

Transition from Early Childhood to Primary Education: Preparing the Child for the Success of Future Education

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*“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken adults.”
- F. Douglas*

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION is deemed crucial for the child’s future education, and the importance of the transition from early childhood to primary education (TfECtPE) is self-evident. Due to the differences in educational systems, the concept of the TfECtPE varies in different countries. In some countries, it refers to the child’s transition from home-based care to formal education provided by public institutions. Educational authorities in Canada, for instance, have developed family engagement programs to foster constructive interactions among families, kindergartens, schools, and local communities to facilitate this transition. In other countries, it denotes child transition from preschool to primary school. In France, for example, it refers to the transition from “l’école maternelle” (nursery school) to “l’école primaire” (primary school) (Wu, 2013). In China, the TfECtPE is mainly about the transition in teaching materials and methods from kindergarten to primary education (Liu et al., 2021).

Overall, the chief purpose of TfECtPE education is to facilitate the smooth progression of the child from preschool to primary education (Ramey & Ramey, 1998). This education is necessitated by the fact that kindergarten teaching typically adopts play- and life-based approaches, underscoring child learning through intuitive experiences and development of interests, whereas primary education marks the initiation of formal instruction of academic knowledge and poses higher requirements for the child’s awareness of rules, time management skills, and basic learning capacities. Without adequate transitional training, the child may suffer cognitive, social, and emotional difficulties in the primary school.

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Well-designed TfECtPE programs can effectively assist the young child in navigating the challenges of interpersonal relationships, behavioral discipline, and learning habits in a new educational setting. Furthermore, research reveals that TfECtPE efforts can have far-reaching impacts on the child's academic performance in primary school as well as their future development. Unsuccessful transition may lead to underperformance in primary school and even affect future academic motivation and development direction. Conversely, children who receive scientific transitional education are better prepared for school and potentially achieve greater academic outcomes. Hence, the significance of TfECtPE training lies not only in alleviating the initial pressures of school entry but also in paving a strong foundation for the child's lifelong development.

From an international perspective, the education world in Western developed countries has placed increased emphasis on TfECtPE efforts in recent decades. Since the 1990s, these nations have established comprehensive frameworks of educational policies and initiatives to ensure that education quality improvement is the central objective of educational reform, and within this context, TfECtPE education outcomes have become one of the key indicators for measuring the quality of early childhood education. The smooth TfECtPE of all children has come to the fore in a succession of laws and policy papers. In the United States, Goals 2000: Educate America Act highlights all children being ready to learn upon entering school as a primary goal. 2003's School Readiness Act aims to promote school readiness in children from low-income families by providing comprehensive support services to them (Zhang, 2012). In France, a series of educational laws have addressed the transitional education, including 1989's *Orientation of Education Law*, 1990's *Organization and Operation of Kindergartens and Primary Schools Law*, and 2005's *Fillon Law* (Li, 2013). In Japan, the *Kindergarten Education Revitalization Plan* (2001–2006 Early Childhood Education Development Plan), released by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in 2001, raised the issue of strengthening TfECtPE education and set forth implementation strategies. In 2004, the Central Council for Education formulated the plan for integrating early childhood and primary education, which officially took effect in 2006. In 2009, new *Daycare Center Education Guidelines* and *Kindergarten Education Guidelines* were introduced, incorporating initiatives to promote collaboration between preschools and primary schools (Cao, 2014). New Zealand's *Pathways to the Future*, a ten-year strategic plan for early childhood education released in 2002, proposes the policy of promoting continuity in education from birth to age 8 and highlights the importance of teacher training, teaching methods introduction, and information dissemination to its implementation (Wu, 2013).

At the same time, China's approach to the TfECtPE is undergoing a shift from "advanced education" to "scientific transition." *Regulations on Kindergarten Work (Trial)*, issued by the State Education Commission in 1989, provides that kindergartens and primary schools must sustain close collaboration and co-ordination with each other, and pay attention to the coherence of the two phases of education, establishing the foundational principles for China's later TfECtPE policies. The Ministry of Education's *Guidelines for Vigorously Promoting the Scientific Transition from Kindergarten to Primary School 2021* stipulates the prohibition of implementation of primary curricula in kindergartens and advanced training provided by private tutoring institutions, calling for an initiation of primary education based on zero advanced learning. 2025's *Preschool Education Law* further strengthens mandatory requirements for establishing mechanisms for TfECtPE efforts (Liu et al., 2021).

Parental involvement plays an important role in TfECtPE education. Grounded Theory Analysis of the Parent's Conception of Child Transition from Kindergarten to Primary School: An Interaction Mechanism of the Influencing Factors in this issue investigates the factors affecting the conception of child education in the transitional period among parents of preschool children and develop a grounded theory model of the interaction mechanism of these factors (Zhang, 2026). The study rigorously follows the analytical procedures of the grounded theory method in analyzing first-hand interview data. It al-

so proposes recommendations for enhancing parental participation to facilitate child TtECtPE, based on the identification of workable approaches to engaging parents in the transition efforts. Hence, the study can be seen as a valuable contribution to the TtECtPE research literature.

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