case, request an additional transition meeting or parent-student-teacher conference that takes place closer to the end of the school year. But know that while having the annual review with the old team and the new team is considered a best practice, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act has no provision requiring a transition meeting. So a parent can request it, but there's no legal mandate for the school to accommodate the request. The exception is a transition where a student is moving from a more or less restrictive program triggering what is called a "major program change." In this case an IEP meeting (in some states called an ARC meeting) is held to change the IEP to reflect the change of program. Typically team members from the old program and the new program are present. Transitions that are normal progressions, such as moving from elementary to middle school, do not require the same meeting, though many districts conduct them anyway.

Do a Test Run

If your child will be required to vary to his or her routine, practice these changes until you are confident that he or she knows them. Do not simply tell your child that he or she will be taking a new bus, walk him or her to the bus until it is second nature. Teachers should be prepared to do the same after school. If the student will be walking between classrooms, practice the route and have him or her guide you. Also, bear in mind that an empty campus looks very different than the same halls filled with thousand students rushing to class. Request that staff supervise during the busy first few days (or weeks) of school. If your child requires supervision during any or all unscheduled activities (such as changing classrooms, recess or lunch), ask for a schedule that clearly states which staff member (or members) will be responsible for this supervision.

Designate a Base Camp and/or a Friendly Face

If your student will be moving between classes, or from the bus to the classroom, chances are he or she will get lost during the first week. It happens. Designate a “base camp” where he or she can go to ask for directions. This can be the front office, the counseling office or a specific classroom. For students with special needs, the more visible the base camp, the better. Have the student practice finding this place from various points around campus. Also, designate a member of the office staff, counselor or special education teacher to be the “friendly face” who will help the student find his or her way or answer any questions. Your child should know his or her appointed “friendly face” before school begins, and feel comfortable asking that staff member for assistance.

Talk About It

If you notice that your child is exhibiting anxiety about a transition, talk about it. Ask your child to list his or her fears, from the biggest to the smallest, and try to address each one. Teachers can do this, too. On the first day of school, have students anonymously write their fears about the new school year on pieces of paper, and read them out loud as part of a group discussion. This is a great ice breaker, and helps to build trust between you and your students.

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A Note About Inclusion

If the policy for inclusion is to work effectively, then schools must address a variety of barriers and do so in a proactive way. The following worksheet from our Center’s introductory packet entitled: *Least Intervention Needed: Toward Appropriate Inclusion of Students with Special Needs* provides some added areas of emphasis for school staff to pursue in building a school’s capacity to include special needs students in regular programs. The focus is on expanding attention to capacity-building of teachers, paraeducators, volunteers, etc. so that (a) classrooms are better able to provide personalized instruction and address problems in a caring manner, (b) crisis response personnel are better equipped to provide support and guidance during a crisis, will appropriately follow-up afterwards, and will design prevention efforts that account for students with disabilities, (c) transition activities fully account for such students, (d) home involvement activities fully account for students with disabilities and their families, (e) services needed by disabled students and their family are available at school, and (f) effective links are in place to community resources needed by disabled students and their family. Clearly, student support personnel have a special role to play in all this.

Worksheet: Some Added Areas to Focus on in Building a School's Capacity for Inclusion

Classroom-Focused Enabling

Examples of added concerns

- understanding the nature of specific disabilities
- creating small classes within big ones
- in-class academic assistance and support/guidance for students
- social support mechanisms
- strategies for responding to group dynamics and interpersonal conflicts
- advocacy for individual students
- authentic assessment

Crisis response/prevention

Examples of added concerns

- understanding the nature of specific disabilities
- integrating various policies & implementation plans
- planning for additional supports both during crises and for follow-up debriefing and care
- modifying prevention strategies to accommodate full range of students (e.g., human relations and mediation programs)

Supports for Transitions

Examples of added concerns

- understanding the nature of specific disabilities
- having appropriate social support and physical accommodations as the student(s) make any transition into a new program, activity, or setting, and go one difficult task to another (included here are concerns about going to and from school, recreation and enrichment opportunities)
- restoring any needed services that may be lost in moving from special education to regular classes and applying 504 accommodations
- school to work/career options

Home Involvement in Schooling

Examples of added concerns

- understanding the nature of specific disabilities and its impact on families
- Modifications of homework
- additional ways home can support school's efforts with youngster
- education programs for those in the home (including siblings) so they can better support youngster's development and functioning
- mutual support and respite programs for family members

