SUPPORTING KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION:
BEST PRACTICES AND REAL WORLD APPLICATIONS

Transition to Kindergarten Summit
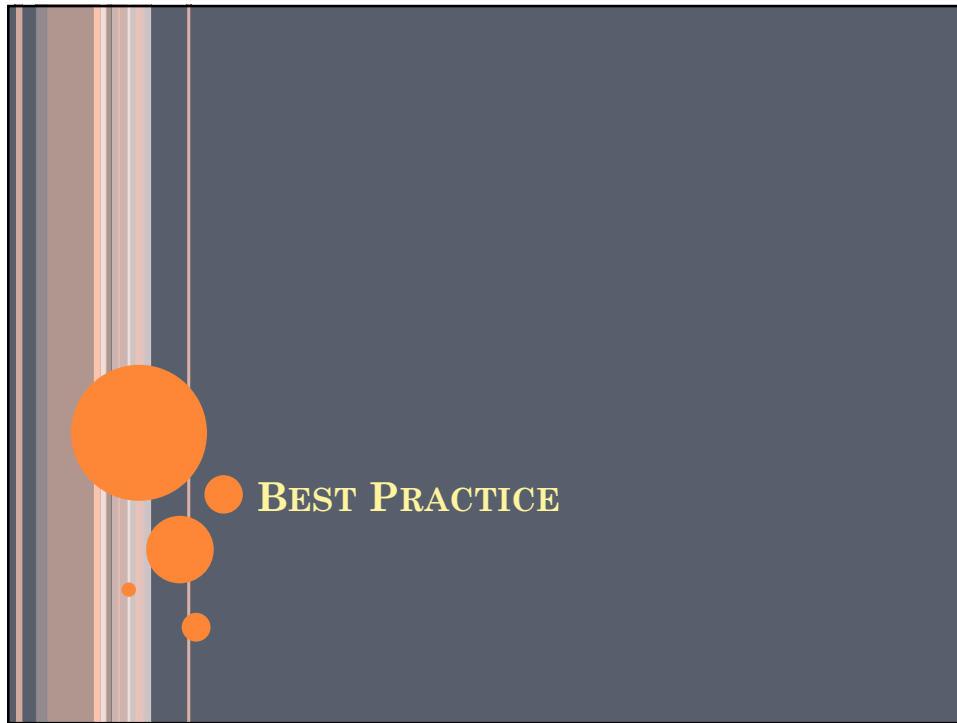**December 2, 2022**

Megan Purcell, Ph.D.
Clinical Associate Professor
Purdue University

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Best Practices
  - Evidence
  - Models of Transition
- Application
- What does this all mean

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BEST PRACTICE

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WHAT THE EVIDENCE SAYS

DEC Recommended Practices (2014) states:

Transition is a process that generally involves many activities on the part of the practitioner in collaboration with the family. As with other life transitions or changes, positive relationships--in this case positive teacher-child and practitioner-family relationships--are associated with greater satisfaction, better adjustment, and better child outcomes.

Division for Early Childhood. (2014). *DEC Recommended Practices in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education.* Los Angeles, CA: Author.

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DEC RECOMMENDED PRACTICES: TRANSITION

o TR1. Practitioners in sending and receiving programs **exchange information** *before*, *during*, and ***after*** transition about practices most likely to support the child's successful adjustment and positive outcomes.

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DEC RECOMMENDED PRACTICES: TRANSITION

o TR2. Practitioners use a **variety of planned and timely strategies** with the child and family *before*, *during*, and ***after*** the transition to support successful adjustment and positive outcomes for both the child and family.

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How might we see those practices in action?

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FOUR MODELS OF TRANSITION

- Rimm-Kaufman and Pianta (2000) studied the process of preschool to kindergarten transition.

