



Washington Office of Superintendent of  
**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

*TRANSITIONAL  
KINDERGARTEN  
ADMINISTRATORS'  
BEST PRACTICES  
WORKBOOK*

**2022**

# TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN ADMINISTRATORS'

*Best Practices Workbook*

2022

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# **WELCOME TO THE TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN ADMINISTRATORS' BEST PRACTICES WORKBOOK**

OSPI aims to help you set a strong foundation to serve children of all abilities who lack access to other early learning group settings with screening to identify children with the most complex needs. In this workbook, we will share the purpose of Transitional Kindergarten and the steps to get started in building trust with families and supporting them to select the best environments for their children. OSPI will also support your school/ district with connections to the Washington Pyramid Model implementation community of practice. Finally, this workbook sets your district up for success to collaborate with local early learning programs.

The Transitional Kindergarten Administrators' Best Practices Workbook begins with an overview that will give you a general sense of the content and how to move through it. There will be opportunities to reflect, set goals specific to your program, and check your understanding.

# OVERVIEW

## Objectives

The objectives for the Transitional Kindergarten (TK) Administrators' Best Practices Workbook include:

- Understand the purpose of Transitional Kindergarten
- Understand how to continually build awareness and relationships in Early Learning Collaboration and document the process
- Assess and document the need for TK in your community
- Know the elements of developmentally appropriate practice and the assessment tools to build high-quality Transitional Kindergarten
- Know how to create inclusionary classrooms using the Washington Pyramid Model as part of your district's MTSS framework
- Build relationships with families at the rate of trust to support their informed choice of learning environments to meet their child's individual needs
- Conduct continual needs assessments for TK and referrals to other community- based early learning programs to best meet needs of family and child
- Establishing coordinated recruitment and enrollment including:
  1. Braiding funding and tools related to funding (utilizing tools like [Unlocking State and Federal Program Funds](#), and the [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center's Preschool Inclusion Finance Toolkit](#))
  2. Conversing with each family to ensure that they are fully informed on of a continuum of Regular Early Childhood program placements for their child
  3. Building best practices for families to have uniform entry, recruitment, screening, and prioritizing enrollment in Head Start and ECEAP.

## The Purpose of TK Administrator Workbook

The purpose of the Transitional Kindergarten (TK) Administrator Workbook is to support principals and administrators in implementing the five pillars with fidelity and an eye to local needs. Visit the Transitional Kindergarten Webpage to learn more.

## Useful Course Resources

The purpose of this section is to provide you with foundational Transitional Kindergarten (TK) materials. This section functions as a home base of helpful resources. You do not need to read each resource in this section. Additional resources are found throughout the workbook and resources listed here may be provided within the context of specific TK elements in later sections.

# General Resources

If you have general Transitional Kindergarten questions, please visit the [OSPI Transitional Kindergarten webpage](#).

- [Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction Transitional Kindergarten webpage](#) details Transitional Kindergarten (TK), a kindergarten program for children below the age of five, who do not have access to high-quality early learning experiences prior to kindergarten. Additionally, these children have been deemed by a school district, through a screening process and/or other instrument(s), to be in need of additional time in a high-quality early learning setting to be successful in kindergarten the following year. Districts may select to offer TK programs, but they are not required.
- The [Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction Early Childhood Special Education Washington Pyramid Model Implementation webpage](#). This TK Workbook will help orient leaders to Washington Pyramid Model (WAPM) practices.
- The Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction [Transitional Kindergarten FAQ document](#). Outlined is a list of frequently asked questions regarding the TK program.
- The [Eligibility Determination for Transitional Kindergarten document](#) which details multiple sources of information that include three components: 1. Coordinated recruitment and enrollment, 2. Family interview, and 3. Establishing developmental indicators for eligibility.
- The [Transitional Kindergarten Readiness Considerations \(PDF\)](#) document detailing suggested questions and considerations for determining whether Transitional Kindergarten (TK) is "right" for your school.
- The [Transitional Kindergarten: Coordinated Recruitment and Enrollment Referral Planning Worksheet](#) includes information for developing a coordinated referral and enrollment plan.
- [The Washington State Full-Day Kindergarten Guide](#) was developed to provide information about high-quality, full-day kindergarten in order to implement developmentally appropriate and academically rigorous kindergarten programs statewide. The guide outlines the requirements for full-day kindergarten, which also apply to Transitional Kindergarten. It addresses child development; developmentally appropriate learning environments (classroom setup, suggested materials, sample schedules); curriculum and instruction; and other useful information for helping districts to comply with the specific requirements of kindergarten.
- [Washington State Early Learning and Developmental Guidelines](#): The state Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), in partnership with OSPI and Thrive by Five Washington published the Early Learning and Development Guidelines for children from Birth Through Third Grade. The guidelines replace the Early Learning and Development Benchmarks, which were first created in 2005 to outline what children know and are able to do at different stages of their development. The Guidelines' easy-to-read format better supports parents as their child's first and most important teachers with information about what children can do and learn at different

stages of development.

- [Learning Pathways in Numeracy](#): The Learning Pathways in Numeracy document was created by OSPI as a tool to help teachers and families to understand the role of progressions in developing numeracy skills in children.
- [Early Literacy Pathways](#): The Learning Pathways in Early Literacy focuses on the areas of social-emotional development, cognitive development, language and literacy development, and reading and writing development. This document was written using the following frameworks: Early Learning and Development Guidelines, GOLD®, Head Start Early Learning Outcomes, and the Common Core State Standards.
- [Social Emotional Learning Pathways](#): The SEL standards and benchmarks along with the guiding principles provide a foundation and system for effective SEL implementation. This framework outlines key SEL skills and defines SEL as a process through which individuals build awareness and skills in managing emotions, setting goals, establishing relationships, and making responsible decisions that support success in school and life. The Washington state SEL standards and benchmarks were developed by a team of practitioners and other experts who work with youth and families in educational settings, and with knowledge of topics related to SEL. Development of an SEL framework reflects input, thoughts, and perspectives received from statewide stakeholders collected from focus groups, community forums, and online surveys.
- The OSPI [Linking Kindergarten & 3rd Grade Assessment Results Data Brief](#) provides an overview of data available through WaKIDS which reveals the wide range of skills and abilities of incoming kindergartners, across all areas of development. It also indicates a strong positive correlation between development at kindergarten entry and performance on 3rd-grade Smarter Balanced Assessments English Language Arts and Math tests. If you'd like to explore more WaKIDS data for your district or school, check out the [OSPI Washington State Report Card](#).

## Begin to Reflect on Your District's Transitional Kindergarten Journey

Reflect on the following questions. You can type or write directly into the response boxes below each question or take notes in a separate document. We do encourage you to articulate your answers in some form as this will support your progress in Transitional Kindergarten planning and implementation.

1. Tell the story of your district's decision to implement Transitional Kindergarten.

2. Describe your school board's commitment and background with early learning.

3. Provide more background: Who is part of your district team, who leads the program, what are the roles of early learning, special education, and external partnership staff in Transitional Kindergarten?

4. Read the [Bellingham Promise](#). What ideas did you glean from the Bellingham story?

## Transitional Kindergarten101 Glossary

The early learning world can sometimes feel like an alphabet soup. This glossary is a resource page to help you navigate all the acronyms, abbreviations, and terms you will see throughout the course. While acronyms will be spelled out when you first encounter them, it's sometimes helpful to get a quick overview.

- **CRT:** Culturally Responsive Teaching
- **DAP:** Developmentally Appropriate Practice
- **DCYF:** Department of Children, Youth, and Families
- **DEC:** Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children
- **ECEAP:** Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program
- **ECTA:** Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center
- **ESD:** Educational Service District
- **FDK:** Full-day Kindergarten
- **GOLD®:** The whole-child observational assessment tool used in WaKIDS
- **KEA:** Kindergarten Entry Assessment
- **LRE:** Least Restrictive Environment
- **MyTeachingStrategies®:** The online platform where you can access GOLD®
- **NAEYC:** National Association for the Education of Young Children
- **NCPMI:** National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations

- **ODL:** GOLD® Objectives for Development and Learning
- **OSPI:** Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- **WAPM:** Washington Pyramid Model
- **RP:** Recommended Practices
- **TK:** Transitional Kindergarten
- **TPEP:** Teacher Principal Evaluation Program
- **WaKIDS:** Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills

# CHAPTER 1: TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN FOUNDATIONAL UNDERSTANDINGS

The goal of the Transitional Kindergarten Foundational Understandings chapter is to familiarize yourself with the purpose, opportunities, and requirements (Five Pillars) of Transitional Kindergarten. The intention of the chapters is to prepare administrators to succeed in individualized learning for four-year-old children with complex needs.

Additional and continuously updated information can be found to support and expand your understanding of Transitional Kindergarten and the Five Pillars on the OSPI Transitional Kindergarten webpage.

## What is Transitional Kindergarten?

Transitional Kindergarten (TK) is a kindergarten program for children, below the age of five, who do not have access to high-quality early learning experiences prior to kindergarten. Additionally, they have been deemed by a school district, through a screening process and/or other instrument(s), to be in need of additional preparation to be successful in kindergarten the following year.

Watch the [Transitional Kindergarten Introductory Webinar](#) (video is 1:09:42 in length). Presented by OSPI Early Learning, School Apportionment and Financial Services staff, along with guests from the Department of Children, Youth, and Families and Bellingham Public Schools, this webinar discusses the requirements of Transitional Kindergarten, where it fits in the early learning landscape and what to consider when planning to implement TK in your school.

## Why TK?

You may be wondering, why Transitional Kindergarten? Transitional Kindergarten allows for the following:

- Access to a continuum of placement opportunities for children with disabilities
- Serves children whose families do not meet income eligibility for ECEAP and Head Start but cannot afford private fees for other early learning programs.
- Supports children with behavioral/ physical disabilities not well served in other early learning programs.
- Expands options for children in unstable housing or experiencing homelessness.
- Builds strong partnerships and referrals among district, Head Start, ECEAP and Early Achievers family child care homes and center.

In the first few weeks of full-day kindergarten, teachers observe the difference in confidence between children who have experienced a high-quality preschool and children who have never been in a group environment. For families who have been on waitlists for ECEAP or Head Start, or

who have experienced a less than optimal placement for their child's unique needs, districts have the opportunity for early entrance kindergarten for children screened and identified to need a group setting.

The process to coordinate recruitment, referrals, and enrollment has the potential to build relationships between your elementary school/ district and community-based early learning programs in your school's neighborhood. In addition, coordinated recruitment and enrollment creates stronger transition practices for all entering kindergartners. These referrals and relationships become critical to serve children who urgently need placement, such as foster children changing homes or children qualifying for McKinney-Vento services.

## What are the Steps to Planning TK?

Districts establishing Transitional Kindergarten need to build the foundation and proceed step by step to be a reciprocal partner with families and community-based early learning programs. Relationships create the path to strong connections.

To summarize the requirements in the [Five Pillars](#), here are the steps to creating a new TK program:

1. [Assess need for TK](#) using at least three sources including but not limited to the [DCYF Early Learning Data Dashboard](#), the [DCYF ECEAP-Head Start Saturation Study](#), and district data on the percentage of children ages 3-5 in [Least Restrictive Environment](#). Head Start and ECEAP waitlists and community needs assessments from community-based early learning programs also provide data indicating need.
2. Meet and learn about the community's early learning partners. what you [learn about other early learning programs](#): demographics, number of slots, hours of operation, maximum enrollment, wait list, and pedagogy.
3. With support from your ESD, build a single-entry recruitment and enrollment process for families with referrals to community-based early learning for Regular Early Childhood Least Restrictive Environment with authentic choices for families.
4. Create communication protocol and referral system among early learning programs.
5. Build relationships with families at the rate of trust.
6. Infuse classrooms and school with families' home languages and cultures, including staff/ educators who represent the races/ ethnicities of children served– and embrace multiple modes of family involvement in the school community.
7. Design a high-quality inclusive TK classroom and outdoor learning environment.
8. Hire staff with endorsements in Early Learning, Early Childhood Special Education or Human Development.
9. Create and adapt a developmentally appropriate schedule for four-year-old children including uninterrupted play, many sessions of outdoor play, and rest.

10. Select curricula that promote self-managed play in learning centers.
11. Trust families to lead their children's education.

## **TK is Part of An Early Learning System**

Take the first step to build trusting relationships with neighboring early learning programs and the families seeking preschool or childcare services. This step is also called Early Learning Collaboration, a key prerequisite to Coordinated Recruitment & Enrollment (Pillar V of TK) AND one of three requirements of WaKIDS. See Chapter 2 to build relationships with the early learning community.

# **CHAPTER 2: COORDINATED RECRUITMENT & ENROLLMENT AND EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATION**

This chapter will set up your school district/ elementary school to forge and continually build strong relationships with early learning partners and establish the required Pillar V of coordinated recruitment and enrollment. In completing the first four steps to establish TK, your school and district will deepen the early learning collaboration required by WaKIDS. At the end of this chapter, you will be able to explain how collaborating with early learning professionals and programs and a single point of entry for families to assess eligibility for the continuum of placement options sets up your TK program for success.

