Early Childhood Program Transition Best Practices

For children transitioning within and in/out of early childhood programs, providers are encouraged to:

☐ Provide a written copy of the program’s transitioning policy to parents.

☐ Initiate the transition process 6 months prior to the children moving to another group within, into, or out of the program.

☐ Meet with parents to discuss the transition process.

☐ Collaborate with parents in creating transition plans. Parental input opportunities are essential. Revisions to transition plans are done by both the program and parents, as needed.

☐ Describe how transition policies and procedures include strategies for supporting both children and families.

☐ Create a transition plan with parents that:
  • Sets concrete timelines that allow for flexibility,
  • Breaks transitions down into achievable action steps,
  • Designates those responsible for each action step/transition phase

☐ Ensure the transition plan is:
  • Signed by the parents/guardians,
  • Signed by program staff,
  • Dated,
  • Shared with the parents/guardians via a printed copy,
  • Maintained in the classroom

☐ Complete assessments on an ongoing basis and prior to the transition.

☐ Provide age-appropriate activities for children to prepare them for the transition to a new classroom or educational setting.

☐ Arrange for children to visit the new classroom or educational setting.

☐ Consider the following factors to support a “whole child” approach to ensuring that children are healthy, safe, engaged, and supported:
  • Developmental levels,
  • Home life/family dynamics,
  • Child’s temperament,
  • Health/nutrition,
  • Disability status (including additional details/documentation for children with Individualized Family Services Plans and Individualized Education Programs)
In addition, to implement best practices specific to children transitioning in/out of early childhood programs, providers are encouraged to:

☐ Conduct a home visit for transitions into the program from home.

☐ Conduct reciprocal program visits for transitions from preschool to kindergarten.

☐ Collaborate with local education agencies, the elementary school, and kindergarten teachers to support family engagement and promote successful transitions.

☐ Complete health screenings prior to the transition.

☐ Transfer children’s records to the new educational setting at the family’s request and with the family’s written consent.