



WISCONSIN'S 4K CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER

February 2023



Welcome to Wisconsin's 4K Connections newsletter!

Wisconsin's 4K Connections is a quarterly newsletter from Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP). The goal of this publication is to bring relevant information and topics around 4K and 4K community approach to the community.

In this edition, we will be sharing resources and tips on

- Celebrations, Reflections, and Transitions
- Inclusion Tool Kit
- YoungStar Transition Update
- Access, Participation, and Supports for a High-Quality Inclusive Program
- Resources to Support DLLS in the Classroom
- Partner Play in Transition
- And More!!

WECCP MISSION

All children will be healthy, nurtured, safe, and successful.

WECCP Vision

Wisconsin communities, agencies, associations, and state government will work together as a system of high-quality, comprehensive early childhood services for all children and families.

4K Connections

2022 Year in Review

We hope that the resources and connection opportunities we offered in 2022 were helpful to you. In case you missed any of our resources or connection opportunities throughout the year, we wanted to remind you that they are all still available for you to access. Feel free to revisit anything that you may have missed or would like to explore further. As we begin a new year, we'd love to hear your thoughts on how we can best support you and your work!

Statewide Wisconsin's 4K Leadership Forum & Networking Events

A virtual event that brings together 4K leaders from across the state to facilitate interactive discussion and shared learning.

Spring 2022
Notes

Fall 2022
Notes



Wisconsin's 4K Virtual Connection Series

An opportunity to collaboratively share information and resources on quality practices relating to 4K and 4K Community Approaches

Priorities in DAP

Math in 4K

Welcoming All Families

Creating a Classroom Community

Assessments to Inform Practice

Wisconsin's 4K Connections Newsletter

A quarterly newsletter with relevant information and topics for the 4K and 4K Community Approach professionals

February 2022

May 2022

August 2022

November 2022



WMELS CONNECTION

ALL CHILDREN ARE CAPABLE AND COMPETENT

The [Guiding Principles of the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards](#) (WMELS) serve as a foundation for the development and implementation of early childhood education in Wisconsin. They are informed by scientific research, our values, and our commitment to providing the best possible start in life for young children and their families.

The Guiding Principle of "All Children are Capable and Competent" recognizes that all children, regardless of their background or abilities, have the capacity to learn and grow.

By embracing this principle, early childhood educators can create a positive and nurturing environment that supports each child's development and fosters their competence.

This includes:

- Engaging in respectful and responsive interactions with children.
- Staying nearby to provide support when asked or needed.
- Allowing children to take risks and build upon their prior knowledge and development.
- Encouraging children's independence through exploration and engagement with a variety of materials and activities.
- Accepting each child's development level, building their strengths, and supporting overall development.
- Planning activities and environments using the concept of "developmental ranges" that match the developmental levels of all children in their care.

Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards
Guiding Principles

- All children are capable and competent.
- Early relationships matter.
- A child's early learning and development is multidimensional.
- Expectations for children must be guided by knowledge of child growth and development.
- Children are individuals who develop at various rates.
- Children are members of cultural groups that share developmental patterns.
- Children exhibit a range of skills and competencies within any domain of development.
- Children learn through play and the active exploration of their environment.
- Parents are children's primary and most important caregivers and educators.

The WMELS Guiding Principle of "All Children are Capable and Competent" serves as a reminder to early childhood educators that all children have the potential to succeed and grow, and that it is our responsibility to create the conditions that allow them to do so

<https://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wmels/>

Celebrations, Reflections, and Transitions

Before time slips away, it is important to look back, focus on the current, and prepare for the future. Often, as we think about the “what needs to be done,” we forget to take the time to celebrate, reflect and use what we have learned to intentionally plan for tomorrow, next month, and next year. Now is the perfect time to identify celebrations, pause and reflect, as spring is coming soon and before you know it, it will be the end of the school year.