- They concluded there are 4 models:
    - 1: Child Effects
    - 2: Direct Effects
    - 3: Indirect Effects
    - 4: Economic and Dynamic

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CHILD EFFECTS MODEL

➢ Child readiness is the main focus and expectation of success of the transition

o What does this look like?
- We work to prepare the child to be cognitively, socially, and emotionally ready for the next level of education

o However, this accounts for **less than 25% of the variance in success** of the transition for the child

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DIRECT EFFECTS MODEL

➢ Contexts such as school, neighborhood, peers, and family influence the child's success in the transition (unidirectional)

o What does this look like?
- We not only work to prepare the child but we also support the family, post information in the community, prepare the school, etc. to support the child being ready for the next level of education

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INDIRECT EFFECTS MODEL

- ➢ The child interacts with and may also influence the contexts of school, neighborhood, peers, and family which then influences the success of the transition (bidirectional)

- ⚬ What does this look like?
  - While the focus is still the success of the child, we see an interaction among the various contexts that surround the child in order to support the child's success in the next level of education

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ECONOMIC AND DYNAMIC MODEL

- ➢ The contexts in models 2 and 3 develop relationships that, not only, influence the child's success in transition but also become their own outcomes

- ⚬ What does this look like?
  - There is an interconnectedness and synergy among the various contexts
  - The child's success isn't the only outcome

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ECONOMIC AND DYNAMIC MODEL

- How can we make this happen?
  - The actual transition begins in the year prior and continues through the following year so that relationships are established and maintained
  - The way we approach family-school communication and relationship must change
  - Outcomes are multi-faceted
    - Child-school connections
    - Peer connections
    - Family-school connections
    - Community connections

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LET'S DIG INTO THE CONNECTIONS

- Child-school connections
  - Preparing the child
  - Preparing the new teacher/classroom
- Peer connections
  - Building relationships
- Family-school connections
  - Informing and engaging the family
- Community connections
  - Deepen understanding of education systems

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SOME SPECIFIC EXAMPLES: CHILD-SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

- Connections to new teacher/classroom/school
  - Home visits or other forms personal contact with new teacher prior to transition
  - New teacher to current classroom
  - Child visits to new classroom
  - Practice routines for new classroom
  - Events at new school
- Connections to former teacher
  - Former teacher shares information with new teacher
  - Former and new teacher communicate throughout the new year
  - Former teacher checks in with child and family after transition

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SOME SPECIFIC EXAMPLES: PEER CONNECTIONS

- Within class
  - Encourage skills in peer relations
  - Plan ahead with assigning children to classrooms – move children together to next classroom as much as possible
- Outside of class
  - Plan for times children can be together outside of school
  - Summer play groups and events to support friendships and familiarity when school starts
- Older children
  - Connect outgoing children with incoming children of a particular classroom

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SOME SPECIFIC EXAMPLES:
FAMILY-SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

- Communication with family prior to the transition for information sharing
  - Prior school year
  - Summer
- Contact with family within the first few days after transition
  - Discuss family needs / concerns
  - Check in on how the child is doing at home and school
- Periodic contact with family after the transition through the next year
  - Individual through face-to-face meetings and phone calls
  - Group through newsletters, etc.
- Regular family opportunities to be at school
  - Classroom volunteering
  - Topic-specific meetings
  - Social events

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SOME SPECIFIC EXAMPLES:
COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- Coordinate conversations among teachers who will transition the children
  - Classroom practices and routines
  - Curriculum and expectations
  - Knowledge of specific children and needs
- Connect family and child to school and community resources as needs arise

