



Governor's COVID-19 Education Pre-K to Kindergarten Transition Newsletter

Prekindergarten to Kindergarten Transition

The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE), the Department of Health (WDH), and the Department of Family Services (DFS) have realized the overwhelming tasks and challenges undertaken each day to provide all students a quality education. Agency representatives collectively commend the creative and innovative efforts that have been provided to continue to serve our children throughout the state.

The purpose of this newsletter is to address the concerns that were identified in the survey results. The June issue will focus on strengthening communication between CDCs, Head Start programs, private preschools, school districts and parents. An additional issue will be shared in August concerning topics related to kindergarten readiness.

Please share this newsletter with parents in your districts.

Survey Results

This spring, agency representatives conducted a survey and received feedback regarding parents' top issues, questions and concerns related to kindergarten transition.

The survey results showed the top two concerns:

1. Communication between local Child Development Centers (CDCs), Head Start programs, private preschools, school districts, and parents.
2. Kindergarten readiness in the areas of social/emotional and pre-academics.

Guiding Documents

The WDE has issued guiding documents at the Pre-K to Kindergarten Transition Summit, which included best practices for Kindergarten transition. All documents can be found at: <https://wyominginstructionalnetwork.com/pre-k-to-kinder-transition-summit/> These practices continue to be suggested, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, the delivery of these practices may need some adjustment:

1. Have regular virtual meetings between the CDCs, Head Start programs, private preschools and school districts to collaborate and plan high impact transition activities.
2. Host a child/parent friendly virtual school tour, including the school's policies and procedures as one high impact transition activity.

Social Emotional Growth and Transitions

Transitioning to kindergarten can be a stressful time for children, and may lead to an increase in challenging behaviors. A child's social-emotional growth is key to helping ensure that this transition is successful. Two things that can help support this vital social emotional growth are environment and routine. Here are some tips to help create a positive environment and routines:

- **Create a daily plan that allows for lots of free time with minimal transitions**

Plan your day ahead of time to benefit teachers and students. Set up activities and centers for children to engage in and allow for ample time to explore areas of interest. Children learn through play and exploration and when we remove a child from an area of interest before they have had a chance to explore it fully, tension could arise. Picture yourself in an engaging activity that has your whole attention, then someone comes along and tells you it is time to move on to something else.....how would you feel? Disrespected, frustrated, angry? These are the same feelings children have when play is interrupted. One thing we have to give children is time, feel free to let them play.

- **Meet the child where they are developmentally and set realistic expectations**

Is it reasonable for a two-year-old to sit at a desk and do worksheets? Should a five-year-old be expected to play with infant rattles? There is no right or wrong answer to these questions as every child is different; however know that children development unfolds in predictable patterns. Understanding child development can help parents set realistic expectations and alleviate frustration, which inturn, leads to better outcomes for the child's day Copies of the Early Learning Guidelines and Foundations can be a tremendous resource in understanding child development.

- **Have conversations with children and keep a consistent routine**

The more parents discuss things, the easier it will be for children to understand the new normal. Can you imagine starting a new job and no one has told you what you are supposed to do? There is no manual to read, no pictures on the wall to follow just someone expecting you to comply and follow the rules. This is how children can feel, if we are not having conversations with them explaining what is happening and what our expectations are. These conversations need to be repeated frequently, so children can begin to feel comfortable with expectations and goals. A consistent routine will help children know what to expect from each part of the day. They can begin to anticipate what will happen and can self regulate what they are supposed to be doing.

- **Play, play, play**

Engage in activities with children. Modeling good behavior is a tremendous asset to children as they look for guidance. What better way to help children learn about the world around them than by watching a respected and loved teacher enjoy the same activities they are involved in.



News to Know

During the 2020 legislative session, enrolled act #59 changed the minimum date in which a child may be eligible to register for kindergarten to five years of age on or before August 1. This has been changed from the previous birthdate of five years of age on or before September 15. In addition, the bill specifically states "the board of trustee in each school district shall: Establish a process in policy to approve or deny requests made by a pupil's parent or guardian based on the pupil's kindergarten readiness assessment score to assess whether the pupil is sufficiently mature to be admitted to the applicable grade."



For more information, contact your local school district.

Resources for Families During COVID-19

Licensed programs may request additional information or assistance by contacting Child Care Technical Assistance Coach Penny Hotovec, at 307-754-2245 x22 or 307-254-1620 (cell) or penny.hotovec@wyo.gov.

To assist families in finding an early childhood program, or for more information about a program, including licensing requirements, visit the DFS website at FINDCHILDCAREWY.ORG or DFS.WYO.GOV.

Healthy Children: <https://www.healthychildren.org/>

Division of Early Childhood: <https://www.dec-sped.org/>

National Institute of Early Childhood: http://nieer.org/covid-19_resources

Governor's COVID-19 Pre-K to Kindergarten Transition Working Group

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