



## AGENDA

### Wyoming Kindergarten Transition Summit

January 6 - 7, 2022 Virtual

**January 6, 2022:**

**1:00 – 1:30 p.m.**

**Welcome and Introduction**

*Margee Robertson, Division Director for Special Education Programs,  
Wyoming Department of Education and*

*Deana Smith, Wyoming Department of Education*

**1:30 – 3:00 p.m.**

**Keynote: Enhance Joy, Resilience and Healing for Early  
Childhood Professionals through Responsive Self-Care and  
Community Care Practices**

*Julie Kurtz, Founder of the Center for Optimal Brain Integration,  
specializing in trauma healing and resiliency building for all ages.*

*Julie Nicholson, Ph.D., Professor at Mills College and Senior Fellow for  
Childhood Education International, U.S.A.*

*Gain knowledge of the foundations of trauma responsive practice and  
the importance of building self-care and organizational care practices to  
prevent burnout, strengthen resilience, recharge energy and bring joy  
into the workplace for children, families and early childhood  
professionals.*

**3:15 – 4:45 p.m.**

**Build Your Own Culturally Responsive Practice to Reduce Stress and  
Recharge Your Energy**

*Julie Kurtz and Julie Nicholson, Ph.D.*

*Review a wide range of self-care activities and practices. Identify  
meaningful self-care for your own self-care toolbox as well as  
organizational care practices that reduce stress and support regulation  
in classrooms, schools and agencies.*

**4:45 – 5:00 p.m.**

**Q & A and Next Steps**



## AGENDA

### Wyoming Kindergarten Transition Summit

January 6 - 7, 2022 Virtual

#### January 7, 2022:

9:00 – 9:05 a.m.

**Welcome/Announcements**

*Deana Smith, Wyoming Department of Education*

9:05 – 10:15 a.m.

**Introduction to Wyoming's New Early Learning Standards**

*Nikki Baldwin, Ph.D.*

*Learn of Wyoming's New Early Learning Standards for Early Childhood and how to put them to use in your practice.*

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

**A Roadmap for Wyoming Kindergarten Transition**

*Nikki Baldwin, Ph.D., University of Wyoming, Early Childhood Outreach*

*Rebecca Steinhoff, Executive Director of Wyoming Kids First*

*Solidify the vision for Wyoming's journey to ensure every child receives a successful transition into Kindergarten by taking a look at where we are currently and where we plan to be as a state in the future.*

12:30 – 12:45 p.m.

**Q & A**

12:45 – 1:00 p.m.

**Closing & Next Steps**

*Margee Robertson and Deana Smith*



# Introduction to Wyoming's Early Learning Standards

Birth Through Kindergarten



Wyoming Early Childhood  
Outreach Network





**WYOMING'S**  
COHERENT PATH TO QUALITY  
Creating a Shared Vision to Ensure High-Quality Learning for Wyoming's Children

## 2020 Federal Preschool Development Grant – Birth Through Five (Initial Grant)

- Statewide needs assessment
- Statewide strategic plan
- Increase parental knowledge and choice
- Share best practices among ECE providers
- **Support improvements to program quality**

# A shift in focus

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- QRIS results
  - Complex systems have not enacted changes in quality.
- The evidence
  - Teachers need help to connect resources to practice.
  - Change occurs with long-term strength-based support and collaboration.
  - Teacher voices and experiences must be centered to have an impact.





## COHERENT PATH TO QUALITY



### Chapter One: Relationships & Interactions .....4

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| Simple Rule #3: Actionable.....  | 46 |
| Questions for Reflection.....    | 50 |

# Wyoming Early Childhood Statewide Strategic Plan 2021 - 2023

- Goal 3a. **Create a shared understanding of transitions** across ECE and B-5 settings and sectors that recognizes that young children and families experience many transitions and should have access to support to help them successfully navigate those transitions.
- Goal 3c. **Ensure that all children and families are supported through transitions.**
- Goal 4a. **Quality ECE programming is continuous and consistent across the state** and is aligned to a shared vision and **articulated strategies for quality that are accessible** by all audiences.
- Goal 5b. **Identify and implement supports and tools that every early childhood educator and caregiver needs to support families and nurture and encourage children for lifelong success.**

Updated  
December  
2020





# WYOMING'S

## EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS

**BIRTH THROUGH KINDERGARTEN:**

A practice based tool for early childhood educators

## Vision

All Wyoming early childhood educators know the early learning standards, understand their importance, and use them daily to create high-quality educational experiences for Wyoming's children.

## Mission

Create a Wyoming Early Learning Standards Document that communicates the value of early childhood standards, embraces a strong image of teachers, and empowers educators to incorporate standards in their practice.



# Evaluation Team

## Team Members

Wyoming early childhood educators with curriculum expertise

## Purpose

Evaluate the existing Early Learning Standards in Wyoming (Early Learning Guidelines and Foundations) as measured against current national standards (NAEYC, Common Core Kindergarten Standards, and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework), new and innovative standard documents, and comparator states. Update and combine Infant-Toddler, Preschool, and Kindergarten Standards into a single document.

Facilitate a process for the development team to interact with the updated standards, contribute ideas for implementation, and provide feedback to inform the final practice-based document.

# Development Team

## Team Members

Practitioners working in a wide range of early learning settings in Wyoming

## Purpose

Participate in the development of a practice-based document that will support educators in their use of the updated early learning standards. Team members will interact with standards to design instruction, assess learning, and provide feedback on implementation. Develop a tool that is accessible for educators with varying levels of expertise, and encourages consistent, intentional practice.

# Review Team

## Team Members

Wyoming early childhood leaders an key stakeholders

## Purpose

Evaluate the standards update draft to ensure alignment with the Statewide Strategic Plan and other Preschool Development Renewal Grant activities, including Wyoming's Coherent Path to Quality.