This chapter covers the first four steps of establishing TK:

1. Assess the need for TK.
2. Meet and learn about the community's early learning partners
3. With support from regional partners, build a single-entry recruitment and enrollment process for families.
4. Create communication protocol and referral system among early learning programs

## **Forge Relationships and Assess the Need for TK**

Early Learning Collaboration is paramount to welcoming children and families into TK and the beginning of their elementary to higher education. TK provides a longer period of time for children to mature and become confident, self-managed learners before transitioning to full-day kindergarten (FDK). Before initiating a TK program, schools are required by Pillar V to collect data on the unmet need. The best way to initiate the data collection is to meet with directors and owners of early learning programs and document a description of their program: the number of children served and slots, hours of operation, demographics and eligibility requirements of families served, ages of children served, and pedagogy.

The purposes of this process to assess need include:

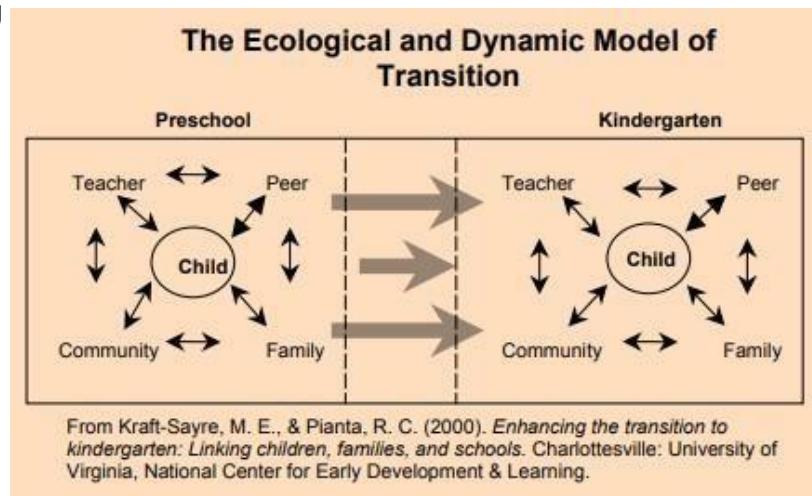
1. Ensure each child and family have their unique needs met by the program, including two-generational comprehensive services for children living in poverty, foster care, unstable housing, or with disabilities.
2. Address unmet need for high-quality early learning for 4-year-old children while sustaining family choice with a mixed delivery system of licensed child care centers and family child care homes, ECEAP, and Head Start programs, among other options with specific pedagogy (Montessori, Waldorf, Reggio Emilia).
3. Maximize the benefit of existing Working Connections subsidies for low-income families and sustain small business early learning programs reliant on these subsidies.
4. Attend to each child and family during their transition from prior early learning setting to TK and then to FDK.

Prekindergarten, Transitional Kindergarten, and Full-day Kindergarten each mark a milestone in a child's life as their first introduction to group learning environments.

## The Research on Transition Practices

The research literature on the extended transition to TK and kindergarten is robust and suggests that children's early learning experiences have long-term impacts on school and later life outcomes (Barnett, 2011; Duncan & Magnuson, 2013). Research maintains that positive transition experiences from the early learning setting to kindergarten are linked with increased social-emotional skills in children, increased family engagement in kindergarten, and higher academic performance in math, literacy, and language (Hamre and Pianta, 2001).

Moreover, effective early school experiences can narrow opportunity gaps and create consistency between settings; both are crucial to children's success in kindergarten. Most notably, a 2005 longitudinal study conducted by Schulting, Malone, and Dodge surveyed 17,212 children who recently entered kindergarten. The study concluded that the more transition activities children encountered in the summer and fall prior to entering TK or FDK translated into higher academic performance in the spring.



To fully support children transitioning to kindergarten, it may be helpful to view kindergarten transition as a process that children, families, and teachers are collectively experiencing, rather than a singular event. The Ecological and Dynamic Model of Transition (Rimm-Kaufman and Pianta, 2000) provides a helpful visual for the transition from early learning providers to kindergarten. In this child-centered model, you can see the various facets of a child's life. Building consistency and communication between these relational and informational facets allow for a smooth transition to kindergarten. This graphic creates a web of potential supports to tap into for Early Learning Collaboration. As you look at the Ecological and Dynamic Model of Transitions, think about what you can do to connect the child's teachers, peers, community, and family as they enter TK.

DCYF and OSPI analyzed and summarized data in the report Successes and Challenges of Early Learning Transitions in Washington (Taylor & Stahr-Breunig, 2020) and a companion data brief (Taylor & Stahr-Breunig, 2020) using the Pianta and Kraft-Sayre framework to categorize the findings. In Seeds of Inspiration for Effective Transition Approaches, the authors expand upon the categories of common and unique strategies as seeds to inspire early learning programs, schools, families and communities. Recommended strategies include one or more of the following characteristics:

- Relationships
- Family voice, leadership, and advocacy
- Inclusion
- Culturally sustaining transitions
- Shared recruitment and enrollment strategies from birth through age 8
- Program alignment

When planning Early Learning Collaborations with your teaching team or school, remember that children are entering your TK classroom with a wide range of early learning experiences.

Nonetheless, all children will experience some transition entering kindergarten. The following are transition types you should consider:

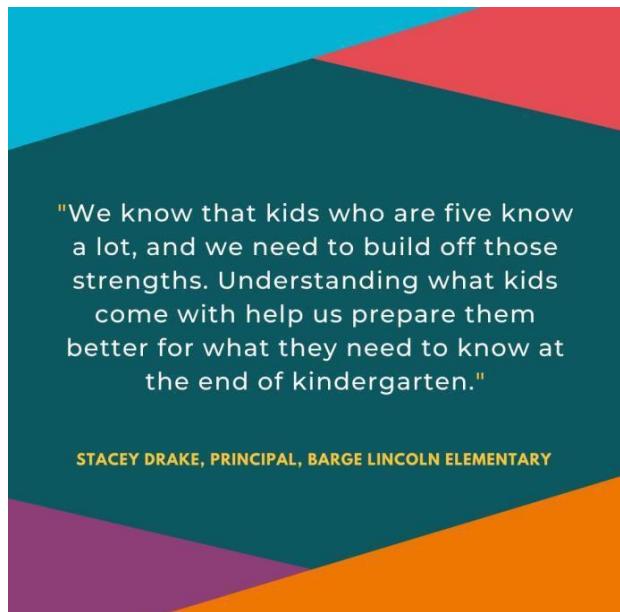
1. Child to school builds children's familiarity and comfort with the classroom setting and teachers. The child to school connection works to increase a child's level of comfort and foster teacher-child relationship.
2. Family to school fosters family collaboration and engagement with the school (you accomplish this with the Family Connection and ongoing relationships and planning with families).
3. School to school provides children with stable, high-quality classroom experiences including from Early Supports for Infant and Toddlers (ESIT Part C) settings to an inclusive PreK to TK.
4. Community to school facilitates the transition process within the child's community by sharing resources and information with community and family members.

As you navigate Early Learning Collaboration, keep in mind that you are working to learn whether an additional program for unserved 4-year-old children screened to demonstrate need is necessary. Do the early learning partners have waiting lists? What are the demographics and needs of the unserved children and families? What evidence did you find in Head Start community needs assessments or the [2020-21 DCYF ECEAP & Head Start Saturation Study?](#)

In addition, your school will be working towards successful transitions for the child and their families into your classroom. Successful transitions share information, foster relationships, and create connections. These guiding principles are evident in the Pyramid Model checklists and assessments, Family Connection, and Early Learning Collaboration. The purpose of these components is truly to create a welcoming environment that is ready for children and their families and a communicative, collaborative partner to your region's mixed delivery system.

# The Purpose of Early Learning Collaboration

The Early Learning Collaboration component of TK and WaKIDS aims to foster relationships with early learning providers to establish a uniform recruitment process, application, and eligibility screening for TK students, and b) create a smooth transition for all children to kindergarten. This practice can create a sense of continuity for children to promote a shared understanding of typical and atypical child development as supported in TK and FDK, and ultimately provide children and families with confidence and agency in school. Trusting relationships with the children's prior educators helps prepare elementary schools and teachers to welcome all age-eligible children and families into Transitional Kindergarten and kindergarten.



"We know that kids who are five know a lot, and we need to build off those strengths. Understanding what kids come with help us prepare them better for what they need to know at the end of kindergarten."

STACEY DRAKE, PRINCIPAL, BARGE LINCOLN ELEMENTARY

The expectations for the Early Learning Collaboration component are outlined in [RCW 28A.150.315](#) and include developing strong connections to the community early learning providers and participating in kindergarten-readiness activities. This collaboration is multi-faceted and relies on participation from the district, principals, and teachers. Be sure to connect with your school administration and teaching team to discuss your school's approach to Early Learning Collaboration, as schools can individualize how they approach and implement Early Learning Collaboration.

## Early Learning Collaborations

The Early Learning Collaboration component of WaKIDS has traditionally focused on smoothing the transition between preschool and kindergarten. While this outcome will still be very important, it is critical that schools leverage their role in helping to support existing preschool, child care, and extended learning programs to meet the needs of children and families.

## Best Practices for Conducting Early Learning Collaboration

- Identify an early learning/extended learning contact in the district to serve as a point person between the community and district-based early learning and extended learning programs.
- Work with community partners to identify all childcare options for four-year-old children whose families don't have the option to stay home with a child each day. Visit [Child Care Aware of Washington](#) to request a list of childcare providers in your area.

- Partner with community-based preschool and childcare programs, and parent/guardian advisory committees to connect with and support families.
- With family permission, encourage child care providers to share information such as the [Washington State Kindergarten Transition Summary Form](#) and Teaching Strategies GOLD® Individual Child Reports for children transitioning to kindergarten.
- Develop MOUs with community-based preschool and childcare programs as needed. These templates may be helpful:
  - [Sample elements of Washington MOU Template for Head Start and ESSA Requirements](#)
  - [Illinois MOU Template](#)
  - [Wisconsin MOU LEA and HS](#)
  - [Iowa MOU Template](#)
  - [New Mexico MOU Template](#)

## Planning for the Transition to Kindergarten

Planning for Transitions to Kindergarten is a team endeavor that involves school administration and your teaching team. OSPI does not mandate a particular approach for Early Learning Collaboration and planning for children's transition to kindergarten. The following two articles provide you with some strategies and resources for this process.

### Do Now

Please choose and read 1 of 2 articles. You will use these readings for an upcoming Stop and Jot.

- Article 1: Read the Transition to Kindergarten: [Why it Matters and How to Promote Success](#) resource from the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning (NCQTL)
- Article 2: Read the [Reopening Washington Schools 2020: Early Learning Planning Guide from OSPI](#) and read Establishing Strong Community Partnerships (page 17), Support Early Learning Transitions (page 18), and Plan for Kindergarten/Program Registration (page 19). While this planning guide was created during the pandemic, it continues to offer helpful guidance on establishing strong community partnerships.

After reading one of the previous articles, reflect on the process to assess need and build relationships.

- What steps will your school take to create a single point of entry for families seeking high-quality early learning in your community?
- What role will your district play to coordinate recruitment, screening, eligibility, and placement of children in the least restrictive environment, e.g. shared staff, shared database, family liaison support, or resource & referral with community-based Child Care Aware of Washington or Help Me Grow.
- What steps will your school take to ensure that you and your school are implementing a collaborative approach to transitioning children to kindergarten?
- Please use three to four sentences to reflect and document the process with the [attached worksheet](#).

## **Stop & Jot**

Reflect on the following prompt. You can type or write directly into the response box below or take notes in a separate document. We do encourage you to articulate your response in some form as this will support your progress in Transitional Kindergarten planning and implementation.

In this section, I was surprised to learn...

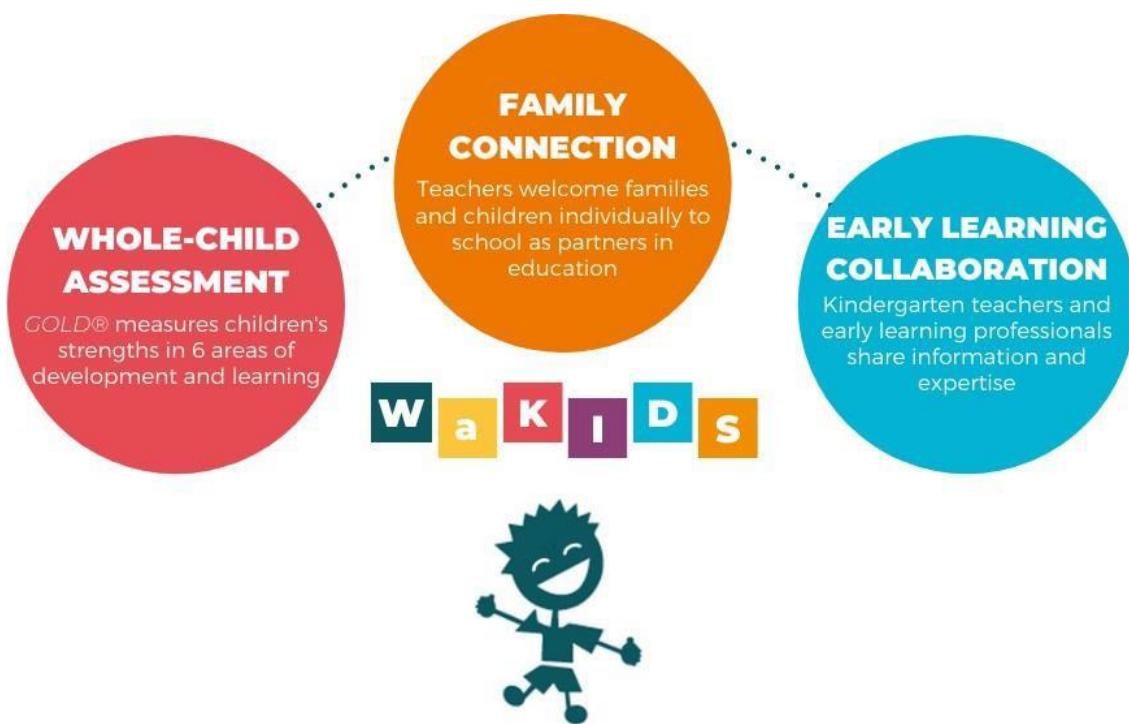
## **Early Learning Collaboration and the Child's Perspective**

There are Three Components of WaKIDS in Transitional Kindergarten and FDK. Although there are a lot of logistics in the Early Learning Collaboration, it's important to remember that this is a child-centered conversation. While the Early Learning Collaboration component connects relevant adults in the transition to kindergarten process, it's important to consider the child's perspective as they transition to kindergarten.