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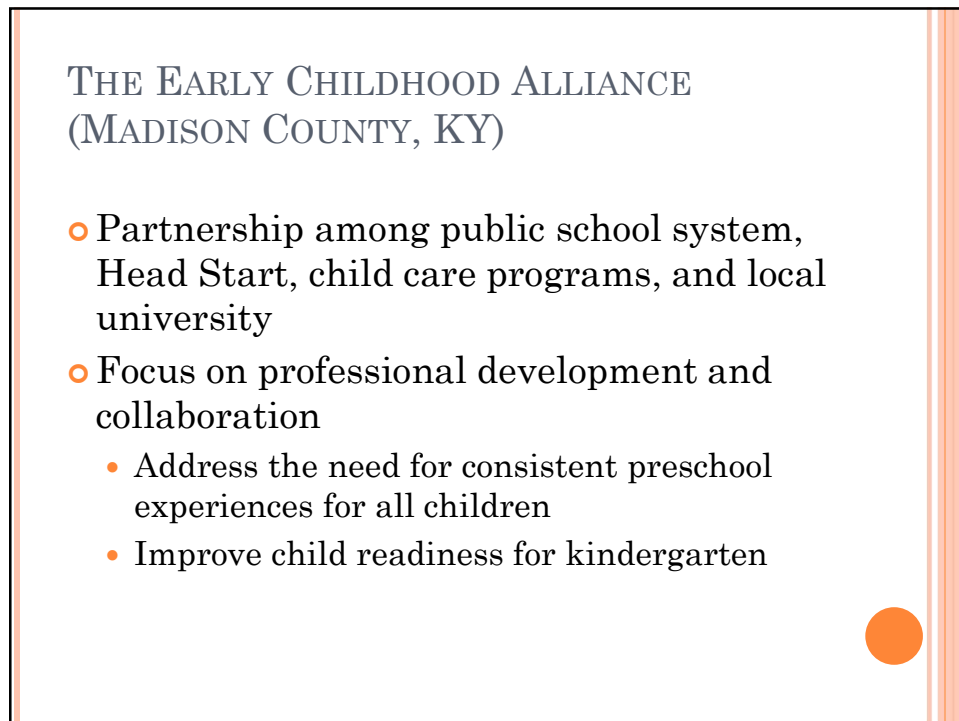
APPLICATION

In almost no other area of educating young children does collaboration make more sense than the transition to kindergarten.

-Pianta, et al. (2001)

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THE EARLY CHILDHOOD ALLIANCE (MADISON COUNTY, KY)

- Partnership among public school system, Head Start, child care programs, and local university
- Focus on professional development and collaboration
  - Address the need for consistent preschool experiences for all children
  - Improve child readiness for kindergarten

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CHILD PROGRAMS INVOLVED

- School District
  - Kindergarten
  - State funded preschool
    - 3 and 4-year-olds disability / developmental delay eligible
    - 4-year olds income eligible
    - Small percentage of typically developing 4-year olds
- Head Start
  - Some in schools as Head Start only
  - Some blended preschool classrooms
- Community Child Care Programs

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THE SPARK TO LIGHT THE FIRE

- Kindergarten Cadre
  - Concerns and issues around effectively preparing children for 1st grade

- Then, state-funded preschool joined in

- *But what about those children who don't go to preschool or Head Start?*

- Invitation to community child care programs

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BRINGING THE MADISON CO. ALLIANCE TO LIFE

o Full support by Public School Superintendent
  • Time, resources, funding

o Open meetings among agencies
  • Public school teachers and admin, Head Start admin, Child Care Owners/Directors, Higher Education

o Discussion of needs and concerns of each agency

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DEVELOPMENT (SUMMER)

o School administration set the framework
  • Focus on PD
  • Foundation in Education Rounds
o Weeklong training and development with school teams (select preschool and kindergarten teachers)
  • State Early Childhood Standards
  • State Primary Program of Study and Kindergarten Standards
  • State Early Childhood Professional Core Content
o IMPACT Triangles format developed (more in just a minute!)

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BEGINNING THE PROCESS (FALL)

- IMPACT Triangle Orientation held in October
  - Sharing of program requirements
- Discussion of
  - Individual professional development needs based on core content
  - Alliance goals
- Year One Focus
  - Each teacher identified a problem of practice based on State Early Childhood Professional Core Content

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IMPACT TRIANGLES
(IMPROVING, MOTIVATING, PREPARING, ACHIEVING, AND COLLABORATING TOGETHER)

- Develop a focus at orientation
  - Identify "problem"
  - Draft their plan
- Visit one another's classrooms 3 times each year
  - In the style of "education rounds"
- Alliance large group meetings 3 times each year
  - Fall planning
  - Winter mid point check
  - Spring wrap up

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INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

