

Building Bridges: Educators Supporting Successful Transitions to Kindergarten – Building Relationships

Edwin Garcia-Prieto: The kids need to love school to come here to feel free to open up and learn. Like, you know, they want to come here and they don't want to be afraid. This is the space for them to feel like home.

Narrator: Head Start educators play a critical role in helping families bridge the transition from Head Start to kindergarten.

Student: I love you, teacher.

Educator: Aw, thank you. I love you too, Mikaia.

Narrator: 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 in Head Start programs build relationships by getting to know the unique strength of the families in their program and partnering with the receiving elementary school. Building positive relationships with families and children helps ensure that families are confident and ready to transition from Head Start to kindergarten.

Yan Dang: Most of the parents, they probably have a different culture education background. When I came to this country, everything's new for me: new language, new culture, new education system. My child attended Denise Louise Education Center years ago. Because of my own experience, I am more easier to understand the family and then help to build a relationship.

Educator: Good morning, Josiah.

Edwin: It's a new journey for them — kindergarten — and there's going to be a lot of feelings about it. We want to communicate with our teachers, and the staff, and classmates, and everybody around how we are perceiving life and how we're feeling about it.

Stacey Lough: We're also empowering the parents to advocate for their children when they go to public school. And we're introducing them to the community, and they're actually — I found a lot of my families that were able to actually participate in community activities. So, it fosters a lot of successes.

Narrator: Partnering with receiving elementary schools supports the relationships needed for effective kindergarten transition.

Amber Escott: If you as a teacher can partner with another kindergarten teacher and just see what they're looking for. They'll give you ideas, and then you can brainstorm as a teacher. You have all the tools.

Katrina Jones: It's critical that you have time to plan and meet and really work together as a team.

Narrator: When Head Start educators ensure a smooth transition to kindergarten by building relationships with children, families, and the receiving elementary school, everyone succeeds.

Educator: Head straight to the bus.

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