A Review of Research in Early Childhood Transition:
Child and Family Studies
Technical Report # 5

Sharon Rosenkoetter, Ph.D.
Carol Schroeder, M.S.
Beth Rous, Ed.D.
Ann Hains, Ph.D.
Jordan Shaw, M.S.
Katherine McCormick, Ph. D.
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Abstract

It is widely accepted in the early childhood field that for young children both with and without disabilities the transition from one type or level of services to another is an important life event and process. Transition planning for young children with disabilities and their families has been prescribed by Federal legislation since 1991. According to Federal Regulations for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2006), each state’s application for federal funding must include a description of this transition process. Transition planning is one of the few 100% federal compliance indicators for IDEA services which must be addressed in the State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Review process for both Part C (early intervention for children birth through age two) and Part B (which includes preschool services for young children with disabilities).

The National Early Childhood Transition Center (NECTC) was asked by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs to conduct a thorough review of existing refereed research on early childhood transition, with a specific focus on findings related to young children with disabilities and their families. The review included articles published in refereed journals between January 1990 and March 2006 and resulted in the identification of 50 articles, 33 of which focused on children in transition and 18 which focused on families of young children moving between early childhood services, such as between infant-toddler programs and preschool, prekindergarten and kindergarten, or kindergarten and early elementary services. One study fit into both child and family categories. A detailed explanation of the review process is provided. Of the 50 studies reviewed, 15 (30%; seven child and eight family) focused on young children with disabilities and their families. Of those 15, 11(73%) were completed before 2002. Of the 50 studies, nine were experimental or quasi-experimental in design, 14 were correlational, and 28 were descriptive. The paucity of studies located and the fact that the majority of studies were descriptive, rather than experimental, meant that few specific transition practices could be validated sufficiently to satisfy current criteria. In this Technical Report, participants and key findings of the studies are noted, promising practices indicated, and future directions for researchers suggested.

Articles that met the review criteria appeared in 30 journals. They included more than 40,000 children and 30,000 adults. Forty-two of the 50 studies collected data in the U.S., and nearly half of those were geographically representative of the United States. Almost all included children from diverse racial and ethnic groups, although few focused on diversity or traditionally under-represented groups. The majority of studies explored the transition of children from preschool into kindergarten and beyond. All 50 studies are described and annotated in Appendices C through F.
Major findings that relate to children in transition and are supported by a moderate/large extent of evidence (What Works Clearinghouse, 2008) include the following:

- High quality child care and developmentally appropriate classrooms for young children are associated with better academic outcomes, work habits, and social adjustment after the transition to the next setting.

- Various ecological factors (e.g., socio-economic status, family psychosocial factors) are associated with long-term academic achievement and positive social outcomes for children after their transition into school.

- A close positive teacher-child relationship during and after transition is associated with better cognitive outcomes for children.

- Teachers and principals/directors view social skills as being more important for children’s school readiness than academic skills.

- A match between sending and receiving environments and teaching skills which are related to the requirements of the next environment result in more successful adjustment and positive outcomes after transition for young children.

In addition, four strategies are reported as promising, but were supported to a lesser degree by less empirical evidence.

Major findings that relate to families of children in transition and are supported by a moderate/large extent of evidence (What Works Clearinghouse, 2008) include the following:

- Transition is a complex process, not a static event. Positive relationships and transition support activities can ease the stress of transition for families.

- Parental sense of self-efficacy is associated with greater school-related parent involvement and improved academic outcomes for children.

An additional finding that met a moderate extent of evidence was:

- Needs of families must be met before families are able to help their children with disabilities transition between programs or systems.

In addition to general findings, 13 promising practices were identified.

Theories cited by authors of the reviewed studies are included. A relationship is proposed between findings and two relevant conceptual models for transition. Further, implications for practitioners and recommendations for researchers are provided from the review of refereed research on early childhood transition published between January 1990 and March 2006.
PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND METHODS

Background

It is widely accepted in the early childhood field that for young children both with and without disabilities the transition from one type or level of services to another is an important life event and process. Moreover, it is agreed that family involvement in the transition of young children with disabilities is important to the success of the child’s transition, well-being, and subsequent achievement (Head Start Bureau, 1989; Lazzari, 1991; Rosenkoetter, Hains & Fowler, 1994; Rous & Hallam, 2006). Also repeatedly judged to be helpful for all children, but especially for children with disabilities, is a planning process that (a) enables multiple agencies and service providers to join with families in supporting their young children in transition, and (b) provides a range of individualized and culturally responsive family supports to assist the caregivers in their efforts.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1990/1991) and subsequent reauthorizations have provided specific guidelines and mandates for the transition of children from early intervention services to preschool environments. These guidelines include provisions for family members to receive information about service options for their child at age three and definitions of the family’s role and inclusion in all aspects of decision-making regarding their child’s transition. According to Federal Regulations for the IDEA (2006), each state’s application for federal funding must include a description of this transition process. Transition is one of the few 100% federal compliance indicators for IDEA services which must be addressed in the State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Review (APR) process for both Part C (early intervention for children birth through age two) and Part B (which includes preschool services for young children with disabilities).

Purpose

One of the major goals of the National Early Childhood Transition Center (NECTC) has been to examine, report, and synthesize existing research findings related to early childhood transition, both for children with disabilities and those considered to be developing typically. This review was conducted to provide a contemporary look at the research findings in two major areas: child-focused and family-focused transition studies.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA, 2004) requires the use of research evidence to guide actions designed to aid children and youth with disabilities. Section 635(a)(2) of the IDEA underscores the need for services (by implication including transition planning) to be grounded in scientifically based research “to the extent practicable.” The U.S. Department of Education has proposed the inclusion of this requirement in each State Performance Plan (SPP).

To support these efforts, NECTC examined research literature from January 1990 to March 2006, to identify practices that support the transition of young children and their families from early intervention to preschool settings, from preschool settings to kindergarten, and/or from kindergarten into the elementary grades. The overarching research question that guided
the review process was “What does research tell us about effective practices to support transition across the early childhood years?” More specifically, the questions were: (a) what does research tell us about effective practices to support the child? and (b) what does research tell us about practices to support families?

Findings from this study are presented in four sections: Part 1 provides an introduction that includes the methods and procedures used to identify the research reports to be reviewed. Part II presents the findings related to transition for children. Part III presents findings related to transition for families. The final section, Part IV, offers a summary across findings as well as implications for practice and research. Appendices include supporting tables and annotations.

Methods

Selection Guidelines and Process

A survey of the transition literature was conducted related to documents published between January 1990 and March 2006. Seminal work (i.e., work of a “classic” nature frequently cited in more recent literature) also was included regardless of publication date. A total of 786 documents were identified and subsequently sorted into published research-based and published non-research-based documents. Published research-based articles (n = 50) included only those that appeared in major refereed journals and described studies related to the transition of children in the early childhood years, that is, between birth and eight years of age.

Three major methods were used to identify potential studies for inclusion in the review. First, EBSCOhost, PsycINFO, and ERIC databases were searched. For searches, the following descriptors were used: early intervention, preschool, early childhood, infants, young children, and kindergarten paired with transition(s), readiness, entry, continuity, and alignment. Second, citations and references were reviewed in each article to identify additional works. Third, recommendations for studies were sought from stakeholder members of four NECTC advisory groups -- the Research Team, Advisory Board, Expert Panel, and Diversity Work Group (for more information, see http://www.ihdii.ify.edu/nectc/), as well as from the general public. These NECTC groups included families of young children with disabilities, early intervention and preschool providers, state and local agency representatives, and researchers in the field of early childhood and early childhood special education.

Articles then were categorized by the primary research focus: children or families. As a result, a total of 50 articles were identified for review: 33 articles focused on children in transition and 18 articles on families in transition. While families were the major focus of the literature review, relevant studies primarily studied parents as family representatives. One article (Kemp, 2003) was reviewed under both child and family areas. Articles included in the review represented 30 different journals (see Table 1).
Table 1. Journals for Articles Included in the Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal Name</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Research Quarterly</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Early Intervention, formerly Journal of the Division for Early Childhood</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School Journal</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceptional Children</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Psychology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Child Development and Care</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topics in Early Childhood Special Education</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Development</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Educational Research</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of School Psychology</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Journal of Early Childhood</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Occupational Therapy Journal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Education and Development</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Education Journal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Research and Practice</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Years: An International Journal of Research and Development</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Gerontology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Psychology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Journal of Behavior Development</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Journal of Disability, Development and Education</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Psychology Review</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology</td>
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<td>Journal of Child and Family Studies</td>
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<td>Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Educational Psychology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Positive Behavioral Intervention</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Social Psychology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting: Science and Practice</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Children</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Review Process

The review process (Appendix A) involved six major steps. First, a team consisting of NECTC researchers and Advisory Board members developed a coding form using existing coding forms and research processes as guides (e.g., Data Extraction Protocol, Version 3, What Works in Transition Research Project, 2003; Practice Based Research Synthesis Coding Form, Research and Training Center on Early Childhood Development, 2003). The final coding form, Transition Literature Review Coding Form, is presented in Appendix B.

In the second step, project staff developed a list of 29 potential reviewers representing NECTC’s Research Team, Advisory Board, Expert Panel, Diversity Work Group, and the project’s professional staff, as well as transition experts and individuals who had published research findings related to transition for young children with disabilities. Potential reviewers were invited to participate in the review of child- and family- focused research studies, which resulted in a final group of 24 reviewers.

During the third step, reviewers participated in an orientation to the review process via conference call, during which the steps of the review process were provided, definitions used in the coding form explained, and questions for clarification elicited and answered. A tape recording of the orientation was mailed to
reviewers unable to participate in the call, and follow-up by project staff was conducted with these reviewers. NECTC staff provided opportunities throughout the review process for additional questions and clarification as needed.

Fourth, each article was reviewed by two trained reviewers, at least one of whom was a non-NECTC staff or research team member. A stipend of $25 was paid to outside reviewers for each article and an additional $50 was paid for meeting the requested three-week timeline. NECTC staff members were available throughout this review to provide assistance and clarification as needed.

In the fifth step, after both reviews of an article were completed, reviews were analyzed for cross-review consistency by a NECTC staff or Research Team member who had not previously participated in the review. Where major discrepancies existed, a third review was conducted by a new reviewer. Ten of the 50 articles (20%) required a third review. The major discrepancies that elicited a third review for these 10 articles were inconsistencies in rating the methodology employed and the level of evidence to support the findings.

Sixth, as reviews were returned, reviewer coding and notations were summarized using matrices, which then were used to develop reports of the major findings. The two original matrices have been merged into Appendices C and E in this report. The completed research review was evaluated by three outside researchers who had not participated previously in the process and who had expertise and knowledge of the transition literature and research. Reviewer comments and recommendations were addressed and findings were organized using the conceptual framework for early childhood transition developed by NECTC (Rous, Hallam, Harbin, McCormick & Jung, 2007). The present paper summarizes the findings across the 50 studies reviewed. For a more complete description of the review process, see Hains (2006).

Sources of Evidence and Definition
During the review process, two levels of evidence were used for classification. Initially, reviewers classified each study based on the research design employed, using six categories: (a) randomized, experimental design (as defined by United States Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences, 2006), (b) large group quantitative, (c) single subject quantitative, (d) case study, (e) interview or focus group, or (f) other. Based on this initial review, studies were further consolidated by NECTC research staff into three methodological categories: experimental/quasi-experimental, correlational, descriptive (see Table 2).

### Table 2. Type of Research Reported for Each Aspect of Transition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect of Transition</th>
<th>Type of Research</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental/ Quasi-Experimental</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correlational</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child-focused studies</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family-focused studies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note: One article (Kemp, 2003) was reviewed for both child and family studies.*
Studies were designated as large scale if they met the following requirements:

- Included 350 or more participants (children, professionals, and/or family members) and were representative of both genders.

- Were representative of the population of the country, both geographically and by racial group.

Studies that did not meet these two criteria were classified as small scale studies.

Evidence is summarized by first noting those findings that demonstrated large/moderate evidence as defined by the Extent of Evidence Categorization Scheme (What Works Clearinghouse, 2008).

Findings with a large/moderate extent of evidence:

- Were supported by more than one large scale study,

- Were reported as having participants who were representative of the population of the country, and

- When aggregated, included a total sample size of 350 or greater.

This is followed by summarization of findings that have lower levels of evidence (e.g., single study, participants non-representative of the population, low sample sizes) but are promising in providing guidelines for the field.

**Organization of the Findings**

Transition has been defined as a complex process that occurs over time and involves both the preparation of children and families and their subsequent adjustment to new settings or environments (Rous, Hallam, Harbin, McCormick, & Jung, 2007). Because of the complexity of the transition process, findings from studies related to children in transition are reported in Part 2 according to the outcome level studied: proximal or distal. The definition of outcome level for children is based on a model developed by NECTC (Rous, Harbin, & McCormick, 2006). In this framework, the proximal outcome for children builds on preparation of the child for the new environment, which leads to successful adjustment, namely adaptation, engagement, and continued learning, within a critical window of time (4-12 weeks) (Rous et al., 2007). Distal outcomes for children focus on success in school.

The definition of outcome level for families is based on Desired Family Outcomes of the Early Childhood Transition Process (Harbin, Rous, Peeler, Schuster, & McCormick, 2007), an expanded conceptual model developed by NECTC. Proximal family outcomes build on preparation that may start as early as a year in advance of the transition event, with the desired result of successful family adjustment to the new environment (Harbin et al., 2007). The distal outcome for families is said to be family engagement and involvement with their child’s learning, both within and outside of the education system. Findings from the family focus in Part 3 are presented according to three themes that emerged: (a) family characteristics related to transition, such as self-efficacy or adaptability; (b) family perceptions about their own transition experience, such as helpful transition practices and successful aspects of the process; and (c) objective data related to the frequency and nature of home school contacts at different levels. Findings which are associated with the conceptual model described above also are provided.
PART 2: TRANSITIONS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

This section provides an overview of the 33 data-based studies related to young children in transition that met the selection criteria described in Part 1. The studies appeared in 21 journals (see Table 3). They are profiled in Appendix C and annotated in Appendix D.

Table 3. Journals for Articles Included in the Review of Child Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Research Quarterly</td>
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<td>International Journal of Disability, Development and Education</td>
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<td>Journal of Social Psychology</td>
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Methods

Participants

In the 33 child-focused studies reviewed, the non-duplicated number of children who participated totaled approximately 40,912; the number of families/primary caregivers was 6,056; the non-duplicated number of teachers and other professionals was more than 11,252. The number of children per study ranged from fewer than 100 (10 studies) to more than 1,000 (five studies). Six studies (18%) involved more than 2,000 teachers. Fifteen studies (45%) were geographically district, or region. Of the 28 studies from the United States, the majority (n = 25; 89%) reported representation from various racial and ethnic groups (Table 4). Of these, 22 listed the percentage of representation from each racial group; three others reported the total percentage of children from minority groups in the studies, but did not describe the specific groups included. Three of the studies reviewed did not include any information about the racial or ethnic composition of the population studied. Reported groups represented among the

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1 One study reported the average number of children per classroom.
2 One study reported first, second, and third grade teacher ratings of children’s competence, but did not include the numbers of teachers.
studies were Caucasian, Asian American, African American, Native American, Pacific Islander, Latino, multi-racial, and other. Four studies reported that some subjects used a language other than English. Five studies represented international populations: Australia (three), New Zealand (one), and Hong Kong (one).

