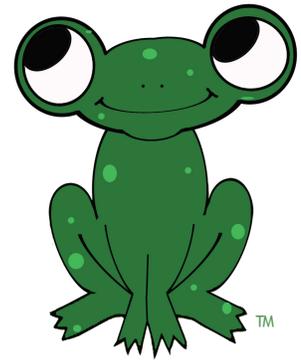


PATHWAYS



To

**COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS**

**PARENT
ENGAGEMENT**

**QUALITY
TRANSITION**

**SCHOOL
SUCCESS**

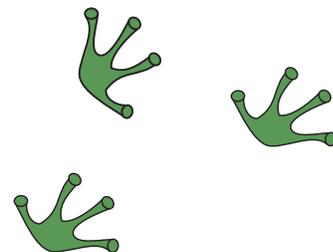
PATHWAYS TO SCHOOL SUCCESS

What is Quality Transition?

In 2006, the University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development began implementing a multi-year school readiness project in several area schools.

Evidence from both research and the field point to several key elements that foster school readiness and create pathways to school success for all children.

- All children need a **quality transition** into kindergarten
- **Early positive relationships** between parents and schools are essential to parent involvement
- Schools need plans that are welcoming and **community-specific**
- Creating a **transition team** engages the community and enhances resources
- **Branding** with a strong theme increases public awareness and creates excitement (see our brand, Ready Freddy™, below)



“It prepared me to see what my child would be facing so that anything she didn’t grasp there I could help her with.”

– New kindergarten parent



This child-friendly character helped families recognize kindergarten transition activities across the district.

PATHWAYS TO SCHOOL SUCCESS

Why Quality Transition is Important

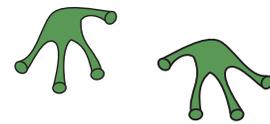
Quality Transition is a series of activities that:

- Welcome families and children to Kindergarten
- Help children be ready to learn in a formal setting
- Reduce anxiety
- Increase enrollment and attendance
- Foster parent involvement
- Create continuity of learning between home and school

The most effective transition activities **begin before school starts.**



First day of school, Kindergarten teacher greets her student



Freddy helps teachers and students prepare for the start of school

Studies show: Transition activities increase parent involvement

Strong parent involvement and a positive relationship between home and school are two of the greatest predictors of school success. A study of 17,212 kindergarten children from 992 schools found that:

- Schools that implement transition practices have **higher student achievement scores**
- Transition practices **engage parents**
- Stronger parent involvement **increases student success¹**

“The transition events at the school have been very successful. They get the parents into the building and more comfortable sending their children here.”

— Elementary school principal

PATHWAYS TO SCHOOL SUCCESS

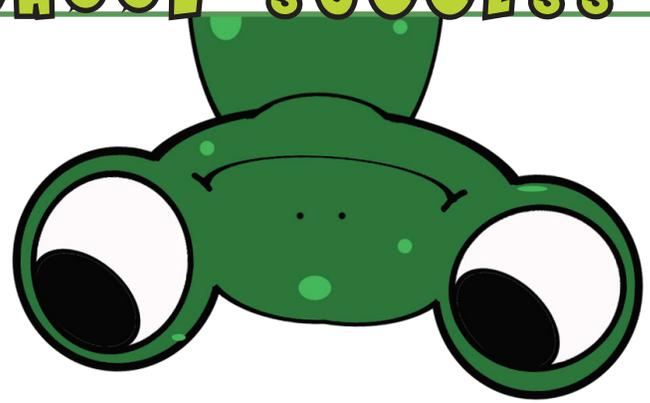
Studies show: Increased parent involvement leads to better school attendance

Elementary schools that actively involve families and communities through positive communication and activities significantly increase attendance and decrease chronic absence.¹

Nationally, 25% of all kindergarten children are at-risk or chronically absent; kindergarten children in poor families are four times more likely to be chronically absent than children in higher income families.²



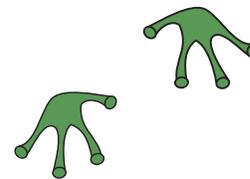
The community celebrates kindergarten's first day



Studies show: Kindergarten students with better attendance score higher on achievement tests

In a national study, children with better rates of attendance in kindergarten had higher scores in reading, math and general knowledge at the end of 1st grade.³

Students who are absent during early elementary years miss critical components of basic learning. If they are behind by the 3rd grade, they will need extra help and are at greater risk for dropping out.⁴



- 1 Schulting, A. (2008). Promoting parent-school relationships during the transition to kindergarten. *The Evaluation Exchange*, 14(1&2), 8.
- 2 Epstein, J. & Shledon, S. (2002). Present and accounted for: Improving student attendance through family and community involvement. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 95(5), 308-318.
- 3 Romero, M. & Lee, Y. (2007). A national portrait of chronic absenteeism in the early grades. National Center for Children in Poverty. Retrieved from http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_771.html
- 4 Chang, H. & Romero, M. (2008). Present, engaged and accounted for: The critical importance of addressing chronic absence in the early grades. National Center for Children in Poverty. Retrieved from http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_837.pdf

PATHWAYS TO SCHOOL SUCCESS

Do *you* need to focus on the transition to kindergarten?

Do ALL of your children arrive excited and prepared for the start of school?

- 48% of children struggle with the transition to kindergarten, both emotionally and academically.¹

Does EVERY parent feel welcome at your school?