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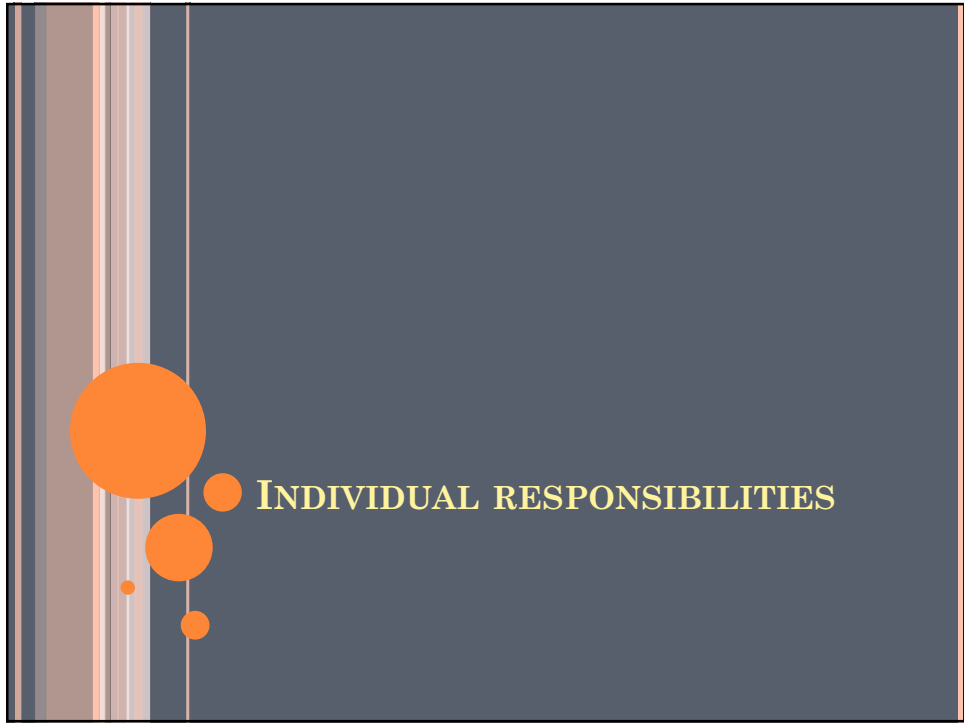
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM
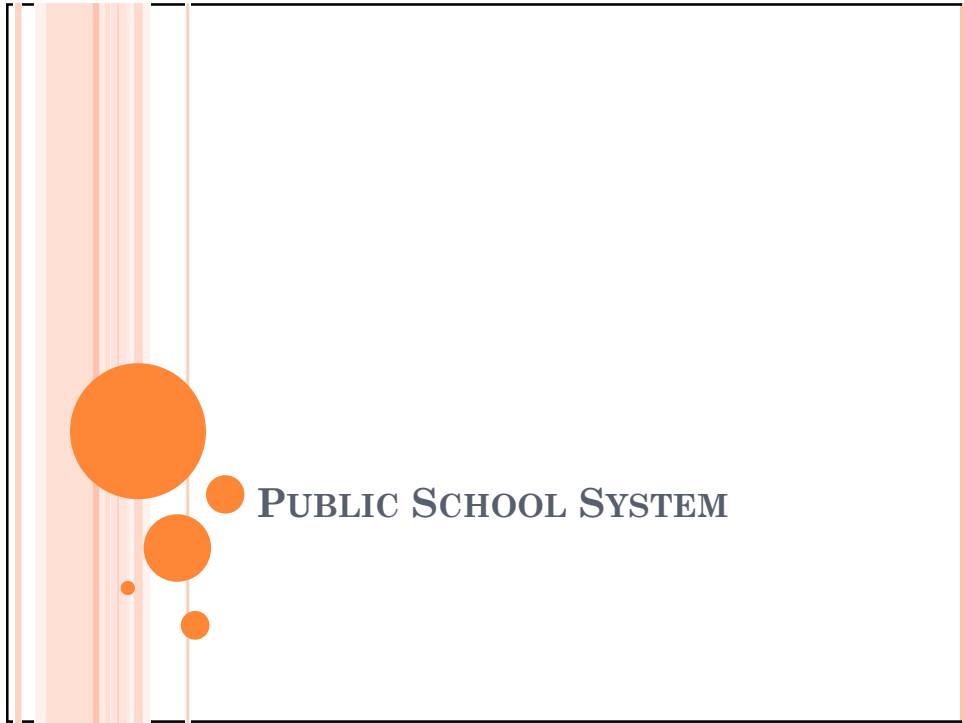
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SUPER SATURDAY