Children might be wondering:

- Who will be my friends?
- What if I get lost?
- Where do I put my belongings?
- What if I need to use the bathroom?
- When will I eat?
- What if I'm afraid?
- When will my grown-up/pick-up person pick me up?

# Early Learning Collaborators



As you have learned, there are many moving parts regarding early learning in Washington State. Remember, the purpose of the Early Learning Collaboration is to promote a shared understanding of the transition process, improve the preparedness of schools for all children.

To effectively navigate both sides of the Early Learning Collaboration component (early learning providers and kindergarten staff), let's explore two helpful websites.

1. **WaKIDS Contacts:** To help you navigate Early Learning Collaboration in your district, each of the nine Educational Service Districts (ESD) in Washington has a person designated as a WaKIDS Coordinator and a person designated as the Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator (in some regions, the same person). [WaKIDS Contacts](#) will direct you to their contact information, should you want additional support around Early Learning Collaboration, the Washington Pyramid Model (WAPM), or WaKIDS in general. Furthermore, WaKIDS Coordinators are valuable resources and can assist you with implementing WaKIDS and best practices in kindergarten.
2. **Early Learning District Liaisons:** Early Learning Collaboration works in both directions, between elementary schools and early learning providers. To support you on the early learning side of this WaKIDS component, many districts have an Early Learning Liaison. You can search the [Early Learning District Liaisons page](#) to find out who that is for your district. Your school administration and veteran teaching team may also be excellent supports.

An additional website you may want to explore is the [Early Childhood Special Education](#)

[webpage](#), featuring Washington Pyramid Model. You can directly reach out to [Julie.Dean@k12.wa.us](mailto:Julie.Dean@k12.wa.us) to connect with your regional Washington Pyramid Model implementation specialist.

## Do Now

Write down your points of contact for the WaKIDS Regional Coordinators, WAPM Regional Implementation Specialist, and Early Learning District Liaisons.

1. You'll need to know which ESD (Educational Service District) your school district is located. You can look this up on the [School District by ESD](#) website.
2. Explore the [ESD WaKIDS Regional Coordinators page](#) and the [Early Learning District Liaison page](#) and the [Washington Pyramid Model webpage](#). *These are the same links listed above.*
3. Write down your WaKIDS Regional Coordinator, Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator, and Early Learning District Liaisons. These contacts will be excellent resources, should you have additional questions about WaKIDS in your region and early learning collaboration efforts.

## Stop & Jot

WaKIDS Regional Coordinator	
Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator	
Early Learning District Liaison(s)	

## Reflect: Early Learning Collaboration

When you consider ways to engage in meaningful collaboration with early learning teachers, community members, family members, and peers, where would you like to start? Please choose one of the Early Learning Collaboration Activities listed below or create your own, and reflect on your choice. The hope is that when you complete the Transitional Kindergarten Administrators' Best Practices Workbook, you will have meaningful connections and reflections that you can refer back to as you engage in the work. This could be a great place to learn new ideas for now or in the future. Please feel free to record any ideas that you want to remember in your notebook.

Select one Early Learning Collaboration activity from below:

- Learn about policies and procedures that early learning programs use for transitioning their PreK families to local schools
- Create and participate in shared professional development with local preschool and childcare providers
- Share PreK-K transition reports
- Review WaKIDS data to align pedagogy and learning environments
- Coordinate cross-program visits

- Co-host kindergarten-readiness events for preschoolers and their families
- Attend local early learning coalition meetings
- Work with your ESD Coordinator to build a transitions and inclusionary practices leadership team.
- If you have a new idea that is not listed, please feel free to share your thoughts in the discussion. We are always on the lookout for new ways for early learning partners to collaborate.

Reflect on the following questions:

- Why do you feel the activity you chose would be important to engage in?
- What would that activity look like if it was implemented well?
- How will PreK teachers get to share about their programs and the children they are transitioning?
- Who needs to be involved, and/or who can help you get the information that you need? (Refer to the links provided in this chapter to identify who you might connect with).
- How will you ensure that the child remains at the center of your collaboration? (ex. If you choose to co-host a kindergarten-readiness event, how will you ensure that the event supports children in transition as opposed to focusing on getting information for the school?)

## Plan, Enroll, and Braid Revenue

As you plan for Transitional Kindergarten implementation, carefully consider all available funding sources and identify potential partners within your local early learning community. This will allow you to leverage partnerships and design creative service models and coordination frameworks utilizing braided funding to support your program decisions.

### Plan

To prepare for regional coordinated recruitment and enrollment, use [a worksheet to document](#) what your district learns about neighboring early learning programs that serve children younger than five. Take notes on their available slots, number of children served, demographics of families, and eligibility requirements.

- Could your region establish a shared waitlist and single entry family registration and eligibility process?
- Could partners create ongoing referrals to ensure the best fit for each child and family?

**Keep your documentation in case the State Auditor's Office conducts an audit.**

## Enroll

Transitional Kindergarten (TK) is a kindergarten program for children not yet age five who do not have access to high-quality early learning experiences prior to kindergarten and have been deemed by a school district, through a screening process and/or other instrument(s), to be in need of additional preparation to be successful in kindergarten the following year. Schools offering TK will need a "screening process and/or instrument(s) which measure the ability or the need, or both, of an individual student to succeed in earlier entry" (WAC 392- 335-025). In order to determine eligibility for TK, screening procedures should include multiple sources of information, that include these components:

1. **Coordinated referral and enrollment** – Because TK seeks to fill a gap in high-quality early learning opportunities, it is necessary to take steps to assure that families are aware of all of the options available to them, as well as the potential benefits and outcomes of those options. Find out who is providing care and education for four and five-year-olds in your area; learn about other services that are available for children and families; make contact with partner agencies and preschool providers to establish a plan for coordinated enrollment, including how to outreach to new families. See the Coordinated Enrollment and Referral Planning Worksheet for more information.
2. **Family interview** – Gathering information from families during the TK screening process is vital when making eligibility determinations. Families may give insight into developmental progress, share child and family histories, identify priorities and share concerns. Interviews are especially important when families don't share the language or full economic advantages of the dominant culture.

Questions to ask families may include:

- What are your child's unique strengths and needs?
- What are your child's academic and behavioral strengths and needs?
- Do you have questions or concerns about your child's development?
- Does your child need additional services or extra help?
- How does your family guide and nurture your child's social emotional growth, especially when they are upset?

Families who enroll in TK will get to participate in the Family Connection component of WaKIDS at the beginning of the program. This will provide another opportunity to get to know families and children.

**Establishing developmental indicators for eligibility** – Screening procedures should be culturally and linguistically relevant. Families play an integral role in the screening process, and screening results may be informed by the family's contextual information. Screening practices should take into account that young children require flexibility and understanding when gathering assessment information. Stress in new situations, hunger, or fatigue can cause children to become distracted from assessments or unwilling to participate. Professionals should be prepared to follow the family's lead, make modifications, or reassess at a later time.

Listed below are examples of widely used, norm-referenced screening instruments that demonstrate reliability and validity and take 30 minutes or less to administer.

#### Sample Screening Instruments:

- Ages and Stages Questionnaires® (ASQ®--3, ASQ®:SE-2), Brookes Publishing Company
- Battelle Developmental Inventory Screening Test, Riverside Publishing
- Speed DIAL-4, Pearson Assessments
- Early Screening Inventory-Preschool (ESI-P), Pearson Assessments

Source: [Eligibility Determination for Transitional Kindergarten](#)

## Braid Revenue

Once you have a clear understanding of the services you will be providing, the scope of program implementation in your district (i.e. how many classrooms, staff, students will be served), and how your TK program may be blended with other early learning programs you can estimate costs and identify available revenue streams that can be leveraged to fund your program. The [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center \(ECTA\) Dollars and Cents: Collaborative Funding in Early Childhood Programs and Inclusion Toolkit provides](#) clear language around braided, layered, and blended funding models. They also clearly differentiate between supplementing and supplanting, which are important terms to become familiar with in developing your budget.

The [TK Shared Enrollment and Budget Planning Tool](#) can serve as a guide in your planning. There are a number of additional resources below to support your planning and decision-making around cost estimation and braided funding.

## Resources to Promote Inclusionary Practice: Finance Tools

In a [Joint Statement](#) issued September, 2015 the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education is was clearly noted that "all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs, where they are provided with individualized and appropriate support in meeting high expectations" ([U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education, September 2015 Joint Statement](#)).

The following finance resources have been curated to help support inclusionary practice in early learning settings:

- [Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs](#)
- [Early Childhood Programs Comparison Worksheet \(2018\)](#)
- [Determine Costs Inclusive Worksheet \(2018\)](#)
- [Braiding Funds: How Districts Can Create Inclusive Placement Opportunities for Young Children with Disabilities \(2018\)](#)
- [Finance References for System Framework \(April 18, 2016\)](#)
- [Dollars and Cents: Collaborative Funding in Early Childhood Programs and](#)

### Inclusion

- [Cost Estimation Tool for Transitional Kindergarten](#)
- [Funding Early Learning Activities in Washington State with Title 1, Part A \(Birth to Age 5\) 2020](#)

Additional resources related to inclusion and funding can be found on the [ECTA Financing Strategies and Collaborative Funding for Inclusive Programs webpage](#).

# CHAPTER 3: GOALS FOR ELEMENTS OF HIGH-QUALITY TK

The Purpose of the Elements of High-Quality TK chapter is to outline the best practices of a high-quality early entrance kindergarten classroom. Upon completion of this chapter, you will have an understanding of the principles of developmentally appropriate practices, culturally responsive teaching, and child-development. You will also explore the importance and components of well-designed learning environments and recognize how teacher-child interactions and classroom and playground management skills impact learning. It is our hope that you will see how all of the elements work together to uphold the WaKIDS and support child-centered instruction.

## Culturally Responsive Teaching

Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including children's cultural references in all aspects of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994). It is a research-based approach that makes meaningful connections between what children learn in school and their cultures, languages, and life experiences.

[Understood's website](#) offers a helpful analogy for the importance of CRT:

"Our brains are wired to make connections. It's easier for our brains to learn and store information when we have a hook to hang it on. That hook is background knowledge. Students bring this knowledge to the classroom every day, including their culture, language, and life experience."

Practical examples of CRT include:

- Learning as much as you can about your children.
- Displaying children's work and their eye-level in the classroom.
- Labeling the learning environment with languages spoken in the classroom.
- Learning to pronounce children's and families' names correctly.
- Getting to know your children's families (the Family Connection Meetings lay the groundwork for this).

In order to implement a developmentally appropriate and high-quality kindergarten classroom, you must implement culturally responsive teaching. Sonia Nieto, a professor emerita of language, literacy, and culture at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, outlines that culturally responsive teaching is a mindset that respects and honor's children's individualities, cultures, and experiences.

## Do Now

To build your knowledge around culturally responsive teaching, please pick one of the following options:

- Option 1: Read the article [What is Culturally Responsive Teaching?](#) from Understood.org. This article provides you with foundational content on the what, why, and how of culturally responsive teaching.
- Option 2: watch this video (4:34 minutes) from [Learning for Justice](#) called [An Introduction to Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: How to Make Culturally Relevant Pedagogy a Reality in Your Classroom](#).

## Check Your Learning on Culturally Responsive Teaching

Mark each statement true or false. Find the correct answers on the next page.

1. CRT is a predetermined curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
2. CRT is a mindset that respects and honors children's individualities as well as their cultures, experiences, and histories.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
3. CRT is a specific set of strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
4. CRT is a commitment to learning children's individualities as well as their cultures, experiences, and histories.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
5. CRT waters down your curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
6. CRT is a way to include children's individualities into the curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
7. CRT is only relevant for only children of a particular background.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
8. CRT insists on high quality work from all children.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
9. CRT affirms children's identities while also expanding their world.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False

## Check Your Learning on Culturally Responsive Teaching Answers

1. CRT is a predetermined curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> False
2. CRT is a mindset that respects and honors children's individualities as well as their cultures, experiences, and histories.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
3. CRT is a specific set of strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> False
4. CRT is a commitment to learning children's individualities as well as their cultures, experiences, and histories.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
5. CRT waters down your curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> False
6. CRT is a way to include children's individualities into the curriculum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
7. CRT is only relevant for only children of a particular background.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> False
8. CRT insists on high quality work from all children.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
9. CRT affirms children's identities while also expanding their world.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False

## Structural Elements of Quality

Working with young children requires completion of certificates and eventually a degree or certification in early childhood education or early childhood special education.

