



Successful

Kindergarten

Transition

## Kindergarten Transition Parent Interview—Preschool (page 1)

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of interview (e.g., family home): \_\_\_\_\_

Person interviewed (e.g., mother, grandparent): \_\_\_\_\_

Other family members present: \_\_\_\_\_

*Directions: Use the following text as a guide to help families explore their experiences in the fall, winter, and spring of preschool. The intent is to engage the family member in a conversation about school, following up on themes that arise. These are some components of an interview. Other questions may be added. For example, the parent may be asked about family stresses, coping, and their social support network. Ideally, responses should be recorded using an audiotape recorder so that the conversation flows more smoothly. If the family member feels uncomfortable being audiotaped, write his or her answers on separate pieces of paper. Further directions appear in brackets in italic print.*

We are interested in learning about children's and families' experiences in preschool. Today, I am interested in talking with you about your child's experiences in preschool this year. I would like to know how these experiences may be similar and how they are different. All of your comments will be kept confidential. Do you have any questions before we begin? *[Pause for any questions.]*

### YOUR CHILD'S EXPERIENCES AT SCHOOL

1. First, I'd like to talk to you about your child's experiences in school. Tell me how *[child's name]* is doing in school this year. *[Ask the family member to tell you more. Use the following prompts to encourage further discussion. You do not need to ask all of the questions.]*
  - What types of things are he or she learning?
  - What does he or she like to do in school? *[Suggest, if necessary, circle time, center time, playground time, reading, story time, and so forth.]*
  - What activities does he or she not like to do?
  - Tell me about your child's progress this year. What are you particularly pleased with? What do you have concerns about?
2. Tell me about your child's behavior at school this year.
  - How well does your child get along with classmates?
  - How does he or she get along with kids outside of school?
  - How well does he or she get along with his or her teacher?
3. Tell me about your involvement this year at school.
4. What's your relationship with your child's teacher like?

### PEER CONTACT

1. Now, I'd like to ask you about your child's contact with other children. Outside of school, what kind of things does your child do with other children? *[If necessary, suggest playing with other children in the neighborhood, attending after-school programs, playing with sibling or other relatives, and so forth.]*
2. Do any of the children your child plays with go to preschool with him or her? Which activities?

*(continued)*

**Figure A12.** An example of a Kindergarten Transition Parent Interview—Preschool.

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Figure A12. (continued)

<b>Kindergarten Transition Parent Interview—Preschool (page 2)</b>			
<b>YOUR CHILD’S ACTIVITIES AT HOME</b>			
<p>1. Now I’d like to ask you about your child’s activities and behavior at home. What kinds of activities do you and your child enjoy together?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What things do you like to do with your child to help him or her learn? <i>[If necessary, suggest reading, talking about numbers or letters, singing songs, and so forth.]</i></li> </ul> <p>2. Tell me about your child’s behavior at home this year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When your child is frustrated or upset, what does he or she do? How do you handle this?</li> </ul>			
<b>YOUR ACTIVITIES WITH THE SCHOOL</b>			
<p>Now I’d like to ask you about things you’ve been involved with at the school. Parents help at school in different ways, depending on their situations. What kinds of activities have you been involved with at your child’s school this year? <i>[First, allow the parent to answer freely, then prompt for those activities not mentioned. Follow up on the frequency for activities mentioned.]</i></p>			
Activity	Never	1–2 times	3 or more times
1. Contacted the child’s teacher through notes			
2. Talked with the child’s teacher by telephone or in person			
3. Talked with other parents from the child’s school			
4. Talked with the school director or principal this year			
5. Attended parent–teacher conferences			
6. Prepared and sent in food or materials for special events or holidays (e.g., class activity, Valentine’s Day)			
7. Attended special schoolwide events for children and families (e.g., family literacy activities, book fairs)			
8. Volunteered or helped out in the classroom			
9. Helped with field trips or other special events			
10. Attended a meeting of the parent–teacher organization			
11. Visited with the teacher or other school staff in the home			
12. Other (Please specify.)			
<b>FAMILY INFORMATION</b>			
<p>1. I’d like to ask you a few questions about your family. Who lives at home with your child? Please tell me their relationship with your child and their ages (e.g., 10-year-old sister).</p> <p>2. Are you currently employed? If so, what type of work do you do? On average, how many hours do you work per week?</p> <p>3. Are there adults living in the house? If so, do they work? What kind of work? What hours do they work?</p>			

