



Supporting School Readiness in West Virginia

A comprehensive framework to support young children and their families with transitions prior to and after school entry



West Virginia Board of Education
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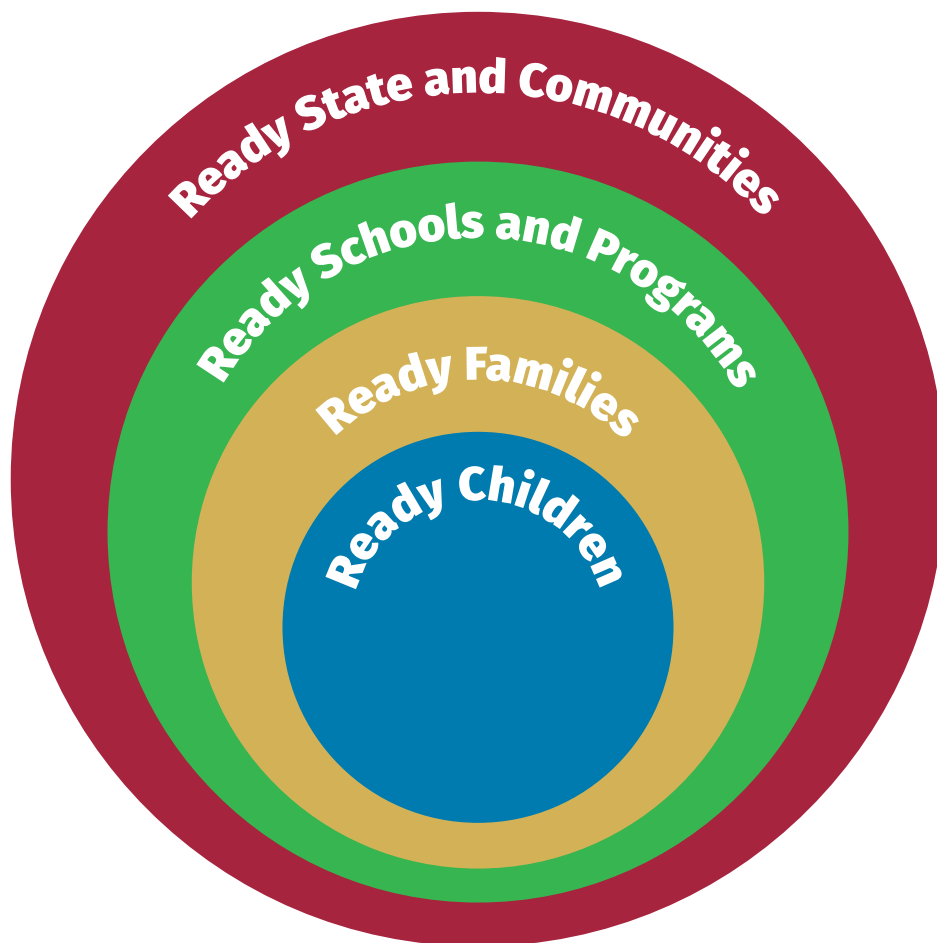
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What is Ready, Set, Go! WV?

Ready, Set, Go! West Virginia Comprehensive Framework for School Readiness (Ready, Set, Go! WV) is designed to help communities, schools, programs, and families understand and support the various transitions in which young children engage prior to and after school entry. Established in 2011 to support kindergarten readiness, Ready, Set, Go! WV was expanded to ensure all young children be afforded opportunities to transition successfully into and out of early childhood settings prior to first grade. Provisions of the school readiness framework include a holistic view that supports young children’s development across domains, as well as transition strategies to support children and families as they enter school.

The framework’s focus on children is reflected in the graphic below:



School 'Readiness' in WV: a formal definition

In West Virginia, school readiness refers to the process of assuring children have access to the best available resources prior to entering first grade.

School readiness resources support children and their families and focus on maximizing children's holistic development from birth. Acknowledging each child's development is significantly affected by previous experiences, school readiness also entails the capacity of schools and programs to welcome families and be prepared to serve all children effectively within the developmental domains of:

- health and physical development;
- social and emotional development;
- language and communication;
- cognition and general knowledge; and
- individual approaches to learning.