Celebrations and reflections are key elements of intentionally planning for effective educational transitions. These should not only focus on children and their “educational” environment, but they should also span across all aspects of [Developmentally Appropriate Practices](#). This includes the children, families, educators, community members, and the system. Each offers opportunities for celebrating, creating partnerships, and identifying resources.

The second guideline of Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Action is *Engaging in Reciprocal Partnerships with Families and Fostering Community of Connections*. One example of a DAP under this guideline is:

Educators continually seek to build their knowledge of inequities within school readiness discourse and practice. They self-reflect on language and practices used around transitions to kindergarten to ensure they promote asset-based perspectives of children and families. (Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Early Childhood Programs, 4th ed. 2022, p. 154).



Photo Source: <https://tinyurl.com/472hwb2n>

What better way to approach asset-based perspectives than to share and build upon celebrations? What better way to build partnerships? Has there ever been a time when someone has not engaged or been excited to hear about and participate in a celebration?

Utilizing celebrations and reflections during transitions can be key motivators to supporting ongoing joyous and meaningful learning. It is always important to view the talents of children, the strengths of families, resilience of professionals as proactive elements when implementing DAP. We want to ensure that as children and families engage in educational experiences and transition into and out of educational settings, that focus is placed on the potential of what “has” and “can” be learned, and not on what “has not or cannot” be learned.

State Agency Partner Updates/Information



Celebrations, Reflections, and Transitions

Resources

Below are links to national resources that embody the integration of celebrations, reflections, and DAP into elements of their transition processes/systems. For each, a specific resource has been highlighted that may be supportive to a range of current activities and planning effective transitions. (In Wisconsin, the term Kindergarten includes 4K and 5K).

[Connecticut: ESSA Student Transition Resources – PreK to Kindergarten](#)

[Transitioning to Kindergarten: The Why, What, and How of this Important Milestone for Connecticut Students.](#) - This document focuses on the comprehensive transition process.

[Minnesota: Kindergarten Transitions](#)

- These videos highlight the importance of DAP, engaging families, and administrators and principals advocating for developmentally appropriate teaching and co-planning time for staff.
 - [Supporting Kindergarten Transitions in Your Classroom.](#)
 - [Supporting Kindergarten Transitions in Your Schools](#)

[Vermont: Considerations on Transition to Kindergarten During the COVID-19 Response](#)

- [Transition to Kindergarten-Collaborations and Connections and Six Steps to Success](#) ~ This document outlines a step-by-step approach to build, implement, and evaluate a kindergarten transition plan.

[Head Start ECKLC-Transition to Kindergarten](#)

- Navigate to the See It: Videos of Effective Practice in Action - A series of individual videos in which effective educators, families, children, leaders, and community members share their experiences fostering partnerships and successful kindergarten transitions.

[Colorado: Transition to Kindergarten-A Road Map](#)

- Provides a system-level vision for the state of Colorado to plan and provide support to families, early care and education (ECE) providers, PreK-12 educators, and other professionals to ensure all children experience successful transitions to kindergarten.
- Strategies may be replicated in other states
- Specific Highlight: Strategy # 3 Child Level Learning Plans (p. 13).

State Agency Partner Updates/Information



YoungStar Transition Update

The YoungStar Transition is full steam ahead. While you may not notice many differences now, there is much work being done behind the scenes. Here are a few updates:

Shine Early Learning Staffing

Shine continues to hire Wisconsinites from across the state to support the YoungStar program. Notable hires include Erin Gernetzke who was named Shine Early Learning YoungStar Director, Sarah Talbot who was named Deputy Director of Program Support and Rebecca Breda who was named Rating Manager. Interviewing continues for Coaching Managers, Coaches and Raters.

Office Locations

In addition to virtual supports, each licensing region will have a YoungStar office that will provide a space for providers to attend trainings, meet with consultants, and more. Addresses and other pertinent information will be provided once the offices are open and ready for business. These offices will be in:

~ Milwaukee ~ Madison ~ Eau Claire ~ Rhinelander ~ Appleton~

Listening Sessions

In partnership with DCF, Shine will be hosting virtual and in person listening sessions in each region to learn about challenges, needs, and successes. These sessions will help guide statewide and regional program and resource development on both the quality and regulation side of early care and education.