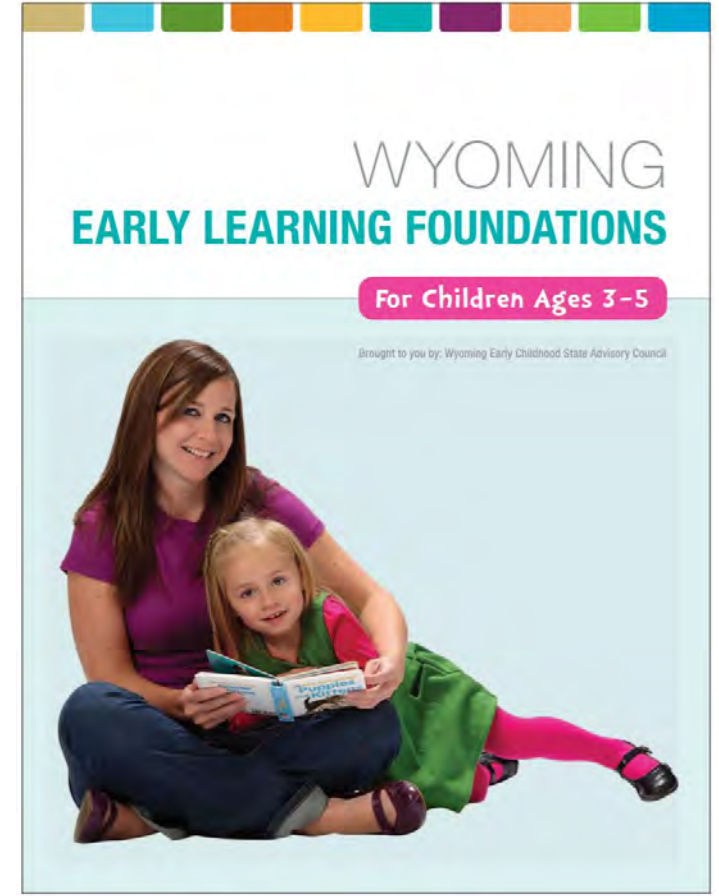
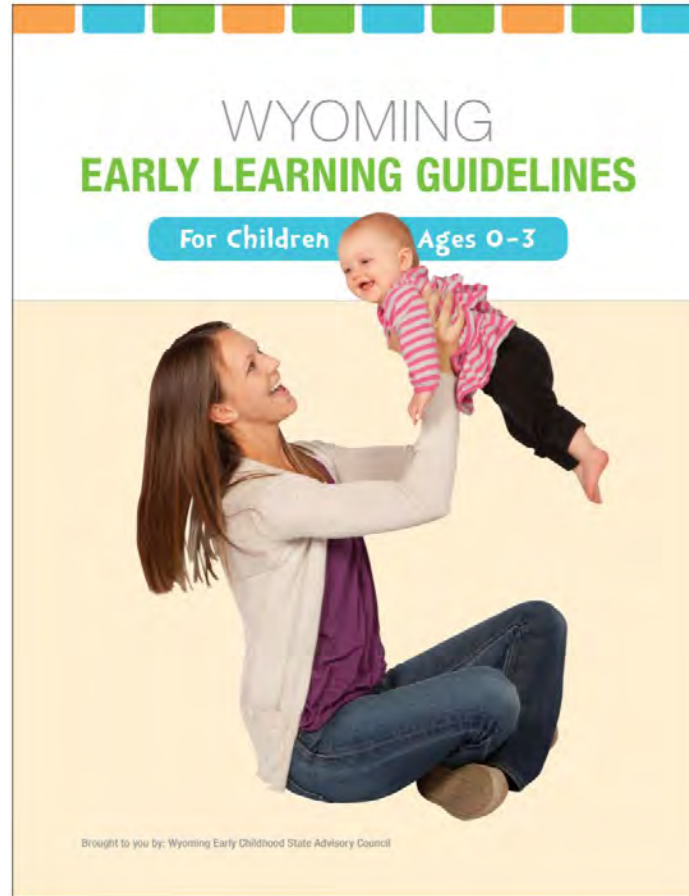
Create a plan for dissemination of the updated standards and a roadmap for the development of additional resources for educators and families.

|                   |                                   |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| May-July          | Evaluation Team meetings          |
| August – December | Development Team meetings         |
| January           | Review Team meeting               |
| January-February  | Publish and disseminate standards |

# Standards Update

*Conducted by  
Evaluation Team*

1. Review of the ELG's and ELF's
2. Comparison against updated national standards
  - Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework
  - Common Core State Standards
3. Consideration of new and innovative state standards examples
  - New York
  - Oregon
  - California
4. Overview of comparator state standards
  - Montana
  - Colorado
5. Survey of ages included in state standards from across the country
6. Draft of updated standards for Development Team to approve







## Key Evaluation Team decisions

- Combine birth-kindergarten into a single document to support transitions.
- Define standards through benchmarks (no indicators).
- Create a practice-focused document that surrounds the standards.



# WYOMING'S EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS

## BIRTH THROUGH KINDERGARTEN

### RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERACTIONS

Strong positive relationships and interactions provide a critical foundation for lifelong development and learning. These relationships help children develop a sense of identity and belonging, manage their emotions, recognize and appreciate diversity, and build skills for interacting effectively with others.

#### EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

##### CHILDREN DEVELOP A SENSE OF IDENTITY AND BELONGING BY:

- 1a. Developing an awareness and appreciation of self as a unique, competent, and capable individual.
- 1b. Feeling a sense of pride and belonging to family, community, and other groups.
- 1c. Expressing confidence in a range of abilities and in the capacity to accomplish tasks and take on new challenges.

##### CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE HEALTHY EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION AND FUNCTIONING BY:

- 2a. Expressing, recognizing, and labeling their body's sensations and emotions.
- 2b. Adapting to diverse situations and new environments with appropriate emotions and behaviors.

### COMMUNICATION

Communication is fundamental to the human experience. Language and literacy development is essential for children's learning across all domains. Dual Language Learners and those who use alternative forms of communication develop their language in the same way as all children. The emerging ability of children to communicate successfully with others in multiple ways allows them to build relationships, share meaning, express needs, and convey ideas.

#### COMMUNICATION

##### CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE SKILLS BY:

- 1a. Understanding, responding to, and learning from conversations with others.
- 1b. Responding appropriately to simple statements, directions, questions, and stories.
- 1c. Comprehending increasingly complex and varied vocabulary.

##### CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE SKILLS BY:

- 2a. Using increasingly complex and varied vocalizations and vocabulary to express ideas and needs.
- 2b. Communicating in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.
- 2c. Understanding, following, and using appropriate social

### COGNITION

Supporting children's cognition—how they think and what they know—is vital to the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. When children approach learning with curiosity, initiative, imagination, and flexibility, they become lifelong learners. Mathematics and scientific reasoning skills help children connect ideas, develop logical and abstract thinking, question, and analyze to understand and organize the world around them.

#### APPROACHES TO LEARNING

##### CHILDREN FOSTER INITIATIVE AND CURIOSITY BY:

- 1a. Demonstrating eagerness to explore, learn about, and discuss a range of topics, ideas, and tasks.
- 1b. Demonstrating flexibility, imagination, and inventiveness in approaching tasks and activities.
- 1c. Planning, initiating, and completing learning activities with peers.

##### CHILDREN PRACTICE COGNITIVE SELF-REGULATION AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS BY:

- 2a. Demonstrating an increasing ability to control impulses.
- 2b. Maintaining focus, sustaining attention, and persisting in tasks with age-appropriate support.
- 2c. Using memories as a foundation for more complex actions and thoughts.
- 2d. Demonstrating flexibility in thinking and behavior.

### PHYSICAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Promoting children's physical health and development enables them to explore and function in their environment and supports development in all other domains. Early health habits lay the foundation for lifelong healthy living.

#### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

##### CHILDREN DEVELOP GROSS MOTOR SKILLS BY:

- 1a. Demonstrating control, strength, and coordination of large muscles.
- 1b. Using perceptual information to guide movement and interactions with objects and other people.

