



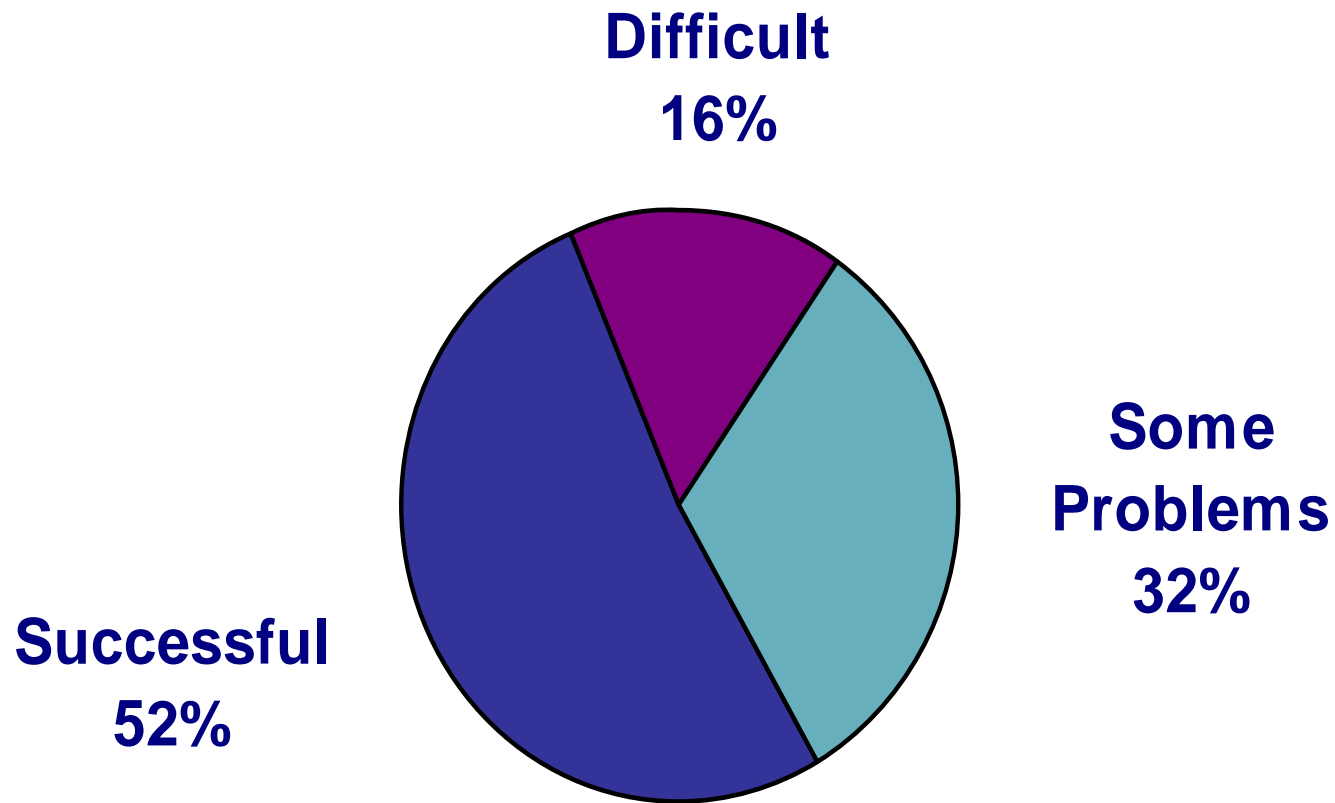
TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

