

Kindergarten COUNTS

Early Kindergarten Transition Program Model

Summer 2015



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Early Kindergarten Transition Program is a part of Kindergarten Counts, a community-wide campaign in Multnomah County that brings together early childhood and school partners to promote successful kindergarten transitions for children and their families in SUN Community Schools.

This program is a school-based summer program **to increase parental involvement in their child's learning, children's attendance in kindergarten, and children's success in school.** The program is based around two core components:

- 1) **Class time** for children in kindergarten classrooms that are led by a kindergarten teacher, and
- 2) **Family engagement activities** that include a facilitated Parent/Caregiver Group and other activities intended to promote positive family-school relationships. Other important programmatic requirements include a program orientation for parents/caregivers prior to the start of the program and follow-up with participating families after the start of the school year.

This summer program is intended to be part of a broader kindergarten transition plan at the school that includes a variety of transition supports ranging from low to high intensity that begin during the year prior to kindergarten entry and continue into the kindergarten year.

This program is intended to primarily reach children with one or more of these criteria:

- Children with no preschool experience
- Children who participated in Head Start
- Children of color or from a culturally-specific community
- Children receiving early childhood special education services

Schools should prioritize their outreach using the above list based on the needs of their communities **with priority given to children with no preschool experience.**

References in this program model to *parents, caregivers, and family* is defined as parents, grandparents, and other family members and adults that are involved significantly in the child's life.

This program model assumes implementation of the program at a SUN Community School where it will be integrated into SUN Community School efforts. Planning and implementation of the program is expected to be led jointly by the School District, School Principal and the SUN Community School lead agency in collaboration with school staff, parents, and community partners.

Kindergarten Counts is a collaborative effort coordinated through the SUN Service System Division of Multnomah County Department of County Human Services that fosters early support and successful transitions in SUN Community Schools.

MINIMUM EXPECTATIONS

All schools implementing the program agree to adhere to the following minimum expectations.

Length of program/contact hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 or 3 week program scheduled to occur primarily in July or August. • Children's Classroom: Minimum of 36 hours of total "class" time with children occurring over this 2-3 week period. • Family Engagement: Minimum of 15 hours of family engagement activities using the following strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parent Orientation prior to the start of the program (1 hour min.) ○ Facilitated Parent Group during the summer, which <u>must</u> include parent group activities but <u>may also</u> include other activities, such as volunteering or parent/child reading time in the children's classroom (10 hours min.) ○ Individual and/or group transition follow-up activities with families after the start of the school year and before December 31, 2014 (2 hours min.) ○ The remaining 2 hours can be added to any of the other activities above and/or to develop other strategies for engaging parents of children participating in the program to support the transition to kindergarten.
Program Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the exception of school building closures, programs should be held at the school where children will be entering kindergarten.
Targeted Outreach and Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of participating children will meet one or more of the following criteria: no preschool experience, participated in Head Start, of color or from culturally-specific communities, receiving early childhood special education services. Priority should be given to children with no preschool experience. • 20 children will participate in each classroom and attend 90% of class sessions. • 75% of children will have parents/caregivers participating in the parent engagement components of the program.
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's classroom: staffed by a Kindergarten teacher from the school with adequate classroom support from paid staff and/or volunteers. • Family Engagement: Facilitator(s) should have prior experience facilitating parent/adult groups and engaging diverse groups of parents/caregivers. Parent Group and other family engagement activities must reasonably accommodate non-English speaking families. • Child Care: High quality child care will be provided during Parent Group time.
Program Meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast will be served for children in the program, including those in child care during parent meetings. • Lunch will be available for children for all days of the program • Snacks and/or lunch will be offered for parents/caregivers. • Meal times can be counted towards required contact hours if structured as a facilitated and/or structured group activity that meets the goals of the program.

