



What's Happening in the Network?

GSC Name: Cheboygan, Otsego, Presque Isle (COP)

Name of Strategy/Project: Bridging the Kindergarten Transition Gap

June 27, 2016

1.) What was the original problem(s) (and associated root causes) that the GSC/GSPC was trying to address with this strategy/project?

Our GSC identified the need to bring all of the people who might be involved in a child's life and education together to discuss the importance of Kindergarten Transition. We also wanted to help build the relationships between parents, childcare providers (home, center and group), preschool teachers, Kindergarten staff and administrators and build a learning community where all three counties and several school districts could learn about what other districts were doing to help foster strong transition practices.

2.) What did the GSC/GSPC do to begin addressing this problem (and associated root causes)? What have been your successes so far?

As a first step, we decided to have a speaker address an aspect of child development at a training to promote relationship building through joint learning. During the first session, the speaker presented on the importance of social and emotional development. This brought about the discussion on the importance of play and building an emotionally and socially strong child.

As a result, the COP General Education Director, Early Childhood Specialist and Great Start Coordinator came together and discussed the needs related to Kindergarten transitions and what would be the best way to help bridge the gap that our school systems may be experiencing. We then sought the participation from the Northeast Great Start to Quality Resource Center (NEGSTQRC), as we felt that we needed to involve the child care providers in the three counties in this very important endeavor. Additional meetings were held to determine "the who, the what and the where" of it all. Once determined, invitations were sent out via email through various networks with the registration being handled through the NEQSTQ Resource Center.

Successes included:

- The cooperation between the COP Education Service District (ESD), Great Start Collaborative, Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) Administrators and the NEGSTQRC.

- The engagement of those in attendance: school administrators, home child care providers, Head Start teachers, GSRP teachers, Step Up teachers (teachers from programs where children are placed between preschool and Kindergarten), and Kindergarten teachers.
- Blended funding for the expense of the trainer, dinner and location.
- The participants agreed that they would like to meet throughout the year to learn from each other and to continue to Bridge the Kindergarten Transition Gap.
- Relationships were beginning to build as conversation progressed. We believe that as others listened and learned what part each person played in a child's life there was a newfound respect for each person's role.

3.) What are/were a few lessons learned from implementation of this strategy/project?

Although we feel the session was a success, and definitely a huge step in the right direction, we felt that we need to do more to bring parents to the table. We talked at great length on the importance of having parents present and the value of parent feedback. We will do more outreach for the next learning communities so that parents feel welcome and involved. We also saw that participants learned that there were many more people involved in the education of a child from birth to kindergarten entry, other than just preschool teachers.

4.) Who should a peer GSC/GSPC contact if they have questions or want to learn more about the strategy/project?

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Email is the preferred method of contact