To support school readiness efforts and assure the use of developmentally effective methods for children prior to entering first grade, the Ready, Set, Go! WV framework is utilized. This includes an approach that focuses on how the state and local communities, schools, and programs can offer support and resources for families and children prior to and during their transition into school. Programs serving children in Early Learning Readiness grades (WV Pre-K and Kindergarten) also provide opportunities for children to build solid foundations and positive dispositions to learning.

Ready State and Ready Communities

Description:

A thorough understanding of West Virginia's comprehensive framework for school readiness and transitions will allow state and community partners to serve as resources for county collaborative early childhood teams and other groups or individuals who play a role in the lives of young children and their families. The infrastructure supported by a ready state and ready communities can positively benefit children and families.

A Ready State and Ready Communities:

- incorporate the state's definition of school readiness in materials and other communication;
- provide resources to encourage an increased public understanding of developmental milestones during the early years;
- share resources by leveraging regional, state, and/or local community resources;
- develop a comprehensive guide to increase public awareness of the importance of physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development in the early years;
- form partnerships with business, medical, dental, and behavioral health communities; and
- offer high-quality early care and education that is developmentally appropriate for all children.

Ready Schools and Ready Programs

Description:

Schools and early childhood programs typically provide young children with their first formal learning experience outside their homes. A holistic approach is included in West Virginia's definition of school readiness to make sure all components of young children's development are nurtured. Ongoing communication with families to promote children's comprehensive development must be a foundational component of all ready schools and ready programs.

Ready Schools and Ready Programs:

- live a vision that is committed to the success of every child;
- ensure clear communication with all stakeholders (families, educators, and administrators);
- ensure quality early childhood programs are included in the county early childhood collaborative team;
- use vertical team collaboration to coordinate the efforts of grade-to-grade educators and enhance grade level programming;
- maintain a written plan for transitioning children into WV Pre-k and kindergarten;
- ensure built-in accountability for transition plans includes all applicable partners (i.e., school psychologist, school nurse, counselor, home visitor, behavior specialist, therapist, WV Birth to Three, etc.);
- provide a transparent enrollment process to increase families' understanding of requirements and options to best fit their needs;
- offer multiple opportunities for family engagement and participation;
- provide all families with appropriate supports and resources to promote their children's learning and development; and
- provide resources and services to address the diverse and individual needs of children.

Ready Families

Description:

Early childhood programs and advocates can develop strong home/school connections by emphasizing the critical role of families and caregivers as the child's first teacher. Welcome and incorporate family engagement in collaborative efforts to meet the needs of young children during the early childhood transition process.

How can families' approaches to school readiness be supported?

- Help families understand the importance of providing environments for their children that are caring, safe, healthy, stable, and enriching;
- Emphasize the importance of the early years as a unique period of children's development;
- Equip families with at-home, no-cost resources to increase family/child engagement;
- Equip families with tools to effectively advocate for their children's learning;
- Encourage families to establish and maintain consistent health care providers (medical and dental homes) and mental health supports;
- Build partnerships to support families as primary decision makers for their children;
- Link families to community and family leadership opportunities; and
- Ensure protection of the rights of children and families, as applicable.

Ready Children

Description:

Ready, Set, Go! WV asserts that the school or program should be ready for all children. This strengths-based approach shifts away from the philosophy that children should be ready for school.

School readiness in West Virginia emphasizes the holistic development of all young children and recognizes the varying levels of opportunities for development each child may have experienced prior to school or program entry.

Each child deserves:

- the opportunity to engage in supportive transitions;
- to be accepted without prior perceptions;
- access to high-quality early childhood programming;
- opportunities to be successful;
- a strengths-based learning approach;
- scaffolding based on current levels of development; and
- inclusive environments that offer nutrition, developmentally appropriate routines, physical activity, play, and learning activities.

Understanding Early Childhood Transitions in WV

Young children in West Virginia typically move through one or more transitions prior to entering first grade:

- Home or program to service or school (i.e., home to WV Pre-K, home to Kindergarten, home to a home visiting program, home to Pre-K Special Needs Services, Early Head Start to Head Start, WV Birth to Three to WV Universal Pre-K, etc.)
- Grade to grade (i.e., WV Pre-K to Kindergarten, Kindergarten to First Grade, etc.)

