



Are We Ready?

Educators

Collaborating Around Language-Focused PreK-3 Transitions

Self-Reflection on Collaboration and Transitions

Reflect on your beliefs on collaboration and transitions with multilingual children and their families.

- What have you learned and believed about school readiness and transition practices (for example, children entering a more formal school setting for the first time; early care and education program to school; grade level to grade level)? How did you arrive at these beliefs?
- What knowledge and skills do you think you need to be ready for multilingual children to come into your classroom or learning space?
- What is the role of families, other caregivers, and communities in transition practices? How did you arrive at these beliefs?
- What does collaboration with families, communities, caregivers, and other educators look like during transitions (in general and connected to multilingual children)?
- Do you feel ready for multilingual children and their families? Why or why not?

Educators can use this guide for reflection and planning connected to promoting equitable transitions for multilingual children and their families. Transitions in this context refers to transitions across one school, classroom, and/or learning space to another (i.e., PreK to K, K to 1, 1 to 2, and 2 to 3). Educators in this context refers to teachers, paraprofessionals, family liaisons, and others who work directly with children. This resource is grounded in the WIDA PreK-3 Essential Actions. It is specifically connected to Essential Action 5, collaborate with others across PreK-3 settings to promote and support multilingual children's language development, dynamic language and cultural practices, and learning.

Ideas for Collaborating with Multilingual Children, Families, and Communities during Transitions across PreK-3 Settings

*Read through the ideas below for collaborating with multilingual children, families, and communities during transitions across PreK-3 settings. Use the **Are We Ready Notetaker** to jot down what you already do, what else you will do, and ways to extend equitable transition practices year-round (for example, aligning PreK-3 family engagement practices and linguistically and culturally sustaining approaches). Use this list of practices and your notes as you plan for PreK-3 transitions in your context.*

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- Reflect on your own identities and experiences and your beliefs about school readiness, transitions, and PreK-3 alignment (pushing up ECE/PreK practices to K-3).
- Get to know the multilingual children and families coming into your learning space. This may be children entering your setting at the beginning of the year and/or newly arrived immigrants or refugees during the year. Learn some common phrases in their languages and how to pronounce everyone's names. Incorporate familiar artifacts that will welcome children and families. Connect children with a classroom buddy or an older buddy who speaks their language(s).
- Take time to be introduced to each family and child. Offer an orientation to your classroom or learning space. Ensure that families are welcome to use their dynamic language practices during the orientation and that they feel their language and cultural practices will be valued, welcomed, and supported.
- Offer a home visit or a visit to a location in the community preferred by families. Learn about children's and families' interests, what they like to do as a family, where they visit in the community, and how they use language in different contexts. Foster trust by learning about families' past experiences, histories, language practices, and possible resources you might use to support them over time. Engage in reciprocal relationship-building by sharing about yourself and about how you will incorporate children's interests, language practices, and backgrounds into your setting. Make this an ongoing conversation!
- Visit community spaces that multilingual children and their families have identified and learn about how language is used there.
- Ask families about their language and learning goals, cultural goals, and social-emotional goals. Share how you can support them to meet their goals (for example, incorporating ideas into your context, providing information and ideas, arranging for families to connect with each other).
- Incorporate what you learn from children, families, and communities about their language and cultural practices, interests, and experiences into your learning environment and instruction. Encourage families to bring up any concerns, needs, or questions and share how you will meet these needs.

We ask families to provide a list of common words in their language so we can better communicate with their children. Whenever a family joins my classroom, I try to learn their language. I study their language and learn simple words. Sometimes I look on Google, and then find someone who can verify the words. I try to find people in the community who speak the language too.

- Derya Gok, Wisconsin

Cuando empezó ir a la escuela, allá, ella [su niña] no podía hablar inglés, y como la maestra habla español, entonces ella se pudo comunicar con la maestra. La maestra trata de ayudarla. [When she started to go to school there, her child couldn't speak any English and since the teacher could speak Spanish, then she could communicate with the teacher. The teacher tries to help her.]

- WIDA Parent Research Study Participant

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- Affirm families' dynamic language and cultural practices and their knowledge and expertise about their child. Identify ways you will provide spaces for children to use and develop all their language practices regardless of your language background and your language program type.
- Ask families how they prefer to communicate with you (for example, preference of communication platform, language, location, time of day, etc.) and then attend to their needs including translation and interpretation services.
- Ask families how they prefer to engage and offer opportunities to connect in nontraditional ways (for example, in a community space they prefer, during drop-off and pick-up, via email or text; share how you will engage with them in an ongoing way). Incorporate families' ideas around ways to share information on topics they want to know more about or ways they would like to be involved.

Ideas for Collaborating with other Educators and Professionals during Transitions across PreK-3 Settings

*Read through the ideas below for collaborating with other educators and professionals around transitions for multilingual children and their families across PreK-3 settings. Use the **Are We Ready Notetaker** to jot down what you already do, what else you will do, and ways to extend equitable transition practices year-round (for example, aligning PreK-3 family engagement practices and linguistically and culturally sustaining approaches). Use this list of practices and your notes as you plan for PreK-3 transitions in your context.*

I try to encourage teachers to incorporate and value students' home languages. Anything from morning greetings in a variety of languages, learning a new word, sharing cognates. Multilingual children have so much language knowledge but often don't realize how it's useful. I feel that I can dip into that, make connections, and acknowledge that all our languages are important or valuable. Teachers that are hesitant are worried that they don't know much other than English. Sometimes I will model it for them if I can or pop in and make a connection.

- Lisa Rose Martin, K-4 EL teacher, Indiana

- Connect with previous educators of the incoming multilingual children you will serve to gather information relevant to providing equitable opportunities for language development and learning. Ask about their engagement with families of multilingual children and how they took an asset-based approach. Reflect on ways you can affirm children's and families' identities and build on their previous experiences and dynamic language and cultural practices.

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- Communicate with future educators of the multilingual children you served. Specifically, share a summary of your observations of the dynamic language practices, language development, and learning of the multilingual children you served. Share about how you promoted children's and families' dynamic language and cultural practices. Connect around the benefits of maintaining home language(s) and the value of translanguaging.
- When communicating with future educators around assessment results, ensure that biases in the assessments or the interpretation of results do not lead to deficit thinking about children's dynamic language practices, lowered expectations, or lack of access.
- Consider using shared protocols that you adapt for your grade level and setting to observe each other's classroom practices and effectiveness and communicate across grade levels and programs.
- Collaborate with other educators in your program or grade level and with educators in the previous and future grade level. Collaborate around teaching practices as children transition to push up early childhood practices into K-3, such as promoting play-based learning, inquiry-based lessons around children's, families', and communities' interests, etc.
- Identify ways that school or program leaders can support you as you collaborate with families and with other educators around equitable transitions for multilingual children.
- Check your resources for biases that frame the dynamic language, cultural practices, and identities of multilingual children in a deficit way. Address these biases by connecting with colleagues, families, and community members to find alternative resources for play-based languaging and learning, observational assessments, etc.
- Bring any needs or issues to school or program leaders about structural inequities that multilingual children and their families are experiencing (for example, lack of access to languaging and learning opportunities, lack of translation and interpretation services, biased assessments).