

Voices from the Field: Christine Lindauer



The importance of transition planning from a parent of a child with disabilities:

Preparation is key to any successful transition. I've always found home visits, visits to the new program, and transition planning worksheets incredibly helpful. But being completely honest, even with the best intentions on both sides, they often just don't happen. Parents and child care providers alike are often incredibly busy and finding time to make these preparations are often just not given the priority they deserve. A home visit is discussed and maybe even scheduled at the transition meeting, but only to be cancelled later. The transition planning worksheets are provided, but not completed, or with insufficient detail - "What does your child like? Music, books". Hmm, not very helpful.

I can't stress enough to make these visits happen. Let's say you've had the transition meeting and planned for the visits. But now, the transition is coming up soon and for whatever reasons, the visits didn't happen, and the transition worksheets are not completed. So ask yourself what can you do right now? Call the parent! Can you schedule a visit immediately? Interview the parent over the phone and ask questions from the transition planning worksheet. Get creative. Maybe a home visit isn't possible, so ask if you could meet somewhere else, a local playground perhaps. Ask the parents if they have any home videos they could share. The key is to communicate and share information any way you can. You'll be starting off your relationship with the family with an open dialogue to not only help with the transition now, but with the child's care going forward.