### Table 4. Percentage of Racial Diversity of Children Included in Studies

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<th>Study</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>&lt; 25%</th>
<th>25-50%</th>
<th>50-75%</th>
<th>&gt; 75%</th>
<th>Not Indicated/Other</th>
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<td>Early et al. (1999)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Primarily Europe; some Polynesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pianta et al. (1999)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prigg (2002)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ramey et al. (1998)</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Redden et al. (2001)</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rule, et al. (1990)</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schulting, et al. (2005)</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Troup &amp; Malone (2002)</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tudge, et al. (2003)</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</table>
A majority of the studies reviewed (n = 19; 57.5%) focused on the transition into kindergarten, four studies addressed transition into first grade, and one study described transition for children from birth through 36 months of age. No studies reported on children’s transition from infant-toddler/early intervention services into preschool. Nine studies provided information about transition to public school over more than one year.

In seven of the 33 studies (21.2%), the majority of the children in the sample had identified disabilities. The disabilities included speech/language impairment, mental retardation/intellectual disability, social-emotional/behavioral disorder, autism, physical impairment, developmental delay, and visual impairment, with severity ranging from mild to significant. Four other studies included children enrolled in Head Start or inclusive classrooms, which undoubtedly contained children with disabilities; however, the percentage of children with special needs and the nature of their disabilities were not described.

**Design**

Seven studies were rated by reviewers (see Part 1) as having an experimental/quasi-experimental design, 11 were classified as correlational studies, and the remaining 15 were determined to be descriptive studies (see Table 2).

Fourteen of the studies (42%) published the data on which their conclusions were based, while 19 (58%) summarized the findings without including the data. Two groups of authors, Kemp and Carter (2000) and Forest, Horner, Lewis-Palmer, and Todd (2004), applied their transition findings to the specific disability population which they studied (young children with intellectual disabilities and young children with autism, respectively), while other authors who included children with disabilities in their studies did not correlate their findings to specific populations. Also, Redden, Forness, Ramey, Ramey, Brezausek, and Kavale (2001) did not describe the disabilities of the children in Head Start who were included in their study, but the authors did specify the categories under the IDEA for the participating children who had been diagnosed with a disability by the time they reached third grade.

**Findings**

Results related to young children in transition are organized using the *Transition Conceptual Framework of Child Outcomes* (Rous, Harbin, & McCormick, 2006) and yield three broad categories of findings. The first category includes outcomes that were assessed or reported within a short time after the transition occurred, i.e., a few weeks to several months, but less than one school term. These proximal findings were related by the research either to a specific intervention that included a control or comparison group or to environmental or ecological factors.

The second category of findings includes more long-term outcomes, i.e., outcomes that occurred from one year to five years after the transition event. Again, the reported outcomes may have been related to a specific intervention or to other ecological factors.

The third category includes findings that are descriptive in nature. Findings in this category were not shown to relate directly to outcomes for young children, but rather the studies pursued factors that may contribute to the transition process, e.g., transition practices, characteristics of classroom environments, or...
Within each major category, findings are further grouped according to whether the outcomes pertained to (a) children with disabilities or (b) children who were at risk or developing typically. The Conclusions section includes information pertaining to whether studies met the criteria of moderate/large evidence using the Extent of Evidence Categorization Scheme (What Works Clearinghouse, 2008). This categorization scheme requires more than one study on a topic, more than one school or program included in the studies, and a total sample size of at least 350 children to receive a rating of moderate/large evidence. Practices that indicated positive outcomes but did not meet these criteria are reported as promising practices worthy of further study.

**Short-Term Findings Related to Child Outcomes**

Eleven studies reported short-term findings. Four of these studies reported findings related to a specific intervention and included children with disabilities. One study compared two types of teaching practices to outcomes for children who were in a transition program. The remaining six studies reported findings related to transition but not to any specific intervention. Each of the latter seven studies included young children at risk and/or children who were developing typically.

**Intervention Studies**

Kemp and Carter (2000) and LeAger and Shapiro (1995) found children with disabilities or at risk for school failure who were taught skills needed in the next environment (kindergarten) were able to transition successfully and complete independent tasks and/or participate in group activities in a kindergarten environment in a manner similar to their typically developing peers. The children in the LeAger and Shapiro study were enrolled in Head Start classes in which 80-100% of the children were identified as having disabilities, including language delays, learning disabilities, and emotional/behavioral problems. None of the children in the LeAger and Shapiro study was subsequently referred for special education services during the kindergarten year. The children in the Kemp and Carter study had been diagnosed with intellectual disabilities ranging from mild to severe and, after transition programming, were subsequently successfully included in mainstream classrooms.

A third study, conducted by Rule, Fiechtl, and Innocenti (1990), also reported that children with disabilities were able to learn “survival skills” and apply them in kindergarten or first grade. The 15 children in this study had disabilities that included mental retardation, behavior disorders, speech/language impairment, cerebral palsy, and physical impairment. A replication study included three children with behavioral or learning problems, but no diagnosed delay. No comparison or control group was used in this study, and follow-up data were limited.

A study reported by Kemp in 2003 focused on the use of an inclusive preschool program that targeted transition of children with intellectual disabilities. Children enrolled in the inclusive preschool program demonstrated successful integration into a mainstream kindergarten classroom. In addition to specific instruction in academic and social skills development, the transition program focused on training in school survival skills, support of the families during the transition process, and collaboration with receiving schools. Findings obtained from structured interviews with principals, teachers, and families indicated both family members and principals perceived integration to be very successful during the second term of the school year, and both family members and
teachers perceived success at the end of the year (fourth term). Family members and teachers reported the most important factor contributing to success was a positive working relationship between families and service providers.

**Non-Intervention Studies**

Seven studies reported proximal findings related to transition practices (one study), child characteristics (one study) or ecological/environmental factors (five studies). All of these non-intervention studies involved children who were developing typically or who were at risk of school failure.

For low-income, minority, urban children who were receiving additional transition (social and educational) services, Huffman and Spear (2000) found that children enrolled in kindergarten and first grade classrooms using developmentally appropriate practices demonstrated higher literacy achievement and problem-solving skills, but not math performance, at the end of the school year than did children in classrooms that used more didactic approaches.

Schulting, Malone, and Dodge (2005), using the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS) database, reported end-of-kindergarten academic achievement scores increased with each additional transition practice implemented at the beginning of kindergarten. The relationship between use of transition practices and academic achievement scores appeared to be greater for children from low- and middle-socioeconomic status groups than for children from higher status groups. Increased numbers of transition practices also were associated with increased parent-initiated school involvement (e.g., policy council member, school volunteer, participation in fund-raising activities).

Mantzicopoulos (2003b) found three factors predicted promotion to first grade vs. retention in kindergarten for former Head Start children. They were parent-reported school involvement and discussion of daily school activities with the child; parent estimates of the child’s abilities; and the level of parent satisfaction with school programs.

Responses by more than 3,500 kindergarten teachers to the Transition Practices Survey, as reported by Rimm-Kaufman, Pianta, and Cox (2000), indicated that 16% of children in their classes had serious adjustment problems after transition (especially following directions, working independently, and mastering academic skills). Children’s competencies also varied related to three demographic factors: metropolitan status (more adjustment problems in rural schools, which also had the highest rate of full-day kindergarten classes); district poverty level; and percentage of school minority population.

Two studies (Chun, 2003; Peters, 2003) reported proximal findings for child-reported adjustment. Peters (2003) described friends as playing a vital role in children’s adjustment to formal schooling in New Zealand and reported that peer-to-peer interactions also facilitated learning in the classroom. According to Chun (2003), children in Hong Kong initially reported that they had adjusted well to primary school, but later they wished to return to kindergarten with its lesser testing and rules. The author attributed this finding to discontinuity in pedagogical approaches and to more pressure to perform in primary school.

Miller, Gouley, Shields, Dickstein, Seifer, Magee, et al. (2003) conducted a functional screening of social-emotional, cognitive, and language skills during the summer for a sample of children enrolled in Head Start and converted the results to transition risk ratings. They found that the ratings predicted preschool adjustment the next spring, based on teacher questionnaires, child interviews, and child observations.
Long-Term Findings Related to Child Outcomes

Thirteen studies reported long-term findings, i.e., outcomes that were identified more than one year after the initiation of the study. One study involved a specific intervention, focused on young children who were at risk, and included a comparison group. Twelve studies were non-intervention studies, i.e., they related risk factors, ecological factors, or relationships to outcomes for children. Two of the 12 studies included children with disabilities; the other 10 focused on children who were developing typically and/or who were at risk for school failure.

Intervention Studies. Mantzicopoulos (2003a) provided evidence that children who had an extra year in a developmentally appropriate (transition) classroom following kindergarten had higher academic scores in first grade and were rated as having fewer behavior problems through third grade when compared with children who were eligible for a transition classroom, but instead went on to first grade. However, the children who participated in the transition classroom also were one year older than the children in the control group when assessed in first and third grades, a possible mitigating factor in the results.

Non-Intervention Studies. Two studies addressed long-term transition outcomes for children with disabilities. Redden et al. (2001) reported mixed results related to transition practices and identified disabilities. At-risk children who received additional transition services/supports were identified with disabilities in third grade at lower rates than children in a control group; however, this pattern did not hold true for speech/language delays. The rate of identified speech/language impairment was higher for at-risk children in third grade who had participated in the transition support program than for children in the control group.

Hanson, Horn, Sandall, Beckman, Morgan, Marquart, et al. (2001) found a variety of factors influenced the placement of children with disabilities in inclusive settings during the five years following their transition from an inclusive preschool. These included professionals’ goals and values; available school options; families’ ability to access information regarding the special education system, procedures, and laws; the ability of the family or others to advocate for the child; the match between family expectations and the expectations of the school; and specific child and/or family characteristics (e.g., type of disability, personality).

Ten non-intervention studies focused on the relationship of ecological factors to long-term outcomes for children who were at-risk or who were developing typically following transition to preschool, kindergarten, and/or elementary school. The study conducted by Greenberg, Lengua, Coie, and Pinderhughes (1999) reported certain variables assessed in kindergarten (i.e., demographic characteristics, socioeconomic status, race, family psychosocial risk factors, and quality of the neighborhood) predicted 18-29% of the variance in child functioning at the end of first grade, including cognitive functioning, social competence, and externalization of problems, for children representative of the general population.

Marcon’s study (2002) of African-American children in an urban setting found that while participation in more active, child-initiated preschool programs did not make a difference in academic achievement during the primary years when compared to participation in academically directed programs, it did correlate with significantly higher grades in the transition to fourth grade. Marcon attributed this finding to the fact that children in more
active and developmentally appropriate preschool classrooms demonstrated greater initiative and self-directed learning, which then allowed them to meet the increasing academic demands of the later elementary grades.

Mistry, Biesanz, Taylor, Burchinal, and Cox (2004) reported data gathered from one month through 36 months of age for children living in poverty showed the degree of financial instability and overall income level of the family predicted cognitive-linguistic outcomes for children at age 3. However it did not predict behavioral outcomes, which were reported to be mediated by family dynamics. In this study, the impact of family dynamics on cognition diminished as family income increased.

In a study conducted by Tudge, Odero, Hogan, and Etz (2003), children who initiated and engaged in more conversations with adults as preschoolers were perceived by elementary teachers two years later to be more competent. Peisner-Feinberg, Burchinal, Clifford, Culkin, Howes, and Kagan et al. (2001) found for more than 700 children who were developing typically, the quality of their child care during preschool was modestly associated with positive cognitive and social-emotional development in kindergarten and, in some cases, through second grade.

Two studies focused on teacher-child relationships. In a longitudinal study reported by Silver, Measelle, Armstrong, and Essex (2004), which focused on teacher-child interactions, conflict in the teacher-child relationship during transition to kindergarten was found to contribute to increased externalizing behaviors through third grade, while declines in externalizing behaviors were associated with teacher-child closeness. Howes, Phillipsen, and Peisner-Feinberg (2000) reported that teacher perceptions of the quality of teacher-child relationships and of children’s social adjustment were consistent over a three-year period from preschool through transition into kindergarten, with teachers reporting a greater closeness to girls than to boys.

Mantzicopoulos (2005) concluded quality of the Head Start classroom contributed to the adjustment of Head Start children to kindergarten. Children reported less conflict with teachers when classrooms were observed to be more developmentally appropriate. Findings also demonstrated children’s participation in transition activities prior to kindergarten correlated with lower teacher-child conflict, and less teacher-child conflict was related to better school achievement.

Results of the longitudinal study conducted by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Child Care Research Network (NICHD, 2003) indicated a relationship between the amount of time children spent in any type of non-maternal care during the first 4 ½ years of life and the degree of externalizing behavior and conflict exhibited at both 4 ½ years of age and in kindergarten, although the degree of effect was smaller than the effect of maternal sensitivity and socioeconomic status on behavior.

Ramey, Lanzi, Phillips, & Ramey (1998) examined child-reported adjustment to kindergarten and found that 74% of former Head Start children interviewed had positive perceptions of their kindergarten experience. Teachers’ ratings of academic performance through second grade were higher for children who reported more positive school perceptions.

**Descriptive Studies Not Focused on Outcomes**

Nine studies are included in this category, including two which focused on children with disabilities, two which included children with disabilities in inclusive programs, and five based on the general population of children.
Studies Including Children with Disabilities.
Two studies explored transition practices for young children with disabilities in transition to kindergarten. Forest et al. (2004) identified 25 elements from the literature as being important for a successful transition and then surveyed families, preschool and kindergarten teachers of three children diagnosed with autism. The respondents agreed that all but one element (placement at least six months prior to transition) was important, but they varied greatly in their perceptions of the degree to which each element had been implemented during the children’s transition to kindergarten. In a study of related service personnel, Prigg (2001) interviewed six occupational therapists in Australia. They described their roles in the transition of children with disabilities from early childhood to mainstreamed school, emphasizing preparedness of the child for school, working with school personnel, and providing support to families.

Two studies explored inclusive settings related to transition. La Paro, Pianta, & Cox (2000) studied the use of transition practices by kindergarten teachers for young children with special needs as they transitioned to first grade. They reported teachers used more individual transition practices before school started and participated in more meetings to coordinate personnel for these children than for children without special needs. A study of inclusive classrooms conducted by Troup and Malone (2002) described a lack of match between sending and receiving environments as being related to less successful transitions, especially for children with developmental delays.

Studies Involving Children At-Risk or Developing Typically. Using data from the National Center for Early Development and Learning Transition Practices Survey, Early, Pianta, and Cox (1999) reported that although kindergarten teachers have adequate education and experience, they lack training on facilitating transitions to kindergarten. Over half of first grade teachers used some transition practices (Pianta, Cox, Taylor, & Early, 1999), but most practices involved the whole class and occurred after the start of the school year (Early, Pianta, Taylor, & Cox, 2001; Pianta et al., 1999). The least used practices were home visits and meetings with families or other teachers to discuss the transition to first grade.

