**Early Childhood Work Group – Kindergarten Transitions**

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**Current Challenges**

·      Every time new site lead, new teachers, need to start over again

·      Connections are personality driven, need to make more systematic

·      Private Pre-Schools provide support and training about what kinder day is like, but often happening in pockets

·      It’s difficult for the school district to reach families, in-home providers

·      After the first day parents feel forgotten - Kinder teachers have enough time to engage with parents during the school year

·      System glitches between different school (i.e. communication between Juneau Charter and Elementary about who’s registering students)

·      Only about 50% of students are registered in the spring, by the first day of kinder about 85% registered -> Families in transition (moving from one area to another or don’t have a home), families whose kids haven’t been engaged with childcare/early childhood activities (Juneau)

·      Transition to afterschool/out-of-school programming (RALLY in Juneau) is rough - parents don’t know they need to be on the list, there isn’t space, etc.

·      Transportation to meetings and school events can be hard, especially for families without reliable access to a vehicle.

·      Parents often have just one day’s notice about meetings with teachers/ assessments before school – can’t make it because of late notice (Juneau)

·      Kinder teachers are already working more than their contract hours – how do we ask them to do more?

**Child-School Connection**

·      Exposure to school building, classroom, routines before the first day of school, i.e. in the spring with tours set-up by child care centers, integrating co-located pre-school programs into school day, and/or family events before the start of school.

·      Summer boot camps (different name?) to deepen exposure to and preparation for school before official start.

**Family-School Connection**

·      Treat family and in-home/family childcare providers (not just licensed centers) as equal partners in transition process (Boston public schools model).

·      Ensure families know what’s needed (Anchorage count down to Kinder model).

·      Families have exposure to school building and processes before the first day of schools, i.e. family nights with tour lead by graduating kindergartners.

·      Spread out learning experiences for parents – one big event when parents are trying to take in information and manage/make children feel comfortable may be too much – parents may need child-free time to digest new info.

·      Ask families what they need – “focus group” or survey about the transition process among current kinder families.

·      Be creative and persistent about sharing kinder-registration info, i.e. post at playgrounds, host meetings and events at Gruening Park or other areas where there may be a high concentration of people with limited access to vehicles.

·      Home visits by teachers – big impact when go in to homes, big deal for training/work.

·      How do we create two way communication?

**School-School Connection**

·      Cross-pollinate, i.e. school staff – principals, counselors, and/or teachers visiting pre-schools and pre-school staff present for the first week of kinder transitions.

·      Share resources, i.e. share among all childcare providers the last three weeks of Second Step curriculum used by Head Start, which focuses on kinder transitions.

·      Encourage and Support all child care providers – licensed or not - in providing support and training about what kinder day is like by hosting parent info session, school visits, teacher visits, etc.

·      Early education providers can help school districts find kinder families – i.e. Imagination Library can run list of kids who will be five by September.

·      Expand to the work that Learn and Grow (Linda-Squibb) is doing with LEAP schools to other schools?

**Data to track**

·      Only about 50% of students are registered in the spring, by the first day of kinder about 85% registered (data point to track) -> Families in transition (moving from one part of town to the other), families whose kids haven’t been engaged with childcare/early childhood activities.

·      DEED is Surveying kinder teachers who filled out Developmental Profile – were kinder teachers able to talk with preschool teachers.

·      Learn and Grow quality domains include community engagement.

·      Link Alaska Developmental Profile to third grade reading scores – do we see a difference in four years?

**Snap Shots of Current Processes:**

**Juneau:**

o   Delayed start, First 3 days of school are used for individual meetings

o   KinderReady, optional summer boot camp

o   Integrated preschool – do things in the spring, part of the school fabric

o   Head Start in school buidlings are part of fabric, but not integrated

o   No system for private, non-school district preschool

o   Family welcome nights happen depending on (grant) funding and school.

**Sitka:**

o   Last three weeks of second step curriculum used by Head Start all about transition to kinder – could they share the curriculum more widely?

o   Preschools focus on transition in spring-time with Brigance social and emotional learning and pre-academics.

o   Start the year with half of class on one day, half the other, all on the third day

o   Principal reaches out to centers and headstart, kids visit school, staff at Woocheen spends first week at Kinder to be a familiar face (Sitka)

o   School Counselor visits Woocheen (Sitka)

**Questions to consider:**

Could home visits be prioritized by AK Developmental Profile scores, free and reduced lunch? Happen in mid-fall? Teachers do in tandum with… available school and assembly members? Non-profit partner from Partnership for Families and Children and/or school board members? Noelle/district staff sets it up? Could Parents as Teachers help provide guidance/parent training?

Can Tlingit and Haida, SHI (Baby Raven Reads), Child care centers also run lists of kids who will be five in September so school district can reach out to them directly? Can this be done as part of data coordination work?

What role can AEYC/thread play in identifying and supporting non-licensed child care providers to organize kinder-transition experiences?