##### CHILDREN DEVELOP FINE MOTOR SKILLS BY:

- 2a. Demonstrating increasing control, strength, and coordination of small muscles.
- 2b. Exhibiting complex fine motor coordination when using tools to complete tasks.

#### DAILY LIVING SKILLS



# Standards Document Design

*Conducted by  
Development Team*

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<https://sites.google.com/view/standards-update-2021/meetings/development-team-meetings?authuser=0>







## Key Elements

- Stories from Wyoming
- Equity connection (DAP, UDL, TIP)
- Tool to help teachers identify proficiency
- Teacher tips
- Links to Wyoming's Coherent Path to Quality
- QR Codes with links to resources



## DAILY JOURNALS

Preschool teacher Lynelle uses daily journals to support her children's emerging writing skills. Daily journals are available for children to access any time during their preschool day. Lynelle also plans more intentional opportunities for the children to write in their journals by providing prompts and a specific journal writing time at least twice a week. Children can choose to share their work with the rest of the class each day by sitting in the "Author's Chair" during meeting time. At the beginning of the year, children most often draw pictures, with adults writing words. As the year progresses, children begin writing their own letters and word approximations, often accompanied by adult writing. Children decide if they want adult assistance with writing in their journal or not. By the end of the year, many children are independently writing letters and words to describe their drawings. Journals go home when they are full, which for some happens several times a year. Lynelle uses the daily journal as an artifact to document and assess children's learning and skills, and to share their progress with families. On this day, Dylan was drawing a pumpkin he saw as he was trick-or-treating.



# Stories from Wyoming

- For each subdomain
- Birth through kindergarten
- Across settings
  - Head Start
  - Home visiting
  - IFSP services
  - Religious based preschool
  - Family-home childcare
  - Center-based childcare
  - Parent and child at home
  - In the community



## STRAWS AND CONTAINERS

Delaney teaches in an Early Head Start center-based classroom with a mixed-age group of infants and toddlers. To meet the learning needs of all of the children, Delaney frequently offers open-ended materials for their play. Observing the children's interest in containers, Delaney provided a variety of straws and containers with different-size openings to encourage exploration. 27-month-old Jason was very interested in the straws and containers. As he explored, Delaney described what she saw him doing. "You opened the lid of the container. You dropped one straw in. Are you going to choose another straw the same color?"







### VOLCANO EXPERIMENT

Calvin, Lydia and Sadie, ages 4, 3 and 2, attend Janae's Family Home Child Care Program. Calvin had been asking to make a volcano for several days. Janae, responding to his interest, originally planned to make a large playdough volcano for the children to observe, using baking soda and vinegar. As she reflected on what she knew about Lydia and Sadie, Janae decided to rethink her plan so the younger children could participate more actively. Instead of starting with a large volcano, she designed a homemade science station with cardboard, test tubes and pipettes which would allow all three children to explore together. Each child had their own test tube, and access to baking soda and vinegar. As they explored, 2-year-old Sadie enjoyed scooping and pouring the baking soda on her own, causing a big bubbling over reaction when vinegar was added. She also loved smelling and looking closely at the bubbles. Lydia was quieter and more focused as she observed the effect of the vinegar on the baking soda. Calvin quickly suggested adding color, and Lydia was thrilled with his idea. The two older children talked about the results of the color mixing while Sadie continued to be most interested in what was happening in her own test tube. Using the standards to reflect afterward, Janae noticed that while the experiment addressed scientific reasoning skills, the children demonstrated strengths in many other subdomains, including communication, fine motor skills and approaches to learning.



## DAILY JOURNALS

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# Equity Connection



## EQUITY CONNECTION: UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

Journal writing in Lynelle's classroom is intentionally designed to support children with different experiences, cultures, abilities and languages. Children choose how to use their journal and decide if they want an adult to help with writing words or not. They choose what they will draw or write, and they determine if they want to share their journal entry with the class. They are given multiple ways to engage and express their ideas (UDL Principle 1 - Provide multiple means of engagement, Principle 3 - Provide multiple means of action and expression).



# Equity Connection



## EQUITY CONNECTION: TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

Delaney's use of open-ended materials allowed the children to make a connection between their knowledge and skills and the task they were presented with. This built the children's confidence and supported their meaning-making. As Delaney remained available to Jason and described what she saw him doing, he experienced feelings of pride and self-mastery and was encouraged to take on new challenges. These Trauma Informed Practices not only supported Jason's growing understanding of himself, they deepened his experience in play.







### **EQUITY CONNECTION: DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE**

Janae intentionally designed an open-ended volcano activity that successfully involved children at multiple levels of development (DAP Principle 4 - Consider individual differences, Principle 5 - Children are active learners, Principle 6 - Foster a sense of belonging, purpose, and agency). During their exploration, she provided responsive individual support based upon her observations of each child (DAP Core Consideration 2 - Individuality, Guideline 3 - Observing, documenting, and assessing children's development and learning)





# Examples of proficiency

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>EMERGENCE</b>      | Precursor skills or skills essential for acquisition                                       |
| <b>ACQUISITION</b>    | Ability to demonstrate a skill or knowledge  |
| <b>GENERALIZATION</b> | Demonstrating a skill or knowledge across time, place, people, and materials               |
| <b>FLUENCY</b>        | Demonstrating a skill or knowledge smoothly and efficiently or with increasing complexity. |

## Example of Proficiency (for Mathematics)

### ***Standard 2c. Identifying currency and recognizing that it holds value.***

**Emergence** - Identifies a favorite toy or object and recognizes favorites of peers.

**Acquisition** - Determines an item or toy's value by offering it in exchange for something else, or pretends to pay for items in play.

**Generalization** - Identifies different types of currency (i.e., coins, bills or credit cards) as a tool to acquire desired objects or to access activities.

**Fluency** - Uses currency correctly during play, or to purchase actual items.

# SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

## CHILDREN BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS BY:

- 1a. Showing trust, developing emotional bonds, and interacting comfortably with adults.
- 1b. Communicating with familiar adults and accepting or requesting guidance.

## CHILDREN BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEERS BY:

- 2a. Engaging in and maintaining positive interactions and relationships with other children.
- 2b. Engaging in age-appropriate social play (e.g., parallel, associative, cooperative).
- 2c. Using problem-solving skills to resolve conflicts with other children

## CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR BY:

- 3a. Recognizing and labeling others' emotions.
- 3b. Expressing care and concern toward others.
- 3c. Recognizing how actions affect others.
- 3d. Asserting themselves and communicating preferences in age-appropriate ways.
- 3e. Participating collaboratively with a group.

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| EMERGENCE      | Precursor skills or skills essential for acquisition                                       |
| ACQUISITION    | Ability to demonstrate a skill or knowledge  |
| GENERALIZATION | Demonstrating a skill or knowledge across time, place, people, and materials               |
| FLUENCY        | Demonstrating a skill or knowledge smoothly and efficiently or with increasing complexity. |

### Examples of Proficiency (for Social Development)

#### ***Standard 2c. Using problem-solving skills to resolve conflicts with other children.***

**Emergence** - Responds physically to express a need or want with another child.

**Acquisition** - Follows an adult's cues to negotiate with a peer.

**Generalization** - Independently offers a solution to resolve a conflict with a peer.

**Fluency** - Offers and follows increasingly complex plans to solve a problem, or anticipates a problem and responds before it escalates.