Student and Family Assistance

Examples of added concerns

- understanding the nature of specific disabilities and its impact on families
- ensuring referral systems are in place and not misused
- ensuring all interventions are coordinated and that there is effective management of care for clients (including as part of systems of care initiatives)
- expanding the range of school-based and school-linked services

Community Involvement

Examples of added concerns

- understanding the nature of specific disabilities and its impact on families
- recruiting businesses that will include students with disabilities 'in mentoring and job opportunities
- outreach to agencies and other resources to encourage accommodation of those with disabilities
- recruitment of parent volunteers and others who understand and want to work with disabilities

Transition Services

<https://www.naset.org/transervices4.0.html>

As most adults know from their own experience, the period known as adolescence is probably the most difficult and unsettling period of adjustment in one's development. It is a time filled with physical, emotional, and social upheavals. Until a child leaves secondary school, a parent experiences a sense of protective control over the child's life. This protective guidance normally involves educational, medical, financial, and social input to assist the child's growth. When the child leaves this setting, a parent undergoes a personal struggle in "letting go." There is always a certain amount of apprehension associated with the child's entrance into the adult world, as the greater responsibility for adjustment now falls on the child and the parent's role diminishes.

For the child with a disability, this developmental period can be fraught with even greater apprehension, for a variety of reasons. Depending on the nature and severity of the disability, special education professionals and parents may play more of an ongoing role in the child's life even after he or she leaves secondary education. Historically, parents and their children have spent years actively involved in Individual Educational Plan (IEP) development and meetings, transitional IEP (ITEP) development, and Committee on Special Education (CSE) meetings concerning educational and developmental welfare. Depending on the mental competence (the capability to make reasoned decisions) of the child with disabilities, some parents may have to continue to make vital decisions affecting all aspects of their children's lives; they need not shy away, thinking that they are being too overprotective if they are involved in the child's life after the child leaves school. On the other hand, the parents of children not affected by diminished mental competence should use all their energies to encourage the child's steps toward independence.

Since planning for the future of a student with disabilities can arouse fear of the unknown, a parent may tend to delay addressing these issues, and instead focus only on the present. It is our belief, however, that working through these fears and thinking about the child's best future interest will ensure a meaningful outcome. Regardless of the nature and severity of a disability, parents will be exposed to a transitional process during the child's school years that will provide a foundation for the adult world. This transitional process will include many facets of planning for the future and should be fully understood by everyone concerned each step of the way. Planning for the future is an investment in a child's well being and the purpose of this section of NASET is to help you understand all the aspects of this important time.

If you are a special education professional or professional, working with students 14 and older than you will need to be fully informed of all the areas involved in the transition phase. While you will not be directly involved in many of these areas, you can assist the parent through awareness, information, and support. Knowing what students and parents must face in order to successfully transition into adult life is a crucial part of special education for children ages 14-21. NASET hopes this section will provide that education and awareness.

Table of Contents

Overview of Transition Services; Types of Services Covered under Transition Services; Transition Planning: A Team Effort; Disability Population Receiving Transition Services; Transition Services on the IEP; Self Determination; Record Keeping During the Transition Service Phase; Vocational Assessments; Employment Planning; Social and Sexual Issues During Transition; Travel Training; Recreation and Leisure Activities; Assistive Technology; Residential Placement Options; Post Secondary Education; Financial and Health Insurance Issues; Legal Issues in the Transition Phase

Transitioning from Psychiatric Hospitalization to Schools

Although overall ... children's hospitalizations did not increase between 2006 and 2011, hospitalizations for all listed mental health conditions increased by nearly 50% among children aged 10 to 14 years.... Inpatient visits for suicide, suicidal ideation, and self-injury increased by 104% for children ages 1 to 17 years, and by 151% for children ages 10 to 14 years during this period....

Torio, Encinosa, Berdahl, McCormick, & Simpson (2014)

During the school year, many children experience an event that causes them to be hospitalized for a lengthy period of time. Afterwards, they face the difficulty of re-entering school. A review of the literature on current practices related to students returning from psychiatric hospitalization indicates transitions are not well planned and implemented. This resource highlights the problem and strategies for improvement.