- February 16: Milwaukee
- February 23: Madison
- March 2: Appleton
- March 9: Eau Claire
- March 16: Rhinelander

Specific details regarding these listening sessions will be shared via the DCF Listserv in the coming weeks. Sign up here <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/program/mailling-list>

Questions

Please visit <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/program/administration> for updated YoungStar Transition information or contact youngstar@wisconsin.gov.

State Agency Partner Updates/Information

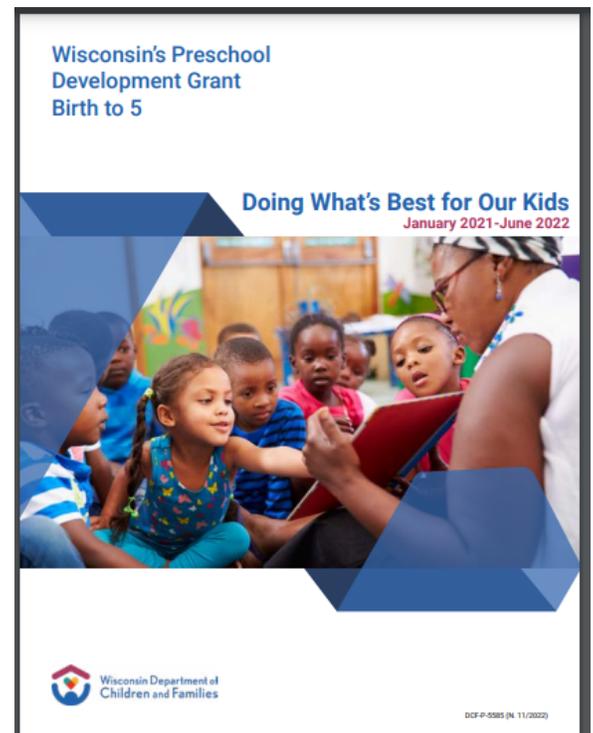


Doing What's Best for Our Kids: January 2021-June 2022 PDG Activities

In December 2020, Wisconsin was awarded a Preschool Development Grant Birth to 5 (PDG B-5) Renewal, totaling \$30 million and spanning three years (2021-23). The PDG B-5 Renewal Grant activities are based on the strategic plan developed by the Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), and other partners, and includes feedback and guidance from Wisconsin's early care and education (ECE) stakeholders.

Recently, DCF released a report titled *Doing What's Best for Our Kids*, detailing the activities made possible between January 2021 and June 2022 by the Preschool Development Grant. In this document, you will find:

- **PDG: Making a Difference Across Wisconsin** – learn about different areas of Wisconsin awarded grant funding or services supported by grant funding, provided by PDG funds
- **PDG Research Activities** – review several research initiatives funded by PDG and access their findings
- **Ongoing and Completed PDG Supported Programs/Resources** – discover various other projects funded by PDG, which support the early childhood system in Wisconsin
- **Leadership Bodies** – read about two leadership bodies that are direct results of PDG investments: the Governor's Leadership Council on Early Years (LCEY) and the Parent/Caregiver Equity Advisory Cabinet (PCEAC).



Download the [full report](#) to catch up with PDG.