## Kindergarten Transition Parent Interview—Kindergarten (page 1)

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of interview (e.g., family home): \_\_\_\_\_

Person interviewed (e.g., mother, grandparent): \_\_\_\_\_

Other family members present: \_\_\_\_\_

*Directions: Use the following text as a guide to help families explore their experiences in the fall, winter, and spring of kindergarten. The intent is to engage the family member in a conversation about school, following up on themes that arise. These are some components of an interview. Other questions may be added. Ideally, responses should be recorded using an audiotape recorder so that the conversation flows more smoothly. If the family member feels uncomfortable being audiotaped, write his or her answers on separate pieces of paper. Further directions appear in brackets in italic print.*

As you know from our previous interviews, we are interested in learning about children's and families' experiences in kindergarten. Today, I am interested in talking with you more generally about his or her experiences, both in preschool and in kindergarten this year. I would like to know how these experiences may be similar and how they are different. As before, all of your answers will be kept confidential. Do you have any questions before we begin? *[Pause for any questions.]*

### YOUR CHILD'S EXPERIENCES AT SCHOOL

1. First, I'd like to talk to you about your child's experiences in school. Tell me how *[child's name]* is doing in school this year and how this compares with last year. *[Ask the family member to tell you more. Use the following prompts to encourage further discussion. you do not need to ask all of the questions.]*
  - What types of things are he or she learning? How do these things compare with what he or she was doing last year? What seems to be the same about what he or she was doing last year? What seems different?
  - What does he or she like to do in school? *[Suggest, if necessary, writing, reading, math, center time, playground time, and so forth.]* How does this compare with preschool?
  - What activities does he or she not like to do?
  - Tell me about your child's progress this year. What are you particularly pleased with? What do you have concerns about?
2. Tell me about your child's behavior at school this year. Is this a change from last year? If so, in what way?
  - How well does your child get along with classmates?
  - How does he or she get along with kids outside of school?
  - How well does he or she get along with his or her teacher?
  - Do teachers expect similar behavior from your child in kindergarten as in preschool? Are there differences in, for example, how strict or structured they are?
3. Tell me about your involvement this year at school. How does it compare with last year?
4. What's your relationship with your child's teacher like?

*(continued)*

**Figure A13.** An example of a Kindergarten Transition Parent Interview—Kindergarten

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Figure A13. (continued)

