



CHANTIER MONTRÉALAIS

TRANSITION VERS L'ÉCOLE

Practice +

A resource for supporting a successful first transition to school

BACKGROUND

After they are born, children experience many transitions. This resource will focus on the transition period toddlers experience as they start school, i.e., kindergarten for 4-or 5-year-olds. Children may transition from home, from educational childcare services, from drop-in childcare centres, or from community organizations. Research has shown that if this initial transition to school goes smoothly, it forms a solid foundation for future transitions. It also affects children's motivation and engagement at school and, by extension, their perseverance and academic success¹.

This first transition to school is a key moment during which the child, family, school, and community adapt to one another. During this period—which lasts around 16 months, beginning in the year prior to the child starting school—the needs of the child, family, and host environment must be considered. A coordinated effort by all stakeholders will ensure continuity between the child's various social, learning, and living milieus.

This definition, inspired by the *Guide for Supporting a Successful School Transition*¹ focuses on interactions between the child's various living milieus and on the importance of planning this transition with those milieus. It shares responsibility for a successful transition among early childhood stakeholders, educational environments, and the family. It implies that the first school transition goes beyond preparing the child for school—a holistic process involving the child's development in various interrelated domains (motor, social, emotional, cognitive, language) that is largely the result of interactions of the child with their environment².

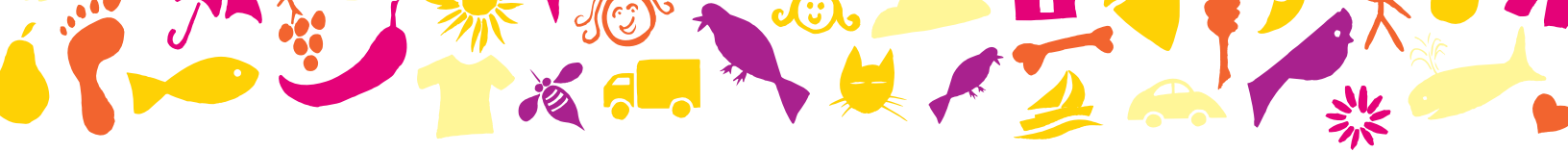
INTRODUCTION

This resource is founded on research data, in particular on the *Guide for Supporting a Successful School Transition*,¹ its evaluation,³ and on the expertise and ideas of Montreal stakeholders concerned with the success of the first transition to school (schools, educational childcare centres, family-centred community organizations, health and social service institutions, libraries, and so on). **It is intended for organizations involved in, or that foresee being involved in, collaborate on the first transition to school and reflect on the success** of this transition.

This resource facilitates a overview and analysis of transition practices that have been or are being implemented. Firstly in order to paint an overall portrait of collaboration among partners and secondly, to enhance practices and optimize their effects in the field. It may also be used to support an organization's process.



1. Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport; ministère de la Famille et des Aînés; ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, *Guide for Supporting a Successful School Transition*, 2010.
2. Ministère de la Famille. Favoriser le développement global des jeunes enfants au Québec: une vision partagée pour des interventions concertées, 2014, 29 pp. in C. Bouchard, *Le développement global de l'enfant en contexte éducatif*. Montreal: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2008.
3. Ruel, J., Moreau, A. C., Bérubé, A., and April, J. Les pratiques de transition lors de la rentrée des enfants au préscolaire. Evaluation of the *Guide for Supporting a Successful School Transition*, final research report. Gatineau, Québec: Université du Québec en Outaouais and Pavillon du Parc, 2015.



COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL FIRST SCHOOL TRANSITION

These are the main components in a successful first school transition:

1. The 5 key moments from the *Guide for Supporting a Successful Transition to School*.
2. The four factors for success from the final report evaluating the *Guide for Supporting a Successful Transition to School*.
3. Continuity in the ties linking the child's living environments. And for children with special needs, continuity of services already received prior to school.

1. The 5 key moments during the 16-month transition period

Prior to admission to school	During admission to school	After admission but before the beginning of the school year	Around the beginning of the school year	After the beginning of the school year
August-December	January-February	March-June	July-September	October-November

2. The four factors of success

FACTOR 1

Recognition of parents' key role: building the school-family relationship to promote parental engagement

Examples of questions to elicit further discussion:

- When do we make space for parents in our practices? Are they present at various key moments during the 16-month transition period?
- What are the strategies and actions in our practices that help us reach all parents and children experiencing the first transition to school?
- How can we make the information we wish to convey to parents more accessible?
- How can we address allophone parents, parents with low literacy, etc.

FACTOR 2

Partnership among transition stakeholders: planning and sharing responsibility for a successful transition

Examples of questions to elicit further discussion:

- Who are the school transition partners in our consultation group?
- Who are the internal and external partners in each organization of the consultation group (e.g., for a school, the afterschool childcare service is an internal partner and the local educational childcare centres are external partners.)?
- What partners are currently absent with respect to our school transition practices?
- How could the presence of these partners make our practices more successful? At what key moment in the 16-month period would this presence be most beneficial?
- How can we raise awareness among/mobilize/integrate new partners?
- In what ways can we work collaboratively/jointly in our community?

FACTOR 3

Tailoring transition practices for children with special needs: involving all partners concerned by this transition

Examples of questions to elicit further discussion:

- What are our school-transition practices for children with special needs? Are these practices implemented at different key moments of the 16-month transition period?
- With which school-transition partners are these practices planned?
- What do our partners contribute to the transition to school of children with special needs?
- How do our specific practices promote continuity among these children's various milieus?

FACTOR 4

Favourable conditions for a coordinated, planned, and structured process.

Examples of questions to elicit further discussion:

- What concrete measures have we put in place to support a planned approach for our practices?
- Do we have financial and human resources dedicated to the school transition?
- Have we created a school-transition committee, or have we put someone in charge of this matter?
- Do we have the ability to free up staff?
- Do our partners have time dedicated specifically to school transition in their mandates?
- How can we access support from school-transition development agents?

PROCEDURE

The 3 tables are intended to:

OBTAIN an overview of school-transition practices in your partnership group or in your territory.

Table 1: Overview of coordinated practices concerning the first transition to school

ANALYZE and enhance a practice taken from your overview

Table 2: Analysis and enhancement of a school-transition practice

PLAN the addition of a new practice

Table 3: Planning framework for a new practice and examples of coordinated practices supporting a successful school transition



The *Chantier montréalais Transition vers l'école* is part of Horizon 0-5, a regional early childhood consultation authority on the Island of Montreal. Horizon 0-5 is a shared-leadership network engaged in improving the well-being and educational success of Montreal children aged 0 to 5 years by building capacity to act in coordination with local communities across the region.

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