Creating a Comprehensive Plan

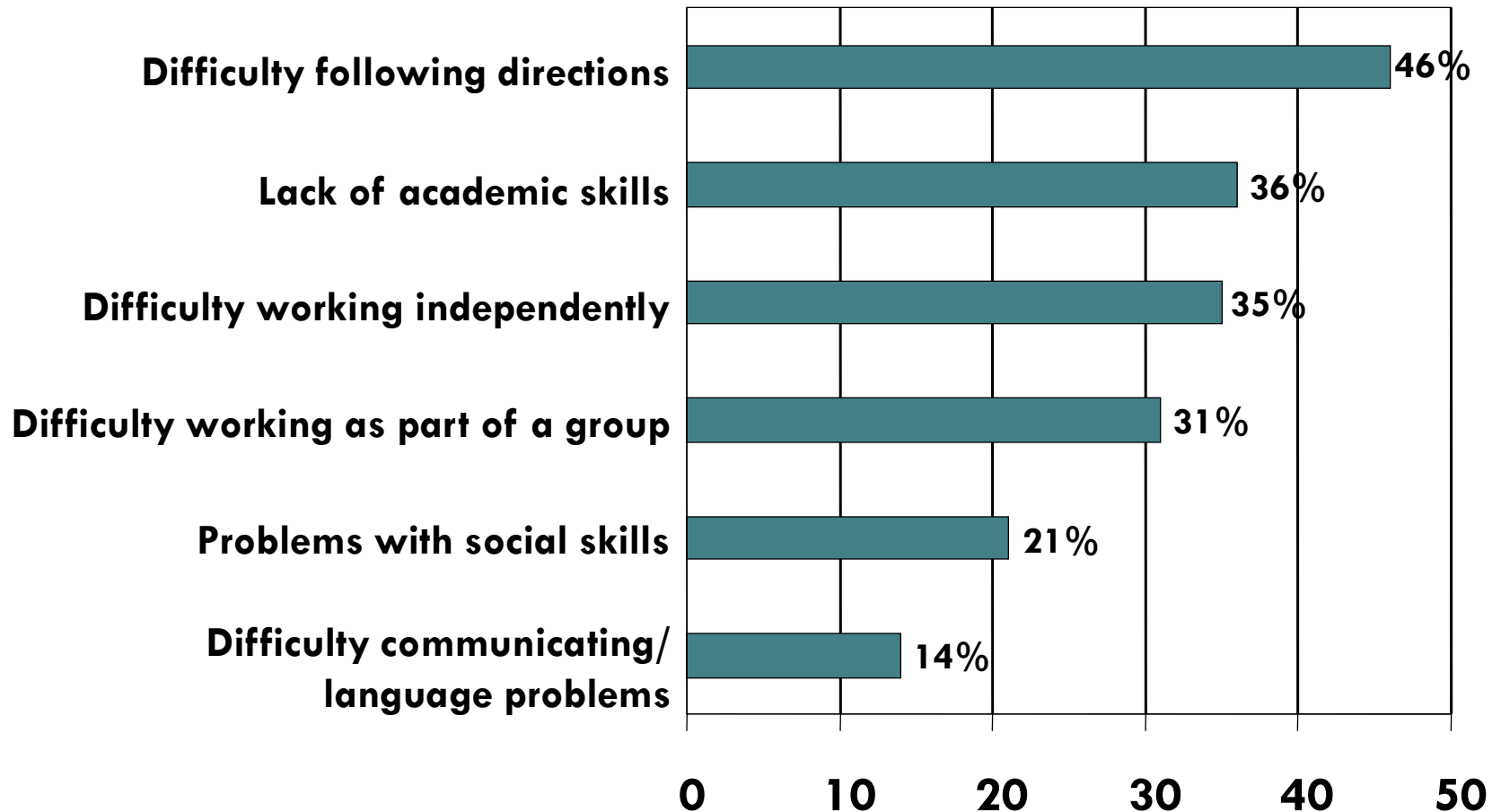
Why focus on transitions?

- Through our monitoring and work with schools throughout the state we have realized that there is a need for assisting our programs in working together to transition children. It became apparent that transition activities are the exception rather than the rule. Since transition is the shared responsibility of many people and institutes the questions arose on how do you create a system that meets everyone's needs?
- The ADE Early Childhood Section had the opportunity to work with Dr. Pianta and Dr. Downer from the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning at the University of Virginia. With their help a Kindergarten Transition Plan was developed. The plan provides a framework for thinking about the people involved in the transition, as well as an opportunity to generate ideas to help develop and foster the critical relationships.

