

Findings from Evaluations of the Implementation of Multnomah County's Early Kindergarten Transition Program

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- EKT Program Background
- EKT Implementation Research
- EKT Next Steps for Research

EKT Program Background

- In Oregon, only 10% of 4-year olds attend a publicly-funded pre-k program
- The first day of kindergarten marks the first experience that most Oregon children have in a formal, classroom-based education setting
- The transition to kindergarten is stressful for children, parents, and teachers

- The original idea behind EKT:
 - *What if kindergarten children could practice kindergarten before school starts?*
 - *And, what if their parents were brought into the school community as true partners at the same time?*
- A pilot EKT program was first implemented in 2 schools in PPS in 2010

- 2010: 2 schools in PPS
- 2011: 5 schools in PPS
- 2012: 12 schools in Multnomah County
- 2013: 21 schools in Multnomah County
- 2014: 32 schools in Multnomah County

- 2 Core Components:
 - Family engagement activities
 - Class time for children in KG classrooms
- 2-3 weeks long
- August (usually)
- School-based
- Follow-through activities
- Targeted
 - Children with no preschool experience
 - Schools with the greatest needs (test scores, ELL, no preschool)
- Collaboration:
 - SUN Service System, SUN Community School lead agencies, School district, schools, Multnomah County library

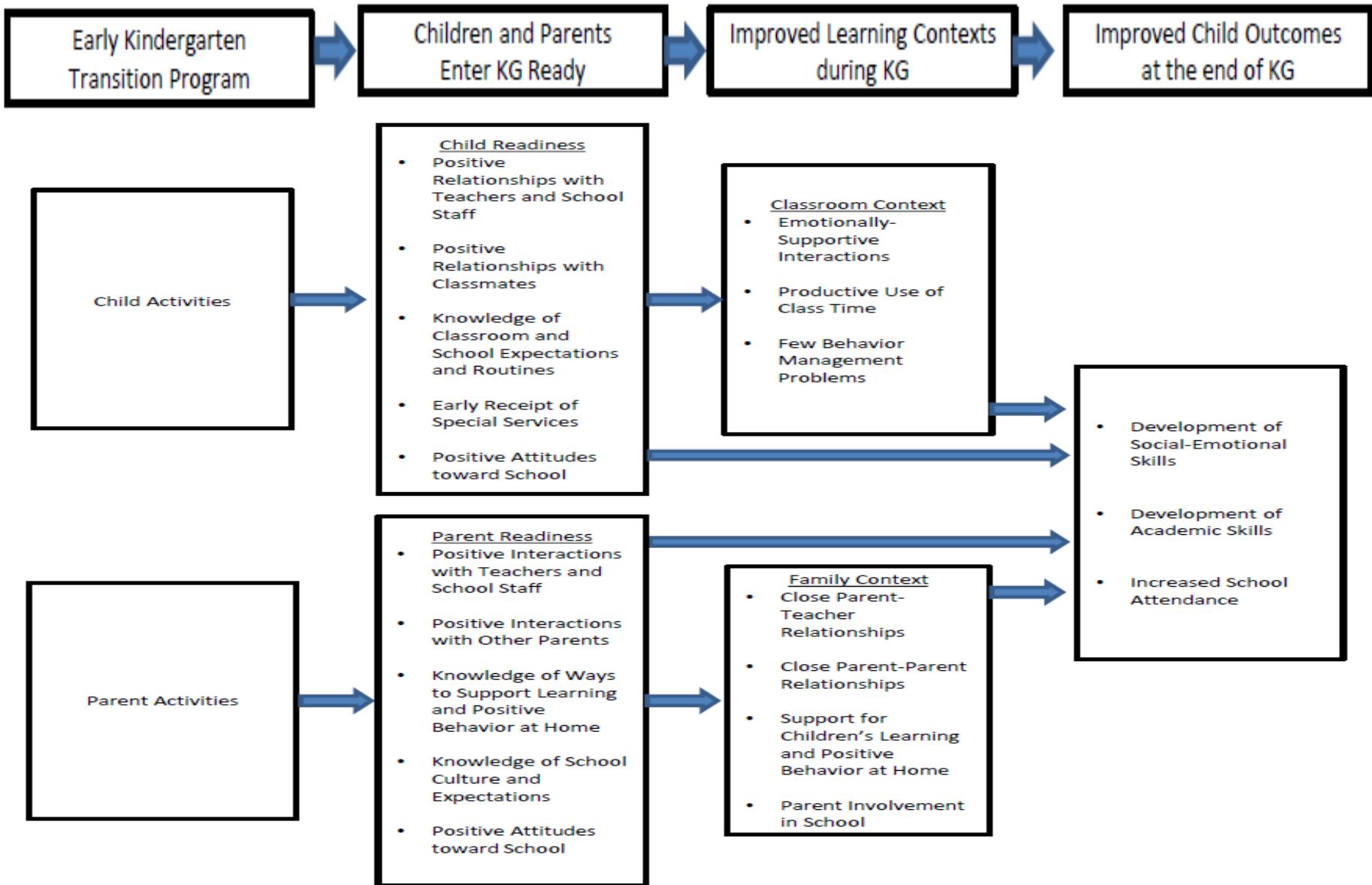
- Family Engagement Activities

- To develop positive **relationships** between parents and other parents, school staff, and community partners
- To increase **parent involvement** in their children's learning at home
- To promote good **attendance** in kindergarten
- To increase **parent comfort and confidence** in the school environment and navigating the school systems

- Class Time for Children in KG classrooms

- To increase **children's social and emotional readiness** for school
- To increase **children's skills to participate in a group**
- To increase children's **abilities to understand and follow classroom routines**

EKT Program Logic Model



EKT Implementation Research

- Approach to this Research
 - Responsive
 - External
 - Objective
 - Student-led
- 2 Sets of Implementation Studies:
 - **Best Practices** for Implementing EKT
 - 2012, 2013, 2014
 - Goal: to build a set of recommended best practices for implementing EKT
 - **Implementation Fidelity**
 - 2014
 - Goals: to describe implementation across all 32 EKT sites, to identify challenges to implementation

Best Practices for Implementing EKT

	2012 Study	2013 Study	2014 Study
Number of EKT sites	6 of 12	7 of 21	All 32
Semi-structured observations	20 days in KG 14 days in Parent meetings	19 days in KG 15 days in Parent meetings	75 days in KG 50 days in Parent meetings