In a longitudinal study (Lin, Lawrence, & Gorrell, 2003) and a study conducted with focus groups (Wesley & Buysse, 2003), pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers, elementary principals, and families reported that social development and communication skills should be emphasized over academic skills for school readiness. Furthermore, children varied in readiness due to cultural and socio-economic opportunities (Wesley & Buysse, 2003). Geographic region, gender, and age of the teacher were associated with teachers’ readiness expectations of children (Lin et al, 2003). Professionals and families also reported that schools were not ready to serve the variety of children who enroll. Respondents said “ready” schools provide: transition practices throughout the year; effective family supports; adequate facilities, appropriate curriculum and congruent classroom philosophies; effective communication styles and patterns; sufficient resources; and professional development (Wesley & Buysse, 2003).
Theoretical Bases

Fourteen of the 33 child-focused transition studies (42.4%) cited a specific theoretical framework that guided the development of their work. While other investigators did not cite a theory, a relationship to a theoretical framework was presented in their reports. The following theoretical bases were cited by one or more of the studies reviewed here. In parentheses following each model are the references listed by researchers who cited the model.

**Ecological Model** *(Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1993; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).* Child development occurs within everyday activities and is influenced by multiple contexts, such as family, school, peers, community, beliefs and values, and infrastructures.

**Social-Ecological-Transitional/Bioecological/Process-Person-Context-Time/and Contextual Systems Models** *(Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1993, 1995; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Boyce, Frank, Jensen, Kessler, Nelson et al., 1998; Landesman, Jaccard, & Gunderson, 1991; Magnusson, 1988; Pianta & Walsh, 1996; Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000; Sameroff, 1983).* These approaches constitute the most frequently cited theoretical framework. In addition to development being influenced by the interactions between the child’s characteristics (e.g., motivation, temperament, initiative) and contextual variation, the child’s interactions shape subsequent events in a dynamic way and have a cumulative effect on learning and development over time.

**Developmental/Ecological Developmental Model** *(Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Boyce, Frank, Jensen, Kessler, Nelson et al., 1998; Dodge & Pettit, 2003; Ladd, 1996; Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 2003; Pianta & Walsh, 1996; Ramey & Ramey, 1994, 1999; Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000).* This model is based on the Contextual Systems Bioecological Models but emphasizes the importance of relationships among all partners, i.e., home, school, community, and peer groups, and notes that relationships broaden over time.

**Developmental Psychopathology Theoretical Model** *(Sroufe & Rutter, 1984).* This model focuses on processes that can explain challenges to high-risk populations and assist in defining successful adaptation in regard to salient social contexts and developmental tasks.

**School Readiness Model.** Critical components are multi-dimensional, highly variable, and culturally and contextually influenced over time *(Kagan, Moore, & Bredekamp, 1995; Love, 2001).* Conceptualizations include the notions that readiness unfolds in stages until the child reaches maturation, considers both child characteristics and environmental experiences, and represents a set of ideas constructed by communities and schools *(Graue, 1993; Harradine & Clifford, 1996; Meisels, 1999).*

Other authors discussed attachment theory, the construct of ready schools, the need for continuity between settings, preparation for the demands of the next setting, and relationships between the child, teacher, and families as being critical components for successful transitions. Although references for these concepts could be located, particular theoretical models were not cited in the articles reviewed.
Studies with Stronger Evidence

Using the Extent of Evidence Categorization Scheme (What Works Clearinghouse, 2008), several findings are supported by sufficient evidence to receive a rating of moderate/large evidence. Such a rating requires more than one study on the topic, the participation of more than one program or school in the study, and a total sample size of at least 350 children across the studies.

Following are findings supported by a moderate/large extent of evidence:

- High quality child care and developmentally appropriate preschool and kindergarten classrooms are associated with better academic outcomes (social adjustment: Mantzicopoulos [2005]; cognition: Mantzicopoulos [2003a]; work habits, initiative, and self-direction: Marcon [2002], Peisner-Feinberg, et al. [2001]; and literacy and problem-solving: Huffman & Spear [2000]) in the next environments for children who are developing typically and for low income, minority, urban children; many of these children and their families also participated in transition activities/services (five studies; 1,363 children).

- Ecological factors, including socioeconomic status/income level (Mistry et al., 2004; Greenberg et al., 1999), family risk factors, quality of the neighborhood (Greenberg et al., 1999), and parent school involvement and satisfaction (Mantzicopoulos, 2003b) are associated with higher academic achievement and more positive social outcomes through early elementary grades for both children who are developing typically and those who are at risk (three studies; 1,972 children).

- A close, positive teacher-child relationship during transition to and in the next environment is associated with better cognitive outcomes for children who are developing typically and for those at risk (Mantzicopoulos, 2005; Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2001; two studies, 836 children) and with decreased externalizing behavior/positive social relationships for typically developing children (Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2001; Silver et al., 2004; two studies, 1,016 children). The unduplicated number of children who participated in these studies is 1,119.

- Preschool and kindergarten teachers and their principals or directors view social development and social communication skills (e.g., expresses wants, takes turns, follows directions) as being more important for school readiness than academic skills (Lin et al., 2003; Wesley & Buysse, 2003; two studies, 3,423 professionals and families).

- A lack of match between the sending and receiving environments is related to less successful transitions both for children who are developing typically and those with developmental delays (Chun, 2003; Troup & Malone, 2002), while teaching skills for requirements in the next environment is associated with more successful adjustment and positive outcomes after transition for young children with disabilities/developmental delay or who are at risk for school failure (Kemp, 2003; Kemp & Carter, 2000; LeAger & Shapiro, 1995; Rule et al., 1990; six studies, 386 children).
Studies with Promising Practices

Although the extent of evidence does not meet the criteria for a moderate/large rating (What Works Clearinghouse, 2008), the findings below are “promising practices” related to the transition of young children. Further research is needed.

- The child’s initial adjustment to the next environment may be hampered by geographic factors, such as a rural setting, or by a discrepancy in minority/non-minority status between teacher and student (Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2000), as well as by the child’s initial lack of friends after transition (Peters, 2003).

- The use of more transition practices at the beginning of the transition year may be related to higher academic achievement later in the year, especially for children in low and middle socioeconomic groups, and to increased parent-initiated school involvement (Schulting et al., 2005).

- Providing transition assistance (health and family support services, parent involvement, curricular modifications) for an extended period of time upon entering a school system may prevent children at risk from being diagnosed with a developmental disability in the elementary grades (Redden et al., 2001).

- Although adequate preparation for skills needed in the next environment is important, the most crucial factor in a successful transition to an inclusive environment for children with disabilities may be a positive working relationship between the family and the service providers (Kemp, 2003).

Conclusions from Child-Focused Studies

While the focus on young children in transition has been explored for at least 30 years, it is noteworthy that only a small number of studies have been published on the topic overall, and few can be classified as experimental or quasi-experimental (Table 2). Many of the studies reviewed reported a relationship between specific transition activities or ecological factors and outcomes for children but showed no causal effect. Some studies focused on children with disabilities, but failed to relate results to specific disabilities and severity levels. Reports for many of the descriptive studies reviewed support the use of transition practices and underscore the perception that these practices are associated with better outcomes for children, but without sufficient data to support the conclusions.

Reviewers have noted that the standards for research have changed since the earlier studies surveyed here were conceptualized, conducted, and published (1990-2006). Also, research on young children, especially young children with disabilities, clearly presents challenges with regard to individual differences, assessment measures, family mobility, and tracking over time. Nevertheless, future research on the transition of young children must address the limitations apparent through this review of the literature. In order to determine the most effective strategies and practices in transition for children with disabilities, children who are at risk for school failure, and children who are developing typically, future research should include the following:

- More rigorous research methodology (e.g., random assignment to experimental groups and statistical control for competing hypotheses in correlational studies; Odom, Brantlinger, Gersten, Horner, Thompson, & Harris, 2005), as well as thorough reports...
Facilitating family involvement in transition has long been recommended content in professional development programs for early childhood service providers (Head Start Bureau, 1989; Kagan & Neuman, 1998) and has been included as a recommended practice published by the leading professional organization in early childhood special education, the Council for Exceptional Children’s Division for Early Childhood (1993). Other countries, such as Australia and Taiwan, also have adopted family involvement recommendations for early transitions for children with disabilities (Kemp, 2003; Rei, 2007). Clearly, family participation has been a pillar of policy and suggested practices for supporting young children’s movement between services, especially when disability may add complexity to the changes encountered.

Of the studies noted in the literature search described, 18 addressed the topic of families of children in transition and met the selection criteria for this literature review. One of these 18 studies also was reviewed for the child-focused studies reported in Part 2 (Kemp, 2003). Three of the 18 studies included families of young children with disabilities but were conducted prior to the specified 1990-2006 time period (Hanline, 1988; Hanline & Halvorsen, 1989; and Johnson, Chandler, Kerns, & Fowler, 1986). These three studies were included in this analysis because they are cited frequently. The 18 family-focused studies are profiled in Appendix E and annotated in Appendix F, and appeared in 14 journals (see Table 5).
### Table 5. Journals for Articles Included in the Review of Family Studies

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Journal Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Early Intervention, formerly Journal of the Division for Early Childhood</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Research Quarterly</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian Journal of Early Childhood</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early Child Development and Care</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educational Gerontology</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Elementary School Journal</td>
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<td>Exceptional Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Journal of Behavioral Development</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Journal of Disability, Development and Education</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Psychology Review</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal of Educational Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parenting: Science and Practice</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young Children</td>
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### Methods

#### Participants

Fourteen of the 18 studies were conducted in the United States, while four were conducted in other countries: Australia (two), Israel (one), and Singapore (one). Of the 14 studies from the United States, five were reported to occur in urban areas. Four used a national sample, while 10 employed participants from a single locale. Altogether, these 18 studies of families in transition reported data on 13,799 adults, with individual samples ranging from four to 9,780. Fourteen of the 18 studies included more than 30 adult respondents. Two employed large data sets, with 2,509 and 9,780 subjects respectively. Some studies reported the number of children in the family, but most did not. Seven studies reported the children’s gender, while reports regarding the gender of family members were inconsistent. For example, five authors stated parents, five indicated both genders, three noted mothers, and four did not define the gender of participants.

Eight of the studies focused on families of children with disabilities, including two that studied families of children with significant disabilities. None of the studies involving families of children with disabilities contained more than 100 participants; most included considerably fewer. Six of these eight studies were published before 2001.

No studies reported a focus on ethnic or linguistic issues of families in transition, although one (Sy & Schulenberg, 2005) described the relationship of parental expectations and involvement for transition to kindergarten with child achievement for participants from two cultural groups. Thirteen authors provided information about the diversity of ethnicity in their samples; eight of these provided specific information. Other authors offered only general statements to describe their sample. Hamblin-Wilson and Thurman (1990) and Rimm-Kaufman and Pianta (1999) noted the largest percentage of families in their samples were African-American; Diamond, Reagan, and Bandyk (2000) and Pianta and Kraft-Sayre (1999) oversampled for African-American populations.

The specific transitions reported varied. The majority of studies (11) explored family issues during their children’s transition from preschool or Head Start into kindergarten. Three studies...
used cross-sectional designs, reporting on more than one transition. Three studies (one multi-level and two single level) yielded information on the transition from early intervention for children with disabilities. One study examined transition from kindergarten to first and/or higher grades, and two studies included results from more than one year of elementary school. Specific information about the type(s) of transition included in each study appears in Appendices E and F.

**Design**

For the family-focused studies, two studies were rated by reviewers as having an experimental/quasi-experimental design, three were classified as correlational, and the remaining 13 were determined to be descriptive studies (see Table 2).

The investigations in this analysis used interviews, surveys, and/or contact logs to gather information about or from family members. Some coupled these approaches with observational assessments of children or interviews with or surveys of teachers. Eight studies used established and/or published instruments, while 10 used project-developed measures. Few provided data regarding the validity of their data collection tools for the study participants. Five reported inter-rater reliability for their data collection, and three reported measures of internal consistency for the instruments used in their study. Two studies employed a comparison group (Seefeldt, Denton, Galper, & Younoszai, 1999, 1998) but for only a minor part of reported findings.

As may be seen in Table 6, 13 of the 18 data-based studies reviewed are descriptive in nature. Seven of the studies (39%) provided empirical data as evidence for their assertions, while 11 of the investigations (61%) published summary descriptions of their findings from qualitative and/or quantitative approaches. Results are provided using three themes that emerged from the findings.

**Findings**

Examination of Appendix E shows the 18 family-focused transition studies fit into three categories. Eight studies dealt with parental qualities or beliefs related to their children’s transition and its outcomes, with none focused on families of children with disabilities. Nine studies, including eight of families of children with disabilities, summarized parental observations about their experiences in transition with their children. One study (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 1999) provided an objective description of the differences in parent-teacher contact between preschool and kindergarten using contact logs. This study did not discuss families of children with disabilities in the analysis.

**Findings Related to Family Involvement and Child Outcomes.** Of the 18 family-focused studies, seven provided detailed empirical evidence dealing with divergent issues related to parenting during transition. Although definitive statements cannot be made from the limited data, findings from these studies lend support to the importance of fostering positive family-school connections in the years during and after preschool. Parental attitudes about school climate (Seefeldt, Denton, Galper, & Younoszai, 1998), and parent self-efficacy (Seefeldt, et al., 1998, 1999) were shown to be associated with family involvement with education at school and at home. Child achievement in kindergarten was positively correlated with parental self-efficacy (Seefeldt et al., 1999). Additionally, family cohesion and adaptability were related to teachers’ positive attitudes about children. These two family characteristics also were associated with
teacher evaluation of more positive child adjustment to kindergarten (Teichman & Ziv, 1998), supporting a need to explore the role of parent involvement in increasing teacher-child closeness to improve children’s school outcomes.

Data from two of these seven studies suggest families from different cultural groups may experience transition differently. Sharpe (2002) reported families in Singapore invested considerable time in preparing their children for transition to the primary grades. Sy and Schulenberg (2005) reported a significant difference between Asian-American and Euro-American families’ beliefs, expectations, and involvement; yet there was little difference in achievement for their children.

Two studies examined families’ perception of school readiness and responsivity to their children’s wariness. Diamond, Reagan, & Bandyk (2000) described home learning activities families used to promote school readiness and found the degree of use was unrelated to the families’ concern about readiness. Early et al. (2002) tracked the relationship of parental responsiveness to children’s inhibition from 15 months to kindergarten age and found greater maternal sensitivity was associated with less child inhibition during the transition to kindergarten. Families of children with disabilities were not featured in any of these seven studies.