- Parents want to be involved and want their children to succeed. The quality of their relationships with school personnel influences how they will participate.²

Is education valued and supported in your community?

- Children succeed when families, schools and communities unite in support of education.³

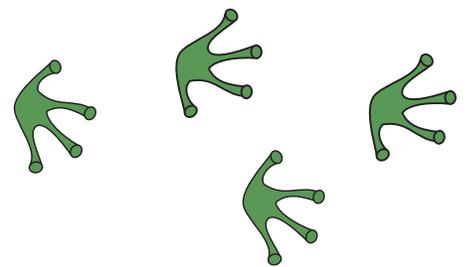
Are your Kindergarten classrooms FULL on day one?

- Early enrollment helps both teachers and families prepare for a successful school year.



Freddy's footprints guide families through the school

If you answered no to any of these questions, perhaps your school could benefit from a Transition To Kindergarten Team....



- 1 Rimm-Kaufman, S.E., Pianta, R.C. & Cox, M.J. (2000). Teachers' judgments of problems in the transition to kindergarten. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 15, 147-166.
- 2 Mapp, K.L. (2003). Having their say: Parents describe why and how they are engaged in their children's learning. *School Community Journal*, 13(1), 35-64.
- 3 Pianta, R.C. & Kraft-Sayre, M. (2003). *Successful kindergarten transition: Your guide to connecting children, families and schools*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H Brookes Publishing Co.

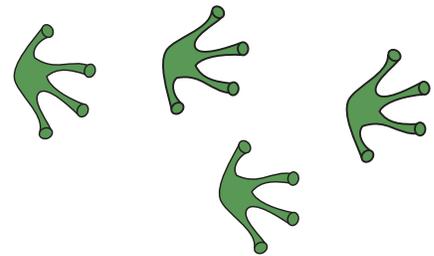
PATHWAYS TO SCHOOL SUCCESS

Transitions Teams

- Include teachers, principals, parents, and other community stakeholders
- Reach out to *all* age-appropriate children and their parents before the first day of kindergarten
- Use local data to understand a community's kindergarten enrollment patterns and challenges
- Organize and publicize transition events that match a community's interests and needs
- Engage family and community partners in the school's success

- Focus on on-time enrollment
- Support and encourage teachers
- Help ensure a welcoming kindergarten experience for all children and families

Thus far, transition teams have helped to *triple and quadruple on-time enrollment* in urban elementary schools. **This can work for you.**



Other Components of the Ready Freddy™ Program

Active, Community-wide Engagement of Parents:

- Community outreach connects schools with families of young children
- Hosting events in the schools helps parents feel welcome and build trust early

K-Clubs:

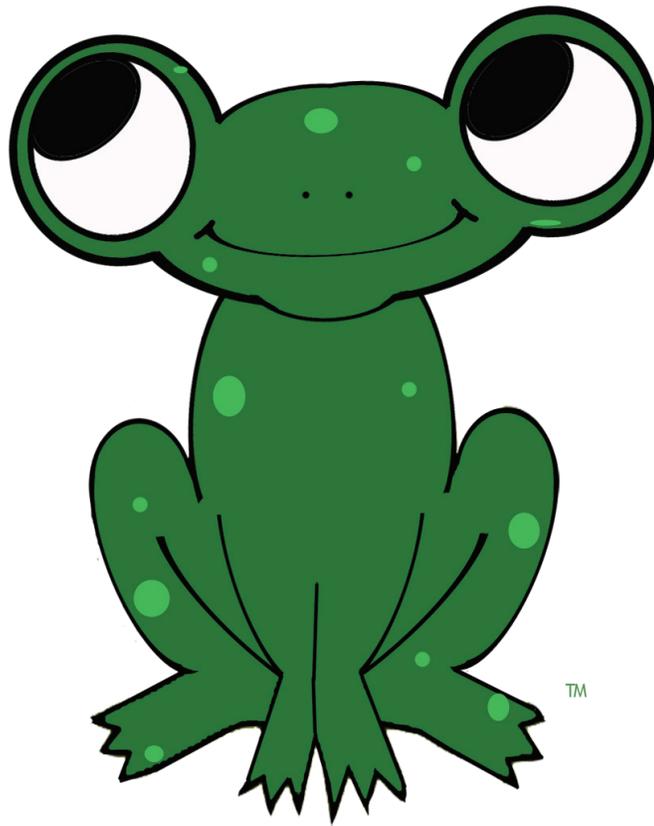
- K-Clubs are gatherings of parents and children that meet for six sessions over the summer and are the vehicles for delivering the Ready Freddy curriculum.
- Each interactive session focuses on the attitudes, skills, and logistical planning that contribute to long-term success in school. The meetings allow for in-depth discussion and help build a sense of community among each club's 10-12 families.
- The Ready Freddy curriculum stands apart from those of other kindergarten readiness initiatives by focusing on not only children's skills, but also the preparedness of their parents.

Ready Freddy Frog Mascot and Logo:

- The frog image puts a friendly face on the program, appeals to children and parents alike, and now brands all program materials and activities.
- The Ready Freddy brand has received extensive press coverage and has been integral to building excitement and public awareness around kindergarten and school readiness across the entire city.



By the first day of school, parents know the kindergarten teacher



OFFICE OF
CHILD DEVELOPMENT

University of Pittsburgh
School of Education
Office of Child Development
400 North Lexington Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15208

www.education.pitt.edu/ocd