

### **A3: Coordination and Collaboration across Early Childhood Education and Elementary Schools: Multiple Perspectives, Multiple Challenges**

Wednesday, April 17, 2019

10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | Latrobe

#### **1. Descriptive Information**

##### **A3: Coordination and Collaboration across Early Childhood Education and Elementary Schools: Multiple Perspectives, Multiple Challenges**

This session will focus on understanding how early care and education (ECE) settings and elementary schools coordinate and collaborate as children transition from ECE to elementary school. The session will highlight views from both ECE and elementary school teachers and administrators. In particular, current practices and pressing challenges to coordination will be emphasized. Additionally, the importance of coordination and collaboration to create environments that are beneficial to children’s development will be discussed. The first presentation will focus on how Head Start programs partner with elementary schools. The second presentation will focus on how elementary schools connect to and collaborate with ECE settings to improve children’s transition into kindergarten. The third presentation introduces the idea of sustaining environments, their impacts on children, and how collaboration between ECE settings and K-12 systems can enhance this idea. Lastly, our discussant will examine these topics from the perspective of a Technical Assistance provider. Discussion will focus on how to support collaboration from a systems perspective.

##### **Facilitator**

**Kelly Purtell**, The Ohio State University

##### **Presenters**

**Kyle DeMeo Cook**, Education Development Center & Boston College | *Examining the Benefits of Head Start Programs' Efforts to Coordinate with Elementary Schools around the Transition to Kindergarten*

**Kelly Purtell**, The Ohio State University | *Understanding Policies and Practices that Support Successful Transitions to Kindergarten: Opportunities for Connection and Collaboration*

**Jade Jenkins**, University of California – Irvine | *Do High Quality Elementary School Environments Mitigate Preschool Fadeout? A Review of Evidence on the Sustaining Environments Hypothesis*

##### **Discussant**

**Karen Ruprecht**, ICF

##### **Scribe**

Ryan Laychak

#### **2. Documents Available on Website**

<https://custom.cvent.com/E3ECECFAE7AA4566BD7321CBEC4C249D/files/b50cfe8f48cc4674a59fadfdd7220054.pdf>

#### **3. Brief Summary of Presentations**

**Summary of Presentation #1:** *Do High Quality Elementary School Environments Mitigate Preschool Fadeout? A Review of Evidence on the Sustaining Environments Hypothesis*, Jade Jenkins

- The first presentation focused on examining sustaining environments with the question: How can policy help to sustain short term gains from pre-school? The main idea addressed was how to provide high quality classroom

or sustaining environments in elementary school and what ongoing post program supports are needed to maintain children's development. Evidence from two sustaining environment studies was presented.

- Study 1 addressed the questions: Does the quality of academic instruction lead to sustaining effects? Does professional development intervention sustain effects? To examine this, the study had two RCTs. The first was a Head start impact study which overall showed good end of impact effects. The study found that for end of kindergarten language and literacy composite results were good for everyone, but didn't mitigate fade out. They found no difference between the treatment and control group. The second RCT looked at the Building Blocks TRIAD Study (math) and found at the end of the kindergarten positive effects for everyone on math skills along with fade out for everyone, but less fade out in first grade for those in the treatment group.
- Study 2 took the ECLS-K 98 and explored all plausible specifications for estimating sustaining environment interactions. The results from the study found no strong evidence of sustaining environments.
- Overall the presenter provided the following implications: keep intervening in PK-3

**Summary of Presentation #2: *Examining the Benefits of Head Start Programs' Efforts to Coordinate with Elementary Schools around the Transition to Kindergarten*, Kyle DeMeo Cook**

- This presentation focused on transition across systems. How do preschool programs and elementary programs work together to support children as they transition across these two systems, and what are the benefits of doing this collaboration? The presenter proposed that transition to school matters [and](#) wanted to consider the discontinuities between these two systems.
- The presenter highlighted that currently there is fairly limited research on coordination and collaboration across systems. The objectives for her study were to: describe coordination practices that Head Start programs use to engage elementary schools, examine relationships between Head Start and elementary school, and to explore the benefits.
- The researcher highlighted two connected studies: one looking at national Head Start FACES data and one using local Head Start interviews.
- For the FACES Data, N=2,019 children. The most prevalent coordination practices included participating in IEPs, providing Head Start records, and helping schools identify kindergarten students. This led to the question, is more better? Or are there specific coordination practices that are better? Directors surveyed reported they do six coordination practices on an average.
- For the question, Is Head Start engagement coordination associated with increased academic and social skills in kindergarten? The research found that meeting with kindergarten teachers was related to higher language scores in kindergarten. More Head Start coordination practices was related to higher math and language skills for children who attend kindergarten with lower reports of general transition practices. Finally, children in Head Start programs with an education coordinator responsible for the transition to kindergarten had higher social skills in kindergarten.
- For the local interview findings, the presenter wanted to go beyond the national survey data. The interviews showed extensive amount of coordination practices done by Head Start programs to engage elementary schools. A lot of information was being shared when getting people in the same room together to coordinate. Extensive conversations in the interviews about the registration process, and the variations of supporting the registration process and the importance of it. For the question about what are the benefits of coordination, the hypothesis was that children benefit from coordination across systems but the study participants found it challenging to explain exactly how children benefit from these practices. Findings suggested that families and teachers do benefit from coordination.