State Agency Partner Updates/Information



Early Childhood Health Consultation

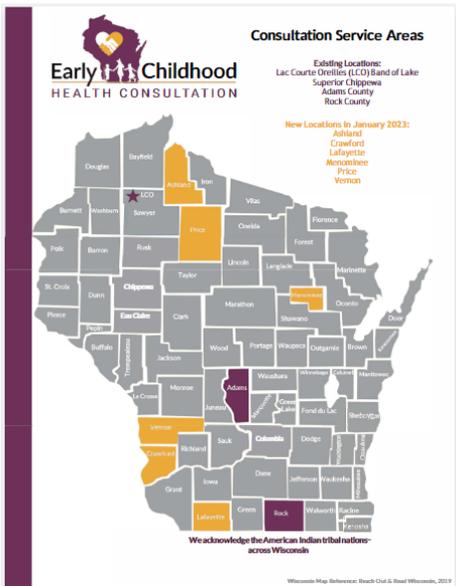
A Partnership with UW-Madison School of Human Ecology & Wisconsin Department of Children & Families

The Early Childhood Health Consultation program partners with early childhood care & education providers to achieve best practices in child health and safety. The Early Childhood Health Consultation (ECHC) is a free program here for you. Currently, the ECHC program offers ongoing guidance statewide through an on-demand resource library and monthly webinars.

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Additionally, health consultation is available to pilot locations across Wisconsin. Current locations include: Adams, Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO) Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Rock, Ashland, Crawford, Lafayette, Menominee, Price, & Vernon

If you are outside of the current locations and are interested in having health consultation in your area please complete the [Interest Form](#) for future consideration.



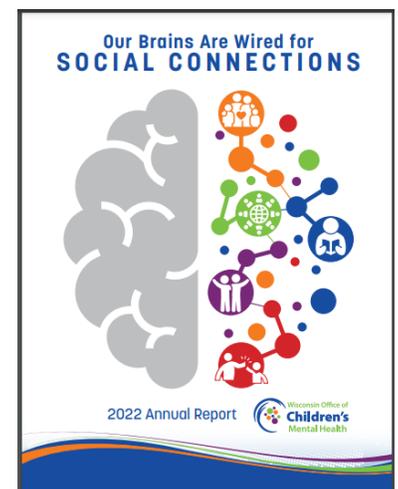
Visit <https://echc.wisc.edu/>



Our Brains are wired for Social Connections

The Office of Children's Mental Health released its [2022 annual report](#). The report includes the current well-being trends of children, teens, and young adults in Wisconsin. And highlights the year's accomplishments and impacts. It also includes mental health activities and resources from the Wisconsin Departments of Health Services, Children and Families, Corrections, and Public Instruction.

Learn more at [OCMH Website](#)





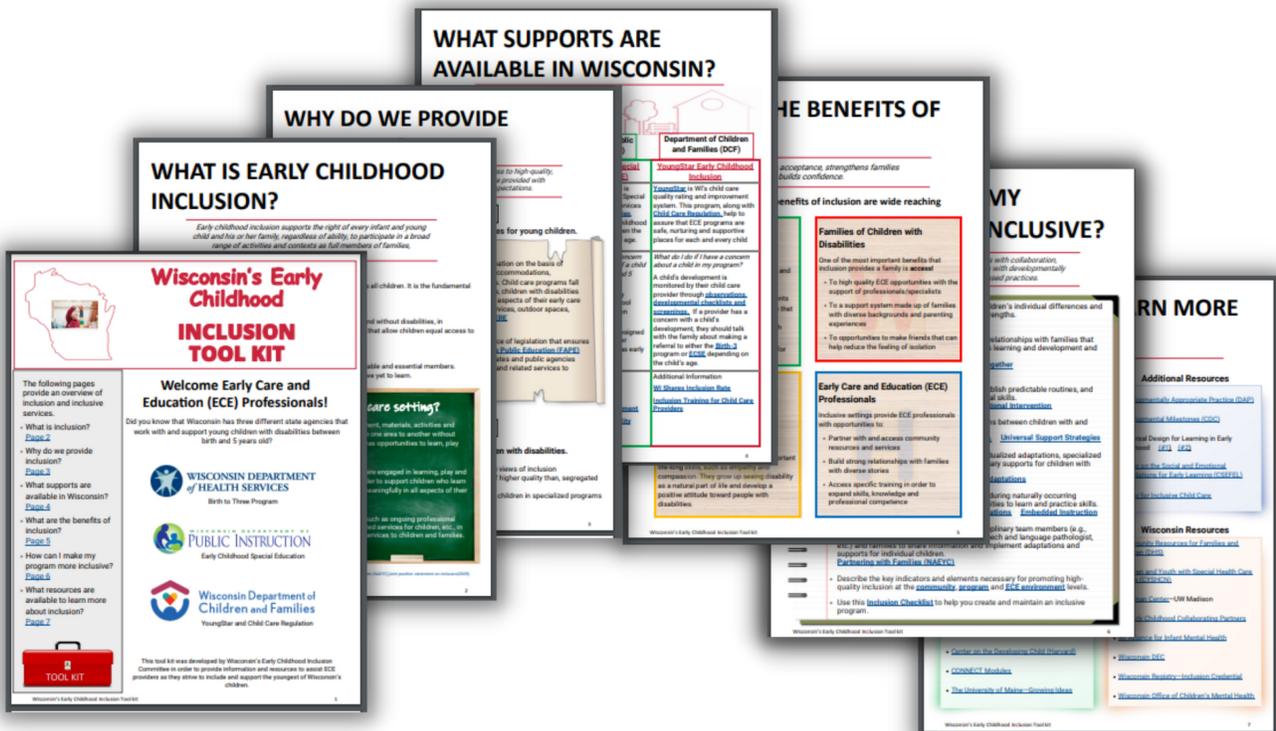
Wisconsin's Early Childhood Inclusion Tool Kit

