

Typical Transitions

Transition to Home

Bringing home a baby for the first time is a big adjustment, whether from a hospital, neonatal unit or through an adoption agency. Adjusting to the transition takes time for parents and babies. It is common for parents to feel nervous. Try to enjoy this special time during a baby’s first few months to bond and get to know each other. Developing secure attachments begins in these first months of life and is critical for all areas of development.

There are a few key things to remember during this transition period to support adjustment.

- Schedule your baby’s first well check within 48–72 hours of leaving the hospital.
- Babies who spent time in neonatal care will likely have a plan developed in partnership with hospital staff and may also have early intervention support already in place. These supports will be tailored to your baby’s individual health needs and help you feel confident about caring for your baby at home.
- Enlist family and friends to provide support.
- If you are having a hard time bonding with baby or feeling sad or blue, reach out for help with postpartum depression which affects both moms and dads.

Resources

- [Postpartum support for moms and dads](https://www.postpartum.net/colorado) (https://www.postpartum.net/colorado)
- [Safe sleep for your baby](https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/safe-sleep-your-baby) (https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/safe-sleep-your-baby)
- [Car seat safety](https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/car-seat-safety) (https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/car-seat-safety)
- [WIC families](https://www.coloradowic.gov) (https://www.coloradowic.gov)
- [Breastfeeding](https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/breastfeeding) (https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/breastfeeding)
- [Newborn screening](https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/newbornscreening) (https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/newbornscreening)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics](https://www.aap.org) (https://www.aap.org)
- [Preterm infants](https://www.cps.ca/en/documents/position/facilitating-discharge-of-the-preterm-infant) (https://www.cps.ca/en/documents/position/facilitating-discharge-of-the-preterm-infant)
- [Bringing home baby](https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/bringing-baby-home.html) (https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/bringing-baby-home.html)

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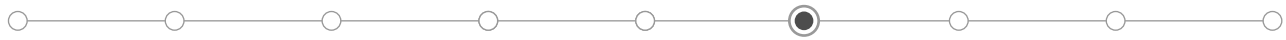
Infancy to Toddlerhood

As children grow from infants to toddlers, they undergo several major rapid developmental changes that support their increasing independence. First, during this period a child moves from crawling to walking and running. This newfound mobility allows children to explore with increasing curiosity. Some parents may find their child now “gets into everything” and child-proofing the environment becomes a must. It can be challenging to both support their growing curiosity and also monitor their safety, with discipline struggles emerging as well. Second, children’s sense of self is also developing, along with their likes and dislikes. Perhaps one of the most significant milestones is children’s ability to use words to communicate their wants and needs. These budding language skills impact the parent-child relationship in new and important ways because children can now communicate their wants and needs using simple words like yes, no, and want. While children are experiencing major developmental milestones, those attending an early care and education setting may also be moving from an infant to a toddler classroom. It is important to maintain continuity to the extent possible during this transition. When the same caregiver isn’t able to follow children from an infant room to a toddler room, ensuring alignment between caregivers in each setting is important. Planning for this change in advance and communicating what will happen with families and children helps to ease fears. Helpful transition activities include inviting children to visit their new classroom with parents or maintaining some similar routines in the new classroom.

Resources

- Support infant/toddler transitions and responsive interactions through the [Expanding Quality in Infant Toddler Care Initiative \(EQIT\)](http://coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.force.com/oec/OEC_Providers?p=Providers&s=Expanding-Quality-in-Infant-Toddler-Care-Initiative&lang=en) (http://coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.force.com/oec/OEC_Providers?p=Providers&s=Expanding-Quality-in-Infant-Toddler-Care-Initiative&lang=en)
- Head Start [Infant/Toddler Curriculum Series](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/curriculum/teacher-time-series/infanttoddler-curriculum-series) (<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/curriculum/teacher-time-series/infanttoddler-curriculum-series>)
- [Continuity of care](https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/85-primary-caregiving-and-continuity-of-care) (<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/85-primary-caregiving-and-continuity-of-care>)





Home to School

Going to school for the first time—whether as an infant, toddler, or preschooler—is often met with mixed emotions for children and parents. Parents enroll their child in a group care setting such as childcare, preschool, or Head Start for many different reasons. Some need childcare in order to work, while others may be seeking socialization opportunities. Regardless of the reason or age of the child, the transition from home to any out-of-home care is a significant transition that is stressful for children and parents.

