

10 KEY TRANSITION TIPS FOR FAMILIES ENTERING PRESCHOOL

1. Ask your service coordinator/provider, program representative, or teacher for a copy of the *“Step by Step Guide to Transition into Preschool”* from First Steps. This can be obtained from a regional First Steps Point of Entry (POE) office. It includes tips, items to collect, and explains the steps to services with the school district. It is a wonderful resource for all families interested in attending a preschool program.
2. If your child is in Parents as Teachers, First Steps, Early Head Start, or an Early Care and Education program, ask your teacher or contact person to help you develop a transition plan that could support both your child and family in preparing for the change transition brings. This development of a transition plan using the *“Transition Conference”* with current providers and others is very important and the local school district representative should always be invited. You will not know what the district has to offer if they are not invited and if your child is eligible for special education and related services, the program is always individualized for each child. For your particular child, it may not be the program you have heard about from *“Susie’s mom”*. This meeting is recommended to occur between the nine-month and the six-month window before your child turns three to allow time for activities developed on the transition plan to be implemented.
3. Use the *Kentucky Early Childhood Standards Parent Guides (or DVD)* and select activities to do with your child that will support his/her growth and development. The B-3 Year *Standards Parent Guides* [link](#) directly to the *Standards Parent Guides for 3-4 year olds*. *The KY EC Standards Parent Guide* activities will lead to school readiness for kindergarten as they are **linked** to the school district *“Program of Studies”* (POS) for all items other than English/Language Arts and Math (which link to *KY Core Academic Standards*). If your child has good attendance in a center based program, or you make sure you are home for in-home service delivery, he/she will be developing along the *“continuum”* or as he/she is ready for skill development in the different areas outlined in each of the guides. If your child is not in a program prior to three, as a parent – you can obtain a copy of the appropriate *KY EC Standards Parent Guide* and do activities with your child at home to support learning plus they are practical and fun!
4. Ask about appointments to visit community preschools early on, observe, and ask questions. Ask if a DVD is available of your community programs. Obtain information about the eligibility requirements for each program and/or special accommodations to meet your child’s needs.
5. Attend any open house provided by preschool programs and join the local PTA/PTO to become acquainted with families who have transitioned before.

6. After you know which preschool your child will be attending, call and ask if you can bring your child and camera when children are not present. Meet different people who will be a part of your child's preschool environment, such as the cooks, principal, a bus driver, librarian, receptionist or secretary, janitor, teacher, assistant teacher, etc. Introduce your child and ask if you can take a picture of them and get them to write their name and title on a sheet of paper you have brought. Take additional pictures of the preschool classroom (schedule, cubbies, centers, playground, and a bus). Have the pictures developed; tape each picture on the sheet of paper with the name and title. Include the pictures of the preschool environment and tape them to sheets of paper. Staple the sheets to make a booklet, and title it with your child. Talk with your child often about the person, their role at the school, and use the classroom pictures to prepare your child for the sequence of activities. Remember to stress, "Work is a child's play" so they will love the work they do at preschool. Let your child use the booklet to "read" to others about the new adventure he/she is ready.
7. Ask how you can support the receiving teachers with immediate information to assist them in the development of adjustment strategies to be used the first 4-12 weeks of the program.
8. Be flexible, optimistic, and develop a partnership with the school, classroom teacher and/or program representatives. You are the real expert on your child, so always be willing to share what triggers inappropriate behaviors (loud alarms, etc.), calming techniques that work for you, and be willing to learn new strategies they might have in mind to be consistent at home.
9. Check the library for books about transition into preschool and books about change. Read to your child at every opportunity and create a love for reading.
10. HAVE FUN WITH YOUR CHILD! They will only be this age once, and the relationships you develop with providers, teachers, principals, etc. are to be cherished and nurtured for future success. If you need additional supports, contact your Family Resource/Youth Service Center (FRYSC), a Family Resource Center (FRC), Kentucky Special Information Network (KY-SPIN), and other parent support groups. The www.transitiononestop.org or www.kentuckypartnership.org/kectp websites may be consulted for many of the resources mentioned in this article. Contact information is also available in the *Step-by-Step Guide* and the *Community Resource Guide for Families* available on the above website.



KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

1. Ask for a Transition Conference and develop a transition plan for your family and child 9-6 months prior to age three.
2. Help implement the activities recommended.
3. Obtain the appropriate *KY EC Standards Parent Guides* for activities to support your child's growth and development and the *Step-by-Step Guide* for transition tips and supports.
4. Visit your preschool options.
5. Ask questions and contact families of children who attended a preschool.
6. Provide all the information you can about your child – give a release of information for records transfer.
7. Attend any opportunity for an orientation, training, etc. If you cannot attend school functions, ask for alternative ways to participate. Become a community advocate for high quality education which will benefit your child and others throughout their school experiences.
8. Be flexible and optimistic. Develop partnerships with the preschool staff.
9. Read books to your child about preschool and take him/her to visit if possible (or ask if they have a DVD or scrapbook to check out).
10. Enjoy your child at each stage of his/her growth and development! Stay involved in *your child's education* as a volunteer, PTA, meetings, etc. Become the expert on your child; be available for questions, check regularly on your child's progress, and implement goals and activities at home consistently with the teachers/program.