

Transition Supports: Strategic Implementation Plan, 2020-2023

Background

In 2018, the Early Learning Board (ELB) and Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) completed a multi-stakeholder planning process that generated the **Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan, 2019-2024**. The State Plan set out a vision, five-year goals, key strategies, and priorities to create a stronger future for our keiki, their families, and the entire state. The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Office of Child Care, through the Hawai'i Department of Human Services (DHS), awarded EOEL a Preschool Development Grant, Birth through Five (PDG B-5) to develop in-depth, actionable strategic plans that are rooted in the State Plan. EOEL used the PDG B-5 Grant to convene work groups and develop seven Strategic Implementation Plans; each one serves as a "living" document meant to change over time as opportunities emerge, lessons are learned, and challenges are met with innovation.

The Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan 2019-2024, full Strategic Implementation Plans, Needs Assessments, and background information can be found at: <https://earlylearning.hawaii.gov/resources/hawaii-state-early-childhood-strategic-implementation-plans/>

Transitions Supports: Rationale

Transition supports, while considered important for all children transitioning into kindergarten, are especially critical for two groups of children and families. The first group is made up of children with special needs when they move from the Department of Health Early Intervention Section (Part C) to the Department of Education Special Education Preschool (Part B). There is a significant cultural shift between the family support-oriented services of DOH Early Intervention and the child/education-oriented services of the DOE Special Education Preschool. The second critical group is made up of children and families experiencing unstable housing when the children transition into kindergarten at age five. Transition to the school structure and community can be difficult for children and families under stress and, at the same time, it can be an important stabilizing force for children, especially when the school community has a deep awareness and understanding of the challenges facing these children and families.

Needs Assessment Summary

	2008 and 2016	2020	Recommendations
Transition from DOH EIS (Part C) to DOE SpEd Preschool (Part B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2008, 30% of families surveyed preferred their child remain in DOH EIS program, but most families that felt initial apprehension about the transition ended up feeling positive about their child's experience; after the transition, 16% of families still preferred DOH EIS services Key transition supports: transition conference and DOE Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting; other supports include: pre-transition site visit, explanation of DOE evaluation report; and, being welcomed by DOE staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of children eligible for Part B were referred by Part C prior to age three, and 95% had an IEP developed and implemented on time 94% of toddlers with special needs exited Part C with timely, completed transition plans 54% of parents indicate the school facilitated parental involvement General perception among families is that mainstream kindergarten is not well suited for children with special needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define a "successful" transition and an "unsuccessful" one Identify the characteristics of the family, the child, and/or the setting that positively impact transitions Identify what barriers negatively impact the transition for the child/family Deepen the data on transitions
Transition to Kindergarten (in general)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2016 study of 755 parents of kindergartners in DOE schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 83% aware of early registration 87% knew what materials were needed for registration 96% found the registration process easy to understand 88% understood their child's schedule 41% were concerned about their child making friends 23% were concerned about their child's adjustment 14% were concerned about their child's experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative data indicates a lower level of satisfaction with transition because the supports are ad hoc, too fluid, and families have to request support and transferring information Parents desire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More communication and guidance throughout the transition Explicit information on transition challenges Information on the major variations between pre-k and kindergarten philosophies Advance introduction to kindergarten teacher Transition protocols for those coming from play-based settings into academic kindergarten 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as above Provide transition support information to families at multiple points in time Develop portfolios of children's work to bring to kindergarten Reintroduce universal kindergarten entry assessment Secure needs assessment information specific to children and families experiencing unstable housing

Key Priorities for Collective Action:

Engage in planning and coordination among entities that serve children as they progress from birth through age eight (and transition to the next level or setting) to ensure all children appropriately receive the services and resources they need for optimal growth and development. (BB3, vii, drawn from the Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan, 2019-2024)

Coordinate support and advocate for aligned and seamless transition practices between programs and services for: 1) children, age three, transitioning from Department of Health Early Intervention Section (Part C) to Department of Education Special Education Preschool (Part B), and 2) children experiencing unstable housing as they transition into kindergarten at age five. (BB5, vii, modified)

Objective 1: Understand and establish intra- and interagency positions and practices that encourage strong collaborative engagement among all partners, including families, and high utilization of available transition supports.	
Actions	Indicators of Success
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in an interagency assessment of transition needs for a) children transitioning from Department of Health (DOH) Early Intervention Section to Department of Education (DOE) Special Education Preschool, and b) children/families experiencing homelessness or unstable housing as they transition into kindergarten, and generate an assessment report for agency leaders and staff on current processes, strengths, barriers, and recommendations (e.g., cross-walk eligibility differences for DOH Early Intervention Section and DOE Special Education services). Integrate Department of Human Services' Med-QUEST Health and Functional Assessment into the Transition Supports process to ensure the appropriate health- and medical-related services are made available and/or maintained for children receiving Medicaid benefits, regardless of parental decisions on transition options. In the context of the assessment report, and to optimize transitions to kindergarten for all, engage community service and early care and education providers in all settings in addressing the needs of families and children transitioning into kindergarten. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common definitions, standards, practices, agreements, and indicators for successful transition are established. Interagency assessment completed and an assessment report have been distributed to agency leaders and other interested parties, including recommendations for action. Action taken by agencies, and others as appropriate, in response to recommendations has begun. Written agreements for data-sharing are developed, as necessary. Agency staff report strong, collaborative intra- and interagency relationships to support successful transitions. Eligible children are receiving the medically necessary services they require, regardless of familial decisions on transition options. Providers are aware of transition supports and are effectively coaching families on transitions. Long-term. Agencies and families have data on the rate of successful transitions. Long-term. Parents report being engaged and well-informed about their child's specific needs related to transition, including knowing how best to support their child, and feeling able to make decisions about transition alternatives.
Objective 2: Develop family-friendly culture of engagement that enhances family knowledge about transitions and builds trusted relationships in support of the best possible child development.	
Actions	Indicators of Success
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Update existing Transition Toolkit for providers. Establish a school-based and program-based culture of safety and support for families and children with housing needs by ensuring appropriate staff are well-trained on vital information and best practices (e.g., McKinney-Vento Act, trauma-informed care). Families with housing needs and children heading into kindergarten are identified and connected to transition supports and housing services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers are using the Transition Toolkit and are reporting it is effective for working with families. Parents report being engaged and well-informed about their child's specific needs related to transition, including knowing how best to support their child, and feeling able to make decisions about transition alternatives. Professional development offerings have incorporated safety and support for families and children with housing needs. Transition supports training attendees report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased confidence working with families and children with housing needs, and Being better equipped to respond to families and children with housing needs. Families report their school-based environment is supportive of their needs. Children are registered on time for kindergarten. Outreach, Keiki Steps to Kindergarten, and mini-transition services are delivered at transitional housing locations and shelters.

This is a summary of the Transition Supports: Strategic Implementation Plan, 2020-2023.