Semi-structured interviews	35 parents/guardians 5 SUN site coordinators 6 Parent Facilitators 6 KG Teachers	19 SUN Site coordinators, Parent educators, and KG Teachers	
Surveys			23 SUN Site coordinators 17 Parent Facilitators 6 KG Teachers

EKT Program Planning

2012

Decide early that a school will have the EKT program

Conduct **planning meetings** that involve district, school, lead agency and county staff to clarify roles and responsibilities and to coordinate program activities

Identify and implement **recruitment strategies** that target children who had no prior preschool experiences

2013

Ensure adequate time for planning and orientation activities for sites, parent education facilitators, and KG teachers who are **new to EKT**

Recognize the critical role of **school secretaries** and include them in planning and orientation activities

EKT Kindergarten Activities

2012

Implement child activities in KG classrooms that are well-organized and arranged **as they will be during the school year**

Maintain **low student-to-adult ratios** in the KG classrooms to provide support with behavior issues and to translate to non-English speakers

Allow KG teachers to determine and implement **activities that are most relevant** in each particular school

2013

Provide **additional staffing** in KG classrooms, especially during the first week of EKT, to help teachers with children's language barriers and behavior challenges, and provide on-going support to all EKT staff during the implementation of EKT

Offer opportunities for children to become acquainted with **all areas in the school and all school personnel**

EKT Parent Activities

2012	<p>Host an orientation meeting for families to clarify expectations for parents' participation, complete paper work, and build trust and relationships with program administrators, implementers, and school staff</p>
	<p>Provide information to parents about the comprehensive set of community and school resources that are available to children and families</p>
	<p>Implement parent activities that utilize hands-on learning strategies and result in the creation of materials that parents can use to support children's learning at home</p>
	<p>Provide formal and informal opportunities for parent-parent engagement and relationship-building</p>
	<p>Conduct meetings in spaces that are arranged to promote parent-parent interactions and collaborative activities</p>
	<p>Provide opportunities for parents to observe their child in the kindergarten classroom</p>
	<p>Provide high quality child care during parent meetings that is developmentally appropriate and connects children to the school environment in positive ways</p>
2013	<p>Include parents who attended EKT during prior years as assistants in the KG classrooms and as facilitators/interpreters in the parent education meetings</p> <p>Offer opportunities for parents to become acquainted with all areas in the school and all school personnel</p>