**Descriptive Studies Not Focused on Outcomes.** Of the 11 studies in this category, eight featured families of children with disabilities (see Appendix E). Ten of the 11 studies used interviews or surveys with family members to determine their satisfaction with their children’s transitions, their needs for transition support, the services they were offered, and the nature of difficulties that arose during the transition process. Most often, the aim of these studies was to provide greater understanding of family participation in the transition process, for either children with disabilities or those without disabilities. A second purpose was to identify strategies to minimize challenges for families during future transitions (e.g., Campbell, 1997; Hanline, 1988; Hanline & Halvorsen, 1989; Johnson, Chandler, Kerns, & Fowler, 1986; Lovett & Haring, 2003; Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 1999).

These research reports indicated the majority of family members who participated in their children’s transition rated it as successful, but many also reported stress and specific concerns along the way. Communication between program/school personnel and families to provide information and answer family questions was seen as critical to resolving concerns. The availability of family options for child placement and support also reportedly helped to alleviate difficulties (Hanson, Beckman, et al., 2000). Other practices recommended by families in the reported research are listed in Table 6. Kemp (2003) demonstrated that in some cases transition challenges were associated with particular child characteristics rather than with system issues. Accordingly, the author suggested such dilemmas be addressed with sensitivity on the part of the family and with individualized support from school personnel.
Table 6. Promising Practices in Family Support for Early Childhood Transition, as Recommended by Family Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promising Practice</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Sources in Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Shared information about the next environment</td>
<td>Schedules, curriculum, difference between programs, teacher roles, language used for familiar items or activities, characteristics of support services, expectations of teachers for children and families, options for parent involvement, safety issues, transportation, program quality, interpretation of unfamiliar language</td>
<td>Campbell, 1997; Hamblin-Wilson &amp; Thurman, 1990; Hanline, 1988; Hanline &amp; Halvorsen, 1989; Johnson, Chandler, Kerns, &amp; Fowler, 1986; Kemp, 2003; Lovett &amp; Haring, 2003; Pianta &amp; Kraft-Sayre, 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Efforts to reduce families’ stress as to whether their children could meet expectations</td>
<td>Talking honestly about preparation to address expectations; accommodations; reports on how child is doing in the new environment</td>
<td>Campbell, 1997; Hanline &amp; Halvorsen, 1989; Lovett &amp; Haring, 2003; Pianta &amp; Kraft-Sayre, 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Individualization</td>
<td>Support tailored to child and family needs</td>
<td>Campbell, 1997; Hanline &amp; Halvorsen, 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Well organized transfer of records</td>
<td>Assessment information, special needs, accommodations</td>
<td>Campbell, 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Liaisons between programs with whom families can work</td>
<td>Relationships with specified individuals who can assist with information and problem solving, repeated discussions to enable families to process the mass of complicated information</td>
<td>Campbell, 1997; Hanline, 1988; Lovett &amp; Haring, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Parent training in advocacy for their child</td>
<td>Information related to the transition process including assessment and formal meetings, how families can voice their views and have an impact on decisions, legal rights, procedures when services discussed are not appropriate/satisfactory to parent</td>
<td>Hamblin-Wilson &amp; Thurman, 1990; Lovett &amp; Haring, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Invitation of families to visit possible future environments and/or meet with the teacher</td>
<td>Site visits, welcome events, conferences with teachers</td>
<td>Hamblin-Wilson &amp; Thurman, 1990; Hanline, 1988; Hanline &amp; Halvorsen, 1989; Johnson, Chandler, Kerns, &amp; Fowler, 1986; Kemp, 2003; Pianta &amp; Kraft-Sayre, 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Community services that might supplement program offered services</td>
<td>Therapy, counseling</td>
<td>Hamblin-Wilson &amp; Thurman, 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Parent participation on agency transition planning teams</td>
<td>Development of process and procedures</td>
<td>Hanline &amp; Halvorsen, 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Linkage with other families</td>
<td>Parent to parent activities, one-to-one mentoring</td>
<td>Hanline, 1988; Hanline &amp; Halvorsen, 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Follow-up support for parent after child has moved to new program</td>
<td>Telephone calls, parent meetings, additional information sheets</td>
<td>Kemp, 2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All the studies listed in Table 6 except one (Pianta and Kraft-Sayre, 1999) focused on families of children with disabilities. These were descriptive studies that did not assess outcomes for children or family members. Practices were general recommendations, not for specific disabilities.

A final study (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 1999) provided a description of the differences in parent-teacher contact between preschool and kindergarten. Disability was not included as a variable in this analysis. Data from contact logs revealed that teacher-family contact was greater during preschool than during the primary years. Head Start families received more home visits than either preschool or kindergarten families. Longitudinal analyses showed that home-school communications became fewer in number and more formal, more negative, and more frequently initiated by school personnel as children became older.

### Congruence with the NECTC Conceptual Model

The Desired Family Outcomes of the Early Childhood Transition Process (Harbin, Rous, Peeler, Schuster, & McCormick, 2007) posits three time-based clusters of outcomes for families related to the transition of their young child with a disability. The immediate outcomes might be considered family preparation for transition. Short-term or proximal outcomes might be regarded as family adjustment to the new environment and its expectations. Long-term or distal outcomes might be measured as family engagement and involvement with their child’s learning.

Examination of the 18 family-focused transition studies indicated that none directly tested the outcome of an intervention at any of the three time clusters. Most of the promising practices apply during the family preparation phase. Several of the empirical relationships noted under the first theme in these studies suggest possible long-term impact of parental characteristics (Early et al., 2002; Hamblin-Wilson & Thurman, 1990; Seefeldt et al., 1998, 1999; Teichman & Ziv, 1998).

### Theoretical Bases

The research reviewed under the family focus was intergenerational in nature (i.e., parent/child or parent/teacher/child; sometimes also grandparent/parent/child). It also was inter- or multi-setting (i.e., home/preschool/school). All studies addressed, at some level, the complexity of the transition experience. Four articles were explicit in the theoretical frameworks upon which their study was designed (Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 1999; Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 1999; Seefeldt, et al., 1998, 1999; Teichman & Ziv, 1998), while the other 14 did not specify a conceptual foundation. The theoretical frameworks cited and their applications to this work follow. In parentheses after each model are the references listed by the researchers who cited the model.

#### Circumplex Model of Family and Marital Systems

(Olson, 1986; Olson, Russel, & Sprenkke, 1983): Families’ cohesion and adaptability play a role in guiding adult behavior and the development of their children, including, it was proposed, during transition to kindergarten.

#### Intergenerational Systems Theory

(presented initially by Bandura, 1977; Bowen, 1978): Both parents and grandparents may
influence their children’s adjustment to kindergarten.

**Ecology of Child Development Theory**
(Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Pianta & Walsh, 1996; Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000; Sameroff, 1995): Children’s adjustment in the transition to school is the product of relationships among a wide array of contexts and persons, including the child, the family, schools and teachers, peers, preschools and preschool teachers, and the wider community, as well as the continuity or discontinuity of these relationships over time.

**School Readiness as an Ecological Phenomenon**
(Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Pianta & Walsh, 1996; Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000; Sameroff, 1995): School readiness results from complex interactions over time and not just from specific child skills.

**Transactional View of the Development of the Self**
(Bandura, 1986, 1997): Behavior, including, it was proposed, behavior related to transition, is the result of reciprocal interactions between personal characteristics, such as self-efficacy, and environmental context, such as school practices related to transition.

**Self-Efficacy Theory**
(Bandura, 1997; Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastarelli, 1996): An individual’s capacity to exert control over personal functioning and environmental demands, including most likely those related to transition, can have considerable influence on development and behavior.

**Discussion**

**Studies with Stronger Evidence**

Using the large study/small study criteria defined in Part 1 (large = more than 350 participants who are representative of the population), two studies focused on families in transition merit the large study designation (Sy & Schulenberg, 2005; Diamond, Reagan, & Bandyk, 2000). Both described family attitudes and behaviors during the transition period rather than specific practices that programs, schools, or families might implement. Neither study focused on families of young children with disabilities.

Using the Extent of Evidence Categorization Scheme (What Works Clearinghouse, 2008), two findings are supported by sufficient evidence to receive a rating of moderate/large evidence. Such a rating requires more than one study on the topic, the participation of more than one program or school in the study, and a total sample size of at least 350 children.

- Transition is a complex process, not a static event. It is based on relationships. Positive relationships and transition support activities can ease the stress of transition for families (12 studies, eight including families of children with disabilities, 1,035 total family members).
- Parental sense of self-efficacy is associated with greater school-related parent involvement and improved academic outcomes for children (two U.S. studies, 486 family members, plus one Singaporean study with 38 families; none focused on disability).

An additional finding is included as having a moderate extent of evidence. Studies related to young children with disabilities tend to have small numbers of participants; however, this finding was supported by seven studies conducted in all parts of the nation with families of children who experienced a variety and range of disabilities.
• Needs of families must be met before families are able to help their children with disabilities transition between programs or systems (seven studies, all including families of children with disabilities, 276 families).

Studies with Promising Practices

In addition to these rather general findings, 13 promising practices were identified in these studies as shown in Table 6. The studies reviewed did not test these strategies directly; they reported families’ agreement about the usefulness of the practices.

Conclusions from Family-Focused Studies

The most striking finding from this review conducted by NECTC on family issues at transition is a lack data-based, peer-reviewed studies. Legislation has supported family participation in transition planning since the early 1990s, and many early childhood transition procedure manuals have been published to guide families and aid in program planning (e.g., Byrd, Stephens, Dyk, Perry, & Rous, 1991; Head Start Bureau, 1989; Rosenkoetter, 1995). Further, while commonly recommended transition strategies for families inherently make good sense, there is limited validation, beyond parent and provider report, of the specific family support strategies that are widely recommended for children with disabilities and/or their impact on child outcomes.

There appear to be two overlapping areas where additional research is needed: first, the dynamics of physical, social, cognitive, and psychological aspects of transition for family members; and second, validation of practices and specific strategies that support families in coping with transition and developing a positive relationship with their new service providers. Both areas may be beneficially explored for the families of all children in a given transition and especially for the families of children with disabilities. In addition, a more targeted study research in determining how transition impacts families from under-represented groups, including culturally and linguistically diverse families and families of children with significant disabilities is needed.

A second finding from this review is the relative limitations related to methods descriptions in many of the research reports. The participants and methods are often inadequately described making it difficult to either replication or generalize findings to other groups or situations or replicating the studies in similar or different settings. The protocols for interviews or surveys often were omitted, and findings were, on occasion, reported without a description of the data. With notable exceptions, many of these studies might best be viewed as pilot studies that can engender hypotheses and methods for future work. In fact, most of the studies appear to have had description, rather than hypothesis testing, as their goal.

More precise examination of family involvement in transition via well designed studies, documented research practices, and clear reporting of results is needed. To be fair, the expectations of the field in this regard have changed during the past 18 years, and data for at least 10 of these studies was collected more than 10 years ago.

A third issue pertains to delineation of the particular family involvement practices that may be more important for families of children with disabilities than for families of typically developing children. Several studies may help communities and agencies design systems and services that provide supports to families at stressful transition times as they seek to comply with the spirit and specific mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (e.g., Campbell, 1997; Hamblin-Wilson & Thurman, 1990; Hanline, 1998; Hanline & Halvorson, 1989;
These preliminary findings require additional testing in well-designed studies. A uniform and abiding message of these studies is the importance of clear communication and positive mutual relationships among key administrators, service providers, and family members as families encounter a change in settings and services for their children with disabilities.

Additionally, researchers may explore the expansion of their theoretical bases for family transition research to encompass more family theory. For example, the Double ABCX model or stress model (Hill, 1949, 1958), as expanded by McCubbin and Patterson (1983), may be fruitful for examining how family members adapt to the new service setting and support their child in adjusting. Family resiliency theory (Walsh, 1996) and family empowerment theory (Nachshen, 2004; Zimmerman, 2000; Zimmerman & Warschausky, 1998) may help to explain positive outcomes for the majority of families in transition and suggest ways to increase the number of families who experience satisfaction during and after the changes. Patterson (2002) has attempted to combine family stress theory and family resilience theory in a manner that might be tested in the case of early childhood transition. In order to promote the most positive outcomes from a stressful situation, Patterson has suggested that family members must attribute positive meanings to the situation, notably three levels of meaning construction: (a) about the particular stressful event, (b) about the family’s own identity, and (c) about its worldview. Family viewpoints in these three areas would seem to have important implications for future interactions of the family in transition with the service system and of adult family members with their own child.

PART 4: SUMMARY

The transition research reviewed included work with typically developing children and their families, children with disabilities and their families, and children at risk and their families. A minority of the studies (n = 15 of 50 studies [one was reviewed for both Parts 2 and 3]; 30%) pertained to young children with disabilities and their families (see Appendices C and E). The following section offers comments on the findings previously reported in Parts 2 and 3, followed by recommendations for future research.

Potential Limitations

There are two potential limitations. First, it is conceivable that some relevant studies were overlooked during the search for transition-related research. In spite of this possibility, the authors feel confident that large numbers of additional refereed publications on this topic do not presently exist.

Second, the field of early childhood transition research has changed considerably since 1990 and continues to evolve since 2006, when the present review concluded. The authors anticipate more findings soon will be available to supplement the work reported here. Nevertheless, it is striking that of the 15 studies that focused on young children with disabilities and/or their families, 11 studies (73%) were published prior to 2002.
Conclusions generated through this review of the research literature cluster into four areas.

1. A primary finding from this review is the limited number of data-based, published studies available on early childhood transition over the 16-year period and across the two major populations of focus: child and family. A related finding is the small number of data-based studies focused on young children with disabilities and their families. The initial goal of this research study was to provide a synthesis of validated transition practices, especially related to children with disabilities, but this was not possible given the paucity of the research available.

Clearly more studies are needed, both to identify and validate key practices and their relationship to child and family outcomes and to help understand the impact of transition on children with and without disabilities, their families, and their service providers. Ideally studies should be national in focus. However, given the high cost of national data collection, innovative regional and multi-community research should be encouraged and supported at both state and national levels. Creative, collaborative approaches are needed to continue to generate results useful to practitioners, policy makers, and scholars.

2. A second significant observation is a lack of clear lines of inquiry which have been replicated across settings and situations. Research that is focused on key questions and founded on emerging conceptual frameworks as a way to design the studies, analyze findings, and synthesize results may bring greater clarity and systematic foundations to transition research (see Harbin, Rous, Peeler, Schuster, & McCormick, 2007; Rous, Hallam, Harbin, McCormick, & Jung, 2007; Rous, Harbin, & McCormick, 2006). Underlying theories that promote hypotheses should be explicated in advance and then used to help interpret findings beyond the level of mere description.

3. A third observation is the limited rigor within much of the current transition research. Most of the field’s current knowledge about the transition process is based on descriptive studies and many of the studies reviewed appeared to be exploratory. Where randomization occurred, it typically was not at the child or parent level. There were few intervention studies with systematic comparisons or controls and few studies that replicated a transition approach with the same populations over time. Research reports often omitted significant information such as effect sizes, population characteristics (e.g., gender, ethnicity, location), instrumentation, or protocols. In some cases, findings were reported without supporting data.