About Psychiatric Hospitalization And Discharge

Severe mental disorders are associated with a variety of symptoms that disrupt life at home and at school. Not all mental disorders require hospitalization. However, when a youngster manifests such symptoms as hallucinations, threatens to seriously hurt him/herself or others, and/or has not eaten or slept for days, psychiatric hospitalization is a common reaction. The placement may be for a few days or a lengthy period of time. When it ends, most youngsters will return to regular schools.

When first hospitalized, a discharge plan is initiated to focus on concerns about post hospitalization care (e.g., specific recommendations about facilities or resources to be considered, changes in living arrangements, medications, psychotherapy). The emphasis is on ways to continue the youngster's improvement and minimize the need for future hospitalization. Good practice calls for hospitals to include parents, the youngster, and other involved professionals while tailoring a personalized plan. It also calls for taking into account the community, home environment, and school.

Clearly, school plays a central role in a student's life. And one of the biggest post psychiatric hospitalization tasks is school re-entry. Transitioning into a school is a hard transition for many students and often more so for a youngster returning from a hospital stay. Both the school staff and peers can be helpful or a problem. For example, when a student returns to a school where s/he was enrolled, they need to feel welcome, and such feelings may be undermined when those at school make comments and ask unwanted questions about why the student has been away. In general, the stresses of re-entry may work against ongoing recovery; positive supports can enhance recovery.

Current Transition Programs And Problems

Transition back to school requires considerable coordination, communication, and care. To accomplish all this, post-hospitalization transitions require a system of care that involves collaboration among the school, the family, and the hospital. Critical to such collaboration is that someone at the school (e.g., a student support staff member, a teacher) be identified as a special

Effective communication among all those involved, of course, is essential to ensuring that everyone is on the same page with respect to implementing the plan. It is both the hospital's and school's duty to be in regular communication. This frequently is not the case. Too often, hospitals and schools do not share critical information necessary to ensure a successful transition. When this happens, the professionals involved have insufficient information for playing their role. In particular, this adds to the problems schools already have with respect to facilitating transitions and helping students adjust. (It has been suggested that one of the main reasons youngsters are sent back to a psychiatric hospital is because of communication errors between hospital and school.)

Transition protocols have been developed and are used in schools across the country (e.g., see <http://www.tapartnership.org/docs/presentations/socMeetingSummer2011/day1/Workshop%2039-%20Successful%20Transitions/School%20Re-Entry%20After%20Discharge%20Guidelines.pdf>). However, research suggests that they are not well used. For example, such protocols suggest having districts sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) about following specific guidelines for re-entry after a psychiatric hospital discharge. One key guideline specifies that the school will appoint an administrative contact person to act as a liaison between the hospital, the parents, and the school to ensure an effective transition and educational placement. Also recommended is consideration of initial partial day attendance to ease the stress of the transition.

An Example of a Hospital Program that Emphasizes Transition

UCLA's ABC Partial Hospitalization program encompasses a focus on facilitating successful transition from hospital to school (http://www.uclahealth.org/site_neuro.cfm?id=614). The program enables a youngster's gradual re-entry and adjustment to school while providing hospital supports.

UCLA's program uses a team of social workers, occupational therapists, recreational therapists, and child psychiatrists working together to implement the plan for the return to school. During the day the youngster arrives around 7:45am and leaves at 2:30, which mimics a regular school day.

The morning consists of catching up with subjects such as Math and Language Arts. Then, a Cognitive Based Therapy (CBT) group focuses on teaching the youngsters to express their feelings in a healthy and controlled manner, and to interact positively with the peers and adults around them. This is followed by Occupational and Recreational Therapy. The former includes art projects such as painting, making candles, stained glass, friendship bracelets, etc., with a focus on enhancing attention and patience. Recreational Therapy emphasizes the idea of sportsmanship, working with others, and being active.

Throughout the school day youngsters are taught how to act around others and be mindful of those around them. A reinforcement system is used to encourage proper behaviors, team work, and other behaviors required in a normal school setting. For example, tokens are given for good behaviors, such as kindness and helping others. The tokens are put in a communal bucket at the end of the day, and when the kids collectively earn enough tokens, they are rewarded with a party. To encourage individual behavior improvements, points are given for good listening, following directions, and working well with others. These points can be cashed in for prizes.

Throughout the day youngsters meet with their assigned psychiatrist. Part of the focus involves working together to create a plan for what needs to be accomplished so the youngster can graduate from the program and return to school.