- **Implementation Fidelity defined:**

- The degree to which the program is implemented *as it was intended by the program developers*

- **4 dimensions of Implementation Fidelity:**

1. dosage: amount of program content delivered/received by participants
2. participant responsiveness: engagement of the participants
3. adherence: program components are delivered/used/received as prescribed
4. quality: theory-based ideal in terms of processes and content

- 32 EKT sites in Multnomah County
- Mixed-Methods approach
 - Observations of each site's parent meetings
 - 1-2 days per site
 - 50 days total
 - Field notes and structured observation
 - Observations of each site's kindergarten classroom
 - 2-3 days per classroom
 - 75 days total
 - Field notes and structured observation
 - On-line survey
 - 23 SUN Site coordinators
 - 17 Parent Educators
 - 16 Kindergarten Teachers
 - Quantitative and qualitative responses
 - Administrative records
 - Parent and children's attendance

1. Parent attendance at Family Engagement Activities
2. Child attendance at Kindergarten class time

2014 Study of EKT Implementation Fidelity Measures of EKT Responsiveness—Parents

	Low	Medium	High
Emotional Tone	Parents become upset during the meeting	Parents are attentive but do not smile or laugh, may seem bored	Parents are at ease with each other and the parent educator, laugh and smile when appropriate
Parent-parent interaction <i>*note: if there is no opportunity for parent-parent interaction during your session, code as n/a</i>	Parents mostly keep to themselves during breaks, only interacting with each other when required to. Parents may be disrespectful and cold to each other.	Some parents talk with each other during breaks and group activities, however these interactions may be brief. Parents are respectful of each other but may not seem friendly and warm.	Most parents talk extensively with each other during breaks and group activities; parents are open, friendly, warm and respectful with each other.
Attention	Most parents lose interest by the end of long activities, or many parents are continually distracted throughout the entire class (e.g. distracted by childcare or falling asleep)	In general, parents are attentive, but many become distracted by the end of long activities, or some may be continually distracted through the entire class	Most parents maintain high levels of attentiveness (e.g. looking at instructor, taking notes, reading materials) for the duration of the class, and no parent is continually distracted throughout the entire class
Participation	No parents volunteer when asked by parent educators; class discussions are almost totally silent. Many parents refuse to participate in class activities.	A few parents volunteer when asked, however most remain silent; many parents are hesitant to talk during class discussion times. Many parents are reluctant to participate in class activities but may warm up by the end of the activity.	Many parents readily volunteer when asked to by parent educators, many parents are willing to share during class discussion time. Parents participate in a majority of class activities (e.g. brainstorming, crafts, games)

2014 Study of EKT Implementation Fidelity Measures of EKT Responsiveness—Children



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	Low	Medium	High
Attention	Children fidget and move about the carpet. Children look around the room or at peers and engage in inappropriate discussion with peers. Children slouch and lean away from the teacher.	Children follow the instruction with their gaze. Some children are distracted. There is minimal inappropriate discussion with peers.	Children follow the instruction with their gaze and lean forward towards the teacher. When children become distracted, they are easily redirected.
Participation	Many children do not volunteer when the teacher asks.	Some children volunteer when the teacher asks.	Many children volunteer when the teacher asks.
Emotional Engagement	Some children express positive emotions. Several students seem bored, nervous, or upset, and a few of these children are unable to regain their composure.	Many children express positive emotions. A few students seem bored, nervous, or upset; however, most of these students regain composure quickly.	Most children express positive emotions (smiles, laughter when appropriate). Only one or two students seem upset (frowns, tears, nervousness).
Routines	Children call out thoughts and ideas. Children interrupt the teacher and fail to raise their hands.	Children call out thoughts and ideas when the teacher stops speaking. Children respond to reminders to raise their hands.	Children raise their hands when thoughts come to them and wait to be prompted by the teacher to respond.
Transitions	While moving from one task to another, children are distracted by peers and irrelevant objects around the room. Children fixate on the previous task and struggle (whine, complain, attempt to bargain) against moving onto next task. Children need reminders to remember what is coming next.	Some children move slowly to the next task or are distracted by peers or irrelevant objects around the room, but they are redirected with little difficulty to the appropriate new activity. Some children may need reminders to remember what is coming next. Children settle down with a few reminders.	Children are aware of what task is coming next. They move quickly, quietly, and enthusiastically to the new activity. The children settle down into next activity with minimal reminders.