# Teacher Tips



## TEACHER TIP: SHARING STANDARDS WITH FAMILIES

Standards are a great resource for families as well as early childhood educators. There are many different ways to share standards with families. You can start by explaining that early childhood standards are a tool to help understand children's development, guide your observations and plan for their learning. They are not a way to measure readiness for kindergarten or to disqualify children from opportunities. As partners, families and educators can use standards to identify children's strengths, discuss learning goals, and plan to support next steps in development. You can help families identify and leverage their own strengths as the child's first and most important teacher as you share standards with them.

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## TRY IT!

Using the standards, identify something to celebrate for each child in your care. Take a photo or save an artifact that demonstrates the child's success, link it to a standard, and include your reflection to tell the whole story. Share this accomplishment with families in a text, email or in a printed document. Notice how they respond as you celebrate their child together!

---

# Teacher Tips



## TEACHER TIP: ASKING GREAT QUESTIONS

As adults engage in meaningful conversations with children, they strengthen relationships, support language development and deepen children's understanding. Thoughtful questions are an excellent tool that teachers can use to create great conversations. Try using questions that require more than just remembering or identifying objects (i.e., "What shape is this?"). Instead, ask questions that encourage children to discuss, explain, compare, contrast, hypothesize and evaluate. Open-ended questions work best. Some examples include: "How did you make this?", "What did you notice about...?", "What do you think will happen if...?", "How does this work?", "What can we try next?" or "What did you like best about...?".



## TRY IT!

Make a list of questions that invite deeper thinking that you can place strategically in your classroom. Try to include different types of questions that help children remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate and create. You may want to make several lists with questions tailored to a specific area (i.e., questions for the block area, dramatic play or mealtimes). Try using the questions with children and share what you are learning.





# Teacher Tip



## TEACHER TIP: UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOR

Young children tell us how they feel, what they know and the things they need through their behavior. When we see children's behavior as a form of communication, we can observe with curiosity and look for the message behind the behavior. Behaviors that adults find challenging are children's response to the environments we create for them. As we observe children's behaviors with respect and care, we are given new insights into ways we can improve the environment and our teaching so that all children can succeed. When a child is experiencing a challenge, rather than trying to make the behavior stop as quickly as possible, we can see it as an opportunity to teach and strengthen our relationship. Don't forget that just like adults, children are allowed to have a bad day! A thoughtful response from a caring adult is often all a child needs.



## TRY IT!

Think of a recent moment with a child who was experiencing a challenge in the classroom. How did you respond? What was the message behind the child's behavior? Were you able to meet the child's needs? How can you leverage the child's strengths and interests to support positive behaviors in the future? Is there something you can change in your environment, routines or teaching that can help the child succeed? Document positive changes you notice in the child's behavior that can help you plan for tomorrow or next week? How did this strategy for recording your observations work for you? Try out other ideas for recording observations until you find one that works best for you.





# Ideas to get to know the standards

- **Connect stories to standards:** Read each of the stories in the document and identify the standards within a single subdomain that were demonstrated by the child or children in the story. As an additional challenge, identify multiple standards demonstrated across subdomains.
- **Document Learning:** Take three photos or videos of children learning in your classroom. Make time to review each photo and identify all the standards you see children demonstrating across domains. As an additional challenge, identify standards that are consistently demonstrated across all three experiences.
- **Age-Group Collaboration:** Find a colleague that teaches children of the same age. Select a subdomain you find challenging. Together identify how children of your age group would demonstrate proficiency on each standard under that subdomain. Use the Measures of Proficiency as a guide if you need help. Select another subdomain and complete the task again.
- **Lesson Plan Review:** Look at your lesson plans from a recent week or month. Identify the standards that were addressed in your plans. Next time you plan a lesson, link your ideas to a standard.
- **Sharing With Families:** Make a plan to share information about standards with families (e.g. highlight one standard at a time in a newsletter or on a parent information board) . Ask families if this information is helpful. Share what you did and what you learned from families with a colleague or at a team meeting.
- **Teaching Partners:** With a colleague who teaches the same children, select three children you would like to assess under a single subdomain. For each standard, share evidence of how each child is demonstrating proficiency. Select another subdomain and complete the task again.





## THE TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

Transitions are a part of children's lives every day. However, some transitions take on greater significance because they impact children and families in profound ways. Starting kindergarten is one of those transitions. Research shows a wide gap between the environment and expectations in kindergarten and children's previous experiences, which places a significant burden on young children and families. Local communities, child-care programs, preschools and school districts can and should help young children carry the burden of change that has historically been placed upon them. An important implication is that kindergarten teachers need the flexibility to make changes to the environment and instructional strategies to better meet kindergartners' learning needs. When school administrators understand the science of child development, and the basic principles of early learning they can better support kindergarten teachers. Embracing early learning principles is not a rejection of academics. Young children achieve important academic outcomes when teachers employ early learning principles and developmentally appropriate practices.

Wyoming's Early Learning Standards have been designed to support the transition to kindergarten by mapping development across the transition through the kindergarten year. The Common Core State Standards\* for Kindergarten are represented across all domains. This means that the document is not an

# The Transition to Kindergarten





**“ It was an honor to be a part of the standards development from the beginning of the process to the very end. I believe the path is being paved for early childhood education to gain the respect and recognition it deserves, and that these standards are one piece to elevating the profession.**

- Jaclyn Klinginsmith, Wyoming Kids First, Laramie

**“ This document was created by a group of extremely passionate educators from around the state of Wyoming. We collaborated on ideas, worked together and created something that gives teachers across the state the reins.**

- Addison Rolf, The Neighborhood School, Cheyenne

**“ These standards unify us, all of us who have an impact on young children, by creating a vision of what each child is capable of and how we can help them get there.**

- Janae Asay, Forward Footsteps Childcare, Green River

**“ I think this new tool will help elevate early childhood education across our state; it provides educators/caretakers and parents with the language to see that the things we do in everyday life can be profound learning opportunities for young children.**

- Kara Cossel, Wyoming Early Childhood Professional Learning Collaborative, Sheridan

**“ The new Early Learning Standards provide a roadmap for quality instruction that can link the many facets of instruction for children birth through kindergarten and beyond. Using this roadmap will help to build a strong foundation for children to succeed.**

- Lisa Garner, Kindergarten Teacher, Afton







## What's next?

- Final draft/design
- Review Team meeting
- Dissemination plan
- Release
- Supporting resources

