

Planning Successful Transitions

A well-planned transition can be the difference between flourishing and floundering. So, how do you plan for success? This two-page list of ideas is a great place to start!



Start or maintain an organized binder.

Keep copies of all your child's assessments, medical records, and contacts for the professionals who support or work with your child. Also, include a detailed profile of your child. This kind of organization comes in handy with each transition.



Meet with your child's school in May or June so you can plan for the start of school.

Introduce your child, share any relevant assessments and information, and ask if the school is open to consultation from other professionals working with your child. If it applies, you can also ask to invite someone who has been working with your child in a daycare or preschool setting. They often already have a plan and can offer insights into valuable strategies and supports that work for your child.



Get to know your district.

Each school and district has their inclusion policy and practices published on their website. Visit these websites to understand different departments and find out who you can reach out to if there are any issues.



Work as a team right from the start.

By working together, parents/caregivers and schools can provide the best and most supportive learning environment at home and school. Let the school know your child's strengths and areas they may need support. Ask who will be responsible for supporting them in challenging times.



Plan for your child to start kindergarten on the same day as every student does.

Kindergarten students usually begin the school year with a gradual entry. All students should be in classrooms with their peers after the gradual entry period. In October or November, the school will invite you to be part of the individualized educational plan (IEP). An IEP is a working document that lists their strengths, challenges, goals, and supports needs for the school year.



Follow the proper channels to have your voice heard.

Parents have the right to be consulted and involved in planning, developing and implementing their child's educational program. If you have concerns about what's happening in the school or classroom, start by talking with the teacher. Students in primary grades often have communication books, which are very helpful in open dialogue with your classroom teacher. Ask the teacher what type of communication works for them. It should be easy to fill out and include information from home to school and school to home. If things aren't resolved, then speak to the school principal. Still no resolution? Then, you can reach out to the school district.



Ask for a meeting at the end of the school year to review the plan for next year.

Ask if the goals for this year have been met, and ask for examples of success. If there were challenges, talk about what's working and what's not. See if there are any changes to medical or support needs. You want to begin each year feeling confident in the school's ability to support your child. Keep collaborating so that there is good communication between home and school.



Learn what assessments are done in your school district and when.

Assessments are used to identify a child's learning strengths and support needs. Each school district offers different assessments at different stages. Assessments are required to verify access to [Community Living BC \(CLBC\) services](#), provincial [persons with disability \(PWD\) benefits](#), and some post-secondary student aid for students with disabilities.

Transitioning into high school

Going into high school can bring many emotions and challenges for you and your child as you start thinking about the future beyond school. Make sure your child's individualized educational plan is up-to-date. You should be invited to a meeting with the high school education team every fall.

In high school, you will have a case manager or resource teacher who will be your child's main person of contact. They will be responsible for writing the individualized educational plan, letting teachers know how your child learns best, and communicating any accommodations or modifications your child might need. Include your child in this process so their voice is heard.



[Click here for a helpful transitions timeline from the Family Support Institute of BC. The simple checklist guides you through all of your child's transitions from birth to young adulthood.](#)

Dogwood or Evergreen?

There may be a conversation to discuss whether your child will continue to [pursue a Dogwood Diploma or shift to an Evergreen Certificate path](#). Both documents mark the completion of high school but carry different requirements. Together, you can decide the best route for your child.

From high school to adulthood

Transition to adulthood will take more time and planning. The services your child has been accessing will shift from under the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) to Community Living BC (CLBC). You'll start coordinating this shift after your child turns 16. Lean on your case manager or resource teacher at this time, as well as your Children and Youth Support Needs (CYSN) worker. They have experience setting up students for a successful transition. Together, you can discover your child's hopes and dreams for the future.