

# TRANSITION TIMELINE: KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

This document is meant to be used as a menu for kindergarten teachers to utilize when planning for the transition from preschool settings to the kindergarten classroom. Please keep in mind that this is not a complete list, nor is it expected that you would do all activities on the list. Pick and choose what works for your individual school/classroom. We welcome ideas and /or suggestions to add to the list. We hope that it is useful as you begin a new school year and as you plan for future years!

## Spring (Before entering Kindergarten):

- Participate in Kindergarten Family Tours (formal or informal)
- Plan/participate in Kindergarten Roundup/Registration night.
- Provide parents with Transition to Kindergarten tips:
  - Ready for Kindergarten information \*
  - Summer literacy activities
  - Book list of books about Kindergarten \*
  - Web-sites about transition \*
- Give parents district resource information
  - Videos or public television broadcasts about Kindergarten
  - Special education contacts
  - Multi-lingual resources
- Encourage parents to attend any school events and to let the child get more familiar with the “big school”.
- Encourage the family to make a “new school album” with photographs of the school, the teachers and the classroom, to look at during the summer.
- Meet with Early Childhood Educator(s) of some of your students to learn about the curriculum, routines and individual students if possible.

## Summer:

- Kinder-Camp: A chance for students to transition into the school during the summer months- usually 1-3 weeks.

## August (early):

- Send letter (\*) to all Kindergarten families with tips for the weeks leading up to the start of school.
- Plan and send invitations (or make phone calls) to special Kindergarten events:
  - Kindergarten picnic: a time for families to socialize with teachers and other kindergarten families (usually the week before school starts)
  - 1st day “Kindergarten Parent Tea” sponsored by PTA or volunteer parents of previous year’s kindergartners. It’s a chance to network with other kindergarten families. Parents drop off students in classrooms and say “farewells” and then attend the “Tea”.
- Encourage parents to have their child write (dictate) a letter to their kindergarten teacher about themselves and what they have learned in their preschool setting and what they would like to learn in Kindergarten. (acknowledge these letters at your first meeting or in your letters to students)

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## Two Weeks before School Starts:

- Letter to Incoming Kindergarten parents (\*) may include:
  - Welcome
  - information about you (the teacher)
  - date and time for intake conference or home visit
  - information about the conference/visit
    - schedule
    - items to bring to conference
  - transition tips for weeks leading up to 1st day of school
  - other relevant information
- Letter to Kindergartner may include:
  - a picture of you and the classroom
  - what they should expect the first day
  - what they should bring to school
  - other relevant information
- Meet with preschool teachers/review any information forwarded from preschool settings (if available)
- Set up your classroom in a developmentally appropriate manner. Make sure to include plenty of concrete materials and areas for academic/free choice.

## One Week Before School Begins:

- Home visits,  
-OR-
- Intake conferences
  - interview questions\*
  - review policies/behavior information
  - share schedule and curriculum goals
  - look at portfolio or records of incoming kindergartner
  - bus/transportation information
  - other paperwork
  - take a picture of the family for a families bulletin board
  - have student choose own seat in the classroom- ease anxiety - something “known”
  - have student color/draw a picture and have it up in the classroom on the first day
- Kindergarten Picnic/Dinner
  - opportunity to meet other kindergartners and kindergarten parents
  - opportunity to see the school one more time before the first day

## First Day(s):

- KinderParties: students are invited for a couple of hours in which they ride the bus, meet the teacher and have lunch in the cafeteria. Approximately eight students visit at a time. While children are being introduced to the school setting, parents meet with principal or home-school liaison and learn about policies and other helpful information.  
-OR-

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- Staggered entrance: For the first 3 days of school, only 1/3 of the class comes to school, providing an opportunity to get to know the students in a smaller, more relaxed setting. All the students come together on the fourth day of school.
- First day(s) activities:
  - singing familiar songs
  - reading familiar/favorite books
  - plan a variety of active and quiet activities
  - make sure activities address differences in ability, school experience, interests and cultural backgrounds.
  - reassure students of structure and schedule until they are familiar with both
  - make a “Passport to \_\_\_\_\_ (school)” book
    - Interview staff members (principal, lunch staff, custodians, secretary, librarian, bus drivers, prep teachers) and glue their pictures onto the appropriate passport page to take home and share with families.
    - This is also an opportunity to tour the school and learn locations of things they will need to get to.
  - Practice routines such as using bathrooms, getting lunch, lining up and packing up backpacks.
  - Allow students to visit a “Family Bulletin Board” to see their families.
- AND/OR-
- Invite parents to send a special reminder of home/mom/dad in their kindergartners backpack.
  - examples might be a fabric swatch sprayed with mom/dad’s cologne,
  - a favorite stuffed animal or a photograph.
- Create a “kinderbook” with pictures of the school, the classroom, the staff, and copies of schedules, policies, resources...for families that did not attend intake conferences. It could be for the family to keep or used on a check-out system.
- Have parents and students document their “hopes and dreams” for the kindergarten year and display them in the classroom with their pictures.
- Call parents after the first full week of school to let them know how things are going and to answer any questions they may still have.

### **Into the Fall and Ongoing Initiatives:**

- Hold an Open House and/or curriculum night to inform parents of what happens at school.
- Invite parents into the school and classroom not as “guests” but as SCHOOL COMMUNITY MEMBERS.
- Send home weekly newsletters (classroom and whole-school)
- Encourage the PTA to reach out to new parents with phone calls and invitations.
  - possibly spend part of first meeting on topic of transition (at all grade levels- especially kindergarten)
- Have both formal and informal conversations with individual students about kindergarten and their emotions.
  - Example: Once a week, meet with 4 students for a special lunch with the teacher (give it a fancy name like “Dunn’s Diner” or “Bird’s Bistro”). Use this time to talk about how things are going.

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- Create a Kindergarten phone list to encourage social interactions out of school.
- Make sure parents have several ways to communicate with you and feel comfortable doing so (e-mail, letters, journal, phone call...).
- Have “Family Nights” at school- some just for Kindergartners and their families and some cross-grade.
- Have monthly meetings with pre-k teachers if onsite to discuss curriculum, social issues...
- Begin to think about transition in a more global sense, as it affects the school as a whole and share this idea with staff.