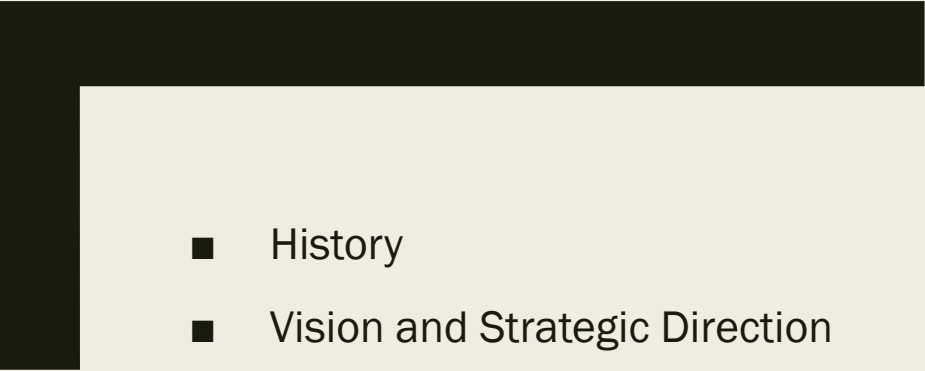



# KINDERGARTEN TRANSITIONS

Becca Steinhoff

January 7, 2022



- 
- History
  - Vision and Strategic Direction
  - Wyoming Transitions Framework
  - Evidence Base (Nikki Baldwin)
  - Community Implementation and Impact
    - *Teton County School District #1*
    - *Lincoln County School District #2*
  - Next Steps
- 

# Agenda



# Leadership, Funding and Partnership

- Wyoming Preschool Development Grant
  - *United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families grant number 90TP0082-01-00*
- John P. Ellbogen Foundation
- UW College of Education Wyoming Early Childhood Outreach Network (WYECON)
- Wyoming Community Foundation
  
- Wyoming Department of Education
- Wyoming Head Start Collaboration Office
- Wyoming Department of Family Services





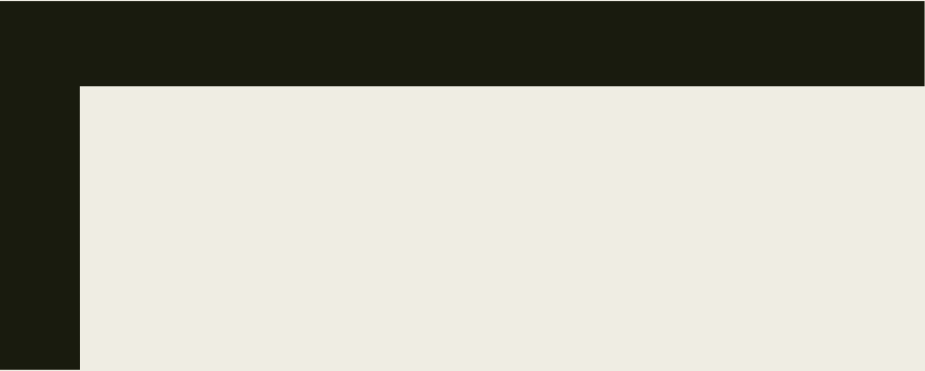

# HISTORY

# Vision and Strategic Direction

Children and families successfully navigate transitions and build their resilience and ability to navigate future transitions. Families, educators and school leaders collaborate to thoughtfully connect children's and families' relationships and experiences across the early childhood years. Communities and the state cooperate to ensure effective and supportive practices and policies recognize transitions as an ongoing process, and place a special focus on the transition into the first year of elementary school.

- Create a shared understanding of transitions across and within children's early childhood years that recognizes that young children and families experience many transitions and should have access to support to help them successfully navigate those transitions.
- Identify strengths and gaps in transition supports and programs across the state, replicate and scale successful programs, and foster opportunities to co-construct new programming.
- Ensure that all children and families are supported through transitions.



- 
- Strengthen coordination and partnerships
  - Align vision, expectations and practices
  - Guide assessment, data and resources
- 

# Wyoming Transitions Framework



# Wyoming Family Engagement Continuum within Transitions

*Continuum Level:* Involvement → Engagement → Leadership

Family Role                      Recipient                      →                      Consultant Partner                      →                      Change Agent  
Community Role    Cultivate Recipients                      →                      Promote Partners                      →                      Sustain Change Agents

Adapted from: North Carolina Early Childhood Family Engagement & Leadership Framework [Summary](#).





# EVIDENCE BASE

# TCSD#1 Transition Work

2021 - Present



# Reimagined Kinder Round - Up

— — —

- Moved to closer to the start of school (from May - Aug)
- Family friendly event that includes school tour
- Student screener includes more hands-on activities such as bracelet making (counting/patterning) and self portrait (fine motor). Self portraits are hung up in classrooms for the 1st day of school to build community, and bracelets are taken home same day.
- Playground observation (free play) time for social skills
- Teachers use screener data to inform class lists

# Kinder - Preschool Pen Pal Program

— — —  
-8 Kinder classrooms and 8 preschool classrooms partnered as pen pals

-Each classroom received a goody basket filled with age appropriate writing materials (markers, gel pens, stickers, stamps, construction paper, envelopes, scissors etc)

-Supports authentic writing and connects preschool to kinder further developing relationships

-Hopeful for springtime outdoor visits to K classrooms!





# Kinder Readiness Home Learning Kits (Pilot)

— — —

-TCSD1 partnered with Teton Literacy Center to pilot Home Learning Kits for the preschool families

-We delivered 27 kits with a focus on fine motor development and early alphabet introduction (playdough, journal, crayons, activity book, magnetic letters, ABC book)

-Included family-friendly ideas and activities to try at home with the materials

-TLC preschool teachers went through the kits at a parent-night and went over the activities

-In a few weeks we will gather feedback from families via a parent survey & try on a mathematics-themed home learning kit in the Spring



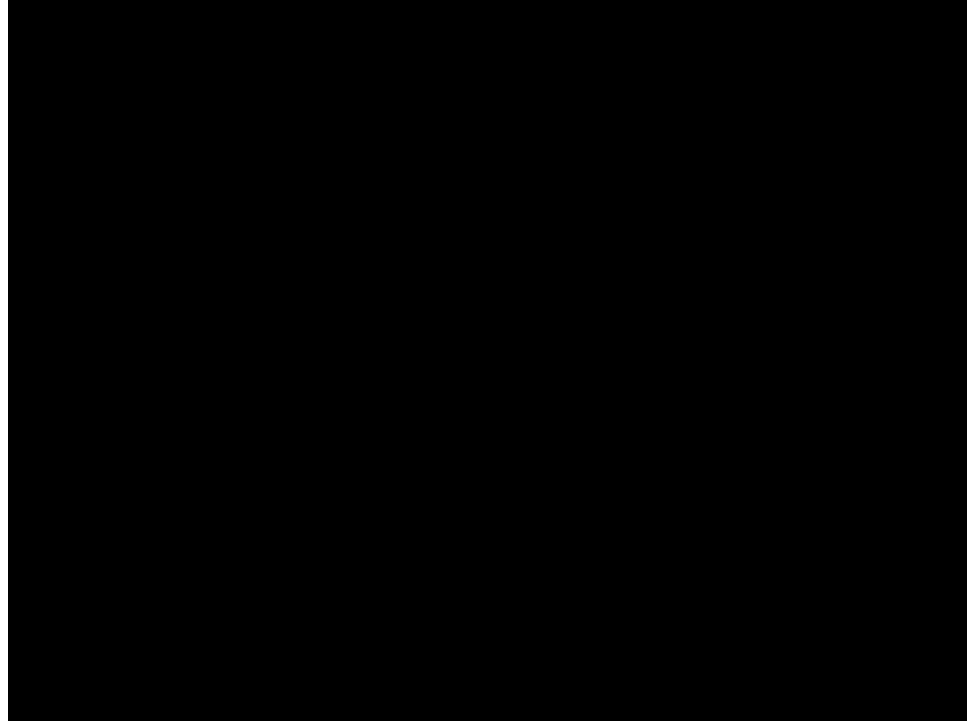
# Incorporating Play-Based Learning into K Curricula: A Yearlong Endeavor