The Wisconsin Early Childhood [Inclusion Tool Kit](#) was developed by Wisconsin's Early Childhood Inclusion Committee in order to provide information and resources to assist ECE providers as they strive to include and support the youngest of Wisconsin's children. In the toolkit you will find...

- What is inclusion?
- Why do we provide inclusion?
- What supports are available in Wisconsin?
- What are the benefits of inclusion?
- How can I make my program more inclusive?
- What resources are available to learn more about inclusion?



Image by jcomp on Freepik



ACCESS, PARTICIPATION, AND SUPPORTS FOR A HIGH-QUALITY INCLUSIVE PROGRAM



Children in early childhood classrooms have diverse needs, interests, and strengths. The 2009 [DEC/NAEYC Inclusion Position Statement](#) provides a common understanding of high-quality inclusive programs. As early care and education providers, we understand and believe that all children have the

right to participate in activities within their community, home and school, which leads to the development of a sense of belonging and an opportunity to develop positive social relationships and friendships for both children and families. Access, participation, and supports are the critical features of inclusion.

Access: All children need access to a range of learning opportunities and activities, within varied settings, and environments.

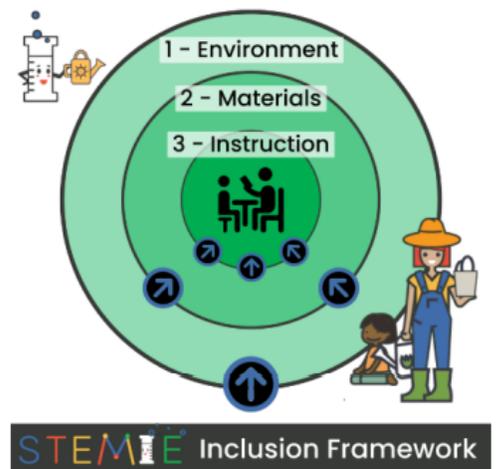
Participation: Some children will need additional individualized accommodations and supports to participate fully in play and learning activities with peers and adults.

Supports: Supports refer to ongoing professional development that provides professionals and families with the skills and knowledge needed to develop and maintain high-quality inclusive opportunities for children.