<b>Kindergarten Transition Parent Interview—Kindergarten (page 2)</b>								
<b>PEER CONTACT</b>								
<p>1. Now, I'd like to ask you about your child's contact with other children. Outside of school, what kind of things does your child do with other children? <i>[If necessary, suggest playing with other children in the neighborhood; attending after-school programs; playing with siblings, cousins, or other relatives; attending religious functions; and so forth.]</i></p> <p>2. Do any of the children involved in these activities with your child go to kindergarten with him or her? Which activities?</p>								
<b>YOUR CHILD'S ACTIVITIES AT HOME</b>								
<p>1. Now I'd like to ask you about your child's activities and behavior at home. What kinds of activities do you and your child enjoy together?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What things do you like to do with your child to help him or her learn? <i>[If necessary, suggest reading, talking about numbers or letters, singing songs, and so forth.]</i></li> </ul> <p>2. Tell me about your child's behavior at home this year. How does this compare with his or her behavior at school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When your child is frustrated or upset, what does he or she do? How do you handle this?</li> </ul>								
<b>REFLECTIONS ON THE TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN</b>								
<p>Now I'd like to ask you some questions about your child's experience with going to kindergarten. I'm interested in how he or she got to know kindergarten before it started and what this has been like for him or her and for you.</p> <p>1. First, how has the experience of going into kindergarten been for your child? <i>[Allow time for a response and then follow up with the next question.]</i> In general, would you say it's been very good, fairly good, just okay, or neutral? Do you have some concerns? Do you have many concerns?</p> <p>2. What has gone well for your child? <i>[Encourage elaboration, and check all areas that apply.]</i></p> <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">_____ Learning</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____ Social</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">_____ Other</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____ None</td> </tr> </table> <p>3. What has been hard for him or her? What has not gone well for your child? <i>[Encourage elaboration, and check all areas that apply.]</i></p> <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">_____ Learning</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____ Social</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">_____ Other</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____ None</td> </tr> </table> <p>4. What has gone well for you?</p> <p>5. What has been hard for you?</p>	_____ Learning	_____ Social	_____ Other	_____ None	_____ Learning	_____ Social	_____ Other	_____ None
_____ Learning	_____ Social							
_____ Other	_____ None							
_____ Learning	_____ Social							
_____ Other	_____ None							

**Kindergarten Transition Parent Interview—Kindergarten (page 3)**

**REFLECTIONS ON THE TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN (cont.)**

6. The way families help their children learn about kindergarten depends, in part, on how familiar they and their children already are with the school. Have you or your child had experience with *[name of school]* before this year? If yes, in what ways? *[Check all that apply.]*

\_\_\_\_\_ Your child attended preschool at the same school last year.

\_\_\_\_\_ You have another child who attended the same school.

\_\_\_\_\_ You attended the same school.

\_\_\_\_\_ Another family member attended the same school. If so, state the relationship.

\_\_\_\_\_ Other. (Please state how.)

7. I'd like you to remember the time your child went to preschool. What kind of things did you do with *[name of school]* to help your child learn about kindergarten? *[First, allow the family member to answer freely. If other activities are mentioned, add them under "Other." Once the parent responds, ask about the remaining activities.]*

School activity	Yes	No
1. Visited kindergarten classroom in the spring		
2. Attended a spring kindergarten orientation		
3. Attended kindergarten registration		
4. Attended a summer activity at the elementary school		
5. Visited the kindergarten classroom before school started during the school's open house night		
6. Participated in kindergarten screening		
7. Attended "Back to School Night"		
8. Met the child's kindergarten teacher		
9. Met the school principal		
10. Got a tour of the school		
11. Talked to parents of the child's classmates		
12. Talked with the child's preschool teacher or transition coordinator about transition issues		
13. Received a letter or written information from the school		
14. Received a telephone call from the child's kindergarten teacher		
15. Had a home visit from the child's kindergarten teacher		
16. Other (Please specify.)		

*(continued)*

Figure A13. (continued)

Kindergarten Transition Parent Interview—Kindergarten (page 4)		
REFLECTIONS ON THE TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN (cont.)		
<p>8. Of these activities, which three have been most useful? <i>[Write down the number of the item identified. If fewer than three are identified, ask about the usefulness of the activities mentioned.]</i></p> <p>9. What kinds of things could the school do to help make your child more comfortable in kindergarten?</p> <p>10. What kinds of things could the school do to help make you more comfortable?</p>		
PREPARING FOR KINDERGARTEN		
<p>In addition to activities at schools, families often do activities on their own to get their child ready for kindergarten. What kinds of activities did you do during the summer to get your child ready for school? <i>[Allow the family member to respond freely. After the family member responds, use the prompts if necessary for the remaining activities.]</i> There are other things that parents sometimes do. It is not expected that parents do all of these things. The activities that a family does depend on a number of factors, such as whether a child has brothers or sisters who attend the same school. Knowing this, did you do any other following activities?</p>		
Activity	Yes	No
1. Did you read parents' magazines or books about starting kindergarten?		
2. Did you read stories to your child about starting kindergarten?		
3. Did you take your child to play on the school playground?		
4. Did you talk with other parents of children from your child's school?		
5. Did you talk with family members or friends who have school-age children?		
6. Did you teach your child his or her address?		
7. Did you teach your child his or her telephone number?		
8. Did you teach your child to tie his or her shoes?		
9. Did you discuss what will happen on the first day of school with your child?		
10. Did you discuss meeting the new teacher with your child?		
11. Did you discuss meeting new classmates with your child?		
12. Did you discuss how to behave with your child?		
13. Did you discuss the kinds of kindergarten work with your child?		
14. Did you practice daily routines of getting ready for school (e.g., bedtime, morning schedule)?		
15. Other (Please specify.)		

