

A PEATC

Do You Know....



Fact Sheet for Virginia's Parents Transition from Early Childhood Special Education to Kindergarten

An Exciting Time and a BIG Step!

Going to kindergarten is exciting for parents and children. Making sure the *transition from preschool to kindergarten* goes smoothly is important, especially for children with disabilities. Whether your child has been in an inclusive preschool, educated at home, or attended a special education early childhood program, as a parent you may feel stressed about this big step. Educating yourself on the process and feeling supported will help your child be successful.

If your child is eligible for special education and related services under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), **they will have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in kindergarten.** If your child is not eligible to receive special education, they may qualify for a **504 Plan** that should provide appropriate accommodations so that they can learn alongside classmates. (See PEATC Fact Sheet *IEP vs. 504: Which is Right for My Student*)

Preparing for Kindergarten

This is a time of change. Your child may be transitioning from a partial week to a full week program, from a half to a full day program, and may be attending a new school. **Collaborative planning and clear communication are key.** Here are some tips.

- **Visit various kindergarten programs and classrooms** to get an idea of where your child would fit in and be supported. You may feel more comfortable with a particular teacher and while you can't necessarily secure a specific teacher, it never hurts to ask.
- **Write down your hopes and expectations for your child, including concerns.**
- Be sure that the **preschool team and the kindergarten team are all present at your child's transition IEP meeting.** Your child's strengths and challenges should be discussed along with the services and supports they need to be successful. **Your child has the right to be educated alongside their peers without disabilities and in the school they would normally attend** unless, "*the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.*"

Resources on Transition to Kindergarten

[School Readiness \(VDOE\)](#)

[Transition to Kindergarten \(PACER Center\)](#)



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Fact Sheet for Virginia's Parents

Kindergarten is the easiest year to be successfully included and can set the stage for continued inclusive education opportunities. However, if you/the IEP team do not feel that your child's IEP can be implemented in the regular classroom, there is a **continuum of placements available**.

- **Arrange to visit the school/program in advance**, so that your child can see the classroom, tour the school, and meet his teacher. This can help your child know what to expect, ease the adjustment to a new routine, and meet their need to know what to expect.
- **Introduce yourself** to your child's teacher and establish a **system of communication**. If the teacher did not attend the IEP meeting, go over your child's IEP with the teacher.
- **Be familiar with kindergarten policies and activities** and be involved if you are able. Attend orientations, open houses, assemblies, field trips, etc. Don't focus only on special education meetings. Become a part of the classroom community. Check out the PEATC [Families Engaging Families: Early Childhood](#) webinar for ideas.
- Talk to the teacher about whether or not **an introduction to your child** to his peers is needed. Sometimes it can be helpful to let the other children know that your child is just like them and wants to be friends, especially if your child has communication or social challenges.
- **Address issues immediately**, in a collaborative manner, and **share tips** for working with your child. The **IEP team may need to meet** during the school year to refine services and supports or address any concerns that occur. Don't hesitate to reach out to the teacher if you feel as though your child is not thriving and needs more support.
- **Read books about school. A few of our favorites are:**
 - *The Night Before Kindergarten*, Natasha Wing
 - *All are Welcome*, Alexandra Penfold
 - *Pete the Cat: Rocking in My School Shoes*, Eric Litwin
 - *Kindergarten Rocks*, Katie Davis

Preparing for Kindergarten

Children with and without disabilities benefit from parent involvement. If your child has already been in an early childhood education program, you are ahead of the curve. The **National Association for the Education of Young Children** provides the following tips for all parents. You can do these with your child as appropriate.

- Read with your child every day.
- Provide crayons for drawing and scissors for cutting.
- Do playful number activities like counting.
- Offer markers, Legos, and other small manipulatives to support grasp and fine motor coordinator.
- Give your child the opportunity to make decisions and smart choices.
- Have a regular bedtime and prepare healthy needs.

Source: [Transitions to Kindergarten, NAEYC](#)



PEATC's mission focuses on building positive futures for Virginia's children by working collaboratively with families, schools, and communities to improve opportunities for excellence in education and success in school and community life.

For more information about us, please contact:

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The contents of this factsheet were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education, **#H328M200002**. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government Project Officer. PEATC is not a legal services agency and cannot provide legal advice or legal representation. Any information contained in this factsheet is not intended as legal advice and should not be used as a substitution for legal advice.