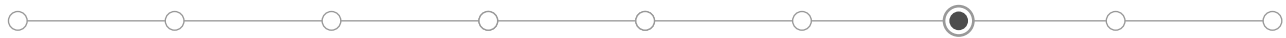
Parents and caregivers should pay attention to a child’s temperament in preparing them for the school transition. If a child is slow to adapt at home—for example they are sensitive to changes in their routine, clothes, or food—they may also have a hard time with transitioning to a new environment. For children slow to adapt, it can be helpful to gradually introduce them to the change. Older children may worry about change or a new school which can result in different reactions, such as withdrawal, aggression, or regression in skills. For example, a once potty-trained child may start having accidents. Tasks that a child once independently performed such as feeding themselves, they may now ask a parent to do. Give children time to adjust and support them as they transition, their independence will return once they are comfortable in their new setting.

Depending on their age a number of different strategies might support children’s adjustment:

- Read books about going to school. Regardless of your child’s language skills, you can talk about what is happening in the story and how the characters are feeling, opening up natural conversations to ask older children how they feel about going to school.
- Engage in make-believe play scenarios about going to school with dolls, stuffed animals, and other toys that can help children share how they feel.
- Visit the new school and classroom together, taking time to play on the playground or in the classroom. Observe what your child enjoys about the new classroom and remind them what they are looking forward to about their new school or classroom.
- Communicate with the classroom teacher about letting your child bring in a familiar object from home and put pictures of the family up in the classroom.
- Be prepared to have a longer drop-off the first few mornings to help ease the transition. Start a good-bye routine to help comfort and prepare your child for your exit.

Resources

- [Bright Futures](https://brightfutures.aap.org/materials-and-tools/guidelines-and-pocket-guide/Pages/default.aspx)
(<https://brightfutures.aap.org/materials-and-tools/guidelines-and-pocket-guide/Pages/default.aspx>)
- [Group socializations](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/teaching-practices/home-visitors-handbook/group-socializations)
(<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/teaching-practices/home-visitors-handbook/group-socializations>)



Early Intervention (Part C) to Preschool Special Education (Part B)

If a child is receiving early intervention services to support their development, as they get closer to the age of three—between the ages of 2 years and 3 months and 2 years and 9 months—a referral to Part B for an evaluation will be made. A transition conference will then be held to begin the transition to Preschool Special Education. A service coordinator will meet with parents and other providers as a team to complete the transition plan that will outline steps in the transition process to preschool special education services that begin at age three. At this point the local school district will meet with the family to develop a service plan for preschool special education.

When children are no longer eligible for early intervention or special education services other options may include private therapy sessions, other community or faith based preschools, Head Start, or other programs in the community that will support the ongoing development of your child.

Resources

- [Family Guidebook III: Transition Planning](#)
- **Family Voices of Colorado** is a chapter of the national, grassroots organization made up of families and friends who care for and about children with special health care needs. www.familyvoicesco.org
- Parent to Parent of Colorado provides parent-to-parent connections to support families on the journey of parenting a child with special needs. www.p2p-co.org (www.abilityconnectioncolorado.org/p2p-co/)
- PEAK Parent Center provides information, support, workshops, and technical assistance for parents of children with disabilities and to professionals who work with children with disabilities. www.peakparent.org





Transition to Kindergarten

Going to kindergarten is a major milestone of early childhood. As with other transitions, going to kindergarten can bring about feelings of excitement as well as fear for children and families. For example, a child's readiness for kindergarten may be a question on the mind of many families. Children who are ready for kindergarten are able to do things independently such as going to the bathroom, getting dressed on their own, and other personal hygiene tasks. Ready children also have acquired more complex motor skills like skipping and balancing as well as developed the fine motor skills needed to use a writing utensil. Kindergarteners may still be working on self-regulation skills but they can engage in some strategies to manage their behavior and emotions so that they can learn academic skills in the kindergarten classroom.