It should be stated that the extant research reviewed represents the research standards of the field 10-20 years ago. In the case of studies with children with disabilities and their families, researchers have often pointed to difficulties in creating science-based findings that meet the highest standards: the diversity and special requirements for assessment of this population, the need to individualize both techniques and research questions, the small numbers of potential subjects overall and in a given geographic region, and the challenges inherent in obtaining a sufficiently large subject pool to conduct statistical analyses (Buysse & Wesley,
Given changing expectations in the field, future research in transition should be designed with rigor to meet the new requirements for science-based evidence (e.g., What Works Clearinghouse, 2008).

Finally, while the empirical evidence may be weak, it does provide preliminary and promising findings. Buysse and Wesley (2006) have suggested that the requirement for evidence-based practice is well-served by marshalling multiple forms of evidence around a target question in order to solve real-world problems and inform critical policy decisions. In the case of transition, legal and regulatory guidelines, combined with the field’s broadly embraced values about transition practices (based on experiential evidence covering more than 25 years), buttress recommendations for the use of transition planning and practices with families and to support their participation in the transition process. Anecdotal evidence related to transition practices for children with disabilities and their families has come from the findings of numerous U.S. Department of Education demonstration and outreach projects conducted across the nation, state technical assistance efforts, local initiatives, and numerous personal reports from families and service providers about their experiences (Rosenkoetter, Whaley, Hains, & Pierce, 2001).

### Implications for Practice

Below is a summary of the findings reported in the Discussion sections of Parts 2 and 3. Each finding is followed by possible implications for policy, practice, or research.

1. **Contextual factors** – in addition to the characteristics of a particular child – have an important and complex impact on child outcomes. Transition procedures and whether or not they are implemented, the behaviors of professionals, family characteristics and involvement, family efficacy, teacher-child closeness, school climate, timelines, location of the receiving classroom, and other factors, such as the child’s friendships, have been shown to affect the quality of the transition and, in some cases, the outcomes and adjustment for the child. Embracing this contextual understanding implies a major re-thinking from child-centered “school readiness” to a more context-centered approach to transition.

2. The use of transition practices and strategies are one aspect of the critical context that may impact child and family outcomes following transition. This finding suggests the need for major research and subsequent translational work on the use of specific transition practices and strategies. From the studies reviewed, the linkage between specific transition practices/strategies and outcomes has yet to be clearly demonstrated for young children with disabilities and their families. Additional research is needed to produce specificity and identify the critical variables during the transition process for typically developing children, those at risk, and those with disabilities and their families.

3. Within a facilitative context, a positive relationship exists between quality child care/developmentally appropriate classrooms during the preschool years and positive child outcomes in kindergarten and elementary school. This finding supports continued policy and practice research and implementation to improve the quality of environments where
young children, including children with disabilities, are served.

4. Emerging research suggests an important relationship among teacher-child interactions, child social-emotional characteristics, and transition outcomes. If this finding continues to be upheld, it will have major implications for curriculum development and delivery, professional education, and community priority setting.

5. Varied perceptions of school readiness exist in the transition research. School readiness was discussed more frequently in the studies reviewed related to typically developing children or those at risk, while school adjustment was featured more prominently in studies of young children with disabilities and their families. Although this observation is perhaps logical, the topic merits discussion and further research related to services in today’s outcome-oriented school culture.

6. There is support for the importance of fostering family-school connections during the years during and after preschool. Research seems to be catching up with recommended practice, although actual practice would appear to lag behind recommendations. Particular strategies for fostering family involvement need validation, especially for families of low income and cultural or linguistic diversity.

7. Contributors to family involvement include parental self-efficacy and parent educational levels. Additional family characteristics also may promote positive child outcomes. As families’ self-efficacy increases, positive outcomes for children also increase, a concept that the IFSP/IEP process has exemplified for many years. It would appear that, in some cases, practice lags behind policy in this matter. A related area of research is the study of ways to support family members of young children with disabilities in being efficacious in advocacy for their children.

8. Overall, family members who participated in their children’s transition rated it as successful, but many also reported stress and specific concerns during the process. Investigations were most often based on a small number of interviews that invited families to share their experiences. The message has force from its repetition, but more validation of specific practices and areas of difficulty is needed. Understanding these findings may aid administrators and service providers in tailoring their approaches to support families and reduce family stress by fostering improved communication and information sharing. For researchers, it would be valuable to tie existing findings and new results with the stress and coping literature for clues to prevention and amelioration.

5. Promising strategies and research exist to help resolve family concerns about transition. These include communication among sending programs and school personnel, provision of information to anticipate or answer family questions, individualization of planning, family support, visits to schools, and family options for child placement and support. Given the small number of subjects in most of these studies, findings require systematic replication, but, meanwhile, community transition planners might give consideration to the reported results.
Recommendations for Future Research

Seven recommendations follow, based on this review of 50 articles on young children and their families in transition:

1. **More research is needed**, using clear conceptual frameworks and concisely stated hypotheses that are developed based on specified theories.

2. **Studies need to be adequately designed and funded** to ensure sufficient geographic and ethnic representation to enhance generalizability.

3. **Researchers and academic mentors of theses and dissertations should work to increase the scientific rigor of studies**, including improved clarity and specificity in written research reports. Data must be provided with supportive statistics and/or transcript evidence for the reader to evaluate the scientific rigor (validity and reliability) of reported findings.

4. **Authors should purposefully attempt to triangulate their findings with other sources and types of evidence** to help clarify the threads of research on early childhood transition and propose meaningful next steps in research, policy, and practice.

5. **Increased attention to the age 3 transition is needed.** Given the regulatory environment of the age 3 transition, the lack of studies of children during this transition is noteworthy. While studies with no-treatment control groups would be difficult, consideration should be given to comparison studies of transition practices and strategies (or among different packages of these) that are most likely to yield evidence-based findings. The studies reviewed provide insights to guide future work and include a number of practices and strategies that may be validated in comparison studies. Another approach may be to evaluate the implementation of existing versus enhanced transition practices. Similarly, researchers may seek to determine whether any one or a bundle of specific practices is key to positive outcomes.

6. **More study is needed to identify appropriate transition outcomes and measures for children and families at immediate, proximal, and distal time points.** This recommendation includes validation of the transition constructs used here or others adopted by an individual researcher.

7. **Additional research on transition for young children with significant disabilities and their families and for children and families from culturally or linguistically diverse groups is vital to understanding the transition process across settings and contexts.**

State and federal law and policy, family experiences and advocacy, federal monitoring procedures, and historical precedent all underscore the importance of effective transition practices for young children with disabilities. Yet the current research base is restricted in scope, focus, size, and rigor. This review of the evidence from published, refereed sources has indicated that the body of results is fragmentary. The research reviewed supports existing recommendations but compels future investigation to clarify the transition process and guide its development to enhance the early learning experiences and outcomes for young children with disabilities and their families at transition.


LeAger, C., & Shapiro, E. (1995). Template matching as a strategy for assessment of


NICHD Early Child Care Research Network. (2003). Does amount of time spent in child care predict socioemotional adjustment...
during the transition to kindergarten? *Child Development, 74,* 976-1005.


Rei, S. H. (February 3, 2007). *Early intervention in Taiwan*. Speech at FuJen Catholic University, Taipei, Taiwan.


Acknowledgements

We wish to thank the following members of the NECTC Research Team who contributed to this study through instrument feedback and data collection.

Ann Hains, University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

Rena Hallam, University of Tennessee - Knoxville

Gloria Harbin, University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill

Marilyn Harmon, University of Wisconsin

Katie Mathews, Jefferson County Schools

Katherine McCormick, University of Kentucky

Teri Nowak, Eastern Kentucky University

Sharon Rosenkoetter, Oregon State University

Beth Rous, University of Kentucky

Carol Schroeder, University of Kentucky

Jordan Shaw, Scott County Schools

Sarintha Stricklin, Consultant

Kathy Whaley, University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill

Note: The authors especially appreciate the assistance of reviewers Susan Fowler, Marci Hanson, Mark Innocenti, and Ann Turnbull, whose helpful comments contributed significantly to this work. In addition we wish to acknowledge the expertise and contributions of our literature review panel.
Literature Review Expert Panel

Annie Bertram, University of Kentucky
Deborah A Bruns, Southern Illinois University
Christian Dogaru, Oregon State University
Dr. Susan Fowler, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Paula Goff, former Part C and 619 Director, Missouri Department of Education
Sarah Hadden, Charlottesville, Virginia
Ann Hains, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukie
Katherine McCormick, University of Kentucky
Robin McWilliam, Vanderbilt University
Christine Meyers, University of Kentucky
Dave Smith, Part C, 619, Early Childhood, Colorado Department of Education
Barbara Smith, University of Colorado- Denver
Rena Hallam, University of Tennessee-Knoxville
Sarintha Stricklin, LSUHSC Early Intervention Institute
Sharon Rosenkoetter, Oregon State University
Rosa Amy Santos, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Carol Schroeder, University of Kentucky
Jordan Shaw, University of KY
Pat Snyder, Louisiana State University
Christina Stacy, University of KY
Sarintha Stricklin, LSUHSC Early Intervention Institute
Alan Sugawara, Oregon State University
Kathy Whaley, University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill
Pamela Winton, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
# Appendix B
## Transition Literature Review Coding Form

### Transition Literature Review Policy Coding Form

#### I. Background Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Synthesis Area (check all that apply):</th>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Full Study Citation:**

**Research is:**
- [ ] Published (refereed)
- [ ] Published (not refereed, e.g. proceedings of meetings/symposia, monograph, working/technical/research reports, government/university reports, recommended practices from state or national association, etc.)
- [ ] Not published (e.g., dissertation, master’s thesis, manuscript, presentation, poster, etc.)
- [ ] Other (please describe):

**Reviewer’s full name:**

**Date:**

#### II. Sample Characteristics

**Respondents (may check more than one):**
- [ ] Families
- [ ] Service providers/teachers
- [ ] Administrators
- [ ] Cultural/linguistic leaders
- [ ] Advocacy organizations
- [ ] Community system leaders
- [ ] State or federal policy makers
- [ ] Local policy makers
- [ ] State agency staff
- [ ] Local or state council representative
- [ ] Other (please describe)

**Completion (answer all that apply):**
- [ ] Percentage of participants who did not complete the study: __________
- [ ] Reason(s) given for not completing the study:

  ___________________________

  ___________________________

- [ ] Any information provided about representativeness of non-respondents:

  ___________________________

  ___________________________

- [ ] Number and type of non-respondents:

**If applicable, please provide additional information about the participants:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total #</th>
<th>Total Male #</th>
<th>Total Female #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the geographical scope?</th>
<th>□ Nation □ Region (of country) □ State □ Region within a state □ Local □ Other (please describe)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the geographical location in which the research took place?</td>
<td>□ Rural A rural place is any incorporated place with fewer than 2,500 inhabitants that is located outside of an urbanized area. □ Urban An urban area comprises all territory, population, and housing units located in urbanized areas and in places of 2,500 or more inhabitants outside of urbanized area. □ Suburban Only if indicated by author □ Some information given (please write authors' description) □ No geographic information given</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### III. Target Population Characteristics

**Focus: Respondents are being asked to describe policy issues related to which of the following? (check all that apply)**

- □ Newborns
- □ Toddlers preparing for transition out of Part C
- □ Toddlers or other children preparing to move from home based to center based settings
- □ Preschool aged children who have recently completed a transition
- □ Preschool aged children preparing to transition to kindergarten
- □ Kindergarteners who have recently completed a transition
- □ Young children and families changing program locations
- □ Young children leaving hospitals
- □ Family members
- □ Program staff/teachers
- □ Program administrators
- □ Community system leaders
- □ State or Federal policy makers
- □ Diverse policy makers

**Focus: What policies are the respondents describing? (may check more than one)**

- □ Personnel/professional development
- □ Programs, community systems
- □ State systems/models
- □ Federal systems/models
- □ Other (please describe)

**Does this work address children with severe/significant disabilities (per definition provided in the article)?**

- □ Explicitly states (please specify) ____________________________________________________________
- □ Implicit (please describe) _________________________________________________________________
- □ Not stated/unclear
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does the policy study address the effects of policy on particular ethnic or cultural groups? If yes, please specify.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Hispanic/Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Asian American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Multiple, described</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Native American/ Pacific Islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Other: ________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please describe the way in which this work addresses cultural issues.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Explicitly states (please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Implicit (please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Not stated/unclear</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do the authors report how, if at all, the study was funded?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Yes, explicit One or more sources of funding are identified (please specify all sources)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Yes, but no specific source is given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ No The authors explicitly state that no external funding was used for the study or no statement is made about funding.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What was the organizational setting in which the research was conducted?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Within the funding source (i.e., offices structured to conduct planning, evaluation, policy analysis, research, or development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Outside the funding source (i.e., nonprofit think tanks, for-profit contract research firms, consultants and Universities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Not specified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IV. Methodology, History, & Purpose

With what level of clarity and thoroughness was the study informed by or linked to an existing body of empirical and/or theoretical research? Look at the introduction and examine the logic and flow of the rationale of the study. Check how recent and extensive the quantity and quality of the references are, and how compelling the case is made for examining the research questions and hypotheses for this study.

- □ High quality, probably reflective of the best evidence criterion
- □ Medium quality — clearly satisfactory. Lacking on one or more dimensions of clarity, thoroughness, and quality of literature cited as the rationale for the study.
- □ Low quality — achieves minimum standards. Clearly lacking on most dimensions of clarity, thoroughness, and literature cited as the rationale for the study.
- □ Unacceptable. Does not meet even the most fundamental standards of clarity, thoroughness, and literature cited as the rationale for the study.

What is the purpose of the policy study? Please write in authors’ description if there is one. Look for a purpose statement or a problem statement. Elaborate if necessary, but indicate which aspects are reviewers’ interpretations. Do not give specific research questions or hypotheses here.

- □ Explicitly stated (please specify) ____________________________
- □ Implicit (please specify) _____________________________________
- □ Not stated/unclear (please specify below) ________________________
| What policy issue is the study addressing? Please write in authors’ exact description if given. | □ Explicitly stated (please specify) ____________________________________________________________________________
|                                                                                   | □ Implicit (please specify) _________________________________________________________________________________________ |
| In terms of the policy issue, what is the focus/purpose of this study? | □ Problem Definition                                                                                                      |
|                                                                                   | □ Problem Solution                                                                                                       |
| What is the policy stage? (check all that apply) | □ Policy Development                                                                                                    |
|                                                                                   | □ Policy Approval                                                                                                         |
|                                                                                   | □ Policy Implementation                                                                                                  |
|                                                                                   | □ Not Stated                                                                                                             |
| What are the research questions or hypotheses? Research questions and hypotheses operationalize the aims of the study. Please write in authors’ exact questions, hypotheses or both. | □ Yes, specific questions/hypotheses are given (please specify) ______________________________________________________________________ |
|                                                                                   | □ Yes, questions/hypotheses are given, but they are broad (please describe) __________________________________________________________________________ |
|                                                                                   | □ Yes, questions/hypotheses are given but they are vague (please describe) __________________________________________________________________________ |
|                                                                                   | □ No questions/hypotheses are given by the authors of the study                                                          |
| Methodological Approach | □ Moral/Philosophical Approach Characterized by “think pieces” that selectively pull together and synthesize theoretical literature, data, and existing research findings from a variety of sources in support of an argument or thesis. |
| Methodology | □ Empirical Approach Emphasizes collection and analysis of data rather than interpretive synthesis. |
|                                                                                   | □ Focused synthesis Similar to a literature review but includes information obtained from published articles and additional sources (e.g., evaluation reports & reports to Congress). |
|                                                                                   | □ Secondary Analysis The analysis and reanalysis of existing databases. |
|                                                                                   | □ Field Experiments An intervention is developed, implemented and data on the resulting changes is collected and analyzed. This includes randomized and non-randomized designs. |
|                                                                                   | □ Qualitative Methods Includes focus groups, interviews, and observations. |
|                                                                                   | □ Surveys Document comprised of a series of questions to be answered by the participant as the primary form of data collection. |
|                                                                                   | □ Case Studies In depth study of an individual, group, agency etc. Tends to be qualitative but can be quantitative as well. |
Methodology (Continued)

- Cost-Benefit & Cost-Effectiveness Analyses: Compares the costs and benefits to society of alternative policy options. Benefits can be expressed in monetary terms or as expected outcomes.
- Forecasting: Typically used with time-series designs and correlates estimating for any time series, cross-sectional or longitudinal data.
- Single Subject: A single program, community, or state is under investigation.