In addition, the workplace environment affects the quality of care. Poverty-level wages and lack of health benefits creates a high turnover rate in the workforce, reducing children's ability to attach to their caregivers and scaffold their learning. Children in programs with high turnover rates exhibit signs of stress which interferes with their ability to learn.

Here are a few elements of structural quality to pay attention to in TK and early learning partners:

- Compensation and benefits commensurate with skill required for the work.
- Highly qualified substitute pool to maintain a consistent, predictable learning setting and promote adult: adult and adult: child relationships and unbounded learning.
- Adults skilled in self-regulation to support children with co-regulation and management of strong emotions.<sup>1</sup>
- Administrators and educators should be able to articulate the NAEYC description and

position statement of Developmentally Appropriate Practice and share these values with families.

## Establishing Classroom Rules and Procedures

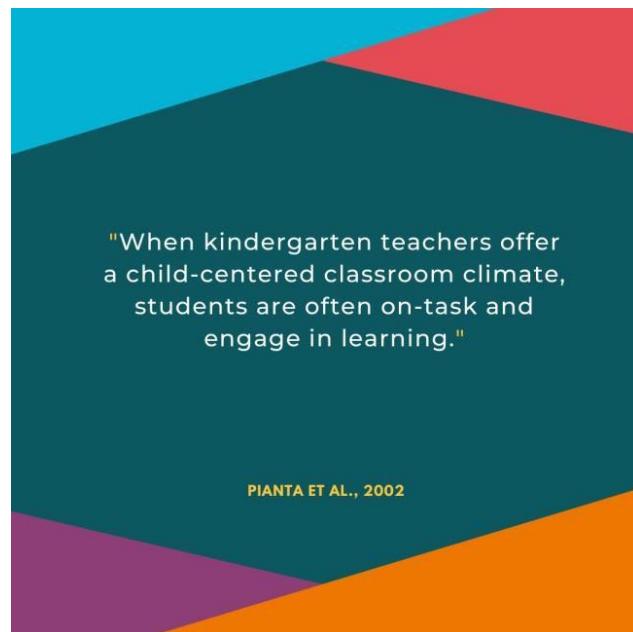
Children entering transitional kindergarten will have a range of group experiences and will vary in this development. Regardless of their experiences, it is essential to establish expectations and routines. Expectations and routines support the goal of creating a safe and caring environment.

Children feel safer when they know what to expect. When children have to spend less cognitive energy anticipating what is next, they are more able to demonstrate what they know and can do.

Clear and consistent expectations and routines will also make the Whole-child Assessment more doable. When you have solid routines and expectations in your classroom you can plan for observation and execute this more seamlessly.

Establishing the expectations, structures, and routines begins on the very first day of school. The materials you have available will influence your success in teaching these elements. Begin by putting out toys that are familiar and easy to clean up (e.g. play-dough, paper and crayons, simple puzzles—no scissors or glue yet!).

Slowly introduce new materials and/or work areas when you feel the children demonstrate an understanding of appropriate classroom behaviors. At the beginning of the year, use shorter blocks of time for the components of the day. Transitions from job to job may constitute new learning and may take extra time to master. Allow time to practice the transition. Consider providing opportunities during the whole group review to reflect on the transition. Following the whole group review period, take time to read a story, sing a few songs, and then send the children back to work again.



<sup>1</sup> [Social Emotional Learning Pathways](#), OSPI 2021. See Appendix B, CASEL Self-Assessment and Appendix C: Classroom Self-Assessment of SEL Support.

## Classroom Rules

It is important for children to understand the teacher's expectations. The children need to know what behaviors are acceptable in the classroom and what behaviors are not. Children need to be taught how, and provided prolonged opportunities for practices, to:

- Use classroom materials.
- Work with classmates.
- Make appropriate choices.
- Move about the classroom (including using the restroom).
- Use an appropriate voice level.
- Sit on the rug in a group.

In classrooms using best practices, there is shared control. Teachers consciously give children some control and decision-making opportunities (e.g., self-selected projects during work time, daily classroom job). Classroom agreements (rules) are clear, concise, and consistent. Aim for **three to five** rules and create the rules with your class. Rather than listing all potential do's and don'ts in the classroom, create global rules that serve as guiding principles for the classroom.

Consider these two rules: "don't hit" and "be respectful". The first rule is narrow and only applies to specific situations. The second rule is broad and allows for application in different situations (e.g. be respectful of classroom materials, be respectful of your peers (don't hit)). These broader rules foster critical thinking and grant children an opportunity to apply expectations to different situations.

Classroom rules provide students age-appropriate choices and non-negotiables. Non- negotiables will always include health and safety rules, but also will include school and teacher standards and expectations. In addition to introducing classroom patterns, it is important to establish building rules and procedures. Rules should be discussed, demonstrations are given, and time provided for practice.

### **Elements of the Day**

High-quality transitional kindergarten classrooms will have a healthy balance of child- initiated and teacher-led learning opportunities throughout the day. This variety of activities is developmentally appropriate practices and is mindful of child development. Offering choices to young learners provides deeper engagement in learning. However, a heavy emphasis on child-initiated activities also is not a free for all. It is in the intentional planning on the part of the teacher, in the materials, room arrangement, teacher-child interactions, and structure in how the children engage with peers. Teachers need to plan their daily schedule to keep that 'just right' balance of child-initiated and teacher-led activities for each group of children.

In a best-practices classroom, the daily schedule includes a mix of whole-group activities, small-group workshops, and independent area/centers.

Whole-group times are used to:

- Build community and common experiences; do group problem-solving.
- Introduce and teach skills and concepts.
- Practice and review skills not yet mastered.
- Perform—sing, dance, play, and act.

Small-group times are used to:

- Reinforce skills.
- Provide corrective feedback during guided practice.

- Provide differentiated instruction.

Centers/areas are used to:

- Provide independent practice of familiar skills.
- Provide connecting and extending activities.
- Build independence and self-reliance skills.

The interactive learning style of kindergartners must be reflected in the structure of the schedule.

Key considerations include:

- Sedentary components of the day must be separated by the more active elements.
- Whole group times should be limited to 20-30 minutes (at the beginning of the year, 15-20 minutes).
- There must be a balance of teacher-directed and student-initiated activities.
- A suggested recess schedule may include a 15-minute morning or afternoon recess, plus a 20-minute lunch recess.
- There should be a 60-70-minute block of uninterrupted student-directed learning/center time daily.
- As the year progresses, the kindergarten schedule should evolve along a continuum of looking like a preschool classroom to a first-grade class.

# Kindergarten



If you are teaching Transitional Kindergarten, imagine September through October to feel more like preschool for three-year-old children, and May through June to feel more like kindergarten.

## Classroom Routines Sample Schedule

A balanced daily schedule that accommodates play-based learning across content areas is a key element of a high-quality TK or kindergarten program. A balanced schedule allows children to fully engage in planned activities without interruption for extended periods of time. The schedule includes time for content area-specific experiences, but teachers should anticipate that literacy, math, science, and social studies will be blended across segments of the day.

Content learning does not happen in silos. The schedule is based on the premise that children spend most of their time in an activity that is not sedentary. Rather, experiential, hands-on

experience dominates a day that asks each child to explore, apply, and extend concepts and ideas from each content area through investigations and projects. Quieter and more active moments are balanced throughout the day. The earlier portion of the day is scheduled with activities that require more focus.

Specialists intentionally happen in the latter part of the day to eliminate the number of transitions.

When creating a schedule be sure to include visual prompts such as pictures of the activity. Post your schedule in a spot easily seen by students and refer to it often. This practice helps to create consistency. If the schedule changes, adjust the physical schedule, and let your children know. When you complete an activity on your schedule it helps to turn it over so that children can see their day progress visually.

Please see these [sample schedules from Bellingham School District](#).

#### Knowledge Check: High-quality Transitional Kindergarten

1. Children feel more secure and learn more readily in programs that are well organized, have predictable routines and expectations, represent the children culturally and build on positive reciprocal relationships.  
• True      • False
2. Which of the following are strategies that a teacher can engage in that will support all children?
  - Modeling making mistakes and how to respond
  - Acknowledging children as unique individuals
  - Communicate with children at their eye level
  - All options are correct
3. The classroom schedule/routine should look the same whether it is the beginning or the end of the year.  
• True      • False
4. At a minimum, TK classrooms should include:
  - Math area, dramatic play area, block area, large group area, covered outdoor space, science area, and art area
  - Dramatic play area, block area, large group area, privacy area, math area, literacy area, science area, and art area
  - Dramatic play area, block area, large group area, covered outdoor space, math area, science area, and art area
  - Block area and literacy area
  - Time out chair

## **Answers**

1. True
2. All options are correct
3. False
4. Dramatic play area, block area, large group area, privacy area, math area, literacy area, science area, and art area

# THE PLAN, DO, REFLECT PROCESS

## Step 1: Planning

- **Choice with intention:** During this first step of the process, children are planning their play. They are answering the questions: "Where do I want to work?" and "What am I going to do?" The process of planning encourages children to articulate their ideas, intentions, and decisions. They can increase their self-confidence and establish a sense of control as well. It begins the process of engagement in the learning, leading to concentrated play that allows a child to move along a continuum with increasing complexity.
- Children may make play plans (a wonderful way to embed literacy into play and to assess where children are in their writing development) in a journal. As children plan their play, they are having rich conversations with their peers and the teacher has the opportunity to scaffold the conversation.
- **What this looks like in action:** Children are planning their play (maybe sharing their selection out loud during a large group at the beginning of the year and planning their play in a journal towards the end of the year). This may sound like, "I am going to go to the block center to build a tower."

## Step 2: Do

- During this second step, children carry out his/her own ideas with the guided support of a teacher. Children are able to construct meaning as they engage in key experiences by manipulating appropriate familiar and unfamiliar materials as well as interact with peers and adults. In a risk-taking environment, the children are able to explore and extend their ideas while also processing new information. The adults are then able to observe, support, and scaffold the students' play leading to a deeper level of learning.
- **What this looks like in action:** Children are engaged in purposeful play in learning centers. They are actively engaged and play with rigor. The teacher(s) is circulating around the classroom, engaging in conversation, asking open-ended questions, and conducting the whole-child observational assessment.

## Step 3: Reflect

- **Remembering and reflecting with analysis.** By using language and/or props a child is able to share his/her thinking and learning process with his/her peers. In doing so a child is able to describe and review from mental images. The child is able to engage in a conversation beyond the present and evaluate the process in which his/her learning went through. In sharing personal reflections, the child is able to enlighten others, pose problems needing collaborative solutions, inspire others, or be inspired themselves.
- What this looks like in action: This time may end with a whole group meeting, and children sharing and reflecting on their play.

View the [Plan-Do-Reflect in Motion chart on page 35 of the Full-day Kindergarten Guide](#).

The [OSPI WaKIDS Plan, Do, Reflect Worksheet](#) can support educators and families in implementing this process.

## Knowledge Check: Plan-Do-Review

**Task A:** Fill in the blanks with the correct information. Answers are on the following page.

Options	5-15	5-10	45-50
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- Plan is \_\_\_\_\_ minutes.
- Do is \_\_\_\_\_ minutes.
- Reflect is \_\_\_\_\_ minutes.

The correct answers are:

- Plan is 5-10 minutes.
- Do is 45-50 minutes.
- Reflect is 5-15 minutes.

**Task B:** Mark each statement true or false. Find the correct answers on the next page.

1. During the plan phase, the adult closes certain areas in the classroom not allowing them to be used by children.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
2. During the plan phase, children are assigned areas to play in or the areas are structured so that there is only one entry point.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
3. During the plan phase, children have the freedom to move between areas during the work period.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
4. During the do phase, the role of the adult is to interact, play, extend a child's thinking by always being at the same physical level and attend to children's social-emotional needs addressing them through problem solving issues.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
5. During the reflect phase, children are asked to reflect in a rote fashion: "Where did you work today?"	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
6. During the reflect phase, children are able to share their work using props, words, pictures, writing, and/or reenactment	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False

1. During the plan phase, the adult closes certain areas in the classroom not allowing them to be used by children.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> False
2. During the plan phase, children are assigned areas to play in or the areas are structured so that there is only one entry point.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> False
3. During the plan phase, children have the freedom to move between areas during the work period.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
4. During the do phase, the role of the adult is to interact, play, extend a child's thinking by always being at the same physical level and attend to children's social-emotional needs addressing them through problem solving issues.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
5. During the reflect phase, children are asked to reflect in a rote fashion: "Where did you work today?"	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> False
6. During the reflect phase, children are able to share their work using props, words, pictures, writing, and/or reenactment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False

## How Districts Support Quality

Quality starts with leadership's understanding of early learning pedagogy and knowledge of developmental progressions, such as the objectives and dimensions in MyTeachingStrategies Creative Curriculum and GOLD® or the [Washington Early Learning & Development Guidelines](#). Principals must understand the interrelated, typical progression of children's learning across all domains in unfettered play. Social emotional skills need to be taught intentionally. Behavioral guidance is supported with the Washington Pyramid Model elements of Positive Behavioral Intervention Services (PBIS) and [Multi-Tiered Systems of Support \(MTSS\)](#). These skills create the foundation for parallel play, small groups, and creative space to engage in inquiry, problem solving, language development, early numeracy, and arts. Hire teachers with educational backgrounds emphasizing child development and early childhood special education to support the complexity of continually adapting the learning environment to adjust to children's growth over time, using the indoor and outdoor learning environments as safe places for children to explore and learn independently, making their own meaning.

