Research Summary on Transition Practices in Early Childhood

Beth Rous, University of Kentucky
Rena Hallam & Susan Lewis, University of Delaware

This document extends work of Rous, Schroeder, & Rosenkoetter (2009) on research-based practices to support the transition of young children. Through a review of the literature six practices were identified based on the following criteria: 1) supported by more than one study; 2) included a representative sample with an aggregate sample size of 350 or greater. For each practice, supporting studies are provided.

High quality child care and developmentally appropriate preschool and kindergarten classrooms are associated with better academic and social outcomes (cognition, work habits, initiative, self-direction; literacy, problem-solving, social adjustment) in the next environments for children who are developing typically and for low income, minority, and urban children.


Ecological factors, including socioeconomic status/income level family risk factors, quality of the neighborhood and parent school involvement and satisfaction are associated with higher academic achievement and more positive social outcomes through early elementary grades for both children who are developing typically and those who are at risk.


A close, positive teacher-child relationship during transition to and in the next environment is associated with better cognitive outcomes for children who are developing typically and for those at risk and with decreased externalizing behavior/positive social relationships for typically developing children.


Preschool and kindergarten teachers and their principals or directors view social development and social communication skills (e.g., expresses wants, takes turns, follows directions) as being more important for school readiness than academic skills.


A match between the sending and receiving environments is related to more successful transitions both for children who are developing typically and those with developmental delays while teaching skills for requirements in the next environment is associated with more successful adjustment and positive outcomes after transition for young children with disabilities/developmental delay or who are at risk for school failure.


**Communication between sending and receiving teachers is associated with more successful adjustment and sociobehavioral outcomes for children typically developing and those at risk.**


**References:**