- Child care request for PD hours
  - Convenience
  - Expense
  - Appropriate topics
- 6 hours of training offered 3 times each year
  - School system organize training hours for child care providers
    - Needs assessment conducted with Child Care Directors
  - Free to project child care members
  - Open to other child care providers for a small fee

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KINDERGARTEN CHECKLIST

- Informal child assessment checklist addressing skills considered essential for kindergarten success based on state academic expectations

- Toolkit of activities and materials to support child care teachers in assessment and instruction

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ACCESS TO SCHOOL CURRICULUM

- Preschool and kindergarten curriculum available for review and check out by child care programs
  - Preschool programming office
  - Head Start office
  - Early childhood professional development providers

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QUALITY ASSISTANCE

- Assistance to child care programs related to quality enhancement
  - Professional development for child care staff
  - Adult-child interactions
  - Lesson planning

STARS FOR KIDS NOW
Kentucky Invests in Developing Success

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PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

- Annual "award" presentation for participating child care programs
  - Superintendent visit to each center
  - Presentation of Alliance banner
- News releases
  - Photos and information released announcing participating centers
- T-shirts for all partners

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CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

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PARTICIPATING CHILD CARE PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

- Licensed
- Maintain "STARS" rating (voluntary quality rating system)
- Implement State Early Childhood Standards
- Maintain portfolio or checklist for each child transitioning to public kindergarten in the county
- Implement Staff Development Plans
- Submit Annual Self-Report

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PROJECT OUTCOMES

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MEASURING THE BENEFITS

- Quantitative and qualitative data are collected to measure the effectiveness of the Alliance

- Quantitative data used to examine impact on kindergarten success

- Qualitative data used to examine the impact on professional development and perceptions of participants

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DATA RESULTS

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QUALITATIVE DATA

- Review documents, surveys, notes and transcripts from focus groups of all triangles
  - Triangulation

- "Quantifying" consistent themes
  - For example, 9 out of 10 Triangles…

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SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

- Benefits to children
  - Improved Kindergarten readiness
  - Improved and more reasonable expectations for Kindergarten entrance – teachers indicated less stress on children with more reasonable expectations
- Benefits to professionals
  - Kindergarten expressed an improved understanding of preschool expectations and regulations
  - Improved understanding of each others' roles
  - Great benefits having a collaborative professional team to "bounce ideas off of" and to learn new strategies, approaches, activities, etc.
- Benefits to families
  - Children more ready for Kindergarten
  - Know that professionals are collaborating for seamless, better aligned services
  - Improved knowledge of Kindergarten programs and teachers

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QUANTITATIVE DATA

- Multiple regression analysis to predict kindergarten growth as measured by the Fountas and Pinnell and SNAP assessments
- Independent student variables examined:
  - Type of preschool experience
  - Years of preschool experience
  - Free/reduced lunch status

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TRENDS

- In general, children receiving free or reduced lunch and children whose parents reported lower levels of education showed more growth
- Children with more years of preschool showed more growth
- Although the type of preschool experience did not significantly predict any of the measures, it appeared that participation in public preschool and Alliance Centers was correlated with more growth in the Kindergarten year

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DATA REVIEW (WHAT WE ANTICIPATED…)

- Provided direction for following year of Triangles
- Provided a needs assessment for Super Saturday topics
- Revealed an improvement in professional practices and more specific professional development
- Revealed a need for better communication between school administration and child care directors

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UNINTENDED BENEFITS (WHAT WE DIDN'T…)

- Validation of child care providers as professionals
  - Changed assumptions of school district personnel
- Child care providers returning to school for 2 and 4 year degrees
  - Recognized personal ability to improve professional practices
- Improved family and child support in the transition from preschool/childcare to kindergarten
  - Child care providers felt more comfortable providing information to families related to kindergarten transition

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MORE UNINTENDED BENEFITS

- Collaboration between public school personnel and child care providers
  - Support for children in both programs
- Better alignment between public school preschool and kindergarten
  - Teachers more aware of what occurs in other classrooms
- Improved relationships with families
  - See how schools and child care are working together for their children

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APPLICATION PART 2!

