

Toolkit for key moments in the transition to kindergarten IN SUPPORT OF ACTION PLANNING:

THIS TOOLKIT FOCUSES ON 3 TOOLS:

TOOL 1

EXAMPLES OF TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN ACTIVITIES FOR PARTNERS

FOR WHOM:

Stakeholders, professionals, or administrators involved in the organization of transition to kindergarten activities.

WHAT:

Examples of transition to kindergarten activities to inspire partners to implement or enhance a collaborative school

TOOL 2

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR THE TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN FOR PARENTS

FOR WHOM:

Those responsible for communications to parents.

WHAT:

Turnkey messages to sensitize parents on the importance of preparing their child, and themselves, during the year leading up to entry into kindergarten.

TOOL 3

EMOTIONS, STRESS, AND THE TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN FOR PARENTS

FOR WHOM:

Those responsible for communications to parents.

WHAT:

Turnkey messages designed to nourish a positive and friendly vision of school and to normalize the emotions and stress experienced by parents when their child starts kindergarten.

THE CONTENT OF THE TOOLS IS FLEXIBLE. IN ADDITION, EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES, TIPS AND TRICKS AND MESSAGES FOR PARENTS CAN BE EXTRACTED FROM THE TOOLS TO BE INTEGRATED INTO YOUR OWN COMMUNICATION TOOLS.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

The transition to kindergarten is an important step in the lives of children and their parents. This transition is considered by some to be the most important adjustment challenge a child experience during this period.



A initiative of:

R3USSIR
Education Employment Estrie

With the participation of:

Québec 

To learn more, consult *The Transition to Kindergarten — A Guide for Intersectoral Stakeholders to Promote Educational Success* (Partners for Educational Success Estrie (Projet PRÉE), 2019).

TOOL 1 EXAMPLES OF TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN ACTIVITIES FOR PARTNERS¹



PRE- REGISTRATION

AUGUST SEPTEMBER OCTOBER NOVEMBER DECEMBER

- Establish and participate in committee meetings on school transition.
- Participate in a joint training between teachers and educators on the transition to kindergarten.
- Participate in happy hours with teachers and educators.
- Offer the *Passe-Partout* program supported by employers.
- Sensitize other stakeholders to put in place incentives for the participation of more vulnerable families.
- Present/promote the various school transition activities in the area to parents.
- Conduct a parent-child workshop or activity in the school (classroom, library, or gymnasium) outside of school hours.

DURING REGISTRATION

JANUARY FEBRUARY

- Use registration as an opportunity to organize an activity in the school and invite stakeholders to accompany families to visit the school and meet the staff.
- Take a trip to the school gymnasium during a school day.
- Accompany the parent in choosing activities that meet their needs and those of their child.
- Use the school transition communication tool (e.g. *Mon Portrait*).
- Include, in your informational communications, a concerted calendar of activities for the transition to kindergarten (e.g. newsletter to parents, municipal tax bill, etc.).
- Discuss school transition and its activities with families in follow-up or focus groups.

AFTER REGISTRATION BUT BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS

MARCH APRIL MAY JUNE

- Have the teachers visit educational childcare centers (CPE) to meet the children.
- Have the CPE conduct a tour of the school and the preschool classroom.
- Organize a picnic in the schoolyard for families and neighborhood organizations.
- Provide a concerted informational tool on the transition to kindergarten for parents.
- Organize a boxed lunch day and hold it in the school cafeteria.
- Set up tripartite meetings to discuss the requirements of children with special needs.

AROUND THE TIME SCHOOL STARTS

JULY AUGUST SEPTEMBER

- As a facilitator, organize and attend one-on-one meetings with parents/children and the teacher to help build trust.
- Organize activities or games in the schoolyard.
- Organize local festivals in the school or on school grounds.
- Help organize a summer day camp for children who will be starting school.

AFTER SCHOOL STARTS

OCTOBER NOVEMBER

- As a facilitator, continue to support families and communicate with teachers to support school transition.
- Perform, as a transition committee, an assessment of the activities and the consultation.



1. PARTNERS FOR EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS ESTRIE (2019). The Transition to Kindergarten — A Guide for Intersectoral Stakeholders to Promote Educational Success, Appendix C: Model collaborative school transition plan, p. 36-37.

TOOL 2 TIPS AND TRICKS FOR THE TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN FOR PARENTS

Here are some suggestions that may make your child's transition into kindergarten easier. Feel free to adjust the following tips and tricks to suit your particular situation.



PRE- REGISTRATION

AUGUST SEPTEMBER OCTOBER NOVEMBER DECEMBER

- Did you know? When your child does things for his- or herself, they feel proud and gain confidence. This will help them when starting school²!
- Preparing for back-to-school is a lot of fun!
- A great way to prepare your child gradually is to read a story and look at pictures with them on a regular basis².
- Take advantage of the Christmas holiday period to play board games as a family³!
- Encourage your child to ask questions about different subjects to give them a taste for learning².

DURING REGISTRATION

JANUARY FEBRUARY

- School registration is coming up soon! To prepare for this big step, your child needs to play, move, explore, and learn²!
- Now is the time to register your child for school! To get in the mood, visit the school with your child and show them around the building, the playground, and even play in the schoolyard if you're able³.
- Ask the school if there are any activities being offered at the time of registration³.

AFTER REGISTRATION BUT BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS

MARCH APRIL MAY JUNE

- Start talking about school with your child and talk positively about it! Not only will this increase their confidence, but they will also become more comfortable with the big upcoming event³.
- Make sure your child can see and hear well. Make any necessary appointments before the vacation period! Ask your CLSC about free services⁴.
- Participate in activities organized by the school (e.g. picnic, school visit, etc.)³.
- Make a habit of playing in the schoolyard. Playing is a great way to become familiar with the new environment³!