Adults need care and attention too, and principals and administrators make this possible with a psychologically safe environment that supports teachers to be themselves, including their expressions of culture and home language. Teachers also need support to process the inherent challenges in working with children with complex needs, which could include access to adult learning or a PLC with substitute support.

The [Full-Day Kindergarten Walk-Through Tool](#) can help administrators identify characteristics of

high-quality classrooms. This tool is aligned with TPEP, the FDK Guide, WACs/RCWs and provides both general and specific examples of what you should expect to observe in a high-quality classroom.

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National P-3 Center have developed a rich resource titled [Learning to Lead Communities: A Principal's Guide to Early Learning and the Early Grades \(Pre-K-3rd Grade\)](#). This guidebook includes important foundational information and explores six competencies for leadership in early learning communities. You can [view the executive summary of this resource here](#).

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) that receive Title 1, Part A funds are required to coordinate with Head Start programs and with other early learning programs when practical. That coordination could include sharing student information, transition activities, professional development, family engagement activities and summer learning programs (See ESEA Sec. 1119). Source: [Funding Early Learning guide 2020](#)

A Title I preschool program that provides services to children from low-income families must ensure that those services comply at a minimum with the education performance standards in effect under section 641A(a)(1)(B) of the Head Start Act. The specific Head Start standards applicable to Title I preschool programs are in regulations at 45 C.F.R. § 1304.21

— Education and Early Childhood Development. Additional information about Title 1 preschool programs can be found in the document [Non-Regulatory Guidance Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act: Opportunities to Support Our Youngest Learners \(2017\)](#).

You can locate resources for supporting coordination between LEA programs, Head Start and other early learning programs at [Early Learning and the Every Student Succeeds Act\(ESSA\) - CEELO](#).

Additionally, the National Head Start Association (NHSA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) have released a comprehensive toolkit to help school districts in meeting new federal requirements that they formally partner with Head Start and other early childhood education providers to facilitate the transition of children from early childhood settings to kindergarten. This toolkit can be accessed at [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) Toolkit • NHSA](#)

# CHAPTER 4: GOALS FOR PRIORITIZING INCLUSIONARY PRACTICE IN TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN

The goal of this chapter is to explore inclusionary practices as they relate to Transitional Kindergarten with specific descriptors including the integrating of Washington Pyramid Model practices in developing a program-wide leadership team, utilizing program assessment tools like the Indicators and Elements of High-Quality Inclusion to develop inclusive classrooms.

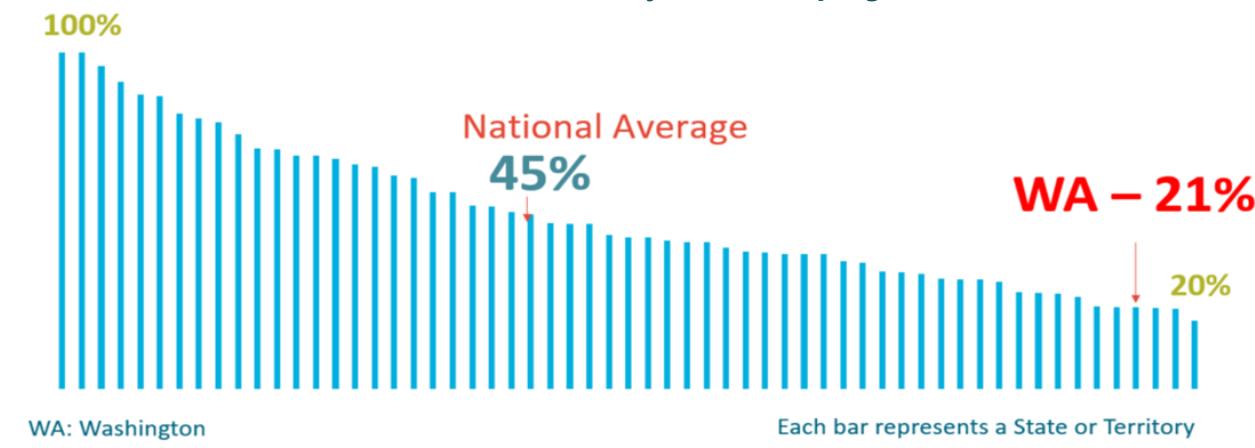
## The State of Inclusion in Washington State

In the school year 2018–19, 45.5% of children attended a regular early childhood program and received the majority of services in that location. The other 54.5% of children receive the majority of services in another location including a separate special education class, separate school or residential facility, service provider location, or home.

For the [OSEP Fast Facts: Children 3 through 5 Served Under IDEA Part B Section 619](#) we present data from the data collections authorized under [IDEA Section 618](#) including that collected through child count and educational environments.

[Preschool Least Restrictive Environment \(LRE\)- Indicator 6A Data](#) for Children aged 3-5 Attending and Receiving the Majority of Services in the Program (2017–2018) serve as a statewide call to action for Washington state.

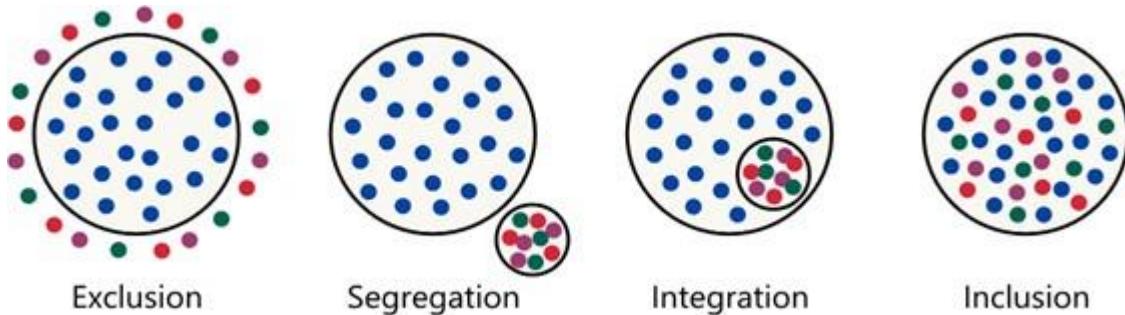
**Table 1: Percent of children who attended early childhood programs in 2017–18**



Visit the [Early Childhood Technical Assistance \(ECTA\) webpage](#) to read the [Policy and Position Statement on Inclusion](#).

# Integrating Inclusionary Practice in Early Learning Settings

Integrating Inclusionary Practice in Early Learning settings is the key criteria to fostering empathy, individualizing learning, creating strong pathways to social emotional development for all children in a high-quality Transitional Kindergarten (TK).



What is the range or continuum of placement options available for students?

The continuum of placement options available includes, but is not limited to, regular early childhood program (RECP), RECP classes with support services and/or modifications, a combination of regular early childhood program and special education classes, self-contained special education classes, placements outside of a school district, home instruction, and residential care or treatment facilities.; TK provides a general education class with support services and/or modifications for the mutual benefit of all students. TK programs clearly fall within the continuum of alternative placement options criteria for children in Washington state.

To learn more about the continuum of alternative placement options please visit the [Placement Decisions and the Least Restrictive Environment \(LRE\) webpage](#).

Part B regulations require states to ensure services to children ages three through five years are provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

- LRE regulations show a preference for educating children with disabilities in regular early childhood programs (RECP).
- LRE for preschoolers with a disability can be provided in a variety of settings including a Transitional Kindergarten setting, regular Kindergarten class, regular early childhood program, public or private preschool program, community-based child care facility, or in the child's home.

[Source: ECTA's Federal Requirements on Inclusion- Part B: Least Restrictive Environment](#)

## Young Children and Special Education

[The Guidance for Families: Special Education in Washington State webpage](#) provides an overview of Special Education and the components of special education to provide all students with access to a high-quality education.

The Overview includes:

- [What is Special Education?](#)
- [How Special Education Works](#)
- [Laws and Procedures](#)
- [Parent and Student Rights \(Procedural Safeguards\)](#)

Along with key topics including:

- [Individualized Education Programs \(IEPs\)](#)
- [Placement Decisions and the Least Restrictive Environment \(LRE\)](#)
- [Response to Proposed WAC Revision Document](#)

Regular Early Childhood Program:

WAC 392-172A-01152 Regular early childhood program. Regular early childhood program means a program that includes fifty percent or more children who do not have an IEP. Programs may include, but are not limited to, the following: Head start; early childhood education and assistance program (ECEAP); kindergarten; preschool classes offered to an eligible prekindergarten population by the public school system; private kindergartens or preschools; group child development centers; or childcare.

Contact [the Special Education Department of OSPI](#) for additional questions.

## **Transitional Kindergarten and Washington Pyramid Model**

Integrating inclusionary practice is critical in early learning settings and is a priority with Transitional Kindergarten (TK). Intentional alignment between [Transitional Kindergarten \(TK\)](#) and Washington Pyramid Model strengthens the quality of instructional practices.

Transitional Kindergarten (TK) intentionally aligns with Washington state's work with the [National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations \(NCPMI\) Intensive Technical Assistance](#) center, [University of Washington - Haring Center for Inclusive Education](#), and [Cultivate Learning](#).

The Washington State Pyramid model is an empirically validated social-emotional framework based on a tiered public health model. Washington Pyramid Model is a collection of practices (framework) and NOT a curriculum package. This framework supports a myriad of curricula for early learners that builds on the current effective workforce to further advancement of responsive and supportive environments for young children

The Washington Pyramid Model framework is culturally affirming and works to promote the social-emotional development of young children in partnership with families and communities.

This framework is a collection of programs and evidence-based classroom practices to support optimal development in a supportive and nurturing environment.

Washington Pyramid Model employs a cascading support network that aligns with the [Multi-Tiered Systems of Support framework \(MTSS\)](#). Like MTSS implementation, the Washington Pyramid Model

is also coordinated through cascading systems to support children as the primary focus. Similarly, program and state leadership teams ensure key partners are engaged with resulting resource, policy, and practice alignment.

To learn more about the Pyramid Model please visit the [NCPMI webpage](#).

## What is Pyramid Model?

Watch the video: [Pyramid Model Overview](#) (length 8:59) for an overview of the Pyramid Model.

## The Critical Elements of Washington Pyramid Model

The critical elements of Washington Pyramid Model (part of the Program-Wide Benchmark of Quality instrument) include:

- **Effective Workforce:** The model is supported at the foundation by an effective workforce. The foundation for all of the practices in the Pyramid Model are the systems and policies necessary to ensure a workforce able to adopt and sustain these evidence-based practices.
- **High Quality Environments:** This includes inclusive early care and education environments as well as supportive home environments.
- **Nurturing and Responsive Relationships:** This is essential to healthy social development and includes relationships with children, families, and team members.
- **Targeted Social Emotional Supports:** This includes explicit instruction and support along with self-regulation, expressing and understanding emotions, and developing social relationships and problem-solving.
- **Individualized Intensive Interventions:** Family-centered, comprehensive interventions that are assessment-based and focused on skill-building.

Content adapted from [Tiers of the Pyramid Model, NCPMI](#).

## The Tiers of Washington Pyramid Model

The Pyramid Model builds upon a tiered public health approach to providing universal support to all children to promote wellness, targeted services to those who need more support, and intensive services to those who need them.

In alignment with the key principles of MTSS implementation and the TK pillars, Washington Pyramid Model is driven by a focus on equity, inclusion, and collaboration.

The foundation of the Washington Pyramid Model is an effective workforce. The effective workforce pinpoints key systems and policies to promote workforce adoption of evidence- based practice for ongoing scale-up and state-wide sustainability.

"The Pyramid Model was designed for implementation by early educators within childcare, preschool, early intervention, Head Start, and early childhood special education programs"

(Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children: The Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children Fact Sheet. to help support meaningful social interactions and development.

Therein, to promote meaningful application, practitioners require support from specialists and/or consulting teachers to identify and design individualized instructional targets and goals and/or related behavior intervention support plans as needed. In some instances a child may be served across all tiers.

**Tier 1** in the Washington Pyramid Model identifies **universal supports** for all children and is a critical component to applied practice. This tier requires the promotion of nurturing and responsive relationships and high-quality environments. The Washington Pyramid Model community of practice recognizes that high-quality environments include, but are not limited to, inclusive early learning, transitional kindergarten, early care, and educational environments along with supportive home, community, and child care environments. This "universal level" of tiered supports highlight practices that are critical for the social emotional development of all children.

**Tier 2** in the Washington Pyramid Model highlights **secondary preventative** practices through targeted social-emotional supports. Targeted support is provided through clear instruction focused on promoting co-regulation, understanding emotions, developing social relationships, and building critical problem-solving skills.

**Tier 3** of Washington Pyramid Model practice highlights **tertiary intervention** practices. These intervention practices are characterized as individualized and intensive in nature. These practices employ family-centered, highly comprehensive intervention practices informed by assessment, data and family voice. Tertiary intervention practice focuses on skill-building to support children and their families in an individualized capacity.