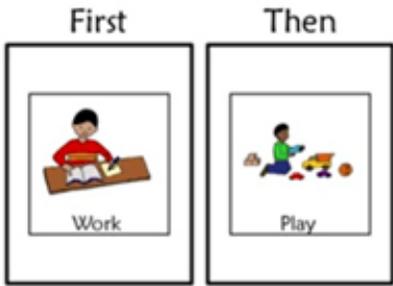
Early childhood educators may need to make changes to activities or materials so that individual children are better able to participate with peers in daily routines and activities. Small changes can make a big difference for a child to be successful in an inclusive preschool environment. Adaptations are changes to a child's environment, materials, or instruction to support their ability to more independently participate in classroom routines and activities. Before determining adaptations ([A Guide to Adaptations](#)), it is important to get to know each child by observing, becoming aware of their interests and strengths, noticing when a child experiences success and when they struggle, and considering what other children are doing and what you would like the child to be doing.

Adaptations are embedded into everyday routines and activities and are based on children's interests and strengths. We know that adaptations are effective when children are active and engaged members of their class, they are able to successfully access and use toys and materials, to communicate with others, to make friends with peers, to solve problems, to participate in group activities, and to move within the environment with minimal adult support.

At this time of year, we begin to think about how to support children who are going to transition to kindergarten. How will children know how to follow new rules? Will they know how to ask for help? When are they going to have time to play? Young children who are successful in a 4K setting because they are supported with, for example, visual schedules, wait time to answer questions, or adapted seating, will probably benefit from those same adaptations in their next setting. It will be up to the current and receiving teachers to discuss the strengths and interests of the child, what adaptations are currently used successfully, and how to immediately incorporate the adaptations in the new environment. If the goal is for all children to belong, then it is up to the adults to put in place the supports needed for children to be successful members of the class.



Here are suggestions for modifications in the areas of environment, materials, and instruction, that align with the [DEC Recommended Practices](#) (environment and instruction).

Adults modify or adapt...	Examples of Individualized strategies...
<p>Environment</p> 	<p>Arrange the area and materials in systematic ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add rails to a stool • Allow space for walkers/wheelchairs • Have a quiet space available for children to support regulation • Provide seating/standing options that allow children to participate at the same level as their peers • Extend fixtures so they are easily reached • Toys and materials are labeled and placed at eye level
<p>Materials</p> 	<p>Assistive technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of voice output • Add materials to utensils to make it easier to grasp • Stabilize materials using tape, Velcro, or nonskid backing • Provide adapted equipment such as crayons, scissors, slant boards, etc. so that children with motor difficulties are able to participate with their peers. • Create, and teach children to use pictures and props for books to increase interest and engagement • Use high-contrast materials • Simplify book text • Use concrete objects or visuals to increase participation
<p>Instruction</p> 	<p>Support for Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrate children's actions • Use communication devices and communication visuals • Use first/then and choice boards • Model language, repeat and extend children's language • Use sign language and gestures

Adults modify or adapt...	Examples of Individualized strategies...
<p>Instruction (cont.)</p> 	<p>Visual Cues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual schedule created, posted at eye level, and used throughout the day • First/then board • Individual schedules • Use prompt cards • Use concrete objects • Use visuals that tell children what to do (feelings/emotions, expectations, calming technique). <p>Teaching Practices, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prompting • Scaffolding • Modeling • Descriptive talking/verbal guidance • Wait time • Reinforcement
<p>Resources</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Guide to Teaching Strategies • CARA's Kit Mini Posters • Classroom Visuals and Supports • Division of Early Childhood Recommended Practices • The IRIS Center. (2015). Early childhood environments: Designing effective classrooms. Retrieved from https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/env/ • Making Adaptations to Meet a Variety of Needs

The Early Learning Technical Assistance and Implementation (EL-TAI) grant supports school districts, community partners, and families to improve outcomes for preschool children with disabilities in Wisconsin, through evidenced-based and meaningful inclusive practices. The Early Learning Technical Assistance Specialists are available to support teachers and teams in the use of evidence-based strategies that support high-quality inclusion. If you would like to contact a specialist, please complete the [Early Learning Technical Assistance Request](#). You also may be interested in reviewing the [EL-TAI Menu of Services](#) for all of the services that are offered through the EL-TAI grant.