AROUND THE TIME SCHOOL STARTS

JULY AUGUST SEPTEMBER

- Now's the time to start shopping for school supplies! Why not take advantage of a less busy time to go to the store with your child? Let them choose their own materials which will make them want to use them and look forward to going to school².
- Get your child to talk about their feelings concerning school. Answer their questions and reassure them to help build confidence².
- Starting school is an important time for children, but also for you! By talking to your child, you'll learn more about their day-to-day life and the challenges they may face².

AFTER SCHOOL STARTS

OCTOBER NOVEMBER

- It's normal for your child to still need some time to adjust after starting school. Remember that your child has strengths as well as limitations. Maintain good communication with them, but also with the school to help find solutions if necessary⁵.



2. NAÎTRE ET GRANDIR (2022). *Learning to like school*, the *Naître et grandir* team, [online], updated December 2021. [<https://naitreetgrandir.com/fr/etape/5-8-ans/ecole/fiche.aspx?doc=faire-aimer-l-ecole-enfant-des-la-maternelle>]

3. Inspired by the real-world experience and knowledge of intersectoral stakeholders in Estrie.

4. GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC (2022). *Agir tôt* program, [online], updated May 12 2022. [<https://www.quebec.ca/famille-et-soutien-aux-personnes/enfance/developpement-des-enfants/programme-agir-tot-depister-tot-pour-mieux-repondre-aux-besoins-des-enfants>]

5. MAMAN POUR LA VIE (2022). *Savoir se détacher dès la maternelle*, [online], August 13 2018. [<https://www.mamanpourlavie.com/vie-scolaire/integration/205-savoir-se-detacher-d-s-la-maternelle.shtml>]

TOOL 3 EMOTIONS, STRESS, AND THE TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN FOR PARENTS: MESSAGES FOR PARENTS⁶

DURING REGISTRATION

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

The school registration process will bring with it all kinds of emotions. Are you unsure if you or your child are more excited? Which of you is more worried?

This important step is the first one towards a very different daily routine than the one you are used to. It is different because starting school will mean incorporating the school's schedule into your routine, and the addition of tasks into your already-full list, such as packing lunches, snacks, clothes and shoes, etc.⁷.

AFTER REGISTRATION BUT BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

Regardless of the memories or experiences you have from school, you do have the skills to support your child in his or her educational journey. Pay attention to the impact of your thoughts and emotions, especially the difficult ones, on your school experience. By embracing your emotions, you can influence how your child experiences school.

To accomplish this, you can help your child decode and name the emotion they are experiencing through their attitudes and behaviours. For example: "Could it be that you are sad you don't see Annie, your teacher, any more?" Putting words to their experience will have an impact on how they respond.

Together, you will find solutions to difficult situations and make the transition to school less severe⁸.

AROUND THE TIME SCHOOL STARTS

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

Starting school brings with it new kinds of stress: from slight nerves to moments that are more difficult to manage emotionally. There is no such thing as a stress-free start to school. In fact, stress is a necessary response that can actually be positive when trying to adapt. During the transition to kindergarten, all kinds of stress triggers are present.

- 1) Do I feel like I have no CONTROL over my situation? For example, I did not choose my child's teacher, classmates, or even school.
- 2) Do I feel like there are a lot of UNKNOWN elements to starting school? For example, I don't know what my child's day will be like, or if things will go smoothly with the teacher and other students.
- 3) Is this my first time experiencing a school transition and all the changes or NEW things that come with it? For example, the ways things work, the rules, places, staff, friends, schedules, meals, naps, activities, expectations, transportation, and the communications are all new to my daily life.

- 4) Do I have fears about my role and abilities as a parent? Is my EGO or PERSONALITY being THREATENED?

Example: I am afraid to ask questions, to be judged as a parent, feeling there could be a negative impact on my child⁹.

What's important is being able to identify the element or elements that trigger your stress if it becomes too overwhelming. This will help you find tools or put a plan in place that will allow you to manage your stress so that you don't pass it on to your child.

AFTER SCHOOL STARTS

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

In a few days you will receive an initial communication regarding your child's progress in school. You are not sure what to expect. You may even be afraid of being judged or hearing things about your child that you did not expect.

Like you, the vast majority of parents feel trepidation and curiosity when waiting for this first official communication from the school. When you read the teacher's observations, keep in mind that your child has a developmental rhythm that makes them unique and that influences their adaptation to school. Consider this testimony as complementary to what you have known about your child since birth.

The content of this initial communication will not compromise your child's future schooling and success. Beginning kindergarten is simply the starting point for your child¹⁰.

6. This tool was developed by the community of practice of agents for school transition in Estrie.
7. Inspired by the real-world experience and knowledge of agents for school transition in Estrie.
8. Inspired by the real-world experience and knowledge of agents for school transition and by the work of Dr. Tina Montreuil with the C.A.R.E. Research Group at McGill University, [online], [https://www.mcgill.ca/edu-ecp/tina-montreuil].
9. Inspired by the real-world experience and knowledge of agents for school transition and the "Principles of stress management", Centre for Studies on Human Stress (CSHS), [online], [www.humanstress.ca].
10. Alloprof parents team, Audet, A-M (2017)., [online], [https://naitreetgrandir.com/fr/etape/5-8-ans/ecole/fiche.aspx?doc=comment-bien-reagir-bulletinenfant].