Characteristics of policy research studies (check all that apply to this study)

- Multidimensional Focus: The policy issue(s) is complex and composed of a number of dimensions, factors, effects, and causes.
- Empirico-Inductive Research Orientation: Begins with a policy issue(s) and attempts empirically to induce concepts and causal theories as the study of the problem progresses.
- Focused on malleable variables: i.e., those aspects of the policy issue(s) open to influence and intervention.
- Participatory research: Stakeholders were included in identification of policy issues to be studied as well as in developing the design of the study.
- Explicitly incorporates values: This includes the values of the experimenter, the study user and society-at-large.

Year research started:

- 1984 or earlier
- 1985 - 1990
- 1991 - 1995
- 1996 - 2000
- 2001 or later
- Not stated/unclear

What level of evidence supports the efficacy and generalizability of a policy as indicated by research in this study? Choose only one (system adapted from Smith & Fox, 2003).

- Level 1 — Empirical Evidence: Quantitative or qualitative research published in a peer-reviewed journal that indicates positive outcomes for children (e.g., improved academic success, better psychosocial adjustment in new setting) or families (e.g., reduced stress, satisfaction with new setting) or service providers (e.g., appropriate placements for clients, efficient and non-duplicative processes) or personnel trainers (e.g., students learn content). Level 1 evidence includes single subject qualitative research, between group experiments, qualitative interviews, survey/descriptive research, and participant observation. This level also includes published reviews of empirical evidence from peer-reviewed journals that cite the original studies.

- Level 2 — Evaluation Reports, Third Party: Data reports that were analyzed by an investigator outside the program or service system and that provide evidence of positive transition outcomes for children, families, service providers, policy makers, or trainers.

- Level 3 — Evaluation Reports, Internal: Data analyzed within the program or service system and that provide evidence of positive transition outcomes for children, families, service providers, policy makers, or trainers.

Rationale for that choice:

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

State the theory or model guiding the study:

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

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### V. Policy Characteristics and Outcomes

List the variables that constituted the focus of the investigation?

Did the study identify a dependent/outcome variable?
- Yes (please specify)
- No, not stated

Did the study identify the actual name(s) of the instruments used to measure the variable(s) in this study?
- Yes (please specify)
- No, not stated

Have the instruments used in this study been used in one or more previously published studies?
- Yes (specify source)
- No
- Not stated

Does the author describe any methods that have been used to address the validity of data collection tools? (e.g., direct mention of criterion related or construct validity)
- Yes (please specify)
- No
- Unclear/Insufficient Description (please specify)

List any examples given of the questions/items used to collect outcome data?
- Yes (please specify)
- No
- Unclear (please specify)

Describe whether or not reliability and validity were measured, and if so, how. Please provide reliability results and report reliability coefficients if possible.
VI. Synthesis Findings

Describe the primary results of the study:

In your opinion, do the results of the study adequately address the research question(s)?
VII. Recommendations and Conclusions

What are the authors’ recommendations to policy makers?

| What degree of change are the authors’ recommendations? | □ Incremental Change focused on fairly minor, short-term solutions within the framework of existing major goals and assumptions.  
□ Mixed Scanning involves the formulation of fundamentally new guidelines that are to be modified incrementally over time.  
□ Fundamental Tends to be the most far-reaching type of change, offering new perspectives, assumptions and goals. |

Describe the conclusions of the study:

Comments about conclusions:

Noteworthy features, study limitations, or other comments:
## Appendix C

### Characteristics of Child-Focused Transition Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Article</th>
<th>Number/ Children</th>
<th>Type of Study</th>
<th>Transition Studied</th>
<th>Includes Disabilities</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Studies Focused on Children with Disabilities</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Intervention Studies—Proximal Outcomes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kemp (2003)</td>
<td>33 children</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Into K</td>
<td>Intellectual disabilities</td>
<td>Sydney, Australia</td>
<td>Effect of transition programs on integration of children with disabilities into K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LeAger &amp; Shapiro (1995)</td>
<td>61 children</td>
<td>Experimental/ Quasi-Experimental</td>
<td>Into K</td>
<td>N = 60&lt;br&gt;Speech-language delays, developmental delays, behavioral disorders</td>
<td>Urban PA</td>
<td>Positive transition outcomes through alignment of preschool to K environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule et al. (1990)</td>
<td>18 children</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Into K</td>
<td>N = 15&lt;br&gt;Mental retardation, behavioral disorders, speech-language delay, cerebral palsy, physical impairment</td>
<td>Urban &amp; suburban</td>
<td>Mastery of a survival skills curriculum as preparation for kindergarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Intervention Studies—Distal Outcomes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanson et al. (2001)</td>
<td>25 children with disabilities &amp; their families; 8 children developing typically &amp; their families</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Into K &amp; through elementary; over 5 year-period</td>
<td>N = 25&lt;br&gt;Mental retardation (8), autism/PDD (5), physical impairment (4), social-emotional/behavioral disorder (3), developmental delay</td>
<td>4 locations across the USA (West Coast, Northeast, Southwest, Northwest)</td>
<td>Factors that influence inclusive placements as transition from preschool to elementary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Article</td>
<td>Number/ Children</td>
<td>Type of Study</td>
<td>Transition Studied</td>
<td>Includes Disabilities</td>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Focus</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redden et al. (2001)</td>
<td>6,162 children</td>
<td>Experimental/Quasi-Experimental</td>
<td>Into 1st grade &amp; through 3rd grade</td>
<td>(2), speech-language delay (2), visual impairment (1)</td>
<td>Head Start Across USA</td>
<td>Relationship of transition assistance to special education placement in 3rd grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Descriptive Studies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest, Homer, Lewis-Palmer, &amp; Todd (2004)</td>
<td>3 children &amp; their parents; 6 teachers (3 preschool &amp; 3 K)</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Into K</td>
<td>N = 3 Autism</td>
<td>New South Wales, Australia</td>
<td>Transition elements important to effective transition of children with autism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prigg (2002)</td>
<td>6 occupational therapists</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Into mainstreamed school (kindergarten)</td>
<td>Developmental disabilities, intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, learning difficulties, ADHD, developmental coordination disorder</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>Role of OTs in the transition of young children into kindergarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huffman &amp; Speer (2000)</td>
<td>113 children</td>
<td>Experimental/Quasi-Experimental</td>
<td>Into K &amp; 1st grade &amp; through 3rd grade</td>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Effect of DAP on academic achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Studies Involving Children Who are Developing Typically, are At-Risk, or are in Inclusive Programs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chun (2003)</td>
<td>32 children &amp; their parents; 8 teachers</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Into primary (first grade)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>Teacher, child, &amp; parent views on easement strategies &amp; difficulties in transition from preschool/home to primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mantzicopoulos (2003b)</td>
<td>261 children &amp; their parents</td>
<td>Experimental/Quasi-Experimental</td>
<td>Into 1st grade</td>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>School, family &amp; child characteristics as predictors of non-promotion to first grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Article</td>
<td>Number/ Children</td>
<td>Type of Study</td>
<td>Transition Studied</td>
<td>Includes Disabilities</td>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Focus</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peters (2003)</td>
<td>23 children, their families, &amp; teachers</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Into first grade</td>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Impact of friendships on adjustment during transition to formal schooling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schulting et al. (2005)</td>
<td>17,212 children; 2,221 teachers</td>
<td>Correlational</td>
<td>Into K</td>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>Nationally representative cohorts from NE, South, West, &amp; Midwest</td>
<td>Relationship of school-based transition practices to academic achievement &amp; role of parent involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intervention Study—Distal Outcomes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mantzicopoulos (2003a)</td>
<td>71 children</td>
<td>Experimental/Quasi-Experimental</td>
<td>Into 1st grade &amp; through 3rd grade</td>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>Midwestern Suburban</td>
<td>Effectiveness of developmental first grade transition program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Intervention Studies—Distal Outcomes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howes, Phillipsen, &amp; Peisner-Feinberg (2000)</td>
<td>793 children; 1,624 teachers (across 3 years)</td>
<td>Correlational</td>
<td>Into K</td>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>CA CO CT NC</td>
<td>Predictive nature of teacher-child relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mantzicopoulos (2005)</td>
<td>103 children &amp; 34 teachers</td>
<td>Correlational</td>
<td>Into K</td>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>Midwestern Suburban</td>
<td>Association of child-reported teacher-child conflict with child, classroom, &amp; teacher characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcon (2002)</td>
<td>160 children in fifth year of school &amp; 183 in sixth year</td>
<td>Correlational</td>
<td>From preschool through third &amp; fourth grades</td>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>Urban school district</td>
<td>Influence of 3 preschool models on later school success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Article</td>
<td>Number/ Children</td>
<td>Type of Study</td>
<td>Transition Studied</td>
<td>Includes Disabilities</td>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>NICHD Early Child Care Research Network (2003)</td>
<td>1,068 children &amp; their parents</td>
<td>Correlational</td>
<td>Preschool &amp; K</td>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>10 sites across USA</td>
<td>Relationship between time in non-maternal care during first 4 years of life &amp; social-emotional adjustment/competence in preschool &amp; K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peisner-Feinberg et al. (2001)</td>
<td>733 children</td>
<td>Correlational</td>
<td>Preschool years through second grade</td>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>4 regions in US in these states: CA, CO, CT &amp; NC</td>
<td>Relationship of child care center quality during preschool to cognitive &amp; social skills in second grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramey et al. (1998)</td>
<td>4,284 children and primary caregivers; teachers across 3 years (number not reported)</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Into K</td>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>28 states across the USA</td>
<td>Factors associated with children's, parents' &amp; teachers' perceptions of children's adjustment to school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver et al. (2004)</td>
<td>283 children</td>
<td>Correlational</td>
<td>Into K through 3rd grade</td>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>Madison &amp; Milwaukee, WI</td>
<td>Effect of past behavior, parenting modes, &amp; teacher-child relationship during transition on externalizing behavior trajectories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tudge et al. (2003)</td>
<td>20 children</td>
<td>Correlational</td>
<td>Into school (K)</td>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>Southeastern city in US</td>
<td>Relationship between preschoolers' engagement in school-relevant activities &amp; later competence in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Descriptive</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early et al. (1999)</td>
<td>3,595 kindergarten teachers</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Into K</td>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>National sample, rural, urban, &amp; suburban</td>
<td>Characteristics of kindergarten teachers &amp; classrooms as a context for transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early et al. (2001)</td>
<td>3,595 teachers;</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Into K</td>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>National sample</td>
<td>Transition practices of K teachers &amp; relationship to teacher, classroom, &amp; school characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Article</td>
<td>Number/ Children</td>
<td>Type of Study</td>
<td>Transition Studied</td>
<td>Includes Disabilities</td>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Focus</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Paro et al. (2000)</td>
<td>3,595 teachers</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Into K &amp; into 1st grade</td>
<td>Some classrooms included children with special needs</td>
<td>Across USA</td>
<td>Kindergarten teachers’ use of transition practices for young children with special needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lin et al. (2003)</td>
<td>3,305 kindergarten teachers</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Into K</td>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>Across USA</td>
<td>Perception of children’s readiness for school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pianta et al. (1999)</td>
<td>3,595 teachers</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Into K</td>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>Across USA</td>
<td>Teacher transition practices &amp; barriers to implementing practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troup &amp; Malone (2002)</td>
<td>11 classrooms, with average of 19 children each</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Into K</td>
<td>Included children with developmental concerns</td>
<td>One urban county in Ohio</td>
<td>Ecological characteristics of inclusive kindergarten classrooms &amp; impact on transition of children with developmental concerns from preschool into K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesley &amp; Buysse (2003)</td>
<td>93 professionals; 25 parents</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Into K</td>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>10 counties in one state</td>
<td>Perceptions of school readiness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Annotations for Child-Focused Transition Articles

Chun (2003). This study reports findings on the transition of children in Hong Kong from kindergarten to primary schools. Initially, children and teachers reported that difficulties of adjustment were overcome within the first two months. Children were happy with peer-relationships and with their teachers. However, perhaps due to a discontinuity of pedagogical approaches, at the end of the year some children wished to return to kindergarten where there was less pressure for study and examination and fewer rigid rules and regulations. Children’s interest in learning new things was high at the beginning of the year, but this interest was not sustained by the end of the year. Children who could not cope with the increasing demands were punished and scolded and deemed to be failures by the teachers, resulting in their decreased sense of self-worth.

Early et al. (1999). Findings from the National Center on Early Development and Learning’s National Transition Practices Survey indicated that kindergarten teachers surveyed were highly educated and experienced. There were few differences related to metropolitan status, district poverty, and minority enrollment. However, few teachers had guidance in facilitating transitions to kindergarten. There was a marked diversity of racial/ethnic backgrounds among teachers, but the overall percentage of non-Hispanic White teachers (60%) was found to be greater than for the overall population of kindergartners. Schools with more minority students were more likely to have teachers from underrepresented groups. High minority and high poverty schools were more likely to have additional paid adults in the classroom. Class size generally met guidelines from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Classes in rural schools tended to be somewhat smaller.

Early et al. (2001). The findings in this report also were gleaned from the National Center on Early Development and Learning’s National Transition Practices Survey. They indicated that most transition practices for children entering kindergarten occurred after the start of school and targeted the class as a whole. Practices coordinated by kindergarten programs that occurred prior to the end of preschool and that were designed for individual children and families or were coordinated with preschool programs and/or community agencies were found to be relatively rare. Barriers to employing transition practices included lack of support for teachers’ summer work, class lists generated too late, and large class sizes. Continuing education in transition and transition practices was the largest factor distinguishing teachers who used transition practices and those who did not. Those with specific training used both individualized and group practices, involved staff from the child’s preschool setting, and started before the beginning of the school year.

