

ISSUES TO CONSIDER AT KEY TRANSITION POINTS IN A STUDENTS ACADEMIC CAREER

	Entry to School	Transition to Middle School	Transition to High School
1. Attendance Every Day	<p>Parents may not realize the importance of regular attendance starting in kindergarten. Missing a month or more of kindergarten is associated with poorer academic performance for all children in 1st grade and the lowest levels of 5th grade achievement for children living in poverty</p> <p>Entry to school, especially if they did not attend preschool, involves children becoming accustomed to the routine of school and often overcoming separation anxiety.</p> <p>When children are young, illness and lack of immunizations can cause absences especially if families lack access to preventive health care.</p> <p>Young children are not likely to be home without the knowledge of an adult. Instead, issues affecting parents, for example, their job situations or sense of connection to a child's school have a greater impact on attendance.</p>	<p>By middle school, attendance of less than 80% of the school year begins to predict a high likelihood of school dropout.</p> <p>Starting in middle school, children begin making their own decisions about whether to attend school or a particular class.</p> <p>The large and more complex nature of middle school education makes it more difficult for adults to monitor student attendance especially across the course of the school day.</p>	<p>In 9th grade, research suggests that attendance of less than 80% of the school year is a better predictor of school dropout than 8th grade test scores. Attendance for high school students is even harder for parents to monitor.</p> <p>Attendance of high school students can be affected by their role in their family, e.g., needing to care for younger children or find a job.</p>
2. Achievement Every Year	<p>25–50% of the reading achievement gap can be attributed to differences in how parents interact with their children around literacy beginning before children enter school.</p> <p>Whether or not children enter school ready to learn is heavily influenced by whether they participated in high quality early childhood programs.</p> <p>Educating parents about how to identify and address developmental disabilities (vs. assume they are normal variations in children's development) is especially critical since early intervention can reduce the need for special education later.</p> <p>Parents may not be aware of the critical importance of learning to read by 3rd grade when the expectation becomes that children can then read to learn other material.</p>	<p>Tracking by academic ability typically begins in middle school. Parents may not be aware of what they need to do to ensure their child is not being discouraged from taking academic oriented courses that lay the foundation for being considered college-bound in high school.</p> <p>The larger size of middle schools as well as the shift from single to multiple teachers makes it harder for parents to stay in contact with their children's teachers.</p> <p>Middle school-aged children generally start to share less about their school day, including what he/she is learning and homework assignments, making it more challenging for parents to assist.</p>	<p>High school teachers are much less likely than elementary or even middle school teachers to communicate with parents about what they are teaching and often only communicate with parents when there is a problem.</p> <p>Parents may not be aware of high school graduation and college entry requirements, especially if new requirements, e.g., high school exit exams, have recently been added. Increased graduation requirements mean that fewer parents have themselves taken the courses or mastered the skills expected of their children.</p>

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3. Attainment Over Time	Parents' words and actions can encourage (or discourage) children, even at a young age, to develop high aspirations for what they want to be when they grow up.	<p>By middle school, parents need to begin to understand students' educational options and the long-term implications of course decisions.</p> <p>Students may have limited aspirations for careers and fields of study simply because they have not had exposure to many options. Parents and schools, with limited resources, may not know how to provide exposure to a wide range of possibilities for their students.</p>	<p>Students may or may not be in agreement with their parents and teachers about their educational and career goals, which can make it difficult to have a shared plan for how to attain them.</p> <p>Especially if parents are not college graduates, they may not have the knowledge to help their children navigate the process of applying for college and obtaining needed financial assistance.</p>