**Kindergarten Transition Parent Interview—Kindergarten (page 5)**

**YOUR ACTIVITIES WITH THE SCHOOL**

Now I'd like to ask you about things you've been involved with at the school. Parents help at school in different ways, depending on their situations. What kinds of activities have you been involved with at your child's school this year? *[First, allow the parent to answer freely, then prompt for those activities not mentioned. Follow up on the frequency for activities mentioned.]*

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>1–2 times</b>	<b>3 or more times</b>
1. Helped the child with homework			
2. Contacted the child's teacher through notes			
3. Talked with the child's teacher by telephone or in person			
4. Talked with other parents from the child's school			
5. Talked with the school principal this year			
6. Attended parent–teacher conferences			
7. Prepared and sent in food or materials for special events or holidays (e.g., class activity, Valentine's Day)			
8. Attended special schoolwide events for children and families (e.g., family literacy activities, book fairs)			
9. Volunteered or helped out in the classroom			
10. Helped with field trips or other special events			
11. Attended a meeting of the parent–teacher organization			
12. Visited with the teacher or other school staff in the home			
13. Other (Please specify.)			

**FAMILY INFORMATION**

- I'd like to ask you a few questions to update the general information about your family. Who lives at home with your child? Please tell me their relationship with your child and their ages (e.g., 10-year-old sister). Is this a change from 6 months ago?
- Are you currently employed? If so, what type of work do you do? On average, how many hours do you work per week? Is this a change from 6 months ago?
- Are there adults living in the house? If so, do they work? What kind of work? What hours do they work?
- Have you moved in the last 6 months?

Thank you for sharing information with me today about your family. I appreciate your time.



## About the Authors

**Robert C. Pianta, Ph.D.**, is Professor in the Curry School of Education's Programs in Clinical and School Psychology at the University of Virginia and holds the William Clay Parrish Jr. Chair in Education. A former special education teacher, he is a developmental, school, and clinical child psychologist whose work focuses on how children's experiences at home and in school affect their development. He is particularly interested in how relationships with teachers and parents, as well as classroom quality, can help improve outcomes for children and youth who are at risk. Dr. Pianta is Principal Investigator on the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development, Senior Investigator with the National Center for Early Development & Learning (NCEDL), and Editor of the *Journal of School Psychology*. He is the author of more than 100 journal articles, chapters, and books in the areas of early childhood development, school readiness, and parent-child and teacher-child relationships, and he consults regularly with several foundations, universities, and federal agencies.

**Marcia Kraft-Sayre, L.C.S.W.**, is Regional Project Coordinator for the National Center for Early Development & Learning (NCEDL) Multi-State Study of Pre-Kindergarten at the University of Virginia. She has also served as Coordinator for the NCEDL Kindergarten Transition Project. Her current work entails managing data collection for a national study of state-funded pre-kindergarten programs. She is the co-author of several articles about the transition to kindergarten. For 15 years prior to coming to NCEDL, she worked as a clinical social worker with children and families in mental health and medical settings.

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