

Bridges to Kindergarten
A Transition Plan for Charlotte-Mecklenburg

Activities for Children

Activity	Suggested Timeline	Evaluation
Attend CMS <i>Beginner's Day</i> .	March-May	Schedule of events
Participate in preschool class trip to a CMS elementary school; trip to include a brief tour; snack at the cafeteria; outdoor play on the playground; and story time or other activity in a kindergarten classroom.	March-May	Trip forms indicating number of children, adults, and schools that participated
Read and discuss a class-made book such as <i>What We Saw in Kindergarten</i> (available in the classroom library).	April-June	Copy of book
Take home a black and white copy of the class book to share with families and encourage related conversation at home.	April	Copy of book
View <i>Ready, Set, Go! Making the Move to Kindergarten</i> to learn what to expect in elementary school (available in English and Spanish).	April-June	Video distribution list
Participate in "Open Playground" at a local CMS elementary school to meet other rising kindergartners who will attend same school.	May-June	Schedule of events and/or sign-in sheets (if available)
Attend a special event with family such as "Countdown to Kindergarten" hosted by local libraries, or "Kindergarten Orientation" at a local elementary school.	August	Schedule of events and/or sign-in sheets (if available)
Begin kindergarten at CMS on a staggered entry schedule.	August	School schedules

Opportunities for Parents and Families

Opportunity	Suggested Timeline	Evaluation
Visit a kindergarten classroom to observe new kindergartners and the curriculum early in the school year.	Fall	Visitor logs at local elementary schools
Attend "Magnet Schools Information Fair" or other informational sessions to explore student placement options in CMS.	Winter	Schedule of district events and/or sign-in sheets (if available)
Attend Open House(s) at one or more schools in preparation for choosing a program.	December-January	Schedule of events and/or sign-in sheets
Register for kindergarten at a local school (if not submitting choice application for magnet program or other options).	Ongoing	PSAs and/or press releases for early enrollment

Attend a family event such as <i>Fun Fair</i> during NAEYC-sponsored “Week of the Young Child.” Visit booth co-sponsored by CMS and CCRI; gather information about kindergarten transition and school readiness.	April	<i>Fun Fair</i> sign-in sheets
Accompany child to CMS <i>Beginner’s Day</i> (schedule of events available on CMS and CCRI websites and advertised to families via distribution to the child care community).	March-May	Schedule of district events, take-home flyer, and sign-in sheets (if available)
Attend a free immunization clinic at a local retail site sponsored by Junior League of Charlotte. Access information related to nutrition and other health issues.	Spring Summer	Schedule of events
Attend a Kindergarten Transition meeting hosted by CCRI/CMS or by the child’s pre-K/preschool/child care setting. Staff may show video entitled <i>Ready, Set, Go! Making the Move to Kindergarten</i> , including a brief slide show with registration requirements and district information.	Spring	Meeting sign-in sheets and evaluation/feedback forms (if available)
Receive <i>Making the Move to Kindergarten: A Guide for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Families</i> . Includes: transition events; children’s book list; tips for addressing children’s questions and concerns; questions to ask about your child’s school; health requirements; proof of residence requirements; ways to promote children’s learning; and a “Family Input Form” to complete and bring to the child’s kindergarten teacher when school begins.	Spring	Sample family guide Distribution list
Obtain child’s library card, possibly at one of the “Countdown to Kindergarten” sessions hosted by a local library.	August	Library card registration records and sign-in sheets (if available)
Attend Kindergarten Orientation or “Meet the Teacher” events at school.	August	Schedule of district events
Attend CMS “Curriculum Night” where teachers present an overview of the kindergarten curriculum and explain the daily schedule and classroom procedures.	September	Schedule of district events and classroom sign-in sheets (if available)
If additional support is needed, families may contact school to request a classroom observation, to be scheduled through the Principal; a general guide for observing is contained in the family information packet.	September	Confidential

