

## Development and Implementation of the Kindergarten Child Snapshot

In 2004, The Child Care Commission formed committees to deal with emerging issues. One of those issues was transition into kindergarten. The School Transitions/Connections Committee set several goals, one of which was to design pilot projects which would enhance the communication between ECE and kindergarten teachers. Another was to survey elementary principals. Both of these efforts yielded one thing in common—a need to pass along information between these two entities and parents regarding children entering kindergarten.

Through a series of meetings it was discovered that ECE sites do a variety of assessments; some long, some short—but nothing in common. Elementary schools ask preschools and parents for information on incoming children—but, again, nothing in common. The committee, with the help of Philliber Research Associates, took all the assessments used in Marin ECE sites and charted the common elements. Then they took all the elementary school site requests and charted those common elements. With these two pieces of information, the committee requested and received a small grant from Marin First 5 Children and Families Commission to do a pilot project which resulted in the "Child Snapshot."

The process for developing the Snapshot was an exciting one. One half of the group members were practicing ECE directors and teachers; the other half were elementary principals and primary teachers. The effort was facilitated by Cathy Ferron and Dani Tarry. Every word in the Snapshot was agreed upon by the group members after vigorous discussion about what was meant by them. In this way, a deeper understanding was developed among professionals whose teaching goals and practices historically have not necessarily been aligned with one another. The finished product was shared with several groups of parents, all of Marin's subsidized preschool programs, as well as various groups of school district teachers and administrators.

In September of 2006, the pilot was deemed "ready to go." At this point it was introduced to the five communities in which First 5 School Readiness and Marin County School Linked Services Initiatives are working together—Novato, San Rafael, Sausalito Marin City, San Geronimo Valley, and Shoreline Unified School District. All five districts agreed to include the Kindergarten Snapshot in their kindergarten registration packets. In addition, all of Marin's subsidized ECE centers serving 4 year olds will have the Kindergarten Snapshots available for parents. Summer Bridge/Kinder Academy teachers will also reach out to the parents they encounter in the summer to encourage this connection as well.

The Kindergarten Snapshot has two forms: One for the parent/guardian to fill out, and one for the preschool teacher, family day care provider, or the Summer Bridge/Kinder Academy teacher to fill out. Together they provide the information that kindergarten teachers have identified as the most important for them to know about new students. The hope is that parents will initiate this process. No information will be shared with a school without a parent's signed approval.

The process we hope to see is this:

1. Parents receive Kindergarten Snapshot forms when they register their children between December and August in the five districts mentioned.
2. Parents bring the form to appropriate teachers in ECE/Summer Bridge or Kinder Academy programs.
3. In addition, ECE and Summer Bridge/Kinder Academy teachers will have blank forms which they will present to parents who have not initiated this process.
4. Completed forms will be turned in to both ECE and school district and elementary school offices prior to start of school.
5. School Readiness and School Linked Coordinators will collect forms from the various entities, will verify all forms have parent signatures, will compare forms to class lists, and will deliver appropriate forms to each school office for distribution to teachers (what has actually happened is that schools want them ASAP).

Kindergarten Snapshot Development Committee members are:

Marin Child Development Programs: Dora Smith, Margaret Woods

Marin Head Start: Cathy Bart, Kristine Jackson, Robin Pence, Perla de los Santos

North Bay Children's Center: Melissa Bridgeman, Jayne Johnson

Novato First 5 School Readiness Project: Kerry Bacho

Novato Unified School District: Jan Hutchinson, Fern Kepke, Angela Kriesler, Ivy Morrirt, Jan Schultz, Leslie Barden Smith

Novato Youth Center: Kara Brazas,

Philliber Research Associates: Sally Brown

Facilitators: Cathy Ferron, Dani Tarry, Tina Warren