Content adapted from [Tiers of the Pyramid Model, NCPMI.](#)

# Transitional Kindergarten Administrators as Inclusion Champions

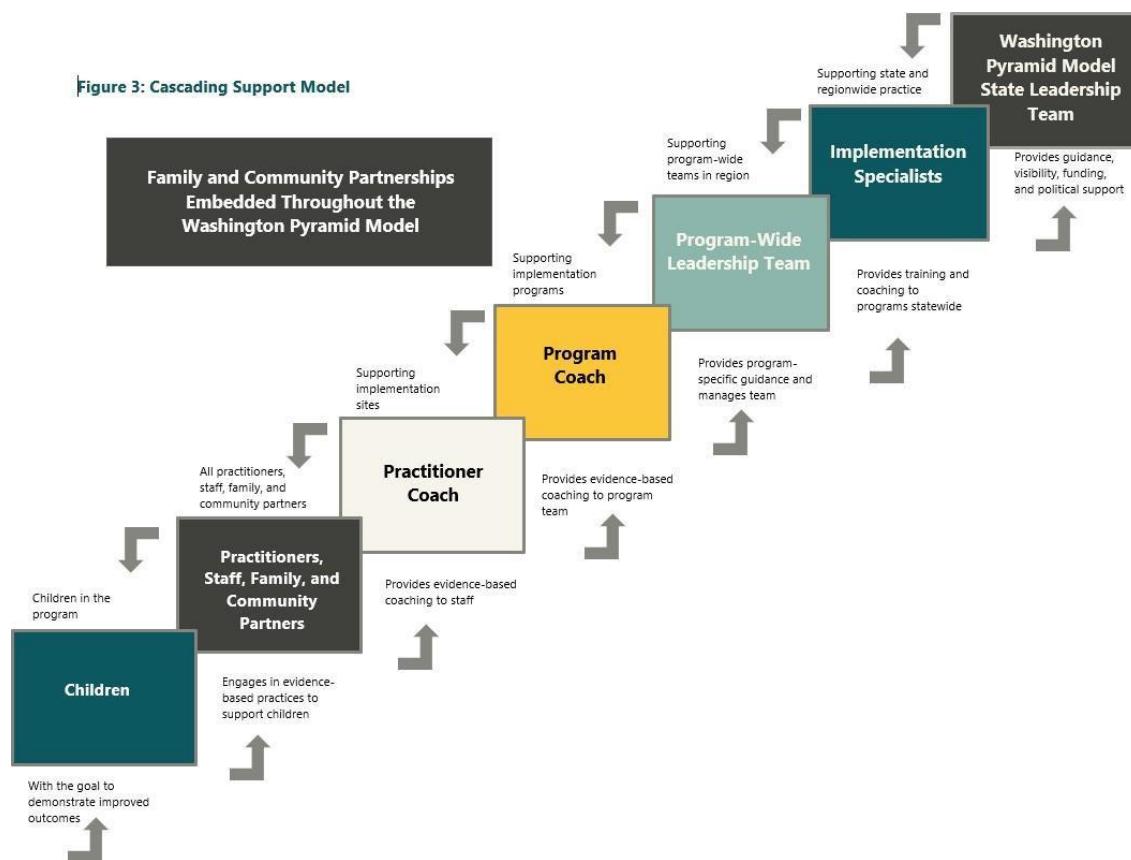
As a Transitional Kindergarten administrator, you can serve as a community-wide leader for inclusion, by convening a diverse coalition who can implement a culture of inclusion across your entire community.

Leaders can adopt a culture of inclusion, set expectations for services to be provided in inclusive settings to the extent appropriate per the child need, establish fair and appropriate policies, allocate existing resources in ways that can facilitate increased access to inclusive Transitional Kindergarten programs, and prioritize workforce development.

The [Washington Pyramid Model](#) employs a layered support mechanism to promote fidelity in inclusionary practices.

Implementation sites (classrooms) and implementation programs (districts) are critical in the application of this work.

As an administrator, you are a necessary member within the program-wide leadership team.



# First Step: Develop Your Program-Wide Team

Program-wide implementation of inclusionary practices allows childhood practitioners to use data to establish equitable and effective practices for all children. An identified tool to assist with this process is the Equity Coaching Guide which supports [culturally responsive practices](#) (also see: the [equity coaching guide](#)) and assists in addressing implicit biases that interfere with positive outcomes for children, practitioners, and families. Increased, coordinated, and sustained investment is necessary to address Washington's priorities of supporting healthy social and emotional development and school readiness of all our children.

Your Next Step: If you haven't already, begin to identify a program-wide leadership team. This team consists of:

- A program coach with specialized training to support program-wide Washington Pyramid Model practice. Teams will be guided by a Washington Pyramid Model coach who will guide program-wide implementation.
- Family members
- Community Members (e.g., health clinic representative, private OT/SLP service providers, YMCA, Community TA provider, any other community member or group that would be able to participate and refer families to early learning care services)
- An administrator(s) (e.g. director, assistant director)
- A broad representation of practitioners (teachers, providers, staff, teaching assistant, office assistant)
- A data coordinator (individual proficient in data evaluation and implementation of practices to fidelity)
- A person(s) (e.g. practitioner coach) who is skilled in coaching practitioners
- A person who will serve as the leading contact to facilitate behavior support planning and processes

Visit the [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center support webpage](#) to learn more about details related to the strategic program-wide leadership teaming process.

## Knowledge Check: Washington Pyramid Model Framework

Answers are on the following page.

### 1. What are the critical elements of the Washington Pyramid Model?

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

**2. What are the tiers of the Washington Pyramid Model?**

1	
2	
3	

**3. Is the Washington Pyramid Model a curriculum package or a framework?**

**4. What is the Washington Pyramid Model aligned with?**

Answers:

**1. What are the critical elements of the Washington Pyramid Model?**

1	Effective workforce
2	Nurturing and responsive relationships
3	High-quality supportive environments
4	Targeted social- emotional supports
5	Intensive interventions

**2. What are the tiers of the Washington Pyramid Model?**

1	Tier 1: Universal Promotion
2	Tier 2: Secondary Prevention
3	Tier 3: Tertiary Intervention

**3. Is the Washington Pyramid Model a curriculum package or a framework?**

Washington Pyramid Model is a collection of programs and evidence-based classroom practices selected by experts in early childhood research to support optimal development and prevent challenging behaviors. The WA Pyramid Model is not a curriculum package.

**4. What is the Washington Pyramid Model aligned with?**

The Washington Pyramid Model is aligned with Washington Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS). Washington Pyramid Model is one of the three "prongs" of Washington MTSS.

## Stop and Jot

**What does inclusionary practice mean to you?**

The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center identifies inclusion in early programs as "including children with disabilities in early childhood programs together with their peers without disabilities; holding high expectations and intentionally promoting participation in all learning and social activities facilitated by individualized accommodations; and using evidence-based services and supports to foster their development, friendship with peers, and sense of belonging."

**What, if anything, is missing from this definition? How does this definition fit with your understanding of inclusion?**

## Ready for the Next Step? Start with Assessment

Explore [The Indicators of High Quality Inclusion Assessment](#) instrument. This self- assessment tool provides a close-in analysis of what a "high-quality" inclusive classroom setting looks like.

You can explore more information related to the [High-Quality Inclusion Assessment tool here](#).

Source: Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, & National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (2020). Retrieved from [Indicators of High-Quality Inclusion](#).

## What does high-quality inclusion look like in the classroom?

- High-quality inclusion in the classroom promotes and affirms individual differences.
- Practitioners and staff comment on the accomplishments of all children to the entire learning community. They display all children's work and call attention to all children's contributions.
- High-quality inclusion in the classroom setting involves identifying all children's preferences and continually using their preferences to guide instruction.
- This includes creating an **open and two-way communication** with families and **affirming**

**the languages** spoken by families. Building and sustaining trusting, responsive relationships by **including and involving families** in early care and education environment activities from the start.

- High-quality inclusive learning settings include **establishing predictable routines** through the use of **visual schedules** that are posted and used by all (practitioners and- staff) throughout the day.
- Promoting positive and **culturally-responsive adult-child relationships** by giving **at least 5 positive statements for every 1 feedback statement or redirection statement**.
- This includes **intentionally teaching a range of social-emotional skills** in small and large group modalities to support problem solving, entering play, and taking turns.
- **Setting up classroom environments and activities that promote interactions** and plan for consistent social opportunities **with routines**.
- This can be done through peer modeling (buddy play and clean-up partners) to **capitalize on the strengths and abilities of all children**.
- High-quality inclusive classrooms integrate **themes that reflect children's interests, abilities, familial and cultural norms**. These classrooms ensure that the **necessary adaptations are in place** to ensure that all children can access and participate in activities.
- Inclusive classroom settings **integrate each child's individual needs into the instructional setting**. Inclusive classrooms ensure that all picture or alternative/augmentative (AAC) communication systems are **readily available to children and practitioners to support the generalization of functional communication skills**. **This includes adaptive supports, environmental modifications, and ongoing teaming to meet the individual needs of the child**.
- **Inclusive classrooms ensure that all children can participate.**

You may have noticed: All of these elements are developmentally appropriate practice!

Content Source: [Early Care and Education Environment Indicators and Elements of High-Quality Inclusion](#)

## **Knowledge Check: What are the components of a high-quality (HQ) classroom?**

Sort the text copy/pasting each item into the correct column or by writing the corresponding number in the correct column. Answers are on the following page.

1. Call attention to all children's contributions
2. Promotes and affirms individual differences
3. Identify all children's preferences
4. Display all children's work
5. Require participation at circle time
6. Comment on the accomplishments of all children
7. When developing a schedule at the beginning of the year, stick with it and do not make any adjustments
8. Remove communication devices that may be a distraction

In a HQ Classroom	Not in a HQ Classroom

## Answers

In a HQ Classroom	Not in a HQ Classroom
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Call attention to all children's contributions</li><li>2. Promotes and affirms individual differences</li><li>3. Identify all children's preferences</li><li>4. Display all children's work</li><li>5. Comment on the accomplishments of all children</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>7. Require participation at circle time</li><li>8. When developing a schedule at the beginning of the year, stick with it and do not make any adjustments</li><li>9. Remove communication devices that may be a distraction</li></ol>

## Reflect: Prioritize Inclusionary Practice

We encourage you to articulate your response in some form as this will support your progress in Transitional Kindergarten planning and implementation. Use the following questions to guide your reflections.

1. Any **new learning** or lingering questions?
2. How will you **adapt your classroom** to incorporate your understanding?
3. How are you addressing children's IEPs in your **coordinated recruitment and enrollment?**
4. What tools will you use to **support braided funding?**
5. What **challenges** do you foresee?
6. What **direct steps** will you take to ensure equitable access to education for your transitional kindergarten students with disabilities? What steps have you **already taken?**
7. What steps will you take to **assess the current state of inclusion in your program?** (See [Inclusionary Practices Data by District to find your current LRE data](#) and [Performance Data Profile Report by District](#) portal for additional information.).
8. What **partnerships** have you developed to support high-quality inclusionary practice in your program?
9. How can you integrate **family and community voice** in your current practice to promote inclusion?
10. How will you ensure **equitable and broad representation** as you develop or analyze your current **program-wide** leadership team?

## Resource: "I Can" Goal Sheet

The "I Can" Goal Sheet resource is a critical tool to help identify and build connections and relationships with students, families, and communities. This goal sheet can be found on the [OSPI Transitional Kindergarten Resource webpage](#).

# "I Can" Goal Sheet

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_ End Date of Plan: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name:

## Part 1: Description of learning activities developed with family.

Goal/ Objective	Resource/ Activity	Look-for	When	Documentation*
<b>Example:</b> <i>Manages feelings</i>	<i>MyTeachingStrategies® Development and Learning Library "I Want It" activity</i>	<i>When presented with choices, can your child choose</i>  <i>throughout the day to</i>	<i>Observe "I want it" activity in the morning routine,</i>  <i>what to wear for</i>	<i>Photo of child in selected outfit, verbal commentary from family member.</i>

## Resource: Interaction Checklists

Sensitive and responsive interactional practices are the foundation for promoting the development of a child's language and cognitive and emotional competence. These interactional practices are the basis for fostering all children's learning. For children who have or are at risk for developmental delays/disabilities, they represent a critical set of strategies for fostering children's social-emotional competence, communication, cognitive development, problem-solving, autonomy, and persistence" ([DEC Recommended Practices, 2018](#)).

[Adult-Child Interaction Checklist](#): This checklist "includes practices that can be used to engage a child in adult-child interactive episodes to promote and support child competence." ([Adult-Child Interaction Checklist, 2018](#)).

INTERACTION Checklist 1 of 4

**ecta** Early Childhood  
Technical Assistance Center

### Adult-Child Interaction Checklist

This checklist includes practices that can be used to engage a child in adult-child interactive episodes to promote and support child competence. The main focus of the practice is responding promptly and positively (contingently) to a child's behavior to elicit or maintain child interactions with an adult during everyday activities and play. Adult contingent responsiveness is characterized by sensitive, prompt, positive, and an appropriate amount of adult responses to maintain and not interrupt child interactions.

The checklist indicators can be used by a practitioner to develop a plan to use the practices with a child or to promote a parent's or other family members' use of the practices. The checklist rating scale can be used to do a self-evaluation to determine if the different practice characteristics were used by a practitioner with a child or as part of promoting a parent's use of the practices.

**Child Social-Emotional Competence Checklist:** This checklist includes practices that can be used to encourage, support, and promote child social-emotional competence. The checklist includes a number of practices that can be used to both engage a child in social play and to respond contingently (positively) to a child's social-emotional behavior and responses. The adult behavior can be used as part of any everyday activities and child-adult social play" ([DEC Recommended Practices, 2018](#)).

