Community Schools and Early Childhood: Building the Foundation for Life Long Success

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Why Community Schools and Early Childhood?

- Ultimate goal is to create a seamless birth to 8 system
- Family involvement
- Meeting the needs of the whole child and family
- Community partnerships
- Neighborhood connectedness
- Engaging families earlier
Where the Rubber Hits the Road
Possible Partnerships for
Community Schools and Early Childhood

• Head Start
• Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies and Community based Child Care Homes and Centers
• Parenting Programs
• Teen Pregnancy Programs
• Family Literacy Programs
• Play and Learn: Friend, Family and Neighbor Care
Early Childhood and Community Schools LINKAGE Project
SUN Community Schools

- 67 Schools
- 6 School Districts
- 45 Elementary/K-8
Linkage

Linkage is an initiative of Multnomah County’s SUN Service System

GOAL:

• Foster early support and successful transitions in SUN Community Schools
Linkage Steering Committee

• SUN Community School Lead Agencies
• School Districts
• Project LAUNCH
• Child Care Resource & Referral
• Library Early Childhood Services

• Portland Children’s Levy
• Head Start Providers
• Multnomah Early Childhood Program
• Home Forward
• Children’s Institute
• Portland State University
Kindergarten COUNTS

A community-wide campaign in Multnomah County bringing together early childhood and school partners to promote successful transitions in SUN Community Schools for children and their families through supporting:

- Early kindergarten registrations
- Summer opportunities
- Good attendance in kindergarten
Chronic Absence in Kindergarten

- Building community awareness about chronic absence in the early grades and the extent of this issue locally
- Tracking chronic absence data alongside other key data pieces
- Materials for parents and educators
- Integrate into transition efforts
Register for School by June

- 2 month campaign – April and May
- Mobilize families, schools and the community as partners in getting children registered for kindergarten before school offices close
Register for School by June

% Record Creation in September for KG Students – ALL DISTRICTS
Early Kindergarten Transition Program
Early Kindergarten Transition Program

• Occurs at the school for 2-3 weeks in the summer
• Reach children entering that particular school who have had little or no preschool experience or are transitioning from Head Start
• Parent (15 hours) and Child (36 hours) Components
• Children’s classroom is staffed by kindergarten teacher from the school
Early Kindergarten Transition Program

- Increase **parental involvement** in their child’s learning
- Reduce **chronic absenteeism** in kindergarten
- Promote **children’s success** in school
Goal: Support children’s social and emotional readiness for school by helping them to become familiar with the school setting and classroom routines

- Introduction to the School and Staff
- Small Motor Activities
- Free Exploration/Individual Choice Time
- Large Motor/Movement
- Literacy/Math Activities
- PBIS Lessons
- School/Classroom routines and protocols
Parent Group Meetings

**Goal:** Nurture parent involvement in their child’s learning through building positive relationships between parents and other parents, school staff, and community partners

- Introduction to the School and Staff
- Organizing for Success
- Supporting Learning at Home
- What Happens in Kindergarten?
- Attendance
Early Kindergarten Transition Program

- External Evaluation by Andrew Mashburn, Ph.D. of PSU

**Summer 2012**
- 257 children participated at 12 SUN Community Schools in 4 school districts
- 56% no preschool experience, 32% Head Start

**Summer 2013**
- 18 SUN Community Schools in 6 school districts will be offering this program
Community Schools and Early Childhood: Building the Foundation for Life Long Success

Erin Ramsey
Senior Program Director, *Mind in the Making*
Families and Work Institute
Families and Work Institute

• Families and Work Institute is a national profit focused on bringing research to action.

• President and Co-founder, Ellen Galinksy, spent the past 11 years reviewing and compiling the best child development research on how children learn based on Executive Function Skills.
Kellogg Foundation, Families and Work Institute and IEL Partnering

• Seamless Birth to 8 System

• Create a Learning Journey for families and professionals together

• Building stronger relationships between service providers, education and medical

• Align Common Core and Early Learning Standards
Executive Function Skills are important in school readiness and school success.
What are Executive Function Skills?

**Focus**—being able to pay attention;

**Working memory**—being able to keep information in mind in order to use it;

**Cognitive flexibility**—being able to adjust to shifting needs and demands; and

**Inhibitory control**—being able to resist the temptation to go on automatic and do what we need to do to achieve our goals.
A 2012 study found that one aspect of Executive Function skills in four-year-olds—“attention span-persistence”—is strongly predictive of whether or not these same children graduated from college when they were 25 years old.
Children who were rated one standard deviation higher on attention span-persistence at age 4 had 48.7% greater odds of completing college by age 25.
Evidence that executive function and self-regulation predict literacy and numeracy skills underscores the salience of these capacities for targeted interventions. Many teachers also contend that competence in these domains is more important at school entry than knowledge of letters and numbers.

—Jack Shonkoff
Executive function skills are crucial building blocks for the early development of both cognitive and social capacities.
As children grow older, these skills include reflecting, analyzing, planning and evaluating.
7 ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS FOR YOUR KIDS & YOU

1. FOCUS AND SELF CONTROL

2. PERSPECTIVE TAKING

3. COMMUNICATING
7 ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS FOR YOUR KIDS & YOU

4. MAKING CONNECTIONS

5. CRITICAL THINKING

6. TAKING ON CHALLENGES

7. SELF-DIRECTED ENGAGED LEARNING

NEVER STOP LEARNING
Mind in the Making and Common Core

- Depth of knowledge
- Seven Essential Life Skills can be a common priority that applies to children and adults
- Requires more cognitive flexibility, critical thinking, etc.
- Aligning Early Learning Standards and Common Core will improve transitions and teacher alignment
Employers are concerned that new entrants to the workforce have a fill-in-the-bubble mentality and aren’t used to working in teams.
In addition to a concern about the graduation rate, school readiness and school success, there is a drop-out-of-learning phenomenon in America.
Key points about Life Skills and Executive Function:

- It is never too late
- Everyone can learn and promote these skills
- It doesn't take expensive toys and materials

FWI MITM Learning Institutes are based on a Learning Journey that begins with the adult, moves to a review of the research, and then to understand the importance of the skills in children's lives.
For additional information and resources:

Early Childhood Education in Community Schools
http://www.communityschools.org/about/early_childhood_education_in_community_schools.aspx

Families and Work Institute Early Childhood and Community
http://familiesandwork.org/site/work/earlychildhood/main.html

SUN Service System Linkage Initiative
http://web.multco.us/sun/linkage

Building Blocks Early Childhood Case Studies
http://www.communityschools.org/about/publications_resources_tools.aspx

Early Childhood/Community School Linkages Research Brief
http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/ECE%20Linkages%20Research%20Brief.pdf

Mind in the Making: Tulsa Area Community School Initiative
https://vimeo.com/57406338

Addressing Early Chronic Absenteeism in Early Childhood Education
https://vimeo.com/57406335

Community School Linkages: SUN Community Schools
https://vimeo.com/57170091

Early Kindergarten Transitions in SUN Community Schools
http://vimeo.com/58026199