How successfully are children entering kindergarten?



Teachers who say “half my class or more” exhibit these problems entering kindergarten



Transition to Kindergarten...



- Influences later school careers
- Sets the trajectory and paves the way for positive, future school adjustment
- Needs to be an ongoing collaborative process
- Requires planning in advance

When children transition to kindergarten families experience...

- A shift in culture and expectations
- More formal academic demands
- A more complex social environment
- Less family support and connection
- Less time with teachers due to larger class size



Transitions...

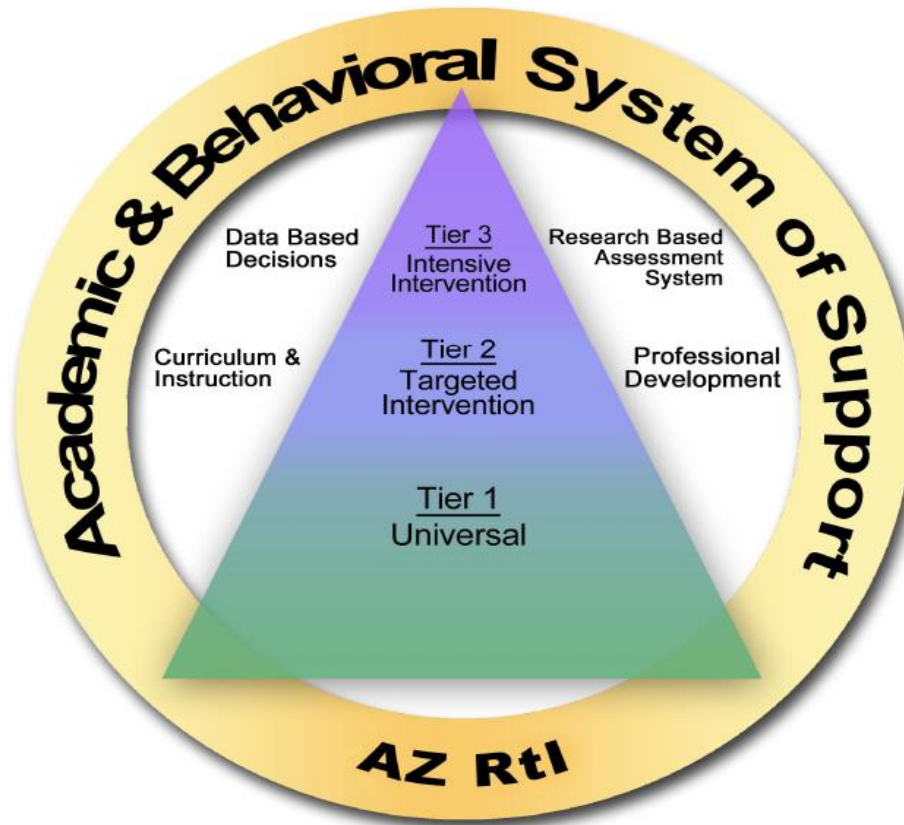
- Need to start early
- Require good communication
- Foster relationships between preschool teachers, kindergarten teachers, students, families and schools
- Are multifaceted processes that vary greatly from school to school



Guiding Principles

- Five guiding principles form the core elements of transition planning and practices, and they can be applied to individual children, families, and schools in order to foster successful kindergarten transitions:
 - ▣ Foster relationships as resources
 - ▣ Promote continuity from preschool to kindergarten
 - ▣ Focus on family strengths
 - ▣ Tailor practices to individual needs
 - ▣ Form collaborative relationships

A Tiered System of Support



Academic & Behavioral System of Support

Where to start...

- Define transition into kindergarten
 - ▣ Is it a static event?
 - ▣ Is it a dynamic process involving many factors over time?
 - ▣ Does it play an important role in children's school adjustment?
 - ▣ Is it considered a relatively inconsequential issue for children?