To support transitions, county collaborative early childhood teams and other stakeholders may choose to utilize the WV Early Childhood Transitions Toolkit (found on page 10 of this document).

Ready, Set, Go! WV Resources to Support School Readiness and Transitions in WV

Frequently used links to statewide resources to support transitions in place as of March 2022. This is not an exhaustive list.

- Resources to support school readiness and transitions in WV: www.readyssetgowv.com
- WV Department of Education Office of Early & Elementary Learning: <http://wvde.us/early-and-elementary-learning/>
- Find a WV Universal Pre-K Program near you: <http://wvde.state.wv.us/oel/map-web/>
- WV Head Start and Early Head Start: www.wvheadstart.org
- WV Department of Health and Human Resources (Bureau for Public Health, Office of Maternal, Child, and Family Health), WV Birth to Three: <http://www.wvdhhr.org/birth23/>
- WV Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Children and Families, Division of Early Care and Education: <https://dhhr.wv.gov/bcf/ece/Pages/default.aspx>
- Early Childhood Advisory Council of West Virginia: <https://wvearlychildhoodcouncil.org/>
- National Association for the Education of Young Children: <http://naeyc.org/>
- Federal Head Start and Early Head Start: eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc
- WV Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health, Immunization Program: <https://dhhr.wv.gov/HealthCheck/preventivehealthresources/Pages/Immunizations.aspx>
- WV Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health, Healthcheck Program: <http://dhhr.wv.gov/healthcheck/Pages/default.aspx>
- WV Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health, Oral Health Program: <http://dhhr.wv.gov/oralhealth/Pages/default.aspx>
- West Virginia Home Visiting Programs: <http://homevisitwv.org>
- WV Campaign for Grade Level Reading School Readiness: <https://wvde.us/early-and-elementary-learning/wv-leaders-of-literacy-campaign-for-grade-level-reading/school-readiness/>
- Imagination Library Book Activities: <https://wvde.us/west-virginias-imagination-library/book-activities/>
- WV Leaders of Literacy Podcasts: <https://wvde.us/leaders-of-literacy-podcasts/>
- Daily tips to help families boost their child's learning: <https://www.vroom.org/about>
- Head Start Approach to School Readiness: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/school-readiness/article/head-start-approach-school-readiness-overview>
- WV Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources: <http://www.wvearlychildhood.org>

WV Early Childhood Transitions Toolkit



This toolkit is provided to assist early childhood professionals, including county collaborative early childhood teams and classroom teachers, in supporting children and families as they transition into and out of a variety of settings. Successful transitions should be thoughtfully planned to ensure the experience of going to school is a positive one. There are many choices that programs, schools, educators, and families can make to support successful transitions for all children. This toolkit identifies key activities which reflect effective practices. Users are encouraged to review the activities and recommended experiences to determine which best meet the needs of the children and families in their community.

Effective practices for successful transitions are outlined in this toolkit, which should serve as a guidance document to assist with the selection and implementation of transition practices. The experiences are categorized by components of the Ready, Set, Go! WV Framework and the transition goals are based on WVBE Policy 2525, *West Virginia's Universal Access to A Quality Early Education System*. This toolkit provides a suggested timeframe for implementation (pages 10-15).

WV Early Childhood Transitions Toolkit



Ready Children

Transition Goal 1:

Children and families will visit the setting into which the children are transitioning. (WVBE Policy 2525)

Ready, Set, Go! WV Component

Intentional Opportunities

Timelines



Ready Families



Ready Programs and Schools

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange visits to early childhood settings for children, families, and staff from the sending program or service. 	Fall
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a “family chat” event where families have the opportunity to talk and ask questions with the next grade level teacher. 	Spring-Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize county resources (ex: Family and Community Engagement Resource Centers) to assist with family training. 	Year-round
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a variety of grade-to-grade transition activities as part of the required Title I family training component. 	Year-round
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a family academy that includes a transition training component. 	Spring-Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule family forums for individual schools or programs to provide an opportunity for teachers to talk with families. 	Spring-Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct orientation events to allow families to meet with their child’s teacher. 	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite families to join the Parent Teacher Association/Parent Teacher Organization (PTA/PTO) at the school their child will attend. 	Summer-Fall