INTERACTION Checklist 3 of 4



### Child Social-Emotional Competence Checklist

This checklist includes practices that can be used to encourage, support, and promote child social-emotional competence during everyday activities and play. The checklist includes a number of practices that can be used both to engage a child in social play and to respond contingently (promptly and positively) to a child's social-emotional behavior and responses. The adult behavior can be used as part of any everyday activities and child-adult social play.

The checklist indicators can be used by a practitioner to develop a plan to use the practices with a child or to promote a parent's use of the practices. The checklist rating scale can be used to do a self-evaluation to determine if the different practice characteristics were used by a practitioner with a child or as part of promoting a parent's use of the practices.

## Additional Resources to Support All Children

If you are looking for additional resources on supporting all children, we've compiled some options below. These are optional resources, but please feel free to bookmark them for later viewing.

### Supplemental Assessment Tools:

- [Benchmarks of Quality for Classroom- Based Programs \(Implementing Recommended Practices Edition\)](#) developed by Denise Binder and Lise Fox is designed to help programs evaluate their progress towards implementing the Pyramid model program-wide.
- The [Local District Preschool Inclusion Self-Assessment](#) works to provide a framework for discussion to promote partnerships to promote the inclusion of young children with disabilities and their families in programs like Transitional Kindergarten.
- Explore [The Indicators of High-Quality Inclusion Assessment](#) instrument. This self-assessment tool provides a close-in analysis of what a "high-quality" inclusive classroom setting looks like.

You can explore more information related to the [High-Quality Inclusion Assessment tool here](#).

### Resources to Support Inclusionary Practice in Your TK Program

- Explore the Tip Sheets from [Child Care Plus +](#), a project focused on inclusive early childhood environments.
- Check out the blog [Diversity in the Classroom](#)
- The [NHS Inclusion website](#) offers more information and articles about philosophy, strategies, and benefits of inclusion.
- Check out the blog [Diversity in the Classroom](#).

- If you would like more information on how to make your classroom more inclusive, consider exploring the [Universal Design for Learning framework](#).
- Washington University in St. Louis Center for Teaching and Learning has a short article on [Strategies for Inclusive Teaching](#).
- [Washington OSPI Early Childhood Least Restrictive Environment \(LRE\) Indicator 6 webpage](#).
- [National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations webpage](#).
- [Early Childhood Technical Assistance \(ECTA\) Center: Practice Improvement Tools webpage](#).

## **Articles and Books**

- *Building Blocks for Teaching Preschoolers with Special Needs* by Susan Sandall, Ilene Swartz, Gail Joseph
- *Adapting Early Childhood Curricula for Children with Special Needs* by Ruth Cook
- *The Inclusive Early Childhood Classroom: Adapting learning Centers for all Children* by Patti Gould
- *Blended Practices for Teaching Young Children in Inclusive Settings* by Grisham-Brown, Hemmeter
- *Including the Special Needs Child* by Grace Bickert
- *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth to Age 8* by Carole Copple and Sue Bredekamp, editors
- *The Power of Guidance: Teaching Social-Emotional Skills in Early Childhood Classrooms* by Dan Gartrell
- *Young Exceptional Children Monograph Series No 1. Practical Ideas for Addressing Challenging Behaviors* by the Division for Early Childhood of The Council for Exceptional Children

# CHAPTER 5: CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES

## What is Family Engagement?

The CDC definition highlights the need for parents and schools to work together. Family engagement is more than merely inviting or bringing families into the learning space. Family engagement is about a two-way meaningful reciprocal conversation and welcoming the family's voice and power.

When thinking about family engagement, keep in mind the history of education in the United States. Schools are part of a historically white system with white institutionalized values. Not all families have had positive experiences in schools and are familiar with the dominant language and school culture. This includes how schools approach family engagement. Notably, Dr. Karen Mapp's 2002 research shows that a lack of trust is often what keeps historically marginalized families from spending time at school. According to Drs. Iruka, Curenton, Durden, and Escayg, "family engagement has the potential to be the way that we systemically address discrimination and bias, while also providing opportunities for all to thrive. This approach [...] requires a commitment to the idea that every family member matters [...]." (*Don't Look Away: Embracing Anti-bias Classrooms*, page 113).

The end goal of family engagement is to support the learning and development of children. It is paramount that educators view family engagement, and the Family Connection, as critical for equity. The Family Connection component of WaKIDS is an example of short- term family engagement. The intended purpose of Family Connection is to lay the foundation for long-term and meaningful family engagement.

For this chapter, shift your definition and purpose of family engagement to include the following:

- Families are full partners in their children's education
- Make space for family voice
- Create space for two-way meaningful conversations
- Maintain a strengths-based approach. Each family and child has something valuable to share

# Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement

RELATIONSHIP-BASED COMPETENCIES TO SUPPORT FAMILY ENGAGEMENT	
COMPETENCY	PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE
1. Positive, Goal-Oriented Relationships	Engages in mutually respectful, positive, goal-oriented partnerships with families to promote positive child and family outcomes
2. Self-Aware and Culturally Responsive Relationships	Respects and responds to the cultures, languages, values, and family structures of each family
3. Family Well-Being and Families as Learners	Supports families' reflections on and planning for their safety, health, education, well-being, and life goals
4. Parent-Child Relationships and Families as Lifelong Educators	Partners with families to build strong parent-child relationships and supports parents as the first and lifelong educators of their children
5. Family Connections to Peers and Community	Works with families to strengthen their support networks and connections with other parents and community members who can address families' strengths, interests, and challenges
6. Family Access to Community Resources	Supports families' use of community resources to make progress toward positive child and family outcomes
7. Leadership and Advocacy	Works alongside parents to build on their strengths as advocates for their families and as leaders in the program and community
8. Coordinated, Integrated, and Comprehensive Services	Works with other professionals and agencies to support coordinated, integrated, and comprehensive services for families across the organization, community, and system
9. Data-Driven Services and Continuous Improvement	Collects information with families and reflects with them to inform goal-setting, planning, and implementation to effect progress and outcomes for families, children, programs, and communities
10. Professional Growth	Shows professionalism and participates actively in opportunities for ongoing professional development related to family engagement

To learn more, read the [Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement guide](#).

## Children from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

In the Family Connection chapter, you will watch Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Ted Talk: The Danger of a Single Story. In this video, she will warn that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding. This holds true when thinking about children with disabilities as well as culturally and linguistically diverse children.

Understanding the children's culture and your own biases will help ensure that your assessment is based on observational facts, not a misunderstanding based on your views of the world.

When assessing (and teaching) culturally and linguistically diverse children, be mindful to adapt your instruction to be more inclusive. For example, imagine you are teaching the letter A to an English Language Learner. In your mind, you are making the correspondence of A, /a/, apple. However, the child may see A, /a/, and a picture of amanaza (apple in Spanish). You can see how this might be confusing.

In 2020, OSPI launched the Washington State K-12 Dual Language Initiative, in which Superintendent Reykdal envisions access to dual language education by 2030. Helping children who are dual-language learners maintain and build their home languages while promoting English fluency is important for three critical reasons. Doing so enables children to:

- Develop their primary cultural identities
- Stay closely attached to their families' customs and traditions
- Progress toward becoming fully bilingual (Espinosa, 2008)

## Do Now

Read [6 Essential Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners](#) from Edutopia to build your instructional toolbox. You'll apply these strategies later in the chapter.

## The Danger of a Single Story

As you prepare for your Family Connection Meetings, don't forget these essential points:

- In Washington State, all children have the right to basic education at kindergarten. The only requirement for entry to kindergarten is to be five-years-old by August 31st. Even though kindergarten is still optional in Washington, it is the first opportunity that all families have to participate in public education. Age-eligibility, rather than development or ability, is what helps to assure equity of access to public schools.
- Schools are historically white institutions, meaning they operate under white cultural values. Some families may not feel welcome entering a school or have a different experience with school than you did. Consider ways to welcome families as they transition into a new classroom, a new school, and sometimes anew system.
- Check your assumptions. Families may have different cultural expectations about family-school partnerships. There is no one right way to have these conversations.
- You will have children and families entering your classroom with different early learning experiences. Not all children will have school experience prior to entering your classroom.

## Do Now

[Watch the following 2009 TedTalk](#) (18:33 minutes) from novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. She tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice -- and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding. You will use this video content as part of your upcoming Stop and Jot.

## Parent Voice in Washington Pyramid Model Implementation

Parent and advocate Munirah Bakhsh shares her story around Washington Pyramid Model implementation in Shoreline, Washington.

Watch the video: [Pyramid Family Perspective](#); 2:08 minutes.

Permission to view video content provided by Munirah Bakhsh for the purpose of the Washington Transitional Kindergarten Partners in Transition Mini-Grant Administrator Academy.

## **Washington Pyramid Model Practices at Home**

Munirah Bakhsh, parent and advocate, shares "Tucker the Turtle" social story for co- regulation featured in the Washington Pyramid Model framework to promote high- quality early learning social- emotional health for her children and community.

Watch the video: [Munirah Shares Tucker Turtle](#); 0:21 minutes.

Permission to view video content provided by Munirah Bakhsh for the purpose of the Washington Transitional Kindergarten Partners in Transition Mini-Grant Administrator Academy.

### **Stop and Jot**

Consider one child that you've been working with...

- What works to pique the child's interest?
- What new interests have emerged recently where you need to shift direction to support the family?
- What are the child's traits and characteristics that inform the approach to learning?
- How did you adapt your instruction?
- How did the child's home language(s) show up in your classroom?



## **Resources for Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families**

Families who are culturally and linguistically diverse may benefit from additional support when engaging their child's education. This page will provide you with some resources.

## Do Now

Please read the linked article [6 Strategies for Partnering with Families of English Language Learners](#) and select **one additional resource** below to help you support families from diverse backgrounds. You will find articles, videos, and other materials to help grow your understanding and build a network of support to serve families.

As you read, be thinking of which strategies you will employ during the Family Connection Meeting.

1. [Understood.org](#): This website offers support for both families and educators. For educators, Understood.org provides information around understanding differences, partnering with families, connecting with children, and teaching strategies.
2. [Since Time Immemorial](#): Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State: A required tribally-developed curriculum through the Office of Native Education at OSPI. This curriculum is available for all ages including early learning and K-3 children.
3. [Minnesota Department of Education/Dr. Rosemarie Allen](#): This website has many useful resources. Near the bottom of the page, you will find webinars focusing on the work of Dr. Rosemarie Allen and teaching through a cultural lens. Topics include suspensions and expulsions through a lens of implicit bias, trauma- informed practices, and more.
4. [Lessons Learned from Our Collaborations with Families](#): A short article by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) that addresses ways to support continuous learning at home with families that are developmentally appropriate. This article discusses the foundations of connecting with families in a strengths-based approach.
5. [Principles of Effective Family Engagement](#): An article that focuses on 6 key principles of family engagement identified through NAEYC's Engaging Diverse Families project.
6. [Research on Parent Involvement with Diverse Families](#): This article is a research summary of Minnesota's Parent Training and Information Center and the St. Paul School District. It explores the project's goals of improving educational results for children and youth with disabilities from diverse communities, particularly Hispanic and Latino, African American, Hmong and Southeast Asian, and Somali families.
7. [Pacer Center Hotlinks](#): This page provides various links and videos that explore family engagement.

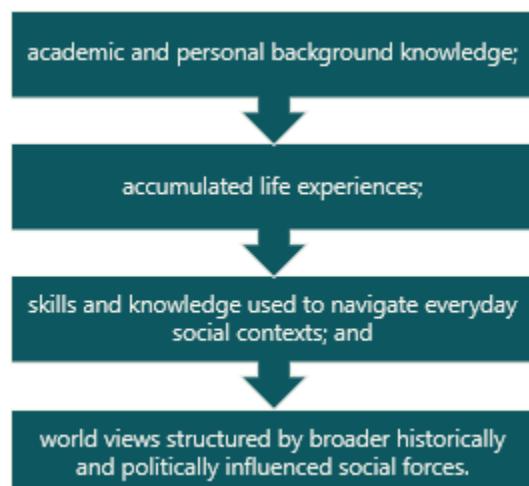
# Funds of Knowledge

The funds of knowledge concept was originally applied by Vélez- Ibáñez and Greenberg (1992) to describe the historical accumulation of abilities, bodies of knowledge, assets, and cultural ways of interacting that were evident in U.S.-Mexican households in Tucson, Arizona.

Here is the [OSPI Funds of Knowledge Toolkit](#).



A student's funds of knowledge can be described as:



## Funds of Knowledge: Frequently Asked Questions

- How do Funds of Knowledge apply to teaching and learning?
  - Using a funds of knowledge approach to understanding students' overall sets of abilities and experiences can help teachers draw on these skills in classrooms to enrich their understanding of academic content while also motivating them during classroom activities.
  - Developing curricular content around the personal contexts, skills, and experiences of students helps scaffold their understanding of academic material.
- How can educators identify their students' Funds of Knowledge?
  - Having the students write essays about their backgrounds, do presentations about their interests, or create projects that represent their family heritage.
  - By visiting with families during home or community visits, teachers can gain a much wider understanding of their students' funds of knowledge.
  - [WaKIDS "Introducing Me!" Family Connection Booklet](#) (available in 19 languages)
  - [WaKIDS Discussion Prompts, Look-Fors and Observational Activities](#) can be used to

discuss children's skills and abilities with families and to guide educators in the classroom.