Social workers conduct family and individual therapy sessions with parents to ensure everyone works together to help the child, and they meet with the parents and the youngster to plan a strong support system at home. After the child graduates, the program continues to check in with the parents and the school on the child's progress. If necessary, youngsters are placed in an Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP), which is an after school program that provides additional family and individual therapy. (The youngster goes to regular school during the day and returns for an afterschool sessions.)

Personal Note: One of our students at UCLA, Simran Singh had the opportunity to volunteer with this program. Here is what she noted: "Most of the children who went through the program were successfully able to re enter the same schools that they left, without any problems. The children who were not able to return to school on their first try, simply went back to the partial hospitalization program, worked on a new plan, and then properly transitioned back to school the second time around. Overall a partial hospitalization program is a model that fits the needs of a child who is transitioning from psychiatric hospitalization back into school."

The School's Role in Facilitating Transitions and Adjustment

Researchers are continuing to clarify strategies for schools to use. A pilot school transition program was reported recently by the University of Maryland School of Medicine as follows:

“The purpose of the School Transition Program is to develop, implement and evaluate an effective model of supports to improve transitions for children and youth as they exit intensive psychiatric settings, specifically inpatient and day hospital settings, and return to the school environment. The immediate outcome includes improved stabilization during the transition process through the provision of enhanced supports to the children/youth and families, while longer-term outcomes include reduced risk of readmission and reduced costs associated with restrictive psychiatric placements.”

http://medschool.umaryland.edu/innovations/RTC_study3.asp

The researchers suggest the following strategies for the school:

- Identify point-person to support student
- Conduct meetings with a strengths and mental health lens
- Emphasize that hospitalization goal is to stabilize, not fix
- Develop crisis plan
- Set clear plan for addressing long-term absence and missed work, and allow for adjustments in classwork/homework upon return
- Implement daily check-ins with youth
- Provide regular feedback to caregiver on child's adjustment back to school
- Provide family peer-to-peer support, if available

http://csmh.umaryland.edu/annualconference/19th/7_6_Slides.pdf

Beyond specific strategies, our Center emphasizes that such strategies and even systems of care are and will continue to be marginalized at schools as long as they are offered as stand alone processes. Rather, promising practices need to be embedded into a unified and comprehensive system of student and learning supports that is fully integrated into school improvement policy and practice. See *Ending the Marginalization of Student and Learning Supports* (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/winter2015.pdf>).

As a fully integrated facet of school improvement, all supports for transitions can be pursued within classrooms and school-wide. And while the immediate goals are to prevent and address transition problems, all transitions provide opportunities to promote healthy development, enhance safety, reduce alienation, increase positive attitudes and readiness skills for schooling, address systemic and personal barriers to learning and teaching, and (re)engage disconnected students and families.

As with all student and learning supports, the work is strengthened when there is broad involvement of stakeholders in planning for transitions and being responsible for effective implementation (e.g., students, staff, home; representatives from the police, faith groups, recreation, businesses, higher education, etc.). Given the substantial overlap involved in providing supports for transitions, coalescing resources from school, family, friends, peers, and community can enhance school capacity to handle the variety of transition concerns confronting students and their families and enhance cost-effectiveness.

Concluding Comments

Transition supports for children re-entering school after psychiatric hospitalization warrants greater attention. Too few hospitals and schools have developed a collaborative system for coordination, communication, and care. Without a system that weaves together the resources the hospital, home, school, and community, a student's risk of re-hospitalization is increased.

System of care programs such as a partial hospitalization program can help enhance the likelihood of a successful transition and adjustment. However, as with so many efforts to address student and school problems, the focus on systems of care is marginalized in schools. For this to end, the efforts must be embedded into a unified and comprehensive system of student and learning supports.

For more, see the references in the Center's Online Clearinghouse Quick Find on the topic of *Transitions* at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2101_01.htm.

For more on embedding mental health into a unified and comprehensive system of student and learning supports, see Adelman, H.S. & Taylor, L. (2014). Embedding school health into school improvement policy, *International Journal of School Health*, 1 – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/intjournal.pdf>.