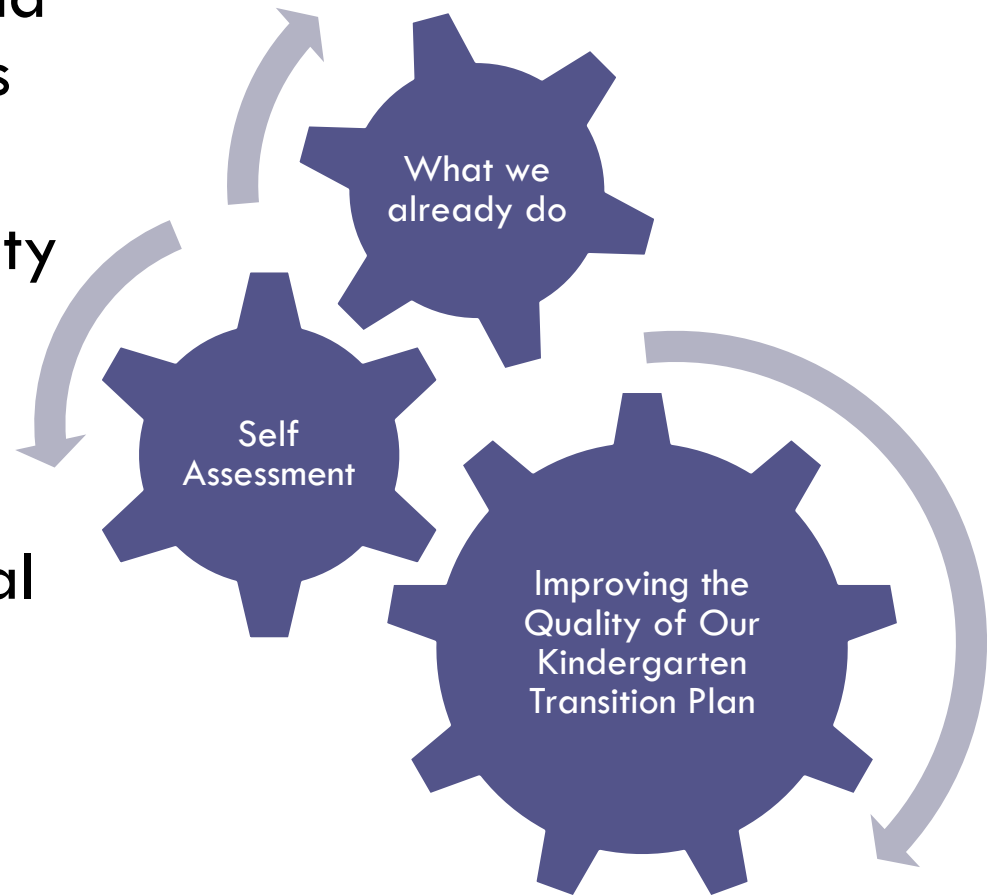
The Process

- “Transition is not simply an event best represented by the first day of school, nor is it a procedure that can successfully occur by happenstance. Rather, the transition to kindergarten is a process that starts in preschool and continues through the early months of kindergarten.”

Successful Kindergarten Transition – Pianta & Kraft-Sayre

Planning and Implementation

- Needs, expectations, and goals of all participants should be considered
- Should promote continuity from preschool to kindergarten
- Should identify and respond to the individual needs of children, families, schools, and communities



Connections

- As you evaluate your current transition plan decide your next steps be sure to include the following connections:
 - ▣ Child-School Connection
 - ▣ Family-School Connection
 - ▣ School-School Connection
 - ▣ School-Community Connection



Steps to Kindergarten Transition

- ❑ Establish Collaborative Teams
- ❑ Identify a Transition Coordinator
- ❑ Facilitate Regular Meetings and Conduct a Needs Assessment
- ❑ Generate Ideas for Transition Activities
- ❑ Create a Transition Timeline
- ❑ Implement Transition Practices
- ❑ Assess, Evaluate, and Revise



Establish Collaborative Teams

- Should consist of those who will be directly affected by the transition as well as those who are indirectly affected but have a vested interest
- Preschool teachers, kindergarten teachers, family workers, principals, parents, community partner directors and teachers, Head Start staff, and other community representatives