- How can educators integrate their students' Funds of Knowledge into classroom practices?
  - Integrating students' funds of knowledge into classroom lessons can be done across all content areas and easily be applied to standards-based instruction.  
For example:
    - [Community Contexts and Funds of Knowledge](#)
    - Classroom Lessons
      - [Cherry Farming in Mattawa](#)
      - [Boxing in Kennewick](#)
      - [Making Kimchi in Tukwila](#)

Source: [OSPI Funds of Knowledge Toolkit](#)

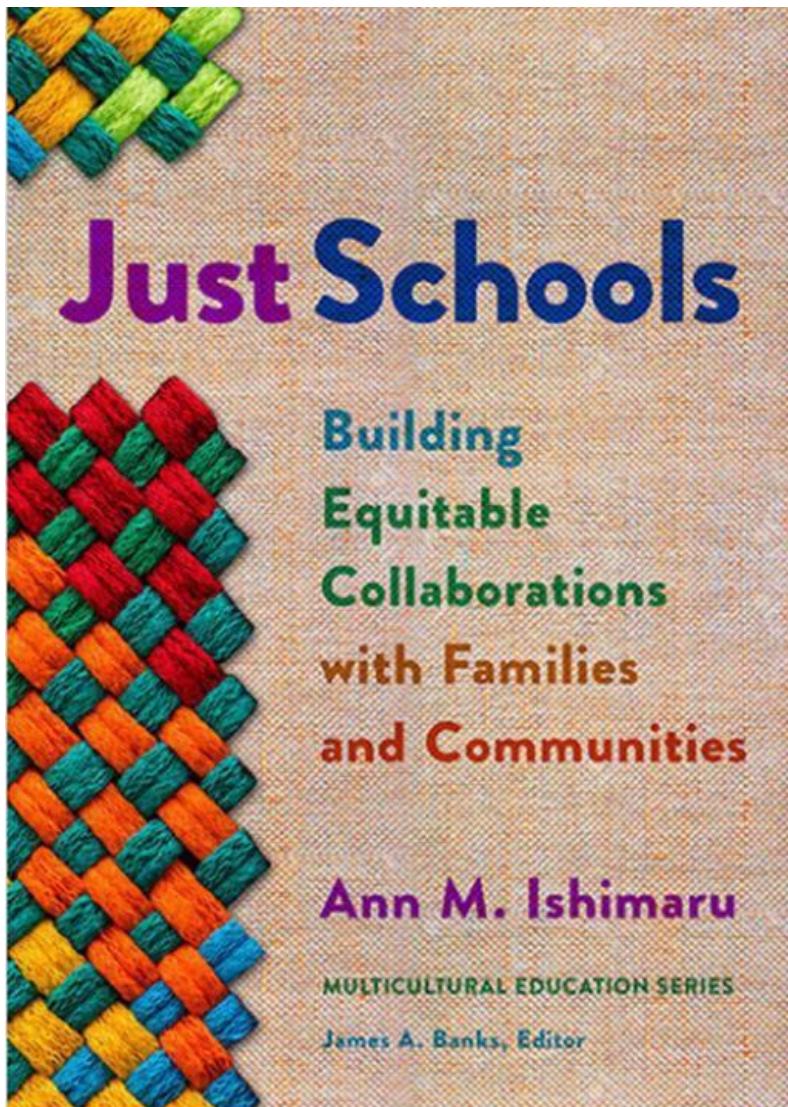
## Funds of Knowledge: Examples

Funds of Knowledge	Home/Community Practices	Classroom Application
Geography	There were a lot of maps around their home. I saw a large world map of South and North America. I also saw small maps on key chains of El Salvador. Ruby's mother also brought out a towel that resembled the Salvadorian flag.	This could be used in social studies. We could look at cities in Washington and take it a step farther and move from each continent and have table groups look closer at cities in specific continents or regions.
Economics	When Ruby's parents lived in El Salvador the currency was different. They had saved their old money in a small box.	We could use this in math, money in math is very common but using different currencies would bring in their funds of knowledge, especially if we have other cultures in our classroom that we may not know about.
Politics	Ruby's family has DirectTV so they got to watch news that came right out of El Salvador. Her mother and father even recorded the news so they would not miss it when it came on.	We could use this in social studies; young students most likely will not be very interested in the news but they could have an assignment that has them work with their parents to choose a topic or find a story in the news together that is relevant to today's dates.

For additional information visit: [OSPI Funds of Knowledge Toolkit](#)

## Parents as Partners

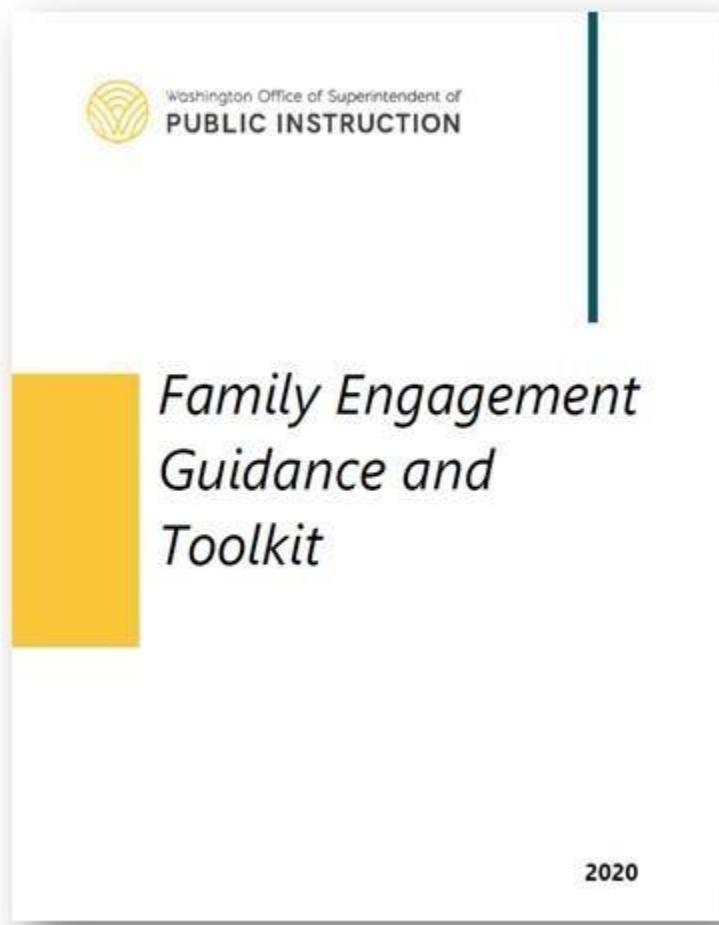
"The push for 'parents as partners' empowerment, and parent education, then, may need to be calibrated to reflect the desires and goals of communities rather than politically laden assumptions made by others about what parents need. (Doucet, 2011)"—Just Schools, Building Equitable Collaborations with Families and Communities, Ann Ishimaru



# Family Engagement Guidance and Toolkit

You will find key questions, suggested actions, and resources for five categories of building successful Family engagement.

- Sharing Planning and Decision Making
- Communication
- Strengthening Relationships
- Supporting Learning at Home
- Community Partnerships



[Family Engagement Guidance and Toolkit](#)

## Family Connection Resources

If you'd like to read more about building family partnerships, check out the following supplemental resources:

- [Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family/School Partnerships by Anne T. Henderson](#). This book reveals strategies for establishing strong collaborative relationships between families and teachers.
- [Seven Essentials for Transformative Family Partnerships](#) from *MyTeachingStrategies*®. This document highlights seven crucial components for building a strong and successful family partnership. These strategies are relevant to both in-person and remote learning.
- [Partners in Education](#) from the U.S. Department of Education. This document explains the importance of family-school partnerships. If you want to learn more about how other schools have built a culture around parents as partners, this document has suggestions and case studies of districts that have made progress in this area.
- [The Home-School Team: An Emphasis on Parent Involvement](#) by James P. Comer & Norris Haynes. This short article published on Edutopia focuses on how children thrive when we are intentional about building a home-school team.
- [Edutopia Family Engagement Resources](#) provides relevant and timely information and has been filtered to show articles and videos related to family engagement in the current context. Many of these contributing educators share practical tips and strategies that are working for them in their classrooms.
- Watch [From 'Best' to 'Next' Practices in Family Engagement for Educational Justice](#). This eye-opening conversation about the principles and practices families and communities of color are using to challenge dominant narratives about race and class and bring about promising new possibilities for transforming power and fostering solidarity across communities in education.
- Read [Critical Practices for Anti-bias Education](#). This article details how investing meaningfully and sincerely in family and community engagement is a key pillar of anti-bias education.
- Read the [Connecting with Families Tip Sheet](#), which provides strategies for connecting with families during meetings/conferences.
- Explore the [BlackSpace Manifesto](#) for co-creation, engagement, and liberatory strategies to support family partnerships.

## Distance Learning and COVID 19 Resources

- Read the [Fostering Connections: A Tool to Support Staff Conversations with Students and Families](#). This tool provides a framework for building relationships and follows Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, as recommended by OSPI. The tool supports staff in starting conversations in a way that builds trust and learns about the needs of the student and family. This helps us meet student and family needs and encourage re-engagement.
- Explore this [self-paced guide and modules for anyone supporting students at home during distance learning](#). Modules 1 through 4 are organized around essential distance learning topics for anyone who is supporting a student while in their care. Module 1: What is a Learning Management System (LMS). Module 2: Creating an At-Home Learning System. Module 3: Support Like a Coach. Module 4: Encourage a Growth Mindset -Why Struggle is

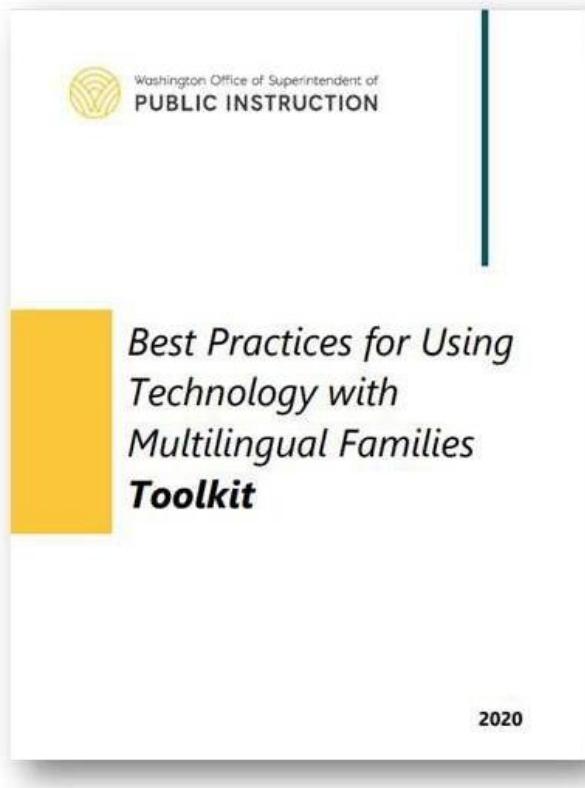
### Good for Learning

- Read the [Reopening Washington Schools 2020: Early Learning Planning Guide and focus on pages 17-19, which provide guidance on establishing strong community partnerships.](#)
- Read [Parent Involvement Has Always Mattered. Will The COVID-19 Pandemic Finally Make This the New Normal In K-12 Education?](#) This opinion piece offers many reflective opportunities on the equity issues surrounding distance learning, as well as hopes for the future of family involvement in schools.

## Funds of Knowledge Resources

The [Multilingual Families Toolkit](#) or the same in [Spanish](#) is designed to help Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) create and maintain effective strategies with multilingual families. We explore and model best practices for the use of technology in teaching, as well as for assessing and communicating with diverse adults.

- The following guide is applicable for face-to-face, blended, and online instruction, and can also serve as a toolkit. In addition, it includes a section on state and federal allowable costs, and technology resources for adult computer literacy training.



- [OSPI Funds of Knowledge Toolkit](#)
- [Parents & Families | OSPI \(www.k12.wa.us\)](#)
- [Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Guidance & Resources | OSPI \(www.k12.wa.us\)](#)

## Revisit Steps to Create TK

Let's revisit the steps to establishing a new TK grade level in your school fulfilling requirements in the [Five Pillars](#):

1. Assess need for TK using waitlists and community needs assessments from community-based early learning programs
2. Meet and learn about the community's early learning partners. Document what you learn about other early learning programs: demographics, number of slots, hours of operation, maximum enrollment, wait list, and pedagogy.
3. With support from regional partners, build a single-entry recruitment and enrollment process for families.
4. Create communication protocol and referral system among early learning programs
5. Build relationships with families at the rate of trust
6. Infuse classrooms and school with families' home languages and cultures, and embrace multiple modes of family involvement in the school community
7. Design a high-quality inclusive TK classroom and outdoor learning environment
8. Hire staff with certification in Early Childhood Special Education or Human Development
9. Create and adapt a developmentally appropriate schedule for four-year-old children including uninterrupted play, several sessions of outdoor play, and rest
10. Select curriculum that promotes self-managed play in learning centers
11. Trust families to lead their children's education

## **Stop & Jot**

What questions do you have?

What plans will you make to fulfill requirements outlined in these steps?

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*Download this material in PDF at [Transitional Kindergarten](https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/support-programs/early-learning-washington-state/transitional-kindergarten) (<https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/support-programs/early-learning-washington-state/transitional-kindergarten>). This material is available in alternative format upon request. Contact the Resource Center at 888-595-3276, TTY 360-664-3631. Please refer to this document number for quicker service: 22-0010.*



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