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PULASKI COUNTY, INDIANA

- Local Coalition
  - Former and current school administrators
  - Community leaders
- Recognized the need for improved school readiness as well as addressing child care desert
- Worked to bring preschool and kindergarten together
  - Professional development
    - Foundations
    - PTQ
  - Collaboration time to brainstorm

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WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN?
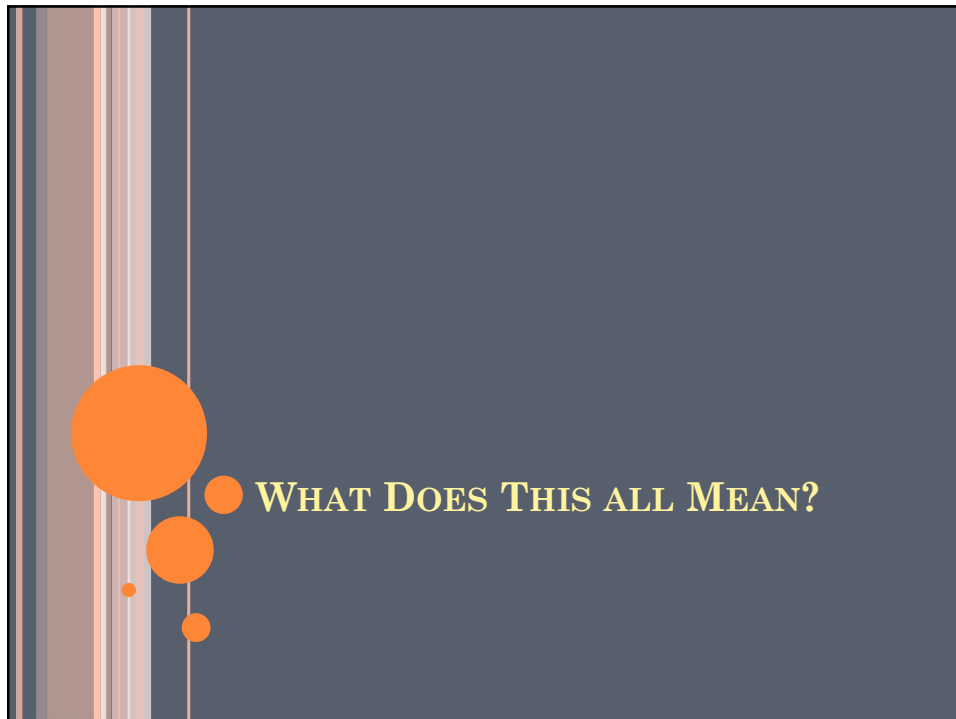
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TAKE AWAYS

- Knowledge of frameworks and curricula
  - The Early Learning Foundations
  - Kindergarten Academic Standards

- C-O-L-L-A-B-O-R-A-T-I-O-N!!!
  - Sending and receiving teams
  - Families
  - Other partners (colleges/universities, PD providers, etc.)

- Administrators as leaders
  - Schools
  - Head Start
  - Child care

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RESOURCES

- Division for Early Childhood Recommended Practices
  - http://www.dec-sped.org/recommendedpractices
- National Association for the Education of Young Children
  - http://www.naeyc.org/
- Transition One Stop
  - http://www.transitiononestop.org/
- Head Start/ECLKC
  - https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/transitions
- Head Start 2 Kindergarten
  - HS2K_Task_4_Report_FINAL_508_remediation_QC.pdf
- American Speech-Hearing Association
  - https://www.asha.org/

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- Kraft-Sayre, M.E., & Pianta, R.C. (2000). *Enhancing the transition to kindergarten.* Charlottesville: University of Virginia, National Center for Early Development & Learning.
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- Rimm-Kaufman, S., & Pianta, R. (2000). An ecological perspective on the transition to kindergarten: A theoretical framework to guide empirical research. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology,*(5), 491-511.

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THANK YOU!

IF WE HAVE TIME, PLEASE ASK QUESTIONS!

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