Strategies for Schools and Teachers

Strategy	Suggested Timeline	Evaluation
Respect cultural and linguistic diversity; provide written communications in family's native language and utilize an interpreter for family events where possible; publish transition information in ethnic newspapers.	Ongoing	English and Spanish press releases and public service announcements; Spanish translation of family guide.
Utilize <i>Making the Move to Kindergarten: A Guide for Pre-K Teachers in Charlotte-Mecklenburg</i> to assist pre-kindergarten teachers in planning for a progression of skills and demands during the four-year-old year; implement suggested activities designed to support children's emerging skills in each area.	Ongoing	Sample teacher's guide
Read transition-themes books to pre-kindergarten children (suggested book list provided to preschool teachers).	March-August	Book list
Encourage children to talk about their experiences at CMS <i>Beginner's Day</i> ; extend through writing, art, music, dramatic play.	April	Teacher's plans
Support families in arranging child care to accommodate new school schedules; provide information regarding Before-and After-Care Programs via CMS website; include CCRI's Child Care Search in transition guide for families.	Ongoing	Web pages Sample transition guides
Take photographs of people, places, and things on a class trip to kindergarten; create a book or display of photos; encourage children's dialogue around kindergarten and send home a copy of the book for families.	April-May	<i>Copy of Teacher Tips for Class Trips</i> Trip forms indicating dates and participants
Complete <i>Child Profile Form</i> for each preschool student; include work samples; assist families in completing a brief form regarding their child.	May-June	Completed forms and/or portfolios shared with kindergarten teachers
Mail "Summer Surprises" from kindergarten teachers to incoming students. Includes: "Welcome to Kindergarten" postcard; "Countdown to Kindergarten" calendar for families; and a framed page on which the child may draw or attach family pictures to bring to school for classroom display. Teachers may wish to add a photo and/or brief profile of self; a class roster (first names only); and a daily schedule.	August	"Summer Surprises" packets

Consider scheduling home visits from the new teacher to any child or family identified as needing additional transition support; this visit may occur at home or at a neutral site (ex: nearby park). Preschool teachers may encourage families to make such a request.	Prior to start of kindergarten, or during the first few weeks of the new school year	Confidential
Employ staggered entry schedule for CMS kindergarten programs.	August	School schedules
Survey families regarding their preferred mode of school-home communication.	September; Back to School Night	Copy of <i>Child Profile Form (Family Input)</i>
Follow up with families by phone call, mail, or e-mail from the sending/preschool teacher or other staff member, where appropriate.	September	Confidential

Action Steps for Community Awareness

Action Step	Suggested Timeline	Evaluation
Build a Kindergarten Transition Advisory Team; expand as needed to ensure balanced representation from all stakeholders; develop commitment through collaboration.	Ongoing Since January 2005	List of team members
Convene monthly or bi-monthly team meetings and solicit input re: transition plan.	Ongoing Since February 2005	Meeting sign-in sheets
Collaborate with Kindergarten Transition Advisory Team to accomplish three critical tasks: design an effective and efficient distribution mechanism for transition information; develop a standard form of communication between the non-public early care and education community and CMS (i.e. <i>Child Profile Form</i>); and consider ways to evaluate the effectiveness of <i>Bridges to Kindergarten</i> .	Ongoing Since February 2005	Meeting agenda, distribution methods, <i>Child Profile Forms</i> , and sample evaluation forms (transition planning process and activities)
Advertise transition information on CMS and CCRI websites and CMS TV-3.	Ongoing	Web pages Cable ads/programs
Plan one or more community events to link families and schools outside of the school setting; possible booth at <i>Fun Fair</i> during NAEYC-sponsored Week of the Young Child with CMS representative(s) on site.	April	<i>Fun Fair</i> booth request, photos, and sign-in sheets
Develop <i>Countdown to Kindergarten</i> , a new column in <i>Taking Care</i> , CCRI's quarterly publication distributed to the child care community.	Ongoing; Since April 2005	Sample <i>Countdown to Kindergarten</i> articles
Distribute transition guides for two groups: families of rising kindergartners; and early care and education professionals including pre-k and kindergarten teachers and directors.	Ongoing; Since April 2005	Sample family guides (English and Spanish) and teacher's guide

Distribute new video entitled <i>Ready, Set, Go! Making the Move to Kindergarten</i> for preschool-age children and their families. Available in English and Spanish, this video was developed by CCRI and CMS to support kindergarten transition efforts.	April 2007	Video program on DVD and VHS
Advertise community resources such as Junior League’s “Neighborhood Family Resource Center” and “Big Shot Saturday.”	Ongoing	Copy of advertisement or flyer
Partner with county libraries to organize “Countdown to Kindergarten” for children and their families; transition-themed books to be displayed; special story times scheduled with kindergarten-themed stories; summer reading list posted; library cards issued.	April-August	Schedule of events Sign-in sheets
Create “Realtors’ Welcome Packet” to involve the local realtors association in distribution of transition information to late-arriving families.	Summer	Sample packet
Share timely transition information with local media to increase community awareness of the transition process and timelines.	Ongoing	Copies of news articles, press releases, public service announcements
Expand <i>Ready, Set, Go!</i> to a three-part video series: <i>Ideas to Grow On</i> illustrates learning opportunities in each of the domains and inspires the viewer to do the little things that help prepare children for kindergarten. <i>All Set for School</i> guides the viewer through the routines, requirements, and relationships that are critical to children’s success in school. <i>Making the Move to Kindergarten</i> leads children through a typical school day and helps them know what to expect when kindergarten begins.	In process	DVD copy of program (upon completion)