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS (DLLS) IN THE CLASSROOM



According to the Migration Policy Institute, roughly one-third of all children, birth through age 5 in the United States are considered dual language learners¹. The ability to speak more than one language is an incredible strength and early childhood is the ideal time for children to develop proficiency in multiple languages. It is important that early childhood programs provide high-quality, language-rich environments that nurture the continued development of children's home languages. Head Start's Professional Learning Guide on Supporting Dual Language Learners says that:

Supporting a child's home language development helps them build on what they already know. They learn in context, linking their knowledge in their home language to English. By supporting a child's home language, educators ensure that children build on and strengthen skills they already know as they learn English. This also builds children's sense of belonging and connection with their communities. Research indicates that continued support of a child's home language is key to building strong school readiness skills and long-term academic success.²

Even if educators don't speak the home languages of the children in their classrooms, there are still plenty of ways they can support and build upon children's knowledge in their home language. Explore these resources to get started!

.....
Dual Language Learners are children who have a home language other than English and are learning two or more languages at the same time or are learning a second language while continuing to develop their first language.
.....

EXPLORE & LEARN

[Head Start Resource Page for Dual Language Learners](#) ~ A collection of dozens of resources that offer information and guidance on the needs of DLL's, including this [Joint Policy Statement on Supporting the Development of Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Programs](#)

[Multilingual Learning Toolkit](#) ~ A collection of research-based key principles, instructional strategies, and resources that are geared toward educators who teach PreK-3rd Multilingual Learners.

[8 Strategies for Preschool ELL's Early Language and Literacy Development](#) ~ An article from [Colorín Colorado](#), a bilingual site dedicated to supporting educators and families of English Language Learners

[Centering Multilingual Learners in Early Literacy Instruction](#) ~ This resource from [Instruction Partners](#) provides classroom-based strategies for ensuring young multilingual learners develop foundation skills and have exceptional experiences becoming readers.

[WIDA: Early Language Development](#) ~ This site contains tools and resources to promote multilingual children's language development.

1. Migration Policy Institute DLL Infographic 2022: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/dll-infographic-2022-web-final.pdf>
2. ECLKC: Intentional Language Support for Children Who Are Dual Language Learners: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/learning-guides-intentional-learning.pdf>

PARTNER PLAY IN TRANSITION

"I'm on her team!" the four-year-old proudly announces to the adults in the living room. The adults are about to play a board game, and the child wants to join and play too. The rules don't quite make sense to the child. The adults talk about strategy and exchange cards. They use words specific to the game that the child has never heard before. There is so much going on as these grown-ups play together, but the child feels joy in learning the game with a "teammate" explaining each step at a table of encouraging adults.

Transitioning into a new school or classroom is in many ways similar to the child participating in a game as the teammate of a grown-up. Children need a safe place to play, learn, and connect with others. With support, encouragement, and guidance from caring adults, children can enter their new school and classroom with confidence and safety, just like the child at the table.

A Child's First Teammate and Teacher

"Parents are children's primary and most important caregivers and educators." (Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards Guiding Principle) As children enter into 4K and progress from 4K to 5K, parents and/or primary caregivers are children's most important "teammates." Engaging with families to understand their needs and hopes for their children is the start to creating shared goals and steps in the transition process. Understanding child care, partnership, developmental, cultural and child specific needs starts with reciprocal partnership with families. Parents are "teammates" that communicate a broad picture of strengths and needs of children with the rest of the players at the table.

-Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards: With Introduction. fifth ed., Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2017.



Partners at the Table

Successful school transitions are collaborative efforts. Smooth transitions are made when all the "players" at the table are engaging in respectful two-way communication with a shared goal of supporting families and children as they enter into a new school and/or classroom. Creating collaborative teams starts with parents and caregivers. Educators take time to listen as families share about their child's current programs and supports and inquire about their needs for the next year.

