



Starting School Right!
Positive Transitions to Elementary School
California Kindergarten Association



Why think in spring about helping children get a good start in school next school year? Because children have a better chance for school success when you start planning early. Below are ideas to help children ease into school and be the most they can be! Having planned transition activities saves time in the long run – with better relationships between children, teachers and families!

Some transition ideas were developed by a grant from the California Department of Education in 2000 for County Offices of Education to provide over 17,000 free backpacks to children enrolling in some of the lowest performing schools in the state. The backpacks were filled with educational materials and activity cards in English & Spanish that offered families school readiness ideas.

Developmentally Appropriate Guiding Principal #12: *Children develop and learn best in the context of a community where they are safe and valued, their physical needs are met, and they feel psychologically secure.*

Developmental Stages – [Starting School is a Major Change](#)

Research

- Teachers who use more transition practices typically have children with better adjustment and fewer behavior problems. This is particularly true for children whose families are at risk due to social and economic challenges. (LaCasale-Crouch, J., A.J. Mashburn, J.T. Downer, & R.C. Pianta 2008)
- UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families, and Communities published for First 5 California a document and toolkit with an overview on transition to school; the benefits of transition for children, families, educators, and communities; research; suggestions on developing a transition plan; and examples of transition activities. It can be [accessed here](#).

Lesson Plans and Activities

- [Background to the Transition to School Backpack Project](#)
- [Transition to School PowerPoint](#)
- [Examples of Transition to School Activities](#) – Here is a wide array of activities from which to choose. More detail on each is found in the Transition Brief linked in the Research section.
- [Backpack Contents](#) – While the backpacks were initially funded by a grant, districts have continued to provide backpacks (or lunchboxes or bags) using Title 1 funds, local funds, or DonorsChoose. Teachers supply companies may be willing to offer group discounts.
- [Backpack Activity Cards \(English\)](#)
- [Backpack Activity Cards \(Spanish\)](#)

Resources

- **State & Federal Requirements for Transition to School Activities** –
 - The California Department of Education document entitled [The Handbook on Transition from Early Childhood Special Education](#), lists federal and state requirements for transition practices.
 - For federal and state laws regarding transitions to school for other children, the California Department of Education has [guidance material](#) issued in Nov 2014.
- [Letters to Families](#)
- [Tips for Trainers](#) – Are you presenting to parents about the importance of their children getting a good start in school? This document offers suggestions along with ideas to help them effectively use any materials in the Transition Backpack.
- [Print and Media Resources](#)
- [Books and Technology for Children](#)

Videos

- [Transition to Kindergarten Video](#)