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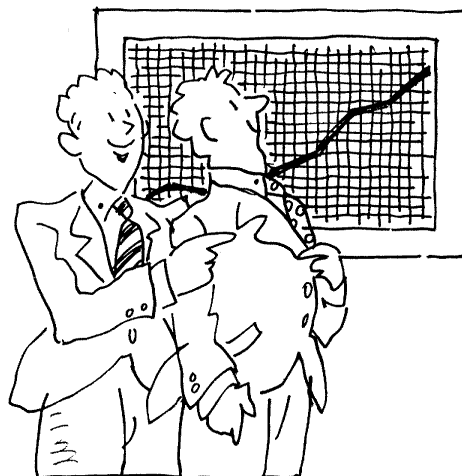
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III. Anticipating, Planning, Implementing, Evaluating, and Sustaining Interventions for Transitions

- A. Role of Support Staff, Teachers, and School Leadership
- B. Preparing Families to Support their Youngster's Transitions
- C. Mobilizing Peers



III. Anticipating, Planning, Implementing, Evaluating, and Sustaining Interventions for Transitions

A. Role of Support Staff, Teachers, and School Leadership

Every school that wants to improve student and learning supports needs a mechanism specifically working on system development to enhance how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students. The goal is to rework existing resources by establishing a unified and comprehensive approach. A Learning Supports Leadership Team is a vital mechanism for transforming current marginalized and fragmented interventions into a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive system that enhances equity of opportunity for all students to succeed at school.

Most schools have teams that focus on individual student/family problems (e.g., a student support team, an IEP team). These teams pursue such functions as referral, triage, and care monitoring or management. In contrast to this case-by-case focus, a school's Learning Supports Leadership Team, along with an administrative leader, can take responsibility for developing a unified and comprehensive enabling or learning supports component at a school.

In doing so, it ensures that the component is (1) fully integrated as a primary and essential facet of school improvement and (2) outreaches to the community to fill critical system gaps by weaving in human and financial resources from public and private sectors.

What Are the Functions of this Leadership Team?

A Learning Supports Leadership Team performs essential functions and tasks related to the implementation and ongoing development of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive system for addressing barriers to student learning and teaching.

Examples are:

- Aggregating data across students and from teachers to analyze school needs
- Mapping resources at school and in the community
- Analyzing resources & formulating priorities for system development (in keeping with the most pressing needs of the school)
- Recommending how resources should be deployed and redeployed
- Coordinating and integrating school resources & connecting with community resources
- Planning and facilitating ways to strengthen and develop new programs and systems
- Developing strategies for enhancing resources
- Establishing work groups as needed
- Social marketing

Related to the concept of an enabling/learning supports component, these functions and tasks are pursued within frameworks that outline six curriculum content arenas and the full continuum of interventions needed to develop a comprehensive, multifaceted approach to student and learning supports that is integrated fully into the fabric of school improvement policy and practice. (See <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/systemic/frameworksforsystemictransformation.pdf>)

Who's on Such a Team?

A Learning Supports Leadership Team might begin with only a few people. Where feasible, it should expand into an inclusive group of informed, willing, and able stakeholders. This might include the following:

- Administrative Lead for the component
- School Psychologist
- Counselor
- School Nurse
- School Social Worker
- Behavioral Specialist
- Special education teacher
- Representatives of community agencies involved regularly with the school
- Student representation (when appropriate and feasible)
- Others who have a particular interest and ability to help with the functions

It is important to blend this team into the infrastructure mechanisms at the school focused on instruction and management/governance. For example, the school administrator on the team needs to represent the team at administrative and governance meetings. A member also will need to represent the team when a Learning Supports Leadership Council is established for a family of schools (e.g., the feeder pattern).

For Related Center Resources, see the System Change toolkit for Transforming Student and Learning Supports into a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System for Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching – especially Section B on Reworking Infrastructure – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm>

Excerpt from: “*Supporting Students in their Transition to Middle School*” A position paper jointly adopted by the National Middle School Association and the National Association of Elementary School Principals <http://www.nmsa.org/AboutNMSA/PositionStatements/TransitioningStudents/tabid/283/Default.asp>

A Call to Action:

The National Middle School Association and the National Association of Elementary School Principals urge principals, teachers, school counselors, parents, and students at both elementary and middle school levels to work together in the planning and implementing of strategies that will directly address students' concerns and ease the transition to middle school and provide children with a foundation for success in school and life. Specifically,

School leaders should:

- Make the planning, implementation, and evaluation of transition activities an annual focus, beginning in the intermediate grades of the elementary school.
- Begin as early as grade five to create an environment that promotes a confident transition from a self-contained classroom structure to the larger team structure of the middle school.
- Encourage collaboration among elementary and middle schools and teachers, students, and parents.
- Provide comprehensive orientation programs for teachers, students and families, including older siblings, who strongly influence attitudes and perceptions of transitioning students.
- Become knowledgeable about the needs and concerns of young adolescents in transition. Support teachers' efforts to address students' social, developmental, and academic needs.
- Provide leadership in creating a climate that values and supports effective home/school communications.