- The overall takeaway: Head Start is doing a lot of coordination activities. Meeting in person may indicate more intensive coordination and strong relationships. More quantitative and qualitative research is needed, and there is a need to research what is happening outside Head Start programs.
- **Summary of Presentation #3:** *Understanding Policies and Practices that Support Successful Transitions to Kindergarten: Opportunities for Connection and Collaboration*, Kelly Purtell
- Project Team: Early Learning Ohio
- Research Background: Access to pre-school/ECE has increased in recent years, and growing evidence of “fadeout” in early elementary school.
- The goal for the research was to document classroom ecology experienced by children in preschool and early elementary school. The presenter used three studies, but focused on a qualitative policy study.
- The overall challenges of kindergarten transition include: new environment, new expectations, new systems and systems level coordination needed to implement integrated systems. In her research the presenter asked the following question: how much do kindergarten teachers and school administrators know about preschool student experiences. The Methodology included interviews across state of Ohio with district personnel and stakeholders.
- The following themes emerged from her research: surprised by number of participants who didn’t know the numbers of preschool attendees in their schools, no systematic collection of data. There were also mixed feelings about what is preschool and what it means to different people. All felt that preschool really mattered across the transition.
- What efforts do different sectors make to ease the transition to kindergarten for children and families? For in community preschool programs – varied response to provide information to elementary schools. For in-district preschools – IEP transitions are well-supported, and visits to kindergarten are provided.
- The presenter highlighted the following barriers: Lack of connection to different preschool sectors and elementary schools for both in district preschool and community preschools. There were also the following policy related challenges: QRIS requirements, late enrollment and the option of school choice are hard for administrators to account for.
- Conclusion: Limited connections between ECE providers and school districts. To improve children school success, barriers to communication and collaboration need to be removed.
- **Summary of Presentation #4:** discussant will examine these topics from the perspective of a Technical Assistance provider, Karen Ruprecht
- Transition to Kindergarten: Technical Assistance (TA) Perspectives.
- The discussant raised the following questions: what transition practices are the most important to families and children? What are the best mechanisms for families to receive information about Kindergarten transition? How can child care build relationships with elementary schools? How can teacher fears be alleviated about transitioning to elementary school?
- The discussant provided the following TA considerations for a sustaining environments approach: curriculum, professional development opportunities, behavioral expectations, and family engagement. For a theory of change approach, the discussant pointed out that child care providers need to understand t why” it’s important for child benefits.

- The discussant provided the following research considerations to strengthen TA: Include child care provider perspectives, examine transition practices in different contexts, involve families, identify partnerships that work and don't work and why, and share findings with provider community.
- The discussant provided the following policy and systems perspective questions to strengthen TA: How can we learn from HS, ESSA and PDG B-5 grantees regarding implementation of best practices in kindergarten transitions? What states or communities are doing well and where are the challenges? How can TA providers use the research and help state leaders build transitions into their theory of change?

**4. Brief Summary of Discussion:** Discussion will focus on how to support collaboration from a systems perspective. Attendees brought up that for transitions to kindergarten, there seemed like there are lots of opportunities for policy support to regulate these practices and transitions. One area participants wanted to look into more was transition practices and what does that mean concretely. Panelists proposed a question that came up in a lot in interviews: What do you do for all children and what do you do for specific children, and what are the areas in between, beyond just IEP children. Research needs to look at what is good for everyone and who are the groups that need a little bit more and what are those? Another question that was raised was about regulations that can help overcome the trust barriers between parents and systems. A final observation emerged around kindergarten transition versus P-3 Alignment. There was discussion about promising experiences around vertical professional communities across grade levels, which are a great opportunity to think more about communities of practice across preschool and kindergarten up and through third grade.

#### **5. Summary of Key Issues Raised**

- The overall takeaway: Head Start is doing a lot of coordination activities. Meeting in-person may indicate more intensive coordination and strong relationships. More quantitative and qualitative research is needed, and there is a need to research what is happening outside Head Start programs.
- Limited connections between ECE providers and school districts. To improve children school success, barriers to communication and collaboration need to be removed.
- Interventions in preschool through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade need to continue.