



Are We Ready?

Schools & 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 school or program?
- What is the role of families, other caregivers, and communities in school-level or program-level transition practices? How did you arrive at these beliefs?
- What does school-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 school or program? Why or why not?

School 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). School and program leaders in this context refers to principals, early care and education program administrators, coaches, 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 School-Level or Program-Level Collaboration with Children, Families, and Communities during Transitions across PreK-3 Settings

*Read through the ideas below for collaborating with multilingual children, families, and communities during transitions across PreK-3 contexts. 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, establishing and sustaining 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 (for example, connecting curriculum, assessment, and other practices across PreK-3; 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. Find out what families of multilingual children want and need around transitions. Seek out feedback from families who have transitioned at the beginning of a school year and from those who have transitioned during a school year. Show families how your school or program affirms and incorporates families' dynamic language and cultural practices.
- Incorporate information from families and community members into your school environment to welcome multilingual children and their families. Think about the messages about language your school environment communicates to families and how your school environment reflects the linguistic landscape of the communities you serve. Multilingual children are often confronted with uncertainty, bias, and discrimination about their multilingualism, multiculturalism, and related identities. Welcoming and incorporating children's, families', and communities' dynamic language practices (for example, translanguaging), in addition to their named languages will build children's confidence as humans and learners.
- Before the start of the year, host orientation meetings at your school, program, and/or in the community at a time and location that families prefer. Orientation meetings are a place to build relationships with families in addition to sharing information. Partner with others (for example community organizations, schools, and programs) to help plan, possibly host, facilitate, and support these meetings. Have interpreters available and share information in families' preferred languages and use family-friendly, jargon-free language.
- Before the end of the year, offer opportunities for children and families to visit the classrooms and other learning spaces they will be in the next year. This can be an opportunity for children and families to see how you welcome multilingual children and incorporate their dynamic language and cultural practices.
- Allocate school resources to make home visits. Home visits help build relationships with families. Teachers may need flexible schedules and a buddy or an interpreter to accompany them to home visits. Home visits are a chance to discover each other's interests, talents, and expertise, and language and learning goals. When teachers and families have opportunities to get to know each other early in the year, they can build deeper relationships and partnerships throughout the year.

There was a program [for Spanish-speaking families]. Every Wednesday parents and children would come together, and we would eat together. We would talk about how our culture and traditions could be involved in the school. I really liked it. I think it was very important. Yes, they were helpful.
- WIDA Family Research Participant

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- Allocate resources to make community visits to support collaboration across educators, families, caregivers, and community members. Community visits are also important for staff to learn about any new group of immigrants or refugees recently arriving in the community.
- Provide opportunities for family members to interact in their preferred language(s). Having bilingual staff and/or interpreters at orientations, meetings, and other events can send a message to families that their voice is welcome in the school.
- Involve multilingual families from the previous year in transition activities. For example, former kindergarten parents can be presenters, panelists, or small group facilitators. When families meet others who are familiar with the school system, and who can speak their language, they feel more welcome.
- Connect incoming families with current families. From a family's perspective, having a person who speaks your language (perhaps a former kindergarten parent) demonstrates respect for language and culture. It helps families feel like the school or program cares about their needs. When a family knows that there is someone to contact when they have questions, this builds a foundation for a trusting relationship.
- Talk with families to identify and partner with organizations in the community they use or that offer resources they are looking for (for example, medical offices, grocery stores, libraries, popular restaurants, meal programs). Many organizations also offer resources for children (for example, story time, school playground gatherings, or school supply drives). Allocate and prioritize school resources to ensure policies and practices are in place for establishing and sustaining such relationships with multilingual families and community organizations.

Ideas for School-Level or Program-Level Collaboration during Transitions across PreK-3 Settings

*Read through the ideas below for collaborating with other school or program leaders during transitions across PreK-3 contexts. 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, offering ongoing, collaborative professional learning connected to providing equitable opportunities for multilingual children and their families, etc.).*

As an administrator, I approach DLLs and their families from two perspectives: (1) What do we need to do as a program to be inclusive, and (2) How can I help teachers use the knowledge and skills they already have to learn what they need to know. I believe strongly that it starts with relationships between the family/child and all of our staff and I am responsible for setting the tone. I meet with teachers to discuss how they might include specific language development goals in their classroom activities, to identify staff development opportunities that will help them provide appropriate activities, and to support family communication strategies. Frequent check-ins occur to provide support and resources in meeting children's individual needs.

- Joan Ershler, Wisconsin

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- Reflect on what you believe about collaboration, transitions, and leadership.
- Allocate time and resources to reflect on and incorporate into the school or program what families, caregivers, and community members have shared from home visits, meetings, and community visits (for example, making a plan to welcome multilingual children and families and create linguistically and culturally responsive school or program environments, classrooms or learning spaces, office procedures, etc.).
- If you are an early care and education (ECE) program leader, identify and create formal linkages between your program and the schools that children attend for PreK and/or kindergarten. If you are a school leader, identify and create formal linkages with the ECE programs that send children to your elementary school. For example, organize visits to the learning spaces of partner programs and schools. Provide outlines and resources for meetings to discuss strengths-based information about children, family engagement, community resources, classroom routines, learning standards/instruction/assessment.
- Offer professional learning communities (PLCs) or other team meeting time, coaching time, or professional learning time for program-school and cross grade-level meetings to support staff collaboration horizontally and vertically. Include topics related to equitable transitions for multilingual children, such as establishing reciprocal relationships with families of multilingual children, incorporating children's dynamic language practices (for example, translanguaging), and culturally sustaining pedagogy.
- Enact school/program policies and practices that support regular check-ins between ECE staff, such as PreK teachers, and kindergarten teachers to continually develop the continuity of the programs for multilingual children. Educators need resources to support these check-ins. For example, provide funding for substitute teachers so that kindergarten and PreK classroom teachers can meet. Other examples include redistributing coaching time to allow teams to meet, using professional learning time for cross grade-level meetings, or reorganizing staff meeting time or professional development days in ways that help PreK and kindergarten staff collaborate.
- Consider the types of assessment results and other data shared during transition times. What cultural or linguistic biases might there be when interpreting these results? Ensure that educators and families in your context have opportunities to collect and share observational data about individual children's language practices. Normalize children's dynamic language practices during these discussions (for example, translanguaging).
- Provide time for peer observations of classroom practices regularly to provide teachers with opportunities to see equitable, culturally and linguistically sustaining learning environments.
- Check for biases or deficit approaches in any school-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).