Teachers and Counselors should:

- Engage in collaborative planning with their counterparts at the elementary and middle levels to ensure a smooth academic transition that recognizes and accommodates variations in curricula across feeder schools.
- Become knowledgeable about the needs and concerns of young adolescents in transition.
- Keep parents informed, help them become skilled in dealing with issues related to transition, and welcome their participation in their children's education.
- Provide counseling at both the elementary and middle levels to address transition concerns and assure students of the availability of ongoing support.
- Provide programs, activities, and curricula to help students understand and cope successfully with the challenges of transition.
- Use a variety of developmentally appropriate instructional practices that will enable each child to experience academic success.
- Employ strategies such as cooperative learning that provide opportunities for peer interaction.
- Consider organizational structures such as team teaching that ensure teachers have meaningful knowledge and understanding of each child.

Parents should:

- Provide young children with manageable tasks that help them develop organizational skills & responsibility.
- Encourage children to try new things and to regard failure as a necessary part of learning and growing.
- Become knowledgeable about the needs and concerns of young adolescents in transition.
- Help children turn their anxieties into positive action by learning about school rules, schedules, locker procedures and the availability of counseling.
- Attend school functions and stay involved in children's schooling.
- Support children in their efforts to become independent.
- Maintain strong family connections with young adolescents.
- Be alert to signs of depression or anxiety in their children and seek help.

In planning and implementing programs to address the needs and concerns of students moving from elementary to middle school environments, it is clear that collaboration among all adults who share responsibility and concern for our children's welfare is ultimately the most effective transition strategy we can employ.

III. Anticipating, Planning, Implementing, Evaluating, and Sustaining Interventions for Transitions (cont.)

B. Preparing Families to Support their Youngster's Transitions

Every family needs to play a proactive role in providing support for youngster's transitions.

Below is one example of the ideas related to transitions to kindergarten, to a new school, to a new class that can be shared with family members.

***About Helping Your Child Adjust
to a New School and Classroom***

1. Prepare them for the new situation
 - Going to a new school can be scary – tell them it's OK to feel nervous.
 - Making friends is hard – let them take their time.
 - Have children go to bed early so they are rested.
 - Have children get up early so they are not rushed.
 - Show your child the way to school and walk in together.
2. Talk and listen to your child about what they are thinking and feeling about the new situation.
 - Share your experiences/feelings in new places.
 - Tell them you will help them to adjust.
3. Help your children meet other children.
4. Help children find something about school they love – ask about after school activities/homework clubs, etc.
5. Find help if your child needs it. Talk to your child's teacher. School staff are all there to help your child succeed.

From: *Welcoming and Involving New Students and Families* (a TA Packet)
online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

Excerpt from: *"The Elementary to Middle School Transition: Five Helpful Hints to Parents"*
by National Middle School Association.

(<http://www.nmsa.org/publications/webexclusive/helpfulehnts/tabid/649/default.aspx>)

For many young adolescents the transition from elementary to middle school can be a time of mixed emotions. It can also be an opportunity for new beginnings. New friends, new teachers, and new a school environment can bring out excitement and, at times, a little nervous energy for middle school students.

There is also a transition that occurs for parents during this time. Great middle schools make sure parents feel welcome and they provide information that will help with the transition.

Listed below are tips that can be shared with parents on how to make the transition go smoothly for everyone involved.

1. Encourage parents to buy a combination lock before school and have their child spend time trying to open the lock. Call the school to see if they will allow him or her to practice. If you don't have the combination, make one up.
2. Go to the school two or three days before school starts and get a copy of your child's schedule. Then take a few minutes to walk from room to room with your child. Look for direct routes to classrooms, stop by the gym, check out the locker rooms, and spend a few minutes in the lunchroom. This will help alleviate apprehensions your child and you might have about going to the middle school.
3. Don't buy backpacks that can store 50 pounds of materials. Remember, the students are not going to hike a mountain or spend two weeks in the wilderness. Keep backpacks simple. They should be able to hold a few items. The more the backpack can hold, the more a middle school student will place in it. Smaller backpacks allow for better organization.
4. Increase your knowledge of adolescent development. Take time to review information and materials that relate to middle level issues. Free tip sheet for parents.
5. If you have raised adolescents, be willing to share advice and information with other parents. Form an information group or support group for parents of new middle school students. Also, ask the principal if they would like some volunteers for the first few days to help students with their schedules and lockers.

