

Transitions

Children adjust to many changes. These changes can create both opportunities and challenges. Different kids require different levels of supports in various areas of their school lives.

Research indicates that transitions with appropriate supports contribute to reduced rates of grade retention, improved social adjustment and overall achievement. Transitions can bring up feelings for kids and families, so it is good to discuss transitions with children of all ages, identifying hopes, fears, and ideas about how to best manage the changes associated with each pending transition. For parents it is often helpful to speak with other parents who have gone through or are going through similar transitions with their own kids. This helps both kids and parents to feel empowered when faced with change and to work together to create positive transition experiences for the whole family.

Successful transitions require that schools, families and students think about transitions, plan for them and work together to create smooth and supported transitions for all students. A school that has a well developed transition program for all students, including those with disabilities will provide transitional supports at the levels of:

- Prevention, general and broad reaching supports to all students in easing a transition (good morning welcomes, student/parent nights at new middle school)
- Early-Onset, more specific and personalized assistance (outreach from school special interest clubs, buddies or ambassadors, parent-to-parent outreach, opportunities for choice making, mentoring and job shadowing.)
- System of Care, continued personal contact with a smaller group requiring more intensive transitional supports (parenting classes for families, school based counselors focused supports, small groups for student supports, transition teachers to facilitate child centered planning in high school for post secondary goals.)

The goal is for parents and schools to work together to support children in negotiating transitions in a positive and empowered way and for the school to support the parent's involvement in these efforts. The Comprehensive Student Support System (CSSS), which is being implemented state wide to support students and families, pays close attention to all transitions through training and supports to school professionals.

The general point of contact for transition questions and concerns is the Student Services Coordinator at each school, or the Transition teacher for Special Education and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) students at the high school level.