

Tips For Completing The Transition Summary Form With Families

As a child care provider, preschool teacher, or early learning professional, you know a lot about the children you have cared for and taught. SELF's *Kindergarten Transition Summary Form* will help Kindergarten teachers to better support children and families as they transition into Kindergarten.

Completing the form will take approximately 30 minutes. This is a helpful tool to guide conversations with families about children's interests, strengths and areas for growth. As an early learning professional, you are uniquely positioned to help parents deepen their understanding of their child's learning style, what to expect as children transition into Kindergarten, and how parents can continue to support their child's growth and development. Teachers will, in turn, be better prepared for their incoming students and can build on the foundation that has been developed while children were enrolled in your program.

KEY MESSAGE TO THE FAMILIES:

Explain that the intent and purpose of the form is to collect and share information with the Kindergarten teachers before the start of the school year. The questions are focused on the individual child's unique strengths and interests and provides an opportunity for the parents to identify questions or areas of concern. While Washington State has developed Guidelines describing skills and abilities children may show at the time of Kindergarten entry, children are not expected nor required to demonstrate the mastery of the skills listed on the second page of the form. Children are ready for Kindergarten if they are 5 years old by August 31 of the upcoming school year.

Some of the technical language on the form may be challenging for families to understand. Tailor your discussions with families by providing explanations of certain vocabulary words and concepts as needed.

Each of the skills on the *Kindergarten Transition Summary Form* relate to a child's growth and learning abilities. Developed from the *Washington State Early Learning Guidelines, 2012* for children ages 4 and 5, each section identifies examples of things that children this age are learning to be, do and know. In addition, the Guidelines provide examples of how families and other caregivers can continue to support young children's growth and development. Read through each section to be able to offer an explanation to parents if they don't understand the area or skills described.

ABOUT ME AND MY FAMILY AND CULTURE – Children develop within the context of their families, neighborhoods and communities – all of which influence school readiness. This section describes how children express themselves and relate to others based on cultural and family influences. Other behaviors and strengths include the ability to identify emotions, regulate their behavior depending on the environment and expectations, and children's interest in trying new things and the ability to learn.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS – Young children's ability to connect with and form relationships with other children and adults is an important part of their development. This section describes some of these behaviors and includes interactions with adults and peers, the ability to take another's perspective, problem solving and conflict resolution.

TOUCHING, SEEING, HEARING AND MOVING AROUND – Young children learn through play and thrive in nurturing environments where they can be actively learning about their world. This section describes the fine and gross motor skills that children this age are developing. Fine motor skills are the ability to coordinate small muscle movements – the kind required to write, cut with scissors, and fasten zippers and buttons. Gross motor skills are the ability to coordinate large muscle movements – like the kind required to run, climb, skip and jump.



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GROWING UP HEALTHY – Overall health, including being free of untreated medical, dental or mental health issues is an important part of being ready for school. This section describes the daily living skills (personal health and hygiene), nutrition and health and safety that children are developing and ways in which caregivers can continue to support healthy habits as well as self-help skills. These are important skills as children transition into the kindergarten classroom where they will be with groups of up to 24 other children and will need to be able to do many of these things on their own.

COMMUNICATING (LITERACY) – Young children develop language and the ability to communicate and be understood through the context of trusting relationships. Communication skills begin before birth and language development is an important part of cultural identity and begins in the child's home language(s). Use this section to identify a child's strengths in speaking, listening, reading and writing in the English language. For dual-language learners, it is important for children to continue to grow and learn in their native language.

LEARNING ABOUT MY WORLD – Young children learn about the world through relationships and play-based experiences where they can note similarities and differences, make predictions and use and apply what they have learned in new settings. Examples of behaviors in this section show their knowledge, mathematical abilities and awareness of science, social situations, and artistic tendencies.

Facilitate a conversation with the child in order to elicit direct quotes that you can capture on the form and that you can use to support the child and family during this important transition. Use the wording on the form itself as a general guide, but you may need to help this process by adding additional questions and suggestions in order to capture the child's thoughts and feelings.

Take into consideration how the child communicates best so you will get direct quotes from the child.

For example, if the child talks to you best when he is building with blocks, try to start a conversation while you are building blocks together. Open-ended questions will usually get more information. Try questions like, "I wonder if there will be blocks like these in Kindergarten? or What do you wonder about?" You may have to revisit the conversation with the child.

Using the questions on the form as a small group activity with a few Kindergarten-bound children might also get the conversation started. Children may want to draw a picture of something they want to know about Kindergarten. As you connect with each child about their picture, you can ask questions from the form and document the child's answers. Use any helpful methods of working with the child to help elicit their responses.

Be careful to frame questions in a positive way. Children may have some fears about making the transition. To help the child process this, ask questions they have about Kindergarten or how they imagine it will be. This empowers the child to find the answers to their questions rather than fear the unknown.

Another fun way to help capture the child's voice is to recommend writing a letter to the new Kindergarten teacher. This offers a clear message that the child's voice is valuable in this transition.

Make this part of the form a fun way to reflect on your time with the child and a gift for the new teacher. You are sending a message to the child, his or her family and the new school that the child's voice is valuable in this transition to kindergarten process.

If parents have questions or express concerns, simply provide support. It may be helpful if you connect them with someone at the incoming school or district.

Once parents have signed the bottom of the form, please make a copy for your records and send the original to the appropriate district's key contact.

Thank families for their time and participation in the Kindergarten transition process and reassure them that they are the child's first and best teacher. Show families this process is a team effort and their personal knowledge of their child is the most valuable tool to a successful transition.