Forest et al. (2004). Families and preschool and kindergarten teachers rated the importance and implementation of 25 transition elements identified from the research literature. All elements, except for identifying the specific placement six months prior to transition, were perceived as important. Wide variability in implementation was seen for the three children with
autism transitioning into kindergarten in this study. The elements identified may be useful to teachers and families preparing for transition to kindergarten.

**Greenberg et al. (1999).** This study examined the effects of demographic and psychosocial factors measured in kindergarten in predicting child behavior and achievement at the end of first grade. Results generally indicated complex and multiple effects, namely, that each additional analysis (i.e., specific demographic characteristics, socioeconomic status, race, family psychosocial risk, quality of the neighborhood) contributed significant additional variance to most child behavior and achievement outcomes. Overall, the dimensions of context predicted about 18-29% of the variance in child functioning at first grade. Neighborhood risk added significantly to reported child externalizing problems and reduced social competence for boys. Single parenthood and a large number of siblings made a unique contribution to predicting lower math achievement, perhaps due to limited access to intellectual resources in the family. Race had a unique effect only on reading achievement. Parent education level predicted cognitive performance, social competence, and reading achievement. The lowest occupation classification for mother (unemployed and homemaker) versus all other occupations predicted externalizing and internalizing problems. The psychosocial risk of the family environment was determined to make the strongest contribution to behavioral outcomes.

**Hanson et al. (2001).** Factors influencing participation in inclusive programs were studied as children moved from inclusive preschool placements to elementary school. After 5 years, over 60% of the children remained in some level of inclusive placement (full inclusion, partial inclusion, integrated activities). Placements were influenced by professionals’ decisions and existing school options; families’ abilities to access information regarding placement options, decision-making procedures, and special education laws and regulations; educational advocates or the parents’ ability to advocate for their children; the match between family needs and expectations and school options and demands; and specific child characteristics, such as the level and type of disability, personality, or behavioral characteristics. Generally, parents preferred inclusive placements until they encountered obstacles at school.

**Howes et al. (2000).** During a 3-year longitudinal study, teachers reported a greater closeness and more dependency in their relationships with girls than with boys. Teacher perceptions of children’s social adjustment (problem behaviors, conflict, and dependency or positive behaviors and sociability) and of teacher-child relationship quality, particularly conflicting relationships, were consistent from preschool through transition to kindergarten. Kindergarten teacher-child relationships were predicted by preschool teacher perceptions of social adjustment and by preschool teacher-child relationship perceptions after controlling for gender, maternal education, and preschool quality.

**Huffman & Speer (2000).** The use of developmentally appropriate teaching practices, as measured by the *Assessment Profile for Early Childhood Programs: Research Version* (Abbott-Shim, & Sibley, 1992) in kindergarten and first grade classrooms, had a significant positive relationship with letter/word identification and applied problem solving over time compared to classrooms that used more didactic approaches. The sample was low-income, minority, urban children, who were at exceptional risk for academic underachievement. No such differences
were seen for math calculation.

**Kemp (2003).** Parents, teachers, and principals were interviewed regarding children with intellectual disabilities transitioning from a model inclusive preschool program to mainstream kindergarten classes. All children had received a comprehensive transition program, including child preparation, parent support, and guidance for the receiving program. Parents felt that the initial and longer-term integration of their children was very successful. Principals agreed with the initial success, and teachers agreed with success at the end of the year. Approximately 2/3 of receiving teachers and principals felt the level of support for initial integration was adequate. Of those who believed that they were not well supported, most reported lack of child skills and child behavior as the primary difficulties. One-third of parents were not happy with their level of involvement in their child’s new school. Other concerns were adequacy of orientation visits, collaboration, and teaching of skills prior to school entry. The attitude of the parents and that of the teachers were rated as the most influential factors in the success of the longer-term integration. The contribution of the principal to the success of the integration was rated as poor by both teachers and parents.

**Kemp & Carter (2000).** Children with a range of intellectual disabilities who participated in a transition program embedded within an inclusive preschool program demonstrated on-task behaviors within the average range in a mainstreamed kindergarten class during both independent and whole class activities, but they were rated lower than typically developing peers in responding to teacher directions during whole group instruction. More follow-up directions were needed for children with disabilities, particularly for children with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities.

**La Paro et al. (2000).** Using data from the National Center on Early Development and Learning’s *National Transition Practices Survey*, the researchers found that over 80% of kindergarten teachers with at least one child with special needs in their classes reported using some form of kindergarten transition practices, and 55% said they used some form of first grade transition practice. Most frequently used kindergarten practices for the whole class were sending letters home after school started and holding an open house. Least frequently used practices were home visits and personal phone calls. The practices most frequently used specifically for children with special needs were reading written records and contacting preschool teachers. However, 12 of the 21 kindergarten practices surveyed were used by less than 1% of the teachers for their children with special needs. The most frequently used whole-class practice for transition to first grade was having the children visit a first grade classroom. The practice most frequently used for children with special needs in transition to first grade was planning activities for individual children. Less than 1% of teachers used more than half of the 11 first grade transition practices specifically for children with special needs.

**LeAger & Shapiro (1995).** Assessments in Head Start and kindergarten classes were used to evaluate the instructional environments and to create templates showing the differences between the settings. These templates then were used to plan interventions to facilitate transition to kindergarten. Results showed more successful performance in general education kindergarten classes for the intervention group over an assessment-only group and a control
group that received no intervention or environmental assessment. Children in the intervention group displayed less off-task behaviors during independent work and received levels of individual and group prompts within the same range as their peers. Unlike the children in the other groups, none in the intervention group was referred for special education services.

Lin et al. (2003). This study examined the perceptions of children’s readiness for school held by kindergarten teachers with different training experiences who worked within varied school contexts. Overall, teachers said they view social behavior and social communication skills of children as a higher priority than academic skill development. Geographic region, gender, and age of the teacher were associated with their readiness expectations. Kindergarten teachers in the South had higher social and academic expectations. Older teachers had lower expectations regarding academic skills. No significant differences were found for expectations regarding social skills. Female teachers appeared to have higher expectations than male teachers related to social skills, but the small percentage of male teachers in the study (2%) may have influenced the reliability of this finding.

Mantzicopoulos (2003a). Using data obtained from the Head Start-Public School Transition Demonstration program, the author found that children placed in a transition room program that employed a developmentally appropriate, active, experiential curriculum and parent involvement activities between kindergarten and first grade showed some gains in social skills (cooperation and assertion) over peers who were eligible for this program but did not participate. Participants were rated as having fewer behavior problems at the end of first and third grades. They also had higher academic achievement scores at the end of first grade, although this difference declined by the end of third grade. Ratings of overall involvement of parents in school was mixed, with parents of non-enrolled children rated higher at the end of first grade and parents of children enrolled in the transition program rated higher at the end of third grade. However, children were compared at the end of each grade level, so that enrolled children were one year older than non-enrolled children at the times of testing. The impact of this age difference was not assessed.

Mantzicopoulos (2003b). Participants in this study were Head Start children and families who were transitioning to school and who were part of the Head Start-Public School Transition Demonstration program. The researcher examined the extent to which non-promotion to first grade can be determined from school and family contexts. Children who lagged on academic achievement, behavior, and social competency were more likely not to be promoted to first grade after kindergarten. No differences were evident for boys versus girls. Parent-reported school involvement and more frequent parent-child discussion of the child’s daily school activities were related to a greater likelihood of promotion. Lower parental estimates of children’s abilities and school adjustment, as well as a lower level of parental satisfaction with school programs, were correlated with an increased risk of non-promotion. Head Start children were less likely to be retained if public schools had provided both educational and family services to support the transition to public school.
Mantzicopoulos (2005). This study focused on kindergarten children’s reports of teacher-child relational conflict and its association with child and classroom context variables. For child variables, gender was not significantly related to teacher-child conflict. Higher ratings on a hyperactivity index and early problem behaviors were related to higher levels of teacher-child conflict. Participation in transition activities from preschool to kindergarten was related to lower teacher-child conflict. Evidence showed that less teacher-child conflict was related to better school achievement. Children reported higher levels of conflict when instructional practices were more teacher directed, rote learning was emphasized, and less individualization and fewer positive disciplinary strategies were used. These findings demonstrated that classroom quality contributes to children’s school adaptation. Teachers’ perceived workload stress also was related to higher levels of relational conflict and to higher numbers of at-risk students in the classroom.

Marcon (2002). Children in this study were followed from preschool through fourth grade (during a 6-year period). Preschool peer models were shown to have an influence on children’s later school achievement, with subsequent school success enhanced by more active, child-initiated preschool experiences. Girls surpassed boys academically by the end of third grade and beginning of fourth grade. Children whose preschool experience had been more academically oriented were retained less often, but no differences were found for their likelihood of special education placement. There were no significant differences at the end of third grade for children enrolled in the three different preschool models, but by the end of fourth grade, children who had been in child-initiated preschool classes earned significantly higher grades and fared better in the transition from primary school to the increased academic demands of later elementary grades. The gap between boys and girls also began to close. On the other hand, those children who had attended more academically oriented preschool classes experienced declining grades during fourth grade.

Miller et al. (2003). Brief, multi-domain functional screenings based on parent and teacher report, child interview, and child observations identified children entering Head Start who were at risk for difficulty transitioning into a classroom environment and predicted their preschool adjustment almost one year later. Domains assessed included language, cognition, externalizing/internalizing behaviors, social skills, and affective tone, with a focus on socio-emotional adjustment and adaptive functioning. Higher transition risk ratings were associated with extremes of emotional displays, both positive and negative, and less regulation. Children at higher risk also were found to be less able to read the behavioral cues of others.

Mistry et al. (2004). Income was found to have a greater impact on child outcomes and parenting for children and families living in poverty than for those who were higher on the income scale. The relationship diminished as income moved further away from the poverty line. Income affected children’s cognitive and achievement-related outcomes more than it did their behavioral outcomes. Limited exposure to educational experiences and materials was found to result in deficiencies in literacy and numeracy skills. The link between income and behavioral outcomes was shown to be mediated through family dynamics. Maternal depression was a consistent negative factor in children’s behavioral and socio-emotional adjustment.
NICHD Early Child Care Research Network (2003). Results showed that young children who spent more time in non-maternal care during their first 4 ½ years of life were rated lower by their teachers on social competence at 54 months and higher on externalizing problems and conflict with adults at both 54 months of age and in kindergarten. The magnitude of these effects was modest, but it remained generally consistent when quality, type, and instability of child care were controlled.

Peisner-Feinberg et al. (2001). Child care quality in prekindergarten was shown to have a modest relationship to children’s development through second grade. Longitudinal effects were found for receptive language and math abilities, cognitive and attention skills, problem behaviors, and sociability, indicating that children who had better quality preschool experiences were more advanced in their development over a five-year period, after adjusting for child and family characteristics. Classroom practices were related to language and academic skills. Closeness of the teacher-child relationship was related to both cognitive and social skills. Stronger effects of quality were evident for children whose mothers were less highly educated, although maternal education was a somewhat stronger predictor of language and cognitive skills over time than child care quality.

Peters (2003). Friends played a vital role in promoting a positive experience for children transitioning to formal schooling and also assisted directly in facilitating children’s learning in the classroom. A lack of friends was related to a more difficult transition, with repercussions that often extended throughout children’s school careers.

Pianta et al. (1999). The National Center on Early Development and Learning’s National Transition Practices Survey, mailed to a sample of kindergarten teachers across the United States, revealed that almost all teachers who were sampled used some transition practices. The most frequently reported practice was talking with the child’s parent after the start of school. Practices that involve low intensity, generic contact and that take place after the start of school were reported to be the most widely used. Contacting families prior to the start of school and practices that involve in-person contacts with children or families were among the least used practices. The most commonly reported barriers were class lists generated too late, lack of support for teachers’ summer work, and lack of a district plan for transition into kindergarten. Teachers in schools that were more urban and had a higher percentage of minority students or were in a high poverty area reported more family-related barriers. However, teachers in high poverty areas reported a higher incidence of making home visits before the start of school.

Prigg (2002). Occupational therapists reported that their roles during the transition of a child with special learning needs from early childhood services to mainstream preschool included preparing the child for school, working with school personnel, and providing support to parents. Negative factors reported were limited time to extend a service, limited support from school personnel for implementation of recommendations, discomfort of the therapist in the classroom, and limited involvement in planning for a specific child.
Ramey et al. (1998). Kindergarten children who had participated in Head Start reported positive perceptions of their kindergarten experience. Seventy-four percent (74%) liked school “a lot.” They reportedly tried “very hard” to do well, said that their teacher is “very good” at helping them learn, stated that they get along “very well” with their teacher, and reported that their parents think that doing well in school is “very important.” Children with less positive school perceptions were likely to be boys and to have lower receptive language skills. Rates of special education placement and family risk variables did not differ for children with higher and lower ratings of school. Parents had more favorable impressions of children’s early school adjustment than did their children. Teachers’ ratings of children’s academic performance in kindergarten, first, and second grades were significantly higher for children with more positive school perceptions.

Redden et al. (2001). Over 6,000 children who had participated in Head Start were followed through third grade to determine rates and categories of special education placement. Half of the children were provided assistance through third grade similar to the services they had received in Head Start, namely, transition assistance, curricular modifications, parent involvement activities, health screening/referrals, and family social services. In third grade, a significantly larger percentage of children who did not receive additional assistance were identified as having an emotional disturbance or mental retardation. However, for the category of speech/language impairment, the opposite occurred. Significantly more children who had received additional transition services were identified for special speech services than children who had not received transition support. Overall, Head Start children in both groups were identified in all disability categories at much higher levels by third grade than the national average for all U.S. children.

Rimm-Kaufman et al. (2000). A national sample of kindergarten teachers who completed the National Center on Early Development and Learning’s National Transition Practices Survey perceived that 16% of children entering kindergarten had serious adjustment problems. Up to 46% of teachers reported that half of their class or more had specific problems in following directions and working independently and lacked academic skills. Children’s reported competencies varied depending on school metropolitan status, district poverty level, and school minority composition. Non-minority teachers reported a modestly higher rate of some problems in schools with a large minority population than did minority teachers in similar schools. Higher overall adjustment problems were found in rural as opposed to urban schools. Authors noted that rural schools had the highest rate of full-day kindergarten classes.

Rule et al. (1990). Children with disabilities mastered survival skills needed for kindergarten/first grade that were taught as a curriculum during part of the preschool day. Mastery included performing the skills when instructions, environment, and task requirements changed and functioning without teacher attention and supervision. Follow-up checklists completed by kindergarten or elementary school teachers for half of the children who were involved in the curriculum indicated that 90-100% of the skills were performed in the new environment with little or no help.
Schulting et al. (2005). Using a large, nationally representative sample, this study found that the number of school-based transition practices in the fall of kindergarten was associated with a modest positive effect on academic achievement at the end of kindergarten, even when controlling for family, socioeconomic status, and other demographic factors. The effect was stronger for low- and middle-SES children despite the fact that low income children and their families received the fewest transition practices. Kindergarten transition practices were positively associated with parent-initiated school involvement, and this involvement partially mediated the effect of transition practices on children’s academic achievement in a positive direction. In contrast, teacher-initiated parent involvement was negatively associated with child outcomes. Parents reported how often they participated in a range of activities over the course of the kindergarten year (e.g., PTA meetings, open houses, policy council meetings, parent-teacher conferences, school events, fundraisers, volunteering at school). This produced a parent-initiated school-involvement score. Using hierarchical linear modeling the authors found that increased parent-initiated involvement contributed to children’s increased academic achievement, thus mediating the relation/effect of transition practices on academic achievement.

