



INDIANA INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY AND COMMUNITY
EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

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Early Childhood Special Education Transitions

Life transitions and changes are not only inevitable, but they are also significant emotional events for everyone. Research tells us that children with disabilities and their families experience service program transitions as especially challenging and stressful.

This isn't surprising considering these families and children experience multiple transitions in a short period of time. Successful transitions, those with minimal disruption in services and that provide continuity of experiences, require providers and teachers to invest time in engaging

families and children in transition planning to ensure a smooth move from their current program to their new environment.

Decades of research on transition (whether that be from First Steps to preschool or preschool to kindergarten) have found that transitions are successful when they result in the following outcomes:

- Families have the necessary information to actively participate in transition meetings and discussions.
- Families effectively communicate their wishes and concerns for their child with early intervention and school staff.
- Families make informed decisions about their child's services and supports.
- Families have high expectations for their child's achievement in the next setting.
- Children are adequately prepared for the next setting.
- Children experience aligned educational experiences.
- Sending and receiving programs establish mutual processes that promote continuity across environments (e.g., developing communication plans; sharing pre-determined specific child information; having knowledgeable and capable teachers to meet individual children's needs).
- Families and children report positive adjustments to their new settings.

Transition is a year-round activity, but research identifies several recommended strategies that families could use over the summer to support the outcomes mentioned above. Here are some examples:

1. Schedule a visit to the new program; talk to your child about visit the new program; get to know the new school personnel; take a picture of the new school building and classroom and teacher, if possible.
2. Over the summer, continue to talk to your child about going to a new program, look at photos you may have taken of the new program.
3. [Read books about going to a new program](#)
4. Provide opportunities for your child to play with other children.
5. Continue to work with your child to communicate with others and ask for help when needed.
6. Children will continue to learn new skills over the summer. Keep a list on your phone your child's capabilities, preferences, interests, and needs.
7. Worried about summer learning loss, especially for students with special needs and students living with income inequity? **Give. Away. Books.** Here's why:

Children living with income inequity may not have equal access to books and print media at home (e.g., Allington et al., 1995; Lindsay, 2012). Shared reading between children and caregivers simply can't happen if books aren't available! Prior to summer, schools can gather up retiring library books, duplicates, and donations, then let children and caregivers "shop" for free books. Schools can also set up a Little Free Library with an exterior access, letting children and caregivers swap out reading materials throughout the summer break!

Worried it won't be worth it? Allington and McGill-Franzen (2012) conducted a large set of studies where researchers allowed children in low income elementary schools to select books to take home and keep. Many of the participant students did not return the reading logs associated with the research...BUT providing books still proved to statistically significantly impact the students' reading achievement the following year, even for students who never returned reading logs at all. Other researchers have also found that providing books for children who may not otherwise be able access them during summer improves elementary students' reading achievement and offsets learning loss (e.g., Kim, 2004; Kim & White, 2008).

Some especially devoted teachers and principals have even brought the books to students' doors (Melosh, 2012). In the Summer Books! project, Melosh (2012) drove books to second grade students' homes over the ten weeks of summer, with students self-selecting and exchanging five new books each visit. This work statistically significantly offset student learning loss and boosted literacy achievement. Furthermore, the study clearly reduced the book burden on families and caregivers facing income inequity, to the ultimate benefit of the children.

Want to learn more? Read *Summer Reading: Closing the Rich/Poor Reading Achievement Gap* (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2012) for a proactive, child-centered approach to combatting income inequity and letting readers soar.

References

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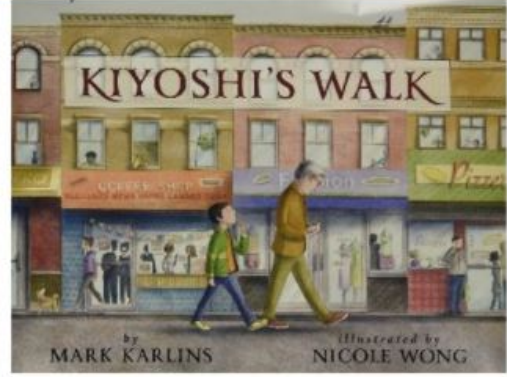
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Melosh, G. (2012). *Taking to the streets! One principal's path to stemming summer reading loss for primary grade students from low-income communities*. In R. L. Allington & A. McGill-Franzen (Eds.), *Summer reading: Closing the rich/poor reading achievement gap* (pp. 70-88). Teachers College Press.



How Diverse Is Your Library?

Here are a few book recommendations:

[*Saturday by Oge Mora*](#) - In this warm and tender story by the Caldecott Honor-winning creator of *Thank You, Omu!*, join a mother and daughter on an up-and-down journey that reminds them of what's best about Saturdays: precious time together.

[*Dreamers by Yuyi Morales*](#) - This is a book that reflects the story of an immigrant child and her mother. They learn how to integrate into a new culture and new ways to find themselves in a new city. They found comfort in the library, where they engage with books and learn about themselves and their dreams. Yuyi Morales shared her personal story when she immigrated from Mexico to Texas with her young daughter. She enjoyed reading picture books that she wrote her own book where she told her story. At the end of the book, she expressed that all immigrants are dreamers, "sonadores" that carry their hopes and dreams to build their future.

[*Kiyoshi's Walk By Mark Karlins, Illustrated by Nicole Wong*](#) - After Kiyoshi watches his grandfather, Eto, compose his delicate haiku, he wonders out loud: "Where do poems come from?" His grandfather answers by taking him on a walk through their city, where they see a cat perched on a hill of oranges; hear the fluttering of wings; imagine what's behind a tall wall; and discuss their walk, with each incident inspiring a wonderful new haiku from Eto. As Kiyoshi discovers that poems come from the way the world outside of us meets the world within each of us, he also finds the courage to write a haiku of his own.

[*I'm enough by Grace Byers*](#) - This book presents a powerful story to remind young children to love themselves for who they are and what they can do. The author wrote this book as an

inspiration for young Black girls to see themselves in the images and words of this book. She empowers children to dream, learn and keep trying as there are enough!

My Friends/Mis Amigos by Taro Gomi- This story is designed to create language and cultural awareness. The author combines English and Spanish phrases that can be easily shared with bilingual and monolingual children and contribute to their language development. The illustrations show children from diverse backgrounds who learn from their friends different skills.

Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match / Marisol McDonald no combina By Monica Brown, Illustrated by Sara Palacios - A mestiza Peruvian American of European, Jewish, and Amerindian heritage, renowned author Monica Brown wrote this lively story to bring her own experience of being mismatched to life. Her buoyant prose is perfectly matched by Sara Palacios' engaging acrylic illustrations.