III. Anticipating, Planning, Implementing, Evaluating, & Sustaining Interventions for Transitions (cont.)

C. Mobilizing Peers

Peers are critical supports for newcomers. Below are a smattering of ideas about how to mobilize this invaluable set of resources.

STUDENT GREETERS: Establish a Student Welcoming Club (perhaps train the student council or leadership class to take on this as a special project). These students can provide tours and some orientation (including an initial introduction to key staff at the school as feasible).

CLASSROOM GREETERS: Each teacher should have several students who are willing and able to greet strangers who come to the classroom. Recent arrivals often are interested in welcoming the next set of new enrollees.

PEER BUDDIES: In addition to the classroom greeter, the teacher should have several students who are willing and able to be a special buddy to a new student for a couple of weeks (and hopefully a regular buddy thereafter). This can provide the type of social support that allows the new student to learn about the school culture and how to become involved in various activities. How this works is that a cadre of peer buddies is trained (see guidelines for peer buddies on the next page). When a new student arrives in class, the teacher introduces the student to classmates and program and to a peer “buddy.” The buddy will orient the student to the class, work with the newcomer in class, go to recess and lunch – at least for first 5 days), introduce the newcomer to other peers and activities, and so forth. The teacher or peer buddy also can give the new student a welcoming “gift” (e.g., notebook with school name, pencils), and the teacher can give the peer buddy a “thank you gift” (e.g. notebook with school name, certificate, etc). Examples of all this are provided in the Center’s TA Packet entitled: *Welcoming and Involving New Students and Families* and in the Center Guide to Practive entitled: *What Schools Can Do to Welcome and Meet the Needs of All Students and Families*.

If more is needed:

SUPPORT GROUPS: Offer groups designed to help new students and families learn about the community and the school and to allow them to express concerns and have them addressed. Such groups also allow them to connect with each other as another form of social support.

Guidelines for Peer Buddies

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS ON “WELCOMING COMMITTEE”

1. Introduce yourself and explain you are a special greeter to new students.
2. Give student the folder with information about the school
3. Introduce new student to other students in your class.
4. Spend recess and lunch with the new student for their first week at school
5. Enjoy your new job! We appreciate you and so will the new students!

SCRIPT FOR PEER BUDDIES:

INTRODUCTION: Introduce yourself and explain that you are a special greeter to new students. Let them know that you’ ll be there for them if they have any questions about where to find things or what there is to do at this school.

SCHOOL TOUR: Give the student a tour of the school, making sure to point out important places (e.g., principal's office, bathrooms, cafeteria, classroom, and anywhere else you think they’ ll need to know).

WELCOMING FOLDER: Give the new student the folder with information on the school.

INTRODUCTION TO CLASS: Introduce the new student to other students in your class and the teacher. Let the student know that if they want to talk to the teacher about the class and school she/he would like to meet with them at the end of the day.

RECESS, LUNCH & AFTERSCHOOL ACTIVITIES: Think about how lonely it can feel at a place where you don't know anyone. Help the new student feel less lonely by spending recess and lunch with them for their first week of school. If you can't do this please find someone in your class who can. Remember to introduce them to your friends and invite them to join any afterschool activities that you know about and/or are involved in.

RECORD YOUR GREETING: Write the name of the new student you welcomed on the record sheet. Please write any problems that happened and/or any questions the student had that you could not answer.

***ENJOY YOUR NEW JOB! WE APPRECIATE YOU AND SO
WILL THE NEW STUDENTS WHO YOU WELCOMED***

Peer Mediation: A Role for Peers on the Playground Before Schools, at Recess, Lunch, and After School

From: "Peer Mediation" *Gale Encyclopedia of Childhood and Adolescence*

Peer mediation is a form of conflict resolution based on integrative negotiation and mediation. It is a process by which students act as mediators to resolve disputes among themselves. A form of conflict resolution used to address student disagreements and low-level disciplinary problems in schools.

Disputing parties converse with the goal of finding a mutually satisfying solution to their disagreement, and a neutral third party facilitates the resolution process. The salient feature of peer mediation as opposed to traditional discipline measures and other forms of conflict resolution is that, outside of the initial training and ongoing support services for students, the mediation process is entirely carried out by students and for students....

