

**THE BUSINESS OF EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION IN ILLINOIS:
Providers' Tools for Improving Quality
Chicago Metropolis 2020, Spring 2004**

Overview

Due to gaps in the way statewide information is gathered, the picture of for-profit child care centers is incomplete. For-profit providers comprise 25% of center-based care and education. Therefore, to help all children enter school ready to succeed, we must enhance quality in all programs, regardless of their tax status. This article is a resource guide that will allow providers easy access to information and programs that can help them enhance the quality of their programs through encouraging effective transitions to kindergarten.

Best Practices in the Transition to Kindergarten

- a. Personalized communication between and among families and staff in child care centers and schools to facilitate continuity of programming.
- b. Scheduling meetings involving child care teachers and parents and kindergarten teachers to discuss the developmental progress and abilities of individual children.
- c. Scheduling visits for children in child care to visit kindergarten classrooms.
- d. Developing transition planning teams.
- e. Aligning curriculum and expectations across child care and kindergarten programs.
- f. Providing education and training to parents.

Benefits of Effective Transition Practices

- a. Children who knew what to expect in kindergarten before they entered experienced less anxiety.
- b. Transitioning is easier for children who have acquired basic school readiness skills before entering kindergarten.
- c. Attendance in high-quality early care and education programs that employ a range of transition activities can set children on a track for continued success in school and later in life.
- d. Family members, particularly those from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds may feel more comfortable advocating for their children in school when they are involved early.

Conclusion

The transition from preschool to kindergarten can be extremely stressful for children. They face new expectations and goals that are more formal and tied to academic progress. Despite this critical period in children's lives, many schools do not have specific transition plans in place. Child care providers are key partners in the transition process. The transition works best when strong relationships linking the children, families, school and community, including child care programs, are established before kindergarten starts.

(2004). *The business of early care and education in Illinois: Providers' tools for improving quality*. Chicago, IL: Chicago Metropolis 2020.