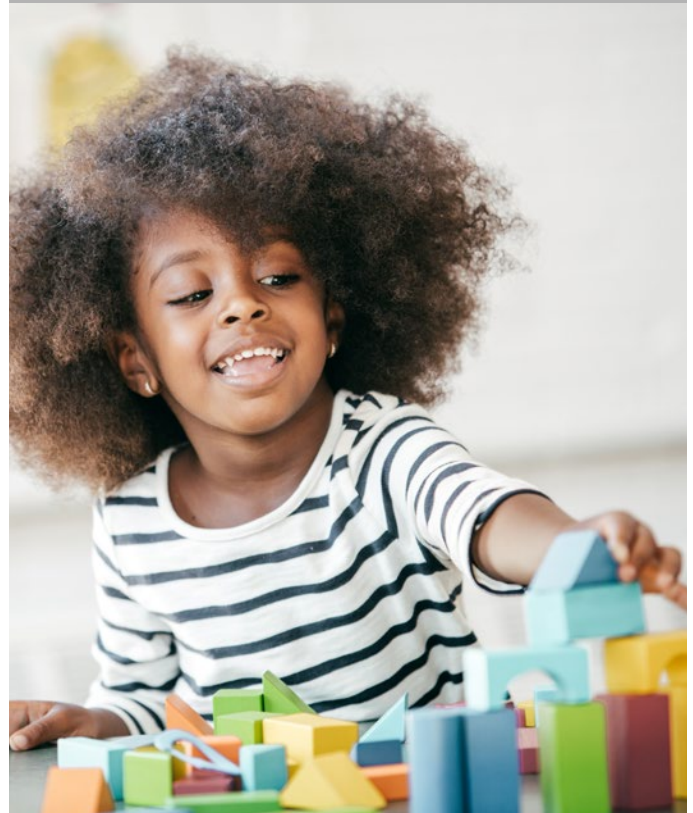
Whether coming to kindergarten from a preschool setting or the home, parents can support children's readiness with a few simple activities:

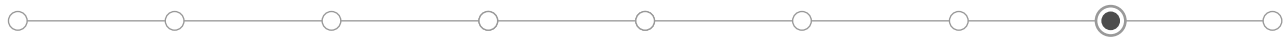
- Read together every day.
- Provide opportunities to draw, write, and use scissors.
- Engage in counting and comparison activities during play and routines such as meals.
- Play with blocks and other small manipulatives to support fine motor coordination.
- Support children in making positive choices on their own.
- Make sure children get enough sleep and healthy meals.

In the first weeks of school, children may be evaluated using a kindergarten readiness assessment to help teachers understand their developmental progress and how best to support their learning. Children who receive special education services in preschool will receive transition support to continue services in kindergarten.

Resources

- [Bright Futures](#)
- [Head Start's comprehensive approach to preparing children for school.](#)
- [NAEYC Kindergarten Transitions](#)
- [City of Denver, Countdown to Kindergarten](#)





Other transitions

Outside of the more common transitions discussed above, there are a number of other changes children might experience during childhood. Remember that even changes that seem routine to adults can be stressful for children, who may need adult support to cope. Any break in a typical routine can be considered a transition.

- Transitions between adults and settings include moving between classrooms in the same child care center or movement between different schools.
 - Consult resources on the importance of [continuity of care](https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/85-primary-caregiving-and-continuity-of-care).
(<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/85-primary-caregiving-and-continuity-of-care>)
- Mid-year or multiple relocations include children and families experiencing homelessness, migrant or seasonal families, children experiencing foster care, expulsions, parental job change or relocation, and military appointments.
 - Consult [Tips for Teachers & Staff: How to Support Students Experiencing Homelessness](#).
- Review Staying connected when a parent is away.
 - Check out resources for supporting [military families](https://www.zerotothree.org/parenting/military-and-veteran-families-support).
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- Seasonal transitions occur when children experience seasonal breaks such as winter, spring, or summer vacations.
 - Check out ideas to support transitioning during [winter break](https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/dec2018/helping-children-readjust-winter-break).
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- Transitions due to family separation include children in dual households when parents are separated, or who experience separation due to military deployment, incarceration, or deportation.
 - Check out the Zero to Three Resources, [Divorce with an under 3 in the House, Living Apart Parenting Together, and Effects of Deployment on Young Children](https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/1365-honoring-our-babies-and-toddlers-supporting-young-children-affected-by-a-military-parent-s-deployment-injury-or-death).
(<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/1365-honoring-our-babies-and-toddlers-supporting-young-children-affected-by-a-military-parent-s-deployment-injury-or-death>)
 - Review how to [Support Children and Parents Affected by the Trauma of Separation](https://www.childtrends.org/publications/supporting-children-parents-affected-trauma-separation).
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