Silver et al. (2004). Conflict in the teacher-child relationship during the transition to kindergarten was shown to contribute to faster rates of increase in externalizing behavior from kindergarten to third grade, above and beyond negative parenting and initial levels of externalizing behavior. Declines in externalizing behavior over time were associated with teacher-child closeness, especially for children with the highest levels of externalizing behavior upon school entry. This pattern applied similarly for both boys and girls. Socioeconomic status (SES) was not a significant predictor of initial levels of externalizing behavior problems, but it was a significant predictor of the externalizing slope; that is, having a higher familial SES was associated with slower rates of increase or even decreases in externalizing trajectories. Negative parenting was found to be a non-significant contributor to the initial level of externalizing behavior and to externalizing trajectories.

Troup & Malone (2002). This study reported the ecological characteristics of inclusive kindergarten programs in one urban county. Seating routines occurred at small tables and on the floor. Other characteristics of the environment included table activities, visual and verbal multi-step directions for seat work, assigned activities, learning centers, limited free choice activity time, workbooks and skill sheets, a “print rich” environment, manipulatives available mainly for math activities, and expectations of independence for toileting and raising hands for assistance. The authors noted that the lack of match between skills and expectations of sending and receiving environments during kindergarten transition affects all children, but is of special concern for children with developmental delays.

Tudge et al. (2003). This ecological study of the relationship between preschool children’s engagement in naturally occurring activities that have relevance to school, their parents’ values, and the children’s subsequent performance in school indicated that middle class preschoolers engaged in more school-related activities than did working class children. They also exhibited more self-directedness because their parents were seen to value self-direction in their children. Preschoolers who initiated and engaged in more conversations with adults were later perceived
by their teachers as being more competent. There was no relationship demonstrated between children’s play with academically relevant toys and games and teachers’ perceptions of child competence.

Wesley & Buysse (2003). Professionals and parents explored the concept of school readiness through focus groups. Findings included (a) social and emotional development and language and communication skills should be emphasized over academic skills, (b) there is a philosophical conflict between developmentally appropriate practices and the expectations and standards set forth by states, (c) there is too much pressure to teach academic skills for testing purposes, (d) criteria set for the end of kindergarten determine entry level skills, (e) children vary in school readiness due to cultural and socio-economic opportunities, (f) children learn by active participation in a stimulating environment with attentive adults, (g) there is wide variation in the skills of children when they enter kindergarten as a result of their previous experiences or lack of experience, and this should not be the basis for identification and placement in a special classroom, and (h) schools have a long way to go to be ready for students, including attention to facilities, philosophy, communication, transition practices, family support, resources, and professional development.
## Appendix E
### Characteristics of Family-Focused Transition Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Article</th>
<th>Type of Study</th>
<th>Number of Parents; Children with Disabilities</th>
<th>Transition Studied</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seefeldt et al. (1998)</td>
<td>Quasi-experimental</td>
<td>235 No mention</td>
<td>To K</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Individual parent characteristics &amp; family involvement in school; impact of transition program on outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seefeldt et al. (1999)</td>
<td>Quasi-experimental</td>
<td>133 No mention</td>
<td>To K</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Parental characteristics related to self-efficacy beliefs and their children's academic beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early et al. (2002)</td>
<td>Correlational</td>
<td>215 No</td>
<td>To K</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Relationship of parent sensitivity to child wariness in transition to K; personal characteristics, not system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teichman &amp; Ziv (1998)</td>
<td>Correlational</td>
<td>38 No</td>
<td>To K</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Personal and family qualities related to coping with transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbell (1997)</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>5 Yes</td>
<td>To PS</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Parent beliefs about the transition process for children with significant disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamblin-Wilson &amp; Thurman (1990)</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>91 Yes</td>
<td>To n/ PS</td>
<td>US Urban</td>
<td>Parent perceptions of support received &amp; amount of involvement between EI &amp; public school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanline (1988)</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>92 Yes</td>
<td>To PS or K</td>
<td>US Urban</td>
<td>Parent ratings of parent needs in transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanline &amp; Halvorsen (1989)</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Yes fit specified age range</td>
<td>Segregated to integrated public school</td>
<td>US Urban</td>
<td>Parent attitudes about transition, supports related to movement to inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Article</td>
<td>Type of Study</td>
<td>Number of Parents; Children with Disabilities</td>
<td>Transition Studied</td>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Focus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hanson et al. (2000)</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>22 Yes</td>
<td>To PS</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Qualitative description of transition; commentaries on system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson et al. (1986)</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>19 Yes</td>
<td>To K</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Family reflections on their transition to K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kemp (2003)</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>33 parents of children with intellectual disabilities</td>
<td>To K</td>
<td>Australia Urban</td>
<td>Parent and teacher interviews midway and near the end of the K year to evaluate transition process and practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lovett &amp; Haring (2003)</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>48 Yes</td>
<td>Birth, hospital to home, EI to preschool</td>
<td>US, largely rural</td>
<td>Parent perceptions of system actions and their own reactions at each of the three transitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pianta &amp; Kraft-Sayre (1999)</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>261 No</td>
<td>To K</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Parent observations about transition &amp; its effect on their children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pianta et al. (2001)</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>110 No mention</td>
<td>To K</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>System as viewed by individual mothers &amp; teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharpe (2002)</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>38 No</td>
<td>To primary school</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Nature of preferred parent involvement in Singapore; individual math support strategies used by parents to support children's success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sy &amp; Schulenberg (2005)</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>9,780 No Mention</td>
<td>To primary school</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Cross-cultural comparison of the relationship of EuroAmerican and Asian American parents’ beliefs, expectations, and involvement with their children’s math and reading achievement -- personal characteristics, not system</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F
Annotations for Family-Focused Transition Articles

Campbell (1997). This Australian study gathered information to evaluate a new program for children with significant disabilities and their families. The goal of the program was to support transition from home-based early intervention to an inclusive neighborhood preschool through gradual introduction to the new classroom and services provided by a specially trained staff. Four parents, one grandmother, and three staff members were interviewed at two weeks and eight weeks after inclusion. Initial concerns were mostly alleviated, but parents continued to be uncertain about what developmental gains to expect for their children. Staff continued to have questions about how to facilitate inclusion. While both groups cited many positive accomplishments, both continued to voice their need for information and concerns about desired outcomes for their children in the new program.

Diamond, Reagan, & Bandyk (2000). Data from the National Household Education Survey (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1994) were used to examine parents’ concepts of kindergarten readiness and home-learning activities. Parents reported reading to their children several days each week. A majority of their children watched educational television. African-American and Hispanic parents and other parents of color were significantly more likely than Caucasian parents to express concerns about their children’s readiness for kindergarten. However, Caucasian parents were significantly more likely than other parents to comment that they would delay sending their child to kindergarten until he or she was older. Parent concerns about their children’s kindergarten readiness were unrelated to learning activities and educational television viewing at home.

Early, Rimm-Kaufman, Cox, Saluja, Pianta, Bradley et al. (2002). Multiple data sources were used in this study, including observational data for 15-month-old children and their mothers and kindergarten teacher and maternal reports during the transition to kindergarten for 215 children from three sites of the NICHD Study of Early Child Care (1994). Findings indicated significant stability of inhibited behavior from age 15 months to the transition to kindergarten and a significant interaction between maternal sensitivity and 15-month wariness in predicting inhibition in the transition to kindergarten. Among children who displayed wariness at 15 months, greater maternal sensitivity was associated with less inhibition during the transition to kindergarten. For children who did not display wariness at 15 months, there was no relation between maternal sensitivity and inhibition in the transition to kindergarten. These findings suggest moderate stability of this early temperamental characteristic and point to the importance of responsive parenting in modifying wary behavior before school entry.

Hamblin-Wilson & Thurman (1990). Ninety-one parents completed a questionnaire about their involvement in, preparation for, and satisfaction with transition from early services into special education kindergartens. Most parents felt involved in the transition process and indicated that they felt more support from pre-K providers than from the public school personnel. More educated parents were more satisfied than less educated family members. Parents who were
found to be best prepared for the transition also were more satisfied than those who were less prepared.

**Hanline (1988).** Ninety-two parents of infants and preschoolers living in San Francisco were surveyed regarding their children’s entry into public school preschool special education. Families reported that they were most interested in information and services that would allow them to obtain and manage the particular services appropriate for their child. Concerns centered around being away from their child for long periods, dealing with an unfamiliar agency, and being assured of receiving appropriate services.

**Hanline & Halvorsen (1989).** During interviews, parents of 14 students with disabilities aged 4-22 years consistently expressed satisfaction regarding the outcomes of an inclusive education for their children. They praised the personal and professional support they had received. Transition concerns were related to safety, attitudes of general education students and staff, program quality, transportation, district commitment to inclusion, and fears of failure. Respondents emphasized the importance in transition to commitment to inclusion from local school districts and professionals, an individualized approach to parent involvement, and ongoing communication with parents.

**Hanson, Beckman, Horn, Marquart, Sandall, Greig et al. (2000).** A sample of 22 families was followed as they entered, participated in, and exited the transition process between Part C, early intervention, and Part B, services for children age 3 and above. Results indicated that families and professionals experienced transition as an event, not as a process. The shift in service delivery models from infant-toddler services to preschool services often was problematic. Information exchange and communication were found to be crucial to family involvement and decision-making. In general, families were given limited choices with respect to preschool programs. Only a few programs offered inclusive service models. Strategies for facilitating transition were shared.

**Johnson, Chandler, Kerns, & Fowler (1986).** Interviews with 19 parents of children who transitioned from a specialized preschool to a specialized or regular kindergarten indicated that they expressed concerns about the transition, sought and received information from a variety of sources, visited future programs, participated in decision-making, preferred opportunities to plan, confronted issues regarding educational services, expressed satisfaction that their child’s needs were met, and experienced some degree of transition-related stress.

**Kemp (2003).** At the beginning of the second term of kindergarten, parents, teachers, and principals of 33 children with intellectual disabilities were interviewed about the children’s transition to mainstream kindergarten in Australia. Data about transition practices and perceptions of their successes and weaknesses were discussed.

**Lovett & Haring (2003).** Family members whose infants’ disabilities were identified around the time of birth were interviewed on multiple occasions. Three broad themes emerged. First, families going through a birth crisis have difficulty understanding information presented to them at that time. Second, parents often feel uncomfortable about assessing their own ability to care
for their babies as they transition from hospital to home. Finally, the transition from home-based early intervention to public school preschool may cause anxiety for families due to the unfamiliarity of the processes and definitions.

**Pianta & Kraft-Sayre (1999).** A sample of 261 parents from three states (NC, VA, and AK) was interviewed by phone in the weeks following their children’s entrance into kindergarten, as part of several transition studies conducted by the National Center on Early Development and Learning. Parents discussed their positive relationship with the school, the child’s positive experience in preschool, effective communication with the school, transition planning activities, and teacher and curriculum quality. On the negative side, up to 35% of parents noted some concerns about their children’s transition. Parents described behavioral/emotional concerns about their children’s transition, family adjustment difficulties, the child’s reluctance to attend, unrealistic expectations by the school, and communication problems between school and home. Authors underscored that transition is a process in which relationships must be built carefully over time.

**Pianta, Kraft-Sayre, Rimm-Kaufman, Gercke, & Higgins (2001).** Families of typically developing children participated in a transition to kindergarten intervention as part of the National Center on Early Development and Learning’s efforts to partner with local schools to implement appropriate transition practices. Three primary findings were: (a) participants in the process differed in their views of transition practices, (b) parents and teachers in the preschool year shared mutually positive views of one another in relation to a range of activities and roles, and (c) preschool staff increasingly were seen as an important and helpful source of support for parents as their children prepared to enter kindergarten.

**Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta (1999).** Rates and characteristics of contact between families and schools, in preschool and kindergarten, were examined both cross-sectionally (N = 290) and longitudinally (N = 71). Family-school contact was compared among three programs (one preschool, one Head Start, and one kindergarten), and in a group of children shifting from preschool to kindergarten. Teachers recorded family-school contacts using a daily diary method. The cross-sectional analysis revealed differences among programs. Teacher-family contact occurred more frequently in preschool than kindergarten. Head Start families received more home visits than families of children enrolled in the two other programs. Kindergarten families received more notes and exchanged more negative news than those in the preschool programs. No teacher or child characteristics other than teachers’ experience teaching preschool were correlated with the rate of teacher-family contact. Longitudinal analysis showed a decrease in teacher-family contact and a shift away from home-initiated contact and toward school-initiated contact as children made the transition from preschool to kindergarten.

**Seefeldt, Denton, Galper, & Younoszai (1998).** At the end of their children’s kindergarten year, parents whose children had been in Head Start were interviewed to determine the relationship among the parents’ self-efficacy beliefs, their beliefs about their children’s academic abilities, their affective state, their perceptions of the school climate, and their reported level of involvement in their children’s education. Parents reported moderately high rates of involvement in their children’s education that was not affected by participation or non-participation in the
Head Start-Public School Transition Demonstration program, a post-Head Start follow-up program. Parents’ views of school climate and their beliefs in their own ability to exercise control over their children’s education predicted school-related parent involvement. None of the variables predicted parents’ reported home involvement in educational activities.

**Seefeldt, Denton, Galper, & Younoszai (1999).** Interviews with 133 former Head Start parents and subsequent structural equation modeling demonstrated that membership in a post-Head Start transition follow-up program, the Head Start-Public School Demonstration program, and the level of parent education were significantly related to parental self-efficacy. In turn, parental self-efficacy beliefs significantly predicted children’s academic abilities as measured by receptive vocabulary, letter and word recognition, and applied problem solving.

**Sharpe (2002).** Parents in Singapore were observed to learn the use of mathematical learning support strategies with their children in pre-primary school in order to prepare the children to succeed in primary grades. Parents in Singapore invest considerable time and effort to build a foundation for numeracy.

**Sy & Schulenberg (2005).** The authors studied 309 Asian-American and 9,471 Euro-American parents from the *Early Childhood Longitudinal Study—Kindergarten Cohort* (National Center for Educational Statistics, retrieved Dec. 16, 2007). Noteworthy was the finding that despite significant mean differences between the two cultural groups in beliefs, expectations, and involvement practices, the degree to which those constructs predicted children’s achievement trajectories over time did not differ between groups.

**Teichman & Ziv (1998).** Israeli grandparents and their adult children described their current families. Investigators explored the cohesion and adaptability of the dyads, the relationships between the grandparents’ and parents’ descriptions of their families, and between family perceptions and children’s adjustment to kindergarten. The study provided evidence for unique, cross-generational influences on children’s development.