



Are We Ready?

Districts & Programs

Collaborating Around Language-Focused PreK-3 Transitions

Self-Reflection on Collaboration and Transitions

Reflect on your beliefs on collaboration and transitions with multilingual children and their families.

- What have you learned and believed about school readiness and transition practices (for example, children entering a more formal school setting for the first time; early care and education program to school; grade level to grade level)? How did you arrive at these beliefs?
- What knowledge and skills do you think you need as a leader to be ready for multilingual children to come into your district or program?
- What is the role of families, other caregivers, and communities in district-level or program-level transition practices? How did you arrive at these beliefs?
- What does district-level or program-level collaboration with families, communities, caregivers, and other leaders look like during transitions (in general and connected to multilingual children)?
- Do you feel ready for multilingual children and their families in your district or program? Why or why not?

District and program leaders can use this guide for reflection and planning connected to promoting equitable transitions for multilingual children across programs, schools, and grade levels (PreK to K, K to 1, 1 to 2, and 2 to 3). District and program leaders in this context refers to curriculum, instruction, and assessment directors or leaders, language program directors or leaders, early care and education program directors, etc. This resource is grounded in the WIDA PreK-3 Essential Actions. It is specifically connected to Essential Action 5, collaborate with others across PreK-3 settings to promote and support multilingual children’s language development, dynamic language and cultural practices, and learning.

Ideas for Collaborating with Multilingual Children, Families, and Communities during PreK-3 Transitions

*Read through the ideas below for collaborating with multilingual children, families, and communities during transitions across PreK-3 settings. Use the **Are We Ready Notetaker** to jot down what you already do, what else you will do, and ways to extend equitable transition practices year-round (for example, providing resources to establish and sustain reciprocal partnerships with families and communities of multilingual children, etc.). Use this list of practices and your notes as you plan for PreK-3 transitions in your context.*

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- Reflect on your own identities and experiences and your beliefs about school readiness, transitions, and PreK-3 alignment (connecting curriculum, assessment, and other practices across PreK-3 and pushing up early care and education practices like play-based learning, social emotional development, anti-bias education, etc.)
- Get to know and partner with families of multilingual children around transition activities. Get to know families' goals for their children (language, cultural, learning, social-emotional, etc). Show in your transition activities how your district works to meet these goals.
- Include families and caregivers (for example, friends, neighbors, and community caregivers) on planning committees around transitions. Partner with families to make decisions about PreK and kindergarten enrollment efforts and transitions that show how your district or program affirms and incorporates families' dynamic language and cultural practices. Transitions can be a good time to build reciprocal relationships with families and communities of multilingual children that you maintain throughout the year and over time.
- Review how your district or program informs multilingual families about Pre-K and/or K enrollment. Families often hear about options through word of mouth. Partner with families and their friends, neighbors, and community caregivers around information shared. Ensure that you post information throughout the community spaces that families of multilingual children visit (for example, libraries, grocery stores, religious institutions, parks, etc.). Print flyers in language(s) families understand using family-friendly, jargon-free language. Partner with other caregivers to present information and answer family questions in person (for example, attending a family engagement meeting at a local Head Start). Remember that enrolling their child in kindergarten will be some families' first contact with the U.S. school system.
- Budget for interpreters and translators who can communicate in many languages and be present during enrollment and transition activities. Districts and programs can also use various tools (for example, smartphone apps, telephone translation services) and community resources (for example, volunteers who speak languages other than English). For in-person events, offer small groups in locations families prefer and encourage questions. Also, budget for childcare to help ensure that families can attend and be present.

In home visiting, because we are in a family's natural environment, we learn through observation and conversation. As a strengths-based program we seek not only to identify the family's strengths but also to point them out. To effectively partner with families, it is paramount that we learn of their values, culture, and routines. As this process continues, we select activities together that are customized to build on the family's strengths, values, cultures, and goals. There is an ongoing conversation and growth of relationship that enables us to learn more about their sociocultural context. It's not enough to respect the culture, but to demonstrate through our materials, plans, and partnering that there is great value in it.

- Dionne Patterson, Delaware

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- Identify key contact people in different language communities to serve as ambassadors and support families during their initial entry into the school district or program. Ambassadors can also provide input on how to best collect information from families about children’s language use at home. Allocate funding and time for ambassadors to partner with educators on home visits and trainings on the knowledge and skills they will need to support families and help the district or program collect meaningful information about children’s language use and development. Also consider hiring bilingual family/community liaison(s), if your district does not have one. Liaisons can take part in and extend on ambassadors’ efforts during initial entry into a district or program. Bilingual family/community liaisons support individual families’ needs, advocacy efforts, and goals, and promote ways to incorporate families’ voices and cultural and language backgrounds into learning spaces.
- Share information with families about how children are identified as English Learners, what language program models are offered in the district or program, and how each model supports the language goals they have for their child. Educators must provide meaningful, family-friendly information to families about the short- and long-term outcomes of the language program models that are offered. In this way, parents can make an informed decision about language support and services for their child.
- Explain the language programming options in your setting if there are options. Share how you promote children’s dynamic language and cultural practices regardless of the type of program or service delivery model you offer. Include families as partners when developing and adapting your language programming. Get feedback from families on the language programming options you have and how you can best meet their language goals for their children. Incorporate families’ input into program changes.

Ideas for Collaborating with other District or Program Leaders during PreK-3 Transitions

*Read through the ideas below for collaborating with other district or program leaders during transitions across PreK-3 settings. Use the **Are We Ready Notetaker** to jot down what you already do, what else you will do, and ways to extend equitable transition practices year-round (for example, investing in curriculum, observation practices, and instructional practices that are culturally and linguistically sustaining, etc.). Use this list of practices and your notes as you plan for PreK-3 transitions in your context.*

We have done a lot of equity training recently and more specifically training on checking your own biases. It is important to link that to language, standards-based learning, and promoting equity for multilingual children.

- Apryl Lowe, Indiana

- Offer professional learning opportunities to all staff about language development, bilingualism/multilingualism, translanguaging, laws and policies about language, and your language program models or services.
- During professional learning and other communications about transitions and PreK-3 alignment, share why it’s important to implement new strategies, not just how. This helps to build buy-in from educators.

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- Learn from others. Explore research, literature, and what other districts and programs do to provide equitable transitions for multilingual children and their families.
- Integrate PreK-3 transitions, collaboration, and alignment into district improvement planning and goals.
- Provide time and resources for vertical and horizontal collaboration, including visiting classrooms, learning spaces, schools, and programs. When educator teams work together they will develop cohesive frameworks that are more likely to be culturally and linguistically responsive. Districts can also support summer bridge programs with the goals of preparing children for their new classrooms and introducing children to the language and routines of a new grade level.
- Check for biases or deficit approaches in any district-based programming, policies, practices, and curricula and assessment resources used during transitions and address them (for example, one-way communication approaches with families, limited opportunities for translation or interpretation services, policies about when and where English use is required).
- Review curricular materials and resources used in your district to ensure they are culturally and linguistically responsive, and that they focus on the whole child rather than only on skills, by incorporating practices such as student-initiated learning, play-based learning, free-choice centers, and dramatic play. In your district-wide messages and resources, share about the importance of affirming and incorporating children's dynamic cultural and language practices (for example, translanguaging).