

# COLLECTIVELY INVESTING IN 3–5-YEAR-OLDS

to foster educational success

## KEY MOMENT

# 5

AFTER THE START OF KINDERGARTEN

## SETTLING IN

A smooth first transition from early childhood to kindergarten relies both on partnerships among the various sectors involved with children and their families and on addressing the needs of all. By investing in this issue collectively, we help make going to school fun and increase parental engagement—strong foundations for educational success! Five key moments over a 16-month period offer numerous opportunities to work together.

CHILDREN

PARENTS

FAMILIES

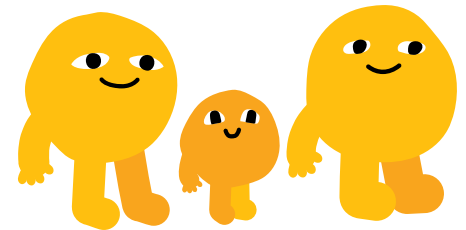
CHILDCARE CENTRES

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**October and November ...** The Big Day – the start of kindergarten – has come and gone. For schools, the arrival of the new cohort represents the beginning of a new adventure. For children and their families, it represents above all a host of major changes: new places, a new schedule, new points and people of reference, new friends, to name a few. Without a doubt, the transition from early childhood to school is a huge adjustment.



## Settling in is...

### RESPECTING EVERYONE'S PACE.

- **Every child adapts at their own pace:** for some, it's smooth sailing a few weeks after the start of kindergarten; others need several months to find their bearings.
- How a child adapts to the new environment will **vary depending on the characteristics** of the child, their parents, and the host environment itself.
- The key point is to take **everyone's needs** into account: everyone must adapt to each other.
- This **mutual adjustment** concerns all stakeholders involved in the first transition to school.

### SHARING WHAT IS KNOWN AND OBSERVED.

- **Sharing information** among school stakeholders, parents and family, and any other practitioners involved in the child's welfare is always a win-win practice.
- Good **communication and dialogue** among teachers and parents will help children adapt to their "new life."
- **Non-teaching school staff** or personnel providing direct student services (e.g., afterschool care, administrative and support staff) also come into close contact with the child and their family. Their observations are equally important and should be shared.

### PUTTING WELCOMING PRACTICES INTO PLACE.

- Welcoming educational practices should be based on the **children's needs**.
- Creating continuity between practices familiar to the children (learning through play, establishing a routine) and new practices from the school environment will provide **reassuring predictability**.
- The period during which school stakeholders **welcome** children and parents is an opportunity to build mutual engagement that helps everyone adapt to the best of their ability.
- Creating new **meaningful relationships** reassures children when their parents are not present.

## · THE 5 KEY MOMENTS OF A SMOOTH FIRST TRANSITION TO SCHOOL ·



### Creating a positive first contact

JANUARY AND FEBRUARY

DURING ENROLLMENT IN KINDERGARTEN

### Working together

AUGUST TO DECEMBER

PRIOR TO ENROLLING IN KINDERGARTEN

### Instilling an enthusiasm for school

MARCH TO JUNE

AFTER ENROLLMENT IN KINDERGARTEN

### Valuing skillsets

JULY TO SEPTEMBER

AROUND THE START OF KINDERGARTEN

### Settling in

OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER

AFTER THE START OF KINDERGARTEN

## A smooth transition from early childhood to kindergarten:



- + A gradual adjustment to kindergarten benefits **children's overall development**.
- + Good communication between the school and families builds mutual trust that stimulates **active parental participation**.
- + Parental involvement reassures children and enhances their **receptivity to learning**.
- + Said with conviction, expressions such as "I love school" have a direct impact on **educational success** over both the short and long term.



## Suggestion box

**Use informal approaches** to identify opportunities to support children and their families.  
E.g., "How are things going at home? ... at school?"

**Create opportunities** in how the school operates that enable all staff members to help new students and their families make a smooth transition to school.

**Make parents aware** that their contact with teachers will be less frequent than it had been with early childhood practitioners, while establishing open lines of communication to let parents know how their children are adapting to the new environment.

**Organize meetings** where families can discuss the transition, and have a parent who has recently experienced the transition speak.

**Ensure that information** given to parents about the start of kindergarten remains available, both online and at the school.  
E.g., information on how the school operates, back-to-school activities, community resources to support families in the transition.

**If necessary, enlist the help** of others (staff members, relatives, etc.) who can facilitate spontaneous communication with allophone families.

**Etc.!**

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COLOURFUL SUMMARY POSTER

The 5 information sheets in the *Collectively investing in 3–5-year-olds to foster educational success* are based on the five key moments in a smooth first transition to school. The sheets are distributed over the course of 16 months and provide information specific to each key moment at the appropriate time of year. They are produced by Réseau réussite Montréal–RRM, which works to disseminate effective concepts, based on a consensus of Montréal stakeholders, related to the transition from early childhood to kindergarten.