

Effective Practices for Early Childhood Transition Birth Through Five Years

In 2008-09, the WV Early Childhood Transition Steering Committee sponsored Early Childhood Collaborative Team Training on Effective Practices for Early Childhood Transition Birth Through Five Years. The training was attended by nearly half of the WV county early childhood collaborative teams. Teams participating included representation from:

1. WV Birth To Three
2. Public Schools Preschool Special Education
3. Public Schools Universal Pre-K
4. Head Start if appropriate to that county
5. Child Care if appropriate to that county
6. Other team members appropriate to that county such as individuals/agencies involved in early childhood services and transitions in your county, e.g., parent(s); Parent Education Resource Centers; Parents as Teachers; public school Title I or other early childhood programs; Early Head Start; Family Resource Networks; Starting Points.

Training addressed research-based effective transition practices and resources for all children age birth through five years related to the following 4 transition components:

1. Interagency Structure
2. Communication & Relationships (including staff & families)
3. Program Continuity & Alignment
4. Child & Family Preparation & Adjustment

Assessing County Early Childhood Collaborative Team Needs: County teams assessed their county needs on 21 indicators related to the above 4 components that were identified through research of the National Early Childhood Transition Center. The “Early Childhood Transition Practice and Strategies Needs Assessment” is available at www.wvearlychildhood.org under “Effective Collaborative Teams” and also “Transition and Continuity”. Teams attending the training found this assessment tool to be simple and quick to use and a helpful resource in setting priorities for working together. The early childhood transition indicators on this needs assessment are:

1. Staff know key information about a broad array of agencies and services available within the community.
2. A primary contact person for transition is identified within each program or agency.
3. Community and program-wide transition activities and timelines are identified.
4. Individual child and family transition meetings are conducted.
5. Referral processes and timelines are clearly specified.
6. Enrollment processes and timelines are clearly specified.
7. Program eligibility processes and timelines are clearly delineated.
8. Staff follow-up on children after transition to support their adjustment.
9. Staff and family members are actively involved in the design of transition processes and systems.
10. Staff roles and responsibilities for transition activities are clearly delineated.
11. Conscious and transparent connections are made between curricula and child expectations across programs/ environments.
12. Methods are in place to support staff-to-staff communication both within and across programs.
13. Transition team members share appropriate information about each child making a transition.
14. Transition plans are developed that include individual activities for each child and family.
15. Children have opportunities to develop and practice skills they need to be successful in the next environment.
16. Families are aware of the importance of transition planning and have information they need to actively participate in transition planning with their child.
17. Families meaningfully participate as partners with staff in program and community-wide transition planning efforts.
18. Families’ needs related to transition are assessed and addressed.
19. Families have information about and are linked with resources and services to help them meet their specific child and family needs.
20. Families actively participate in gathering information about their child’s growth and development.

21. Agencies develop formal mechanisms to minimize disruptions in services before, during and after the transition of the child and family.

County Early Childhood Collaborative Team Plans to Address Transition: Teams were asked to develop plans to address one or more of the 4 transition components based on this needs assessment. Each plan identified the team's priorities and (1) what steps will you take, (2) who is responsible, (3) timelines for steps, (4) resources you'll use and (5) how you'll evaluate transition effectiveness.

A summary of these plans is at www.wvearlychildhood.org under "Effective Collaborative Teams" and also "Transition and Continuity" in a document entitled, "Summary of County Plans Resulting from Early Childhood Collaborative Team Training on Effective Practices for Early Childhood Transition Birth Through Five Years".

Where you can access training and technical assistance: If you would like training and/or technical assistance for your county team on early childhood transition – provided on an individual county or regional basis - contact:

- Birth To Three – Pam Roush, Pam.S.Roush@wv.gov
- Child Care – Melanie Clark, Melanie.A.Clark@wv.gov, and Missy Smith, Melissa.D.Smith@wv.gov
- Head Start – Traci Dalton, Traci.L.Dalton@wv.gov
- Preschool Special Education - Ginger Huffman, vhuffman@access.K12.wv.us
- Universal Pre-K - Clayton Burch, wburch@access.k12.wv.us, and Rhonda Young, ryoung@access.K12.wv.us