Evaluation and Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each program will be responsible for administering and turning in pre and/or post evaluations, provided by Multnomah County SUN Service System, with parents and/or children. • An external evaluation may be conducted by PSU, which may include site visits, focus groups, interviews and data collection. • All data regarding program participants and their attendance must be entered into ServicePoint by each school by August 31, 2015. • Schools will work with Multnomah County SUN Service System to identify data that will be shared and tracked to measure outcomes for program participants.
Outcomes and Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each program will work towards the goals outlined in the program model for each program component and ensure that the required strategies and curriculum strands are in place. Multnomah County SUN Service System does not require the use of a particular curriculum beyond the requirements outlined in this program model.
System-wide Planning and Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools will participate in system-wide planning and coordination convened by Multnomah County SUN Service System to support implementation of the programs, including group and individual meetings.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS: DESCRIPTIONS AND MINIMUM EXPECTATIONS

The following are descriptions and minimum expectations for the two program components. Although each component is being addressed in its own section, joint planning should occur to ensure alignment and identify opportunities for bringing the two components together, including parent participation in the children's classroom and formal and informal interactions between parents and kindergarten teachers.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

The goals of the family engagement component are:

- To develop positive relationships between parents and other parents, school staff, and community partners.
- To increase parent involvement in their children's learning at home.
- To promote good attendance in kindergarten.
- To increase parent comfort and confidence in the school environment and navigating the school system.

Schools are encouraged and have the flexibility to design the family engagement component around the following required strategies and topics that aligns with the practices, routines, and cultural and community backgrounds of the particular school and school community.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Parent Orientation: Schools should host a parent orientation prior to the start of the program to clarify expectations for parents' participation, complete any paperwork, and begin to build trust and relationships.

Parent Group: The Parent Group is offered as a supportive social group for parents/caregivers during the transition to kindergarten. It should be facilitated and structured in ways that build connections among parents, so that they are actively learning from each other's experiences and knowledge. Content and activities during parent groups should support relationship building between parents and other parents, school staff, and community partners. Parent group time can include (as part of the group time or at a separate time) visits to the kindergarten classroom to observe and/or participate in activities (e.g. observing story time followed by parents reading with their child, small groups of parents volunteering in the classroom). The Parent Group should be offered during the summer but can be extended into the school year as part of the School Year Transition Follow-up. It is recommended that Parent Group sessions be no longer than 2.5 hours in length.

School Year Transition Follow-up: Follow-up with participating families should be conducted after the start of the school year and before December 31, 2015, and may include continuation of the Parent Group, "reunion" event(s), home visits, individual meetings and contact, or other strategies that support positive school-home connections and linkage to resources and supports during the kindergarten year. Follow-up activities may include activities developed for all kindergarten families, including those who participated in the program, but must be focused on supporting the transition to kindergarten.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT TOPICS

The table below outlines the **required topics** that should be incorporated into the family engagement strategies above. The **examples** are provided as guidance and to clarify the topics. The intention is not to "cram" information into a limited timeframe; schools are not expected to thoroughly cover each topic but, instead, should prioritize some introductory information and activities within each of the topics.

REQUIRED Topics	Examples
Introduction to the School and Community Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School tours, information and leadership opportunities• Introduction and Q&A with school staff and community partners (e.g. SUN Site Manager, Principal, Kindergarten Teachers, Nurse, Secretary, Counselor)• Understanding and navigating the school system• Informal parent socialization and resource sharing
Organizing for Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Importance of routines: bedtime, mornings, school drop-offs and pick-ups, homework• Tracking school communication, events, and assignments
Supporting Learning at Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting literacy and numeracy skills• Brain/Child development• Supporting positive social/emotional development• Visits to children's classroom to observe and "practice"

REQUIRED Topics	Examples
What Happens in Kindergarten?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits to observe and/or participate in activities in children's classroom • Daily routine and logistics • What kindergartners will be learning and expected to do • Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports - PBIS
Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about the importance of attendance in a strength-based way • Attendance policy and when to keep your child home • Supports and resources available to address barriers to attendance

CHILDREN'S CLASSROOM

The goals of the children's classroom component are:

- To increase children's social and emotional readiness for school.
- To increase children's skills to participate in a group.
- To increase children's ability to understand and follow classroom routines.

The children's classroom is intended to be structured to address issues associated with the transition to school, in particular for children who have had minimal exposure to classroom or group settings. The curriculum should be designed to focus on promoting social and self-regulation skills that will support children's learning in school.

Teachers are encouraged and have the flexibility to design a curriculum around the following required curriculum strands that aligns with the practices, routines, and cultural and community backgrounds of the particular school and school community.

REQUIRED Curriculum Strands
Introduction to the School and Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Tour with focus on transition areas: bathrooms, cafeteria, bus procedures, etc. • Introduction and Q&A with school staff: SUN Site Manager, Principal, ELL Staff, etc.
School and Classroom Routines
Small Motor Activities
Free Exploration/Individual Choice Time
Movement/Songs
Story Time and Literacy Activities
Numeracy Activities