WV Early Childhood Transitions Toolkit



Transition Goal 2:

Provide written information to families about WV Pre-K or kindergarten registration and what to expect in Pre-K and kindergarten. (WVBE Policy 2525)

Ready, Set, Go! WV Component

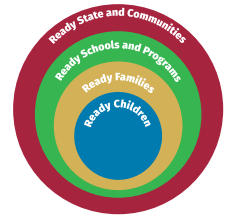


Intentional Opportunities

Timelines



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute information regarding school readiness and the value of early childhood learning and experiences. 	Spring-Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute information regarding school and/or program enrollment requirements, ensuring utilization of a valid HealthCheck, immunizations, dental examination, and other required data. 	Spring-Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop public service announcements for distribution to local radio, newspaper, social media, and/or television outlets. 	Spring-Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post program information on the county, program, and school website. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a sample packet of the school entry requirements to be distributed to all community settings to include online access, such as QR codes or links for families. 	Winter-Spring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disseminate a survey for current school families to identify eligible children for pre-k and kindergarten enrollment. 	Spring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize a “School Messenger” tool to communicate school and/or program enrollment. 	Spring-Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide families with ideas for transitions, including activities to do with their child during the summer, reminders about health information, tips for helping their child prepare to start school, etc. 	Spring

WV Early Childhood Transitions Toolkit



Transition Goal 3:

WV Universal Pre-K teachers and kindergarten teachers meet at least annually to discuss how to facilitate successful transition and support the reciprocity of readiness practices. (WVBE Policy 2525)

Ready, Set, Go! WV Component	Intentional Opportunities	Timelines
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer collaborative meetings with pre-k, kindergarten, and/or first grade teachers. • Offer administrator trainings regarding school readiness and enrollment. • Provide professional learning for new educators regarding school readiness and enrollment as part of new teacher orientation. 	<p>Spring</p> <p>Spring-Summer-Fall</p> <p>Summer</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize vertical teaming to create shared understanding regarding transitions, programming, and content standards. • Develop and integrate interagency professional learning that focuses on early learning transitions. 	<p>Year-round</p> <p>Year-round</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with other agencies to transfer relevant records to public schools, as applicable. 	<p>Spring</p>

WV Early Childhood Transitions Toolkit

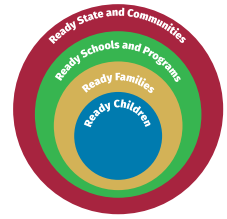


Transition Goal 4:

A county system is in place for transferring assessment data including but not limited to, the WV Early Learning Reporting System, for each child who has participated in an eligible program to the receiving teacher to assist in identifying areas of development and areas for growth to meet the individual needs of each child. (WVBE Policy 2525)

Ready, Set, Go! WV Component	Intentional Opportunities	Timelines
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct orientation and other transition events to allow families to meet with their child’s teacher. 	Spring
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a procedure to ensure relevant records (including, but not limited to, the WV Child Assessment System Transition Report) are transferred appropriately. 	Spring
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide class lists as early as possible, so teachers can access transition reports in a timely manner. 	Spring-Summer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure transition planning for children with special needs who may require accommodations. 	Spring-Summer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize opportunities for current and receiving teachers to discuss successful transition protocols and assist new teachers in identifying the strengths, interests, and areas for growth of all children. 	Year-round

WV Early Childhood Transitions Toolkit



Transition Goal 5:

Policies and procedures are in place for the transition of children, including those with IEPs, as they transition from one setting to the next to ensure compliance with state and federal requirements. (WVBE Policy 2525)

Ready, Set, Go! WV Component

Intentional Opportunities

Timelines



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop individualized transition plans as needed for all children, including those with identified special needs as outlined in an IEP, 504 plan, or specialized healthcare plan. 	Spring-Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange visits to early childhood settings for children, families, and staff from the sending program or service. 	Spring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct home visits before and/or after the new school year starts. 	Summer-Fall
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with families before the new school year starts. 	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for children to practice routines such as riding buses, participating in lunch, etc. 	Spring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage integration of grade-to-grade experiences throughout the school year, where appropriate. 	Year-round



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