

# Supporting Seamless Transitions *for BC's Youngest Learners*

The *Early Years in BC School Districts: A Scan of Promising Practices* guide, developed collaboratively by the Ministry of Education and the Provincial Office for the Early Years, highlights some of the practices in schools and communities across B.C. that support our youngest learners as they transition from early years programs and services into Kindergarten. There is a shared responsibility for government, the education sector and the broader community to ensure that all children have seamless transitions into Kindergarten. These transitions enable students to thrive at the youngest age, and allow them to start their school years well supported and prepared. This table is just a snapshot of some of the roles and responsibilities of educators across BC when it comes to supporting Early Years. More information about these initiatives, including the full guide, are located at: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/how-parents-can-support-young-children/provincial-office-for-early-years>



Provincial Office  
for the Early Years

	Superintendents / District Administration	School District Early Learning Leads	School Principals and Kindergarten Teachers
Leadership & Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Establish a school district (SD) early learning lead responsible for all early learning initiatives. The lead should be a key decision-maker who is knowledgeable and passionate about the early years (EY).</li> <li>▶ Develop an early learning vision, strategy and related policies for the SD.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Work with the community to create a coordinated approach for early learning (i.e. establish an EY advisory committee).</li> <li>▶ Build relationships with local government leaders regarding EY.</li> <li>▶ Identify the use of SD resources to enhance access to EY programs and services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Build relationships with EY professionals.</li> <li>▶ Inform and consult with colleagues in other EY sectors about SD policies and procedures.</li> <li>▶ Identify opportunities for improved collaboration across sectors.</li> </ul>
Seamless Transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Develop policies and procedures to support all children transitioning to Kindergarten, with particular consideration for Aboriginal children, new Canadians, children with diverse needs, and children who have not previously accessed EY programs and services.</li> <li>▶ Initiate a Kindergarten transition process that targets children with diverse needs and complex transitions in a way that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Brings partners to the table to ensure an effective exchange of information and seamless service delivery.</li> <li>◆ Plans appropriate supports with representatives from the Supported Child Development (SCD) program, Aboriginal SCD program, Aboriginal Education, Child Development Centre (CDC), BC Early Years Centre, child care and preschool programs, and appropriate SD personnel.</li> <li>◆ Builds connections with services that support immigrant, refugee and Aboriginal families.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Establish a Memorandum of Understanding with the local union that permits SCD and Aboriginal SCD workers to remain with the child until the child completes a successful transition to Kindergarten.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Work with health and community supports to contact families in the spring (before children start Kindergarten), making services accessible to those who have not previously accessed EY programs and services in a way that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Mobilizes a team of service providers (health, dental, speech, Aboriginal service providers, etc.) who meet families in their communities (e.g. in the school, home or elsewhere in the community and operates similar to a 'hub' concept).</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Organize a tour of the local CDC for Kindergarten teachers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Make connections, share information and collaborate in transitioning children to Kindergarten.</li> <li>◆ Provide Kindergarten teachers with an understanding of the CDC's work and how their services support children in transitioning to school.</li> <li>◆ Build relationships and connections focused on supporting children with special needs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Leverage funds to support transitions for vulnerable children, by assigning additional staffing (e.g. ECEs) to targeted Kindergarten classrooms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Assign StrongStart BC facilitators to Kindergarten classes in September to provide additional support to children transitioning into the school setting.</li> <li>▶ Ask questions of parents/caregivers regarding additional supports their child may require as they transition, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Inserting a question in the Kindergarten registration form that asks if the child has received services from the CDC/SCD or other behavioural or developmental supports.</li> <li>◆ Requesting permission from parents/ caregivers for school support staff to work with community supports to help their child transition into school.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Work with community support services and parents/ caregivers to develop Individual Education Plans before school starts.</li> <li>▶ Invite families to participate in preschool screening during the Kindergarten registration process to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Identify children who would benefit from additional support.</li> <li>◆ Offer a play-based, enhanced, summer early-learning experience.</li> <li>◆ Provide information about community programs and services that families can access before Kindergarten registration starts.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Ask parents/caregivers to complete a 'My Child's Story' questionnaire when they register their child for Kindergarten to identify strengths, challenges and prior early-learning experiences.</li> </ul>

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Supporting Aboriginal Children and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Build early years connections into the SD's Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ A commitment to share decision-making and specific goal setting to meet the educational needs of Aboriginal children in the early years.</li> <li>◆ Strengthening links between the SD and Aboriginal partners.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Implement a culturally-responsive Kindergarten focused on Aboriginal learners that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Works collaboratively with local Aboriginal communities to integrate local indigenous knowledge, traditions and learning within the classroom.</li> <li>◆ Creates a sense of belonging and positive identity.</li> <li>◆ Implements a multi-aged grouping classroom that is focused on play-based learning.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Implement a coordinated approach to Kindergarten transitions for Aboriginal children that makes connections with, and brings together Aboriginal Friendship Centres, Aboriginal service providers, First Nations representatives, Aboriginal-focused preschools, Aboriginal Head Start programs, and SD staff to develop and implement culturally responsive transition plans for Aboriginal children who would benefit from additional support.</li> <li>▶ Identify available SD resources (e.g. Aboriginal Education workers) that may be leveraged to build stronger connections with families.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Identify links with local Aboriginal communities, Elders and early childhood organizations serving Aboriginal children and families.</li> <li>▶ Host sessions at the school to share information, make connections, build relationships, and explore possible programming/service delivery partnerships.</li> <li>▶ Identify space in the school and creative opportunities for program delivery.</li> </ul>
Quality Early Learning Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Prioritize quality early learning experiences in planning, funding and professional development to enhance positive developmental opportunities for young children, and engage parents/caregivers in the school community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Organize network meetings in the SD throughout the year to help educators connect, collaborate and share information.</li> <li>▶ Implement joint professional development and collaboration opportunities that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Bring together Kindergarten teachers, early childhood educators (ECE's) and StrongStart BC facilitators.</li> <li>◆ Release Kindergarten teachers and StrongStart BC facilitators from their duties so they can participate in a variety of professional learning opportunities.</li> <li>◆ Promote collaborative projects (e.g. field trips to StrongStart BC programs and Kindergarten classrooms, joint gradual entry plans, and Individual Education Plans for children.)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Host sessions at the school with the local early years sector (e.g. StrongStart BC facilitators, Kindergarten teachers, BC Early Years Centres, ECEs from child-care centres, CDCs and SCD, etc.) to enable collaboration and peer learning, and to promote smoother transitions between programs and services.</li> <li>▶ Provide release time for Kindergarten teachers to visit CDCs, preschools and/or child-care facilities in the school's catchment area that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Build connections across sectors;</li> <li>◆ Create partnerships and connections between educators;</li> <li>◆ Facilitate successful transitions into Kindergarten;</li> <li>◆ Help identify children who may need additional supports.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Outreach and Relationships with Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Establish a policy/framework for building and supporting parent and community involvement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Offer a play-based early learning outreach program for children aged 0-8 years and their families in a local facility (i.e. a mall), in partnership with other community agencies like public libraries, BC Early Years Centres, early childhood development community tables, etc. This enables connections to be made with new families that may not otherwise access EY programs and services.</li> <li>▶ Work with community-based service providers to establish an outreach strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Bring Kindergarten registration to families who have not previously accessed EY services in a way that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Includes support as families complete their registration documentation.</li> <li>◆ Offers information about Kindergarten, school visits, school connections, summer programs and early intervention services.</li> <li>◆ Leverages the skills and knowledge of Aboriginal Support Workers, Outreach Workers, or Settlement Workers to connect with families in their neighbourhoods.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>