With permission from the family, current and previous educators and providers such as, speech language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, home and community supports, childcare providers, and special education professionals are invited to share and engage in ...



PARTNER PLAY IN TRANSITION



Partners at the Table Continued

... the school transition process. After gaining an understanding of the needs for the upcoming school experience, educators and professionals from the new school should be invited to listen and share helpful program and service related information. In addition to educators, after school or wrap around child care services, homelessness liaisons, special education professionals, and transportation services should be included if applicable. With school and community connection, family and child “teams” are surrounded by a group of adults all working together to create a positive supported transition into 4K and 5K.

Table Talk

As families, children, and professionals gather together to discuss transitioning into a new school and classroom, the rules for discussion are the opposite of game play. Strategy and plans for movement and partnership need to be clearly and openly shared in language and terminology understood by everyone at the table. Everyone shares their knowledge and offers their program and educational support. They show their cards, so to speak. Not only is “table talk” allowed, it is eagerly encouraged and started as early as possible.

Through partnership all players at the table create a supportive, informed smooth transition. Families and children move into and out of 4K eager to declare their new school system their team.

Resources

For more information on transition, check out these videos and resources from [Head Start's Early Learning & Knowledge Center \(ELKC\)](#).





Wisconsin's 4K/4KCA Virtual Connection

Wisconsin 4K Connection Series is an online networking forum for information sharing and collaboration of quality practices relating to 4K and 4K Community Approaches. Sessions will include an overview of the featured topic and sharing of resources. Sessions will be interactive, so please come prepared to share your experience, knowledge, and feedback on the featured topics.

Audience: 4K Teachers, 4K Directors, Principals, Head Start, Child Care, Private Schools, and 4K Community Approach Partners

JOIN ONLINE: [HTTPS://CESA5.ZOOM.US/J/630088301](https://CESA5.ZOOM.US/J/630088301)
MEETING ID: 630 088 301
PHONE: 1 646 558 8656 US

ALL MEETINGS ARE 3:30 - 4:30 PM

Registration is Not Required



SEPTEMBER 21, 2022

Welcoming All Families



FEBRUARY 22, 2023

Building on Individual Strengths



OCTOBER 26, 2022

Creating a Classroom Community



MARCH 15, 2023

Early Literacy



NOVEMBER 30, 2022

Assessments to Inform Practice



APRIL 19, 2023

Looking Back to Think Forward



JANUARY 18, 2023

Teaming and Collaborations

QUESTIONS? PLEASE CONTACT TIFFANY SWAIN ~ SWAINT@CESA5.ORG



Free PBS KIDS Self-Paced Learning Courses

PBS Wisconsin Education is excited to share 21 self-paced learning courses available through The Wisconsin Registry! These courses are with a free account on The Registry - no membership required! View the PBS [Learning Courses flyer](#) for more information.



- Connecting with Families
- K-2 Science Tips
- Building a Reader
- Caring Communities
- Circles of Care
- Roads to Resilience
- Supporting Dual Language Learners
- Supporting Play with Media and Technology
- Teaching Culturally with Informational Text
- Teaching Early Science with the Changing Seasons Collection

Questions? Email learningforcredit@pbswisconsin.org



REGISTRATION IS OPEN!



Promoting Early Childhood

PEC 2023-Virtual Conference
March 8 & 9, 2023

Cultivate Thriving Communities
Sharing strategies, positive practices, and innovative ideas where early learning communities connect and collaborate to grow and thrive.

[PEC Registration Flyer](#)

Questions? Contact: sherry.kimball@dpi.wi.gov 608-267-9625
<https://dpi.wi.gov/early-childhood/pec-conference>

SAVE THE DATE

WISCONSIN'S 4K LEADERSHIP
FORUM AND NETWORKING
EVENT

April 18, 2023

Join us for this free virtual event to collaborate and network around 4-year-old kindergarten in Wisconsin!

If you have any questions about the networking event, contact Tiffany Swain swaint@cesa5.org

