

## **Building Bridges: Educators Supporting Successful Transitions to Kindergarten – Practicing Alignment**

Makyla Melonson: My hope and my dreams are to see Head Start and kindergarten continue to partner within the community, within the schools, so that the communities as a whole can experience success.

Narrator: Head Start educators play a critical role in helping families bridge the transition from Head Start to kindergarten. Head Start educators support successful transitions to kindergarten by using evidence-based transition practices throughout the year. These practices bridge the path from Head Start to kindergarten, creating a smooth transition for families, children, and educators.

A successful transition is built on sharing information, building relationships, and program alignment. Educators can align with the receiving elementary school by participating in joint professional development, partnering around transition activities, and ensuring curriculum and assessments support kindergarten readiness. Let's hear from educators about how Head Start programs and receiving elementary schools might share in joint professional development.

Yan Dang: Sometimes we have partners with us, public school program or an elementary school partner with the kindergarten teachers, and then to find it out and what is the difference, kindergarten and preschool? So, how can we make that gap more closer?

Educator: The purpose of our learning walks today is to go out and observe in actual kindergarten classrooms.

Bernadita Ginoza: The learning walk is actually helping a lot of our teachers to go and observe what the kindergarten teachers are doing in their classrooms so we can better prepare our kiddos that are going there to help them say, "Hey, this is what the kindergarten teachers are going to be doing in their classrooms. It might not be the same as what we are doing here, but it's close to what we are — the schedules that we are doing and the transitions that we do in our preschool classroom."

Narrator: Partnering around transition activities helps children and families move from their Head Start program to kindergarten, confident and ready for the transition.

Bernadita: We do have a collaboration effort with all of the kindergarten teachers because we do, like, a yearly meeting with them. There is a list of things that we're going to be working that we put together as a group that they would like us to be working in our classroom with the kids so when they go to kindergarten, they are ready to go.

Students: Now we're ready to go!

Narrator: When assessments and curricula are aligned, the learning gains children have made in their Head Start program are more easily sustained.

Bernadita: For us, as teachers, it's kind of nice to see what the other teachers are, you know, teaching in the classroom and finding or looking at different strategies that they are using with their kids so we can incorporate them into our classroom.

Amber Escott: Every day after snack, we have a small group based around those children who are going to kindergarten where we sit down and we work either on writing our names, or identifying numbers and letters.

Students: Yay!

Student: I got it right!

Laurie Yarger: In our class, towards the end of the year, we start doing more seat work, and it's kindergarten readiness. And it's still fun activities, but it's really getting them used to the idea that there's going to be more time in a seat. Dude, that it is a perfect R if I've ever seen one. Thanks, my friend! We would change, for instance, lunch, or snack. Instead of doing it in the classroom, we would move them to the cafeteria with the other kindergarteners. Kindergarteners come to us and do a story time with us and have them kind of talk to the kids, because honestly, a kindergartener could tell them more than we can about what kindergarten's like.

Narrator: When Head Start educators ensure a smooth transition to kindergarten by aligning with the receiving elementary school, everyone succeeds.

Hani Ismail: You think you have nothing in common, but then you find out that you have everything in common — everything. Because we're human beings, and we want the same thing, and we want our kids to succeed.