

KANSAS EARLY CHILDHOOD RECOMMENDATIONS PANEL

Recommendation for Kindergarten Readiness Transition
MOU Toolkit



TO: Kansas Communities
FROM: Kansas Early Childhood Recommendations Panel
DATE: December 4, 2020
SUBJECT: Kindergarten Readiness Transition – Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Toolkit

Background

Importance of Transition Planning

The transition into kindergarten is a critical milestone for children, families, and staff. A smooth transition helps kindergarten staff meet the individual needs of children. "When these transitions are successful, children and families are more likely to experience better long-term school success." ¹ Successful collaboration should engage the wide variety of the stakeholders in a community who support young children and their families. A defined, sustainable kindergarten transition plan benefits the entire community.

MOU Toolkit

The Kansas Early Childhood Recommendations Panel tasked a workgroup with developing resources to support active community planning for transitions into kindergarten. This workgroup was comprised of individuals representing our mixed-delivery system, including: local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, local providers of early childhood education and development services, Head Start agencies, and other partners. Parents, communities, and other experts in this area were engaged.

This workgroup developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) toolkit for any community to use and adapt to support an intentional and collaborative process. The toolkit includes an MOU template and a workplan to support community collaboration that advances equitable outcomes. This toolkit is designed to outline parameters for agreement among all partners in a community.

Connection to All In For Kansas Kids

This recommendation is based on the research findings of the *All In For Kansas Kids* 2019 Needs Assessment² where Kansas families voiced the need for smoother transitions.

"We need to create smoother transitions among the varying resources that support young children and families - a continuum of care and support."

"Disconnect is common during transitions, particularly from early childhood to K-12 systems, leaving families unsupported and at-risk."

These comments and many others from Kansans brought recognition to the need for the development of this MOU.

This recommendation addresses the following tactics in the *All In For Kansas Kids Strategic Plan*:³

- 2.1.3 Use evidence-based, standardized screenings such as the Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) and the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale to identify need and connect families to the right services as early as possible.
- 2.2.1 Identify parent or family groups that exist within the community, and seek feedback on their needs and suggestions for increasing family representation in community decision-making about programs and services.
- 2.2.3 Include family representatives from the local community on coalitions and/or advisory councils, and as program evaluators, co-trainers of pre-service or in-service training sessions, mentors for other families and professionals, grant and application reviewers, and participants in needs assessment processes.
- 5.4.1 Provide information to families and technical assistance to school systems to increase the number of students who participate in the Kindergarten Readiness Snapshot (the Ages and Stages Questionnaires).
- 5.4.2 Build community partnerships between elementary schools and early childhood care and education providers to ensure smooth transitions to Pre-K and kindergarten.
- 5.4.3 Inform families and community-based organizations about the importance of transitions, and help families develop transition plans to ensure they receive needed services during times of change, including but not limited to age-related transitions, changes in conditions, and/or geographic moves.

Recommendation

The Kansas Early Childhood Recommendations Panel recommends:

All communities in Kansas should engage in an intentional, active planning process regarding transitions to kindergarten. Community-led collaboration should occur in an inclusive manner that engages a wide representation of early childhood stakeholders, including families, early

childhood care and education providers, schools, businesses, and other partners in the community mixed-delivery system. This planning process should result in a formal agreement that defines the goals, roles, responsibilities, and specific activities of the kindergarten transition process. The MOU toolkit may be used as a starting point for communities to adopt or adapt as needed to fit their local goals.

Further, the Kansas Early Childhood Recommendations Panel recommends that organizations with statewide reach share messages communicating the importance of this topic and the resources available to support community-led collaboration.

I move that the Kansas Early Childhood Recommendations Panel recommends that the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund adopt this Kindergarten Transitions Recommendation and the accompanying toolkit.

¹ [Head Start article on kindergarten transitions](#)

² [Children's Cabinet 2019 Needs Assessment](#)

³ [Children's Cabinet All In For Kansas Kids Strategic Plan](#)

The **Kansas Early Childhood Recommendations Panel** advises the Children's Cabinet as outlined in [Kansas Executive Order 20-02](#). Visit [the Children's Cabinet website](#) to learn more or contact Debbie Deere ddeere@ksde.org