Identify a Transition Coordinator

- Should be filled by a district leader, program coordinator or school administrator
- The primary responsibility is that of facilitator
- Should be able to help implement the programs, identify resources, and address any difficulties unique to the individual schools
- Designate someone who can provide continuity and is familiar with the needs of the children as well as the programs

Facilitate Regular Meetings and Conduct a Needs Assessment

- Arrange for regular team meetings
- Create a cooperative process in which a realistic transition plan can be developed and implemented
- Accept and embrace each members' unique perspective
- Facilitate discussions that prioritize needs for the process as a whole
- Conduct a needs assessment
- Clearly identify needs and set goals



Generate Ideas for Transition Activities

- Generate a working list, or menu, of transition activities
- Consider needs of the families and the programs
- Activities that the school is already doing to promote transition should remain on the list



Generate Ideas for Transition Activities

- Once a working list has been generated, identify common links or interdependencies among the activities
- Prioritize transition practices
 - ▣ How important is it?
 - ▣ What need does it fulfill?
 - ▣ How easy is it to implement?
- Identify the people involved in implementation



Create a Transition Timeline

- Using the activities chosen, create a timeline for implementation
- Dates for many of the activities will be prescribed by how the program is run (kindergarten “Round Up”, registration, etc.)
- The transition plan should be in place at the beginning of the preschool year



Implement Transition Practices

- Review items that will be helpful and useful and fit the need identified
- Experiment with implementation
- Add or revise activities to meet the needs of specific families



Implement Transition Practices

Family-School Connections Goal: Increase family collaboration and involvement with the school and the transition process

- ▣ Maintain contact with the families on a regular basis
- ▣ Connect families to community resources
- ▣ Encourage families to participate in home learning activities
- ▣ Encourage family participation in the classroom and at school events
- ▣ Conduct regular family meetings
- ▣ Create newsletters and resource materials
- ▣ Conduct parent orientation meetings

Implement Transition Practices

Child-School Connections Goal: To increase children's familiarity with the kindergarten setting

- ▣ Establish a connection between the preschool child and the kindergarten teacher
- ▣ Create a connection between the child and the kindergarten using special school functions
- ▣ Have children practice kindergarten rules in preschool
- ▣ Incorporate preschool activities into the kindergarten year
- ▣ Encourage kindergarten support staff to visit preschool classrooms

Implement Transition Practices

Peer Connections Goal: To provide children with the opportunity to engage in positive relationships with peers who can make the transition with them to kindergarten

- ▣ Establish peer connections within the preschool class
- ▣ Establish peer connections outside of school
- ▣ Establish connections with peers who will be in kindergarten
- ▣ Establish peer connections between preschoolers and kindergarteners
- ▣ Have kindergarteners visit the preschool classroom
- ▣ Have preschoolers visit the kindergarten classroom

Implement Transition Practices

Community Connections Goal: To facilitate continuity in the transition process within the community

- ▣ Build useful policies related to transition
- ▣ Foster inter-school collaboration about programs and classroom practices
- ▣ Identify and communicate the curriculum and community expectations for children
- ▣ Establish policy coordination among agencies

Assess, Evaluate, and Revise

Once the transition process has been completed, transition teams need to:

- ❑ Evaluate the activities they used
- ❑ Identify needs that were not met
- ❑ Document what worked well

Evaluation should be done in a variety of ways:

- ❑ Informal conversations
- ❑ Focus groups
- ❑ General meetings
- ❑ Surveys
- ❑ Questionnaires

Revise next years transition plan.

Keys to a Successful Transition

- “Collaboration, partnering, and building relationships make more sense during the transition to kindergarten than they do in almost any other time of educating young children. This is a time of change for families, children, and schools in which new expectations, new relationships, and new competencies are formed that can have long-term consequences.”

Resources

- *Successful Kindergarten Transition: your Guide to Connecting Children, Families & Schools* Robert C. Pianta & Marcia Kraft-Sayre

Contact Information

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