2014 Study of EKT Implementation Fidelity

Measures of EKT Adherence

EKT Program	EKT Parent Activities	EKT Class time
Priority given to children with no preschool	Supporting learning at home	KG teacher is from same school
Program orientation	Organizing for success	School tour
KG teacher has support in the classroom	What happens in KG	Introduction to school staff
Breakfast and lunch for children	Attendance	Literacy activities
Snacks or lunch for parents	School and community resources	Numeracy activities
Follow up activities planned		Movement /songs
		Small motor activities
		Free choice time

2014 Study of EKT Implementation Fidelity Measures of EKT Quality—Parent Meetings

	Low	Medium	High
Emotional Tone	Parent education staff is aloof and condescending; ignores some parents or treats parents rudely; doesn't seem to be enjoying program	Parent education staff is kind but somewhat removed; may not seem comfortable interacting with all parents; may seem nervous	Parent education staff is relaxed and enthusiastic; in general, staff is warm towards parents and treats all parents with respect
Translation	No translation is provided for speakers of non-English languages; most materials are provided in English only	As far as you can tell, translators are available for some but not all non-English languages or translators are available but are not fluent; some materials are provided in English only	As far as you can tell, fluent translators are available for speakers of all non-English languages; all materials are available in all languages
Organization	The materials for many activities are not prepared prior to class; transitions between activities are highly chaotic	Most materials are ready before class, but there are some that are not; transitions between activities are somewhat chaotic	All materials are prepared prior to class; transitions between activities are smooth and quick
Relevance	Classroom activities are largely unrelated to parents' actual lives; educators are never able to be flexible in response to parents' interests. Information is presented abstractly without real-life illustrations.	Classroom activities are mostly directed towards things that parents will do in the future; educators are only sometimes able to be flexible in responding to parents' interests. Instructors sometimes connect activities to real life illustrations.	Classroom activities are matched to things that are useful for parents right now as well as in the future; educators are responsive to parents' interests and requests. Instructors use real life illustrations.
Physical setting	Classroom is crowded; chairs and tables are not comfortable or are in short supply; parents cannot see or interact with each other and/or instructors and translators; room climate control and/or lighting are not working; classroom is subject to frequent interruptions from outside activities (e.g. construction, other summer classes, etc)	Classroom is reasonably comfortable; some parents may be left out of main group; some chairs and tables may be arranged in inefficient ways; some interruptions from outside activities may occur	Classroom is spacious and well arranged; parents have room to take notes and do projects; tables and chairs are adult-size and plentiful; room climate control and lighting are working well; parents can see and interact with all other participants, instructors, and translators; classroom is free of distractions from outside activities
Instructor's familiarity with material	Educator is unfamiliar with the instructional material, often referring to and reading directly from their notes or lesson plan. Educator is unable to answer caregivers' questions without referring to notes. New lessons are never connected to previous material.	Educator presents information articulately, occasionally looking at notes or lesson plan. Educator can occasionally address caregivers' questions thoroughly without referring to notes. New lessons are occasionally connected to previous material.	Educator presents material confidently without referring to notes or lesson plans. Educator elaborates on material and often connects new lessons to previous material.

1. Debriefing session will be held in November to present results from 2014 Evaluation

2. Results will:

- expand the list of best practices for implementing EKT
- describe implementation fidelity across all 32 sites
- identify the greatest barriers to implementing EKT

EKT Possible Next Steps for Research

1. Update the EKT theory of change
2. Use the measure of implementation fidelity for EKT program improvement
3. Further develop and refine the program model and program resources
4. Test the impacts of EKT

Contributors to EKT Research



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