Purposes of peer mediation: In accordance with the principles of conflict resolution, peer mediation programs start with the assumption that conflict is a natural part of life that should neither be avoided nor allowed to escalate into verbal or physical violence. Equally important is the idea that children and adolescents need a venue in which they are allowed to practically apply the conflict resolution skills they are taught. Peer mediation programs vary widely in their scope and function within a school or system. In some schools, mediation is offered as an alternative to traditional disciplinary measures for low-level disruptive behavior. For example, students who swear at each other or initiate fights might agree to participate in mediation rather than being referred to the playground supervisor or principal. In other schools, mediation takes place in addition to disciplinary measures. In either case, peer mediation is intended to prevent the escalation of conflict. Serious violations of rules or violent attacks are not usually addressed through mediation.

Although peer mediation is primarily carried out by students, at least a few staff members and teachers are actively involved in training and facilitation. Ideally, peer mediation will encourage a culture of open communication and peaceful solutions to conflict....

Involving Parents and Volunteers in Providing Support for Transitions

PARENT/VOLUNTEER GREETERS: Establish a Welcoming Club consisting of parents and/or volunteers. They can become greeters as new families come to enroll. They can provide regular tours and orientations (including an initial introduction to key staff at school as feasible). A Welcoming Video can be developed as useful aid.

PARENT PEER BUDDY: Parents and volunteers can be trained as peer buddies for newcomer families. Such buddies can be the core of a social support network for the newcomer, introducing the new arrival around the school and community, informing them about special activities and taking them the first time, and so forth.

PERSONAL INVITATIONS: A designated staff member or volunteer can either meet with the enrolling newcomer on the first day or make contact with the family during the next few days. The objectives are to extend another welcome, provide further information, answer questions, describe available activities, and determine interest and need for involvement. If there is interest or need, an invitation to relevant activities is extended. When newcomers attend their first activity, they are introduced and given a token welcoming “gift” (e.g., calendar with school name; coupons donated by neighborhood merchants).

CELEBRATING NEWCOMERS: Once a month, all those involved in newcomer welcoming might hold a potluck or other special get-together at school to celebrate the coming of all who have newly come to the school that month (family members and staff).

Role of Peers Related to the Transition of Special Needs Students

From: "High School Peer Buddies" by S. Copeland, et al (2002)
Teaching Exceptional Children

Peer support programs enable general education students, rather than a classroom teacher or educational assistant, to provide support to students with disabilities. The type of support peers provide to students with disabilities varies, depending on the needs of the students. For example, general education students may help their peers with disabilities complete class-room assignments, learn appropriate ways to interact in social groups, acquire job skills, or participate in extracurricular activities.

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IV. Resources

A. References

B. Agencies, Organizations, and Websites

C. Center Resources

IV. Resources

A. References

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IV. Resources (cont.)

B. Agencies, Organizations, Websites

Center for Summer Learning
Johns Hopkins University
<http://www.summerlearning.org>

Harvard Family Research Project
Harvard Graduate School of Education
<http://hfrp.org>

*National Center for Early Development
and Learning*
Kindergarten Transition Studies
<http://www.ncedl.org>

*National Center on Secondary Education
and Transition*
Institute on Community Integration
<http://www.ncset.org>

*National Collaborative on Workforce and
Disability for Youth*
Institute for Educational Leadership
<http://www.ncwd-youth.info>

National Institute on Out-of-School Time
Center for Research on Women
Wellesley College
<http://www.niost.org>

*National Technical Assistance Center on
Youth Transitions*
University of South Florida
<http://ntacyt.fmhi.usf.edu/>

Transition Coalition
University of Kansas
Department of Special Education
<http://www.transitioncoalition.org>

IV. Resource (cont.)

C. Center Resources

Below are links to two of the Center's Quick Finds – each of which has direct relevance to the material covered in this packet. Quick Finds are a fast way to access a wide range of information about Center resources and for direct links to resources from elsewhere.

See:

> *Transition Programs/Grade Articulation/Welcome*

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2101_01.htm

> *Expanded Learning Opportunities -- After-School & Summer Programs*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/afterschool.htm>

There are also Quick Finds on:

> *Transition from Adolescence*

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/transition_from_adolescence.htm

> *Transition to College*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/transitiontocollege.htm>