— — —

-Kinder teachers and preschool providers came together to learn about incorporating play into kinder thematic units in PD lead by Dr. Nikki Baldwin.

-Over 2 sessions, they've covered learning through play, connecting to standards & curriculum, and documenting learning.

-Here's a sneak peek into the "pet vet" dramatic play center connected to the Needs of Plants/Animals Unit.





Ready to Learn!

# Kindergarten Exemption Meetings

-Cut off date for kindergarten changed from Sept 15 to August 1st for the 2021-2022 school year.

-Last spring, we began exemption meetings for families whose child's birth date falls between August 1st and Sept 15th, and whose parents were interested in enrolling in Kindergarten.

-These meetings included the family, K teacher, admin, and preschool teachers and focused on Kindergarten Readiness and expectations. The goal is to build relationships early and support families in making the best and most informed decision regarding their child and kindergarten enrollment.



# Looking Ahead....

---

- Literacy Center Math Home Kits
- Summer Kinder Transition Fair
- Language Development ideas



KINDERGARTEN



First Day of School

keepingmykiddobusy.com



# (Details of “looking ahead”)

— — —

- pilot math/numeracy home resources with a short bilingual guide to provide parents with ideas for how to “play learn” at home, and thus enrich children’s natural sponge-like development
- Help ease parent concerns and stress about kinder readiness, as well as provide tools and ideas for fun summer learning
- provide parents with goals to work on with children that will ease their pre-k to K transition....helping parents help their kids be independent and follow some vital routines (eating and sleep habits, reading, everyday math/literacy, oracy, play/socializing, emotional resilience, and overall independence/confidence)....
- Not sure of a date or location. Hopefully multiple childcare centers/TLC

# The Evidence-Base





# The impact of transitions on young children

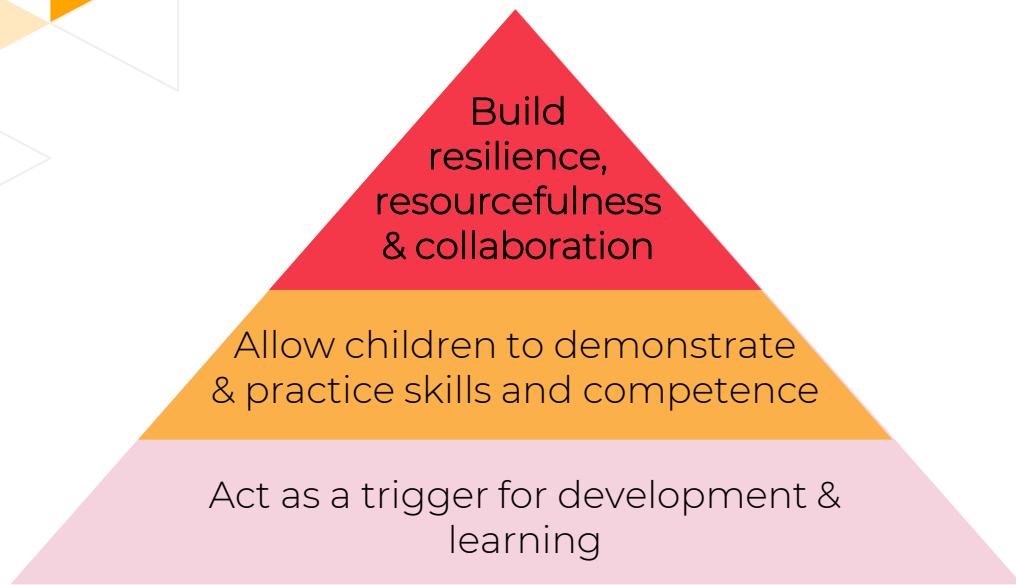




“

*A calm, regulated child can respond to uncertainty with curiosity and interest, wondering what will happen next and feeling ready for it. For a child who is already anxious, uncertainty may trigger increased amygdala activity and shut down other cognitive processes like the urge to investigate or experiment, because the uncertainty seems to pose too much of a threat to allow new learning.  
(O'Connor, 2018)*





**Transitions supported by educated,  
intentional adults**





## Sharing the burden of change

Often our expectation is that the least experienced participants in transitions – children – will change the most (Dockett & Perry 2007).







“

*Transitions often involve changes for children that none of their previous experiences could have prepared them for. This is particularly true when there is a gap between children's social, cultural, and linguistic experiences at home and the expectations placed upon them in the new setting (Allingham, 2015, Docket & Perry, 2007). Is it reasonable for us as adults to expect that children will make the majority of changes?*

*How can we accept greater responsibility and help children carry the burden of change?*



The bigger the  
transition, the bigger  
the burden of  
change.



The bigger the  
burden of change,  
the more help  
children need to  
carry it.



# Factors Impacting Successful Transitions

## Setting

- **Similarities** between settings
- **Communication** between settings
- **Supportive links** between settings
- Interest in the child and family's **background and experiences**
- Degree of match between **expectations** and how children think and learn.

## Relationships


- The child's **sense of belonging**
- The child's access to **warm, affectionate and attuned responses** from adults
- Child and family connection to a **key adult**
- If the child has a **friend** in the new setting
- Parent **attitudes** about the transition

## Agency

- Children's opportunities to engage in **open-ended learning**
- Children's feelings of **confidence** making choices
- Children's **sense of control**
- Opportunities for **collaboration and problem-solving**
- **Children's play** as a tool for meaning-making




# Developmental Model of Transitions

- ▶ Transitions occur over time, not as a single event.
  - ▶ Transitions should be supported before, during, and after the change.
  - ▶ Everyone involved in the transition is impacted by it and influences its success.
- 





# Continuity vs Discontinuity

- ▶ Children need continuity, connectedness, and consistency in order to learn and thrive.
  - ▶ Transitions threaten continuity.
  - ▶ Maintaining continuity during transitions is essential.
  - ▶ Examples of continuity:
    - ▶ The degree with which the two settings relate to each other or are similar.
    - ▶ The extent to which new experiences connect with the child and family's background and experiences.
- 

A young boy with a yellow backpack stands on a sidewalk, looking up at the front of a yellow school bus. The bus is parked on a street with a palm tree and greenery in the background. The scene is bright and sunny.

