

Transitions: Involve Families

When Students Move to New Schools

Transitions to new schools often confuse or concern children and parents. Research shows that family involvement drops dramatically when children move from elementary to middle school and from middle to high school. If families lose touch with their children's schools, they also lose touch with their children as students.

To prevent this problem, elementary, middle, and high schools need to prepare students *and* their families for the transition to a new school. For example, one high school designed a Type 2–Communicating project that included the following activities:

Example: Family Involvement for Students' Transition to High School

March	High school counselors and students meet during the school day with eighth-grade students <i>at the middle school</i> . They describe high school requirements for ninth graders, clubs, sports, and activities, and answer students' questions. Families are invited. Information is provided to those who could not come.
April	High school staff and a panel of high school parents meet in the evening with eighth grade students and families <i>at the middle school</i> . They describe high school requirements for ninth graders, clubs, sports, and activities, and answer students' and families' questions. Information is provided to those who could not come.
May	Eighth grade students visit the high school. They meet with ninth grade students, teachers, counselors, and administrators for information and tour the school. Families are invited.
August	New ninth grade students and families meet teachers <i>at the high school</i> prior to the start of school. A tour of the high school is included. A rally prepares everyone for a good start to the school year. Information is provided to those who could not come.
September	An <i>open house</i> evening meeting is held for all families of students in grades 9–12 <i>at the high school</i> . Students participate. Families follow the students' schedules to meet their teen's teachers, hear about courses, and ask questions. Information is provided to those who could not come.

This high school wanted to increase students' success in ninth grade. They wanted to provide important information to all families of incoming students, including those who could not come to meetings. Similar activities could help children and families move from preschool to elementary school and from elementary to middle school.

ACTIVITY: On the following charts, list activities that *your school* will conduct with “feeder” schools to improve the transition of new students and their families coming INTO *your school*. Also list activities conducted with “receiver” schools for students and families who are moving OUT OF *your school*. Consider these questions:

- How will your school prepare *all* students and families for successful transitions INTO and OUT OF your school? What information do students and families need? Which activities that you presently conduct will your school continue or improve? Which new activities will you add to provide more and better information, visits, and exchanges?
- How might your school work with educators in feeder and receiver schools to develop, conduct, and evaluate transitioning activities?

Help Students and Families

Make Successful Transitions INTO This School

Put a * by the month when the new school year begins.
Activities need not be scheduled every month.

	Which transitioning activities will be conducted with students?	How will families be involved?	How might a feeder school(s) support this activity?
January— Before Transition			
February			
March			
April			
May			
June			
July			
August			
September			
October			
Ongoing . . .			

Add the family and community involvement activities, along with details and schedules, to the *One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships*.

Help Students and Families

Make Successful Transitions OUT OF This School and INTO a New School

Put a * by the month when the new school year begins.

	Which transitioning activities will be conducted with students?	How will families be involved?	How might a receiver school(s) support this activity?
February			
March			
April			
May			
June			
July			
August			
September			
October			
Ongoing . . .			

Add the family and community involvement activities, along with details and schedules, to the *One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships*.