# The Transition to Kindergarten

▶ “School is a BIG place!”

– New kindergarten student

# How big Is the transition?



Differences in settings

Physical

- Physical surroundings differ in size, location, number of people, bigger kids, etc...

Social

- The social world becomes larger and more complex, with different social networks, friendships, identities, and adults with whom they interact.

Philosophical

- Approaches to learning and teaching differ, along with what is prioritized and how time is spent.

Support

- Children are given less individual attention and less support during routines and learning.



# Expectations

Academic demands

Grouping

Self care routines

Rules

Reward systems

Arrival and departure

Independence

Communication

Organization

Self-regulation





**What  
communities  
can do**

# WHAT COMMUNITIES CAN DO

## Schools:

- Support relationship building as the most important priority.
- Support teachers' ability to make decisions and respond flexibly to children's needs.
- Increase communication gathering to support planning for environments and instruction.
- Plan to support the transition before, during and after the event.
- Ensure that everyone involved in the transition understands the science of early learning.
- Embrace trauma responsive teaching, universal design for learning, and developmentally appropriate practice.
- Create links across the settings children navigate.



# WHAT COMMUNITIES CAN DO

## Families:

- Help families understand the science of early learning and development, including children's behaviors as a response to their environment.
- Increase the time and effort spent getting to know families. Use this knowledge to help bring learning closer to children.
- Identify family strengths and build upon them.
- Take extra care to identify and decrease family stress.
- Build relationships with families beyond parent-teacher conferences and welcome nights.
- Support families as they adapt their lives at home to the transition.
- Connect families to one another. Build a school community.

# WHAT COMMUNITIES CAN DO

## Children:

- Focus on relationship building between children and adults and children and children.
- Recognize and embrace play as children's most essential meaning making tool.
- Increase children's opportunities to make decisions and experience self mastery.
- Give attention to and support daily transitions and transitions throughout the year.
- Create assessment and learning environments that decrease children's stress response and allow us to see what they CAN DO (independently and with support).
- Bring all instruction closer to the child's experiences.
- Focus on the whole child as a member of a community rather than as an individual, or a set of discrete skills.

# Star Valley Kindergarten Transition Grant Journey

...

Emily Isaacson  
Char Norris



# Kindergarten transition work already in place

- North Lincoln County Early Childhood Coalition (NLCECC)
- Local child development centers offer free developmental screenings
- The child development centers work with the kindergarten teams to discuss transitioning children's needs and strengths
- Grant funded preschool that is available free of charge through the school district
- Kindergarten Registration in the spring
- Some of our early childhood educators work with Char Norris from the Wyoming Early Childhood Professional Learning Collaborative for trainings and other supports
- Fall activities before school starts hosted by schools within the school district
- Kindergarten teachers have worked and collaborated with Nikki Baldwin to incorporate highly impactful practices based on intellectually engaging activities within the classroom
- School district hosted a professional development night for all early childhood educators presented by Nikki Baldwin in 2019
- Parents As Teachers program offered through the school district
- One of our early childhood educators, Amber Merritt, is a member of the Learning Network that worked towards the creation of "Wyoming's Coherent Path to Quality."

# Applying for the grant

Recommended by kindergarten teachers

Questions of how to unite community of early childhood as well as help families and students as they enter school

Watched presentation by Albany County on grant they had in 2020

Emily Isaacson talked with several childcare, kindergarten, and preschool educators, as well as to her team of administrators to find out if there was interest

Involved:

Emily Isaacson - Family and Community Outreach Coordinator

Angela Burton - Kindergarten Teacher

Janice Gilliland-Rosales - Child Development Center Head Teacher

Amber Merritt - Childcare Facility Owner

We all had access to a google document where we wrote the questions and the answers so we had involvement from multiple areas of early childhood education on the grant application.

“No one person or perspective can give us the answers we need to the problems of today. Paradoxically, we can only find those answers by admitting we don’t know. We have to be willing to let go of our certainty and expect ourselves to be confused for time.”

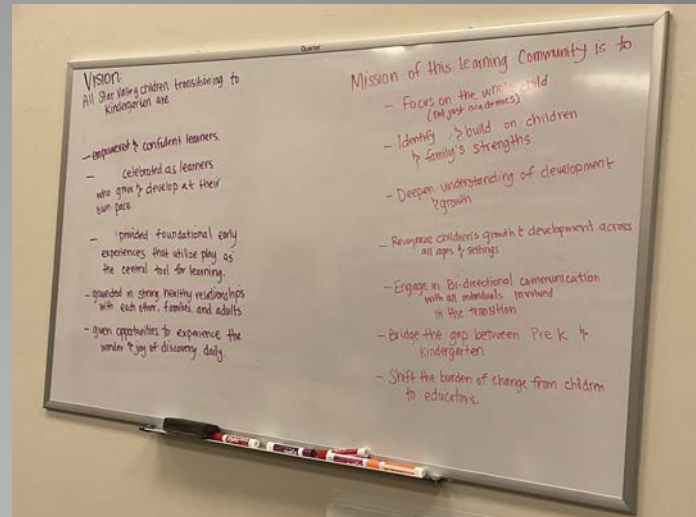
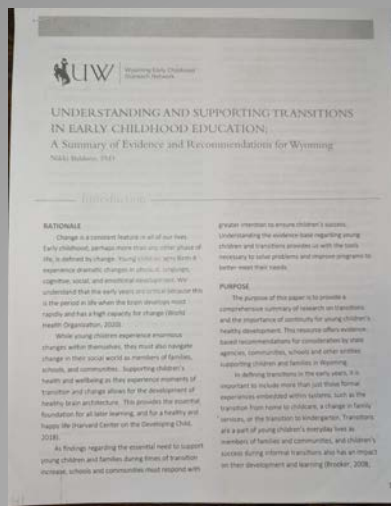
--Margaret J Wheatley



# The process



**WYOMING'S**  
COHERENT PATH TO QUALITY  
Creating a Shared Vision to Ensure High-Quality Learning for Wyoming's Children



“We can’t be creative if we refuse to be confused. Change always starts with confusion; cherished interpretations must dissolve to make way for the new. Of course it’s scary to give up what we know, but the abyss is where newness lives. Great ideas and inventions miraculously appear in the space of not knowing. If we can move through the fear and enter the abyss, we are rewarded greatly. We rediscover we are creative.”

--Margaret J Wheatley

# Leadership Team Purpose

- Represent the needs, concerns, and interests of the Large Group
- Offer possibilities for direction and activities based on Large Group input
- Hold to the Vision and Mission of the group
- Advocate for children and families
- Communicate about the work to the public and stakeholders
- Support each other and the Large Group through challenges



Provided foundational early  
experiences that utilize play  
as the central tool for learning



# Vision Statement:

All Star Valley children transitioning to Kindergarten are:

- Grounded in strong, safe, healthy environments and relationships with each other, families, and adults
- Provided foundational early experiences that utilize play as the central tool for learning
- Empowered and confident learners
- Celebrated as learners who grow and develop at their own pace
- Given daily opportunities to experience the wonder and joy of discovery

## The Mission of the Learning Community is to:

- Focus on the whole child (not just academics)
- Identify and build on children and families' strengths
- Deepen understanding of development and growth
- Recognize children's growth and development across all ages and settings
- Engage in Bi-directional communication with all individuals involved in the transition
- Bridge the gap between Pre K and Kindergarten
- Shift the burden of change from children to educators



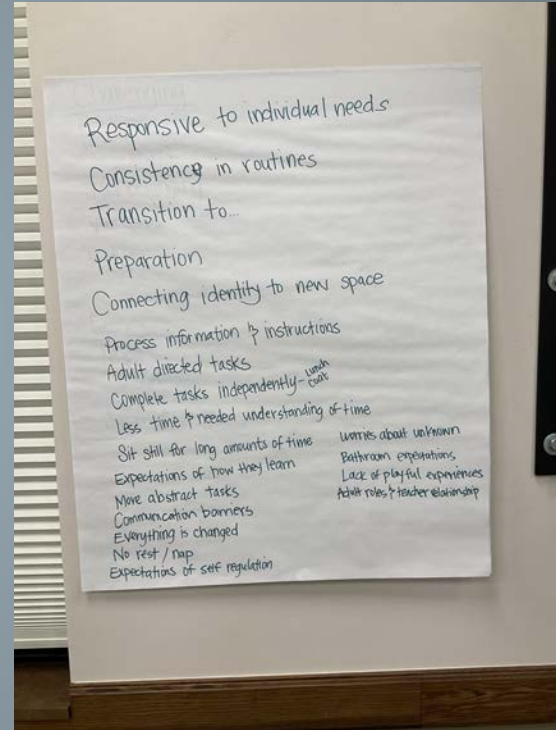
# The Purpose of our Learning Community is:

- To unite as a strong force for good.
- To support kids and families in their transition to Kindergarten.
- To learn from each other and learn about what each educator is doing in their space.
- To close the gap between Early Childhood Education and the Department of Health.
- To learn about children and families' experiences with Kindergarten Transitions in Star Valley
- To figure out how to make Kindergarten transitions individualized to children, families, educators and this community the “Star Valley way”.

# Goals & Focus

- 1) Learning about families' & children's experiences in their Kindergarten Transition
- 2) Learn about each other and what is happening across different settings with the lens: "What does this mean for kids?"
- 3) Wanting input from everyone that spends time with children

# What do we ask children and families to do?





# Opportunities for Learning:

1. Readings:
  - a. “Understanding and Supporting Transitions in Early Childhood Education” by Nikki Baldwin
  - b. NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practice
  - c. Wyoming’s Coherent Path to Quality
2. Site Virtual Visits
3. NAEYC Annual Conference
4. Star Valley Kindergarten Transition Family Survey

# Sharing Our Spaces: Site Virtual Visits





## Family Home Childcare







Preschool



LUCDA / CDC



# Kindergarten





# NAEYC Annual Conference

26 people signed up to attend

Zoom meeting the week after to discuss take-aways and recommend classes

Highlights:

- Supporting teachers through challenging behaviors
- Playbased STEM
- Playful Learning
- Loose parts
- Brain development and affect of trauma
- Self-care and self-regulation
- Reading strategies
- Physical play
- Using music
- Playful Learning

# Family Survey



## Star Valley Kindergarten Transition Family Survey

Definition of educational transition: When a child goes from one place of care or learning to another place of care or learning.

 cnorriswyecplc@gmail.com (not shared) [Switch account](#)



\* Required

Which phrase applies to you: \*

- ☐ I have previously had or currently have a child in Kindergarten.
- ☐ I have not yet experienced a child going into Kindergarten.

[Next](#)

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Google Forms

#1 What are your concerns and fears about your child's transition into kindergarten?

SOCIAL 

LONG DAYS 

ARE THEY READY?  
socially

PARENTAL ANXIETY

\*Family has no experience

#5 What can the preschool/childcare do to help you + your child transition to kindergarten?

- communication of expectations
- communication of available resources
- communication with school district
- Transitions - safe environment, meet teacher, take tour, make friends, talk about expectations









# Family Survey Results:

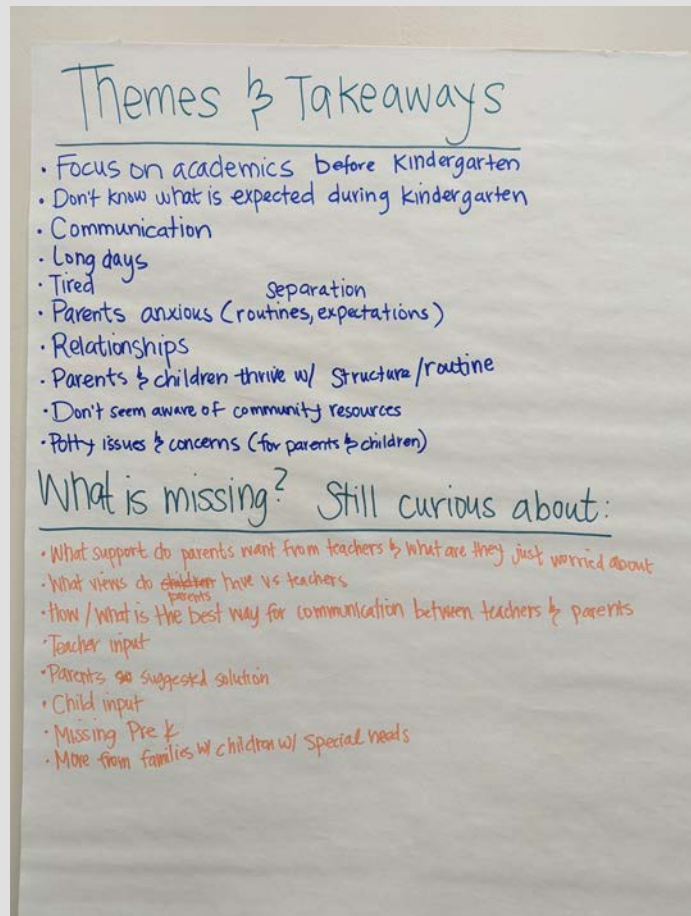
What are the takeaways?

Are there common themes?

What do we need to hold onto?

What is missing?

What are we still curious about?





# Reflection:

1. What we already know...
2. What we learned...
3. What we need to know more about...

# Where we want to go next:

What do we want to explore in the next phase of our learning together?

# The “Star Valley Way”





“We will succeed in changing this world only if we can think and work together in new ways. Curiosity is what we need. We don’t have to let go of what we believe, but we do need to be curious about what someone else believes. We do need to acknowledge that their way of interpreting the world might be essential to our survival.”

--Margaret J Wheatley