



H4.

CHANGES — MAKING SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS



TARGET AUDIENCE

Parents, guardians, friends, and mentors of students grades 4 through 8; possibly for the parents, guardians, friends and mentors of students grades 9 through 12



90 MINUTES



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Handouts: *Changes — What Transitions Will My Child Face?* and *Making Successful Transitions*

INTRODUCTION

Moving away from typical parent meetings in which the facilitator is the expert who provides parents with information on how to help their children succeed academically, this Community Conversations session places parents at the center of the conversation. Through facilitated discussion and small-group brainstorming sessions, participants will share what challenges and transitions they expect their children to experience. In addition, participants will consider what they can do to help support their children during these transitions.

SETUP

For guidance with setup, see Community Conversations H1: *Looking Ahead — Expectations for Our Children’s Future*.

ACTIVITIES

Part 1: Welcome and Introductions

 10 minutes

For guidance with welcome and introductions, see Community Conversations H1: *Looking Ahead — Expectations for Our Children’s Future*.

LEARNING GOALS

- ➔ Participants will explore the phases students go through today as they navigate the educational system.
- ➔ Participants will discuss the influences on their children’s lives.
- ➔ Participants will discuss the possible challenges students may face as they make the transition from elementary to middle school, middle school to high school, and high school to college.
- ➔ In small breakout groups, participants will consider the following questions:
 - What challenges does your child currently face and what might he/she face in the future?
 - How is your child’s life different from what you experienced when you were growing up?
 - How will these challenges and experiences manifest themselves throughout your child’s educational transitions? From elementary to middle school? From middle school to high school? From high school to college?
 - How can you best support your child during these transitions?

Part 2: Opening Discussions

 15 minutes

First Discussion:

- ➔ Ask participants: “Do you believe you have the most influence over your children as they go through adolescence and into adulthood?”

Hopefully, they will say “yes.” Discuss with them how we all know that parents are not the only influence in their children’s lives, but they need to be the most important influence.

- ➔ Allow parents to answer the question and write all the answers on the board as they are responding. Ask parents the following questions:
 - How do you influence or have an impact on your child?
 - What are some important things you can do to keep the lines of communication open with your child during this period of transition and beyond?

Second Discussion:

- ➔ Although parents are the most important influence, there are other influences in the lives of their children.
- ➔ Have parents pair-share and encourage those who feel comfortable to share with the group once the following questions are discussed:
 - Besides you and your family, what other people and things influence your child?



- How do you think you can positively affect the influences outside of your home?
- How can you protect your child from negative outside influences?

- ➔ Validate participants’ responses and encourage their participation.

Part 3: Group Breakout

 30 minutes

- ➔ Break participants into small groups.
- ➔ Provide a *Changes — What Transitions Will My Child Face?* handout to all participants.
- ➔ Ask groups to select one member of their group to take notes during their discussion.
- ➔ Encourage the notetaker to document all areas of discussion and ideas raised by the group during brainstorming. All group members do not have to agree or come to a consensus.
- ➔ As participants work in small groups, walk around the room to make sure that everyone understands the instructions and the questions.
- ➔ Let participants know when they only have 5 minutes remaining.

Part 4: Regroup and Share Out

 20 minutes

- ➔ Get participants’ attention.
- ➔ Inform participants that the whole group will be discussing each question and that they should feel free to share what was discussed in their group at any time. Everyone is free to share.
- ➔ Begin to facilitate conversation and discussion by using questions as a guiding tool:
 - What challenges does your child currently face and what might they face in the future?
 - How is your child’s life different from what you experienced when you were growing up?
 - How will these challenges and experiences manifest themselves throughout your child’s educational transitions? From elementary to middle school? From middle school to high school? From high school to college?

- How can you best support your child during these transitions?

- ➔ Read the first question aloud and ask participants to share what was discussed in their group.
- ➔ As the facilitator, feel free to make connections to previous discussions or points made by participants, and to ask for clarification or examples.

As you facilitate these discussions, you may wish to capture responses by having someone take notes on butcher paper or poster board or collecting a note-taker's personal notes. Later, you may be able to use this information to prepare a handout for your school or program to provide to participating families.

Part 5: Distribution of Resources and Information

 10 minutes

- ➔ Thank participants for sharing their thoughts and recommendations.
- ➔ Distribute the *Making Successful Transitions* handout and review it with participants.
- ➔ Give participants a few moments to review it on their own.
- ➔ Ask them to identify which of the handout's suggestions have already been covered in the discussion.
- ➔ Review the items that were not covered in the discussion. You can do this by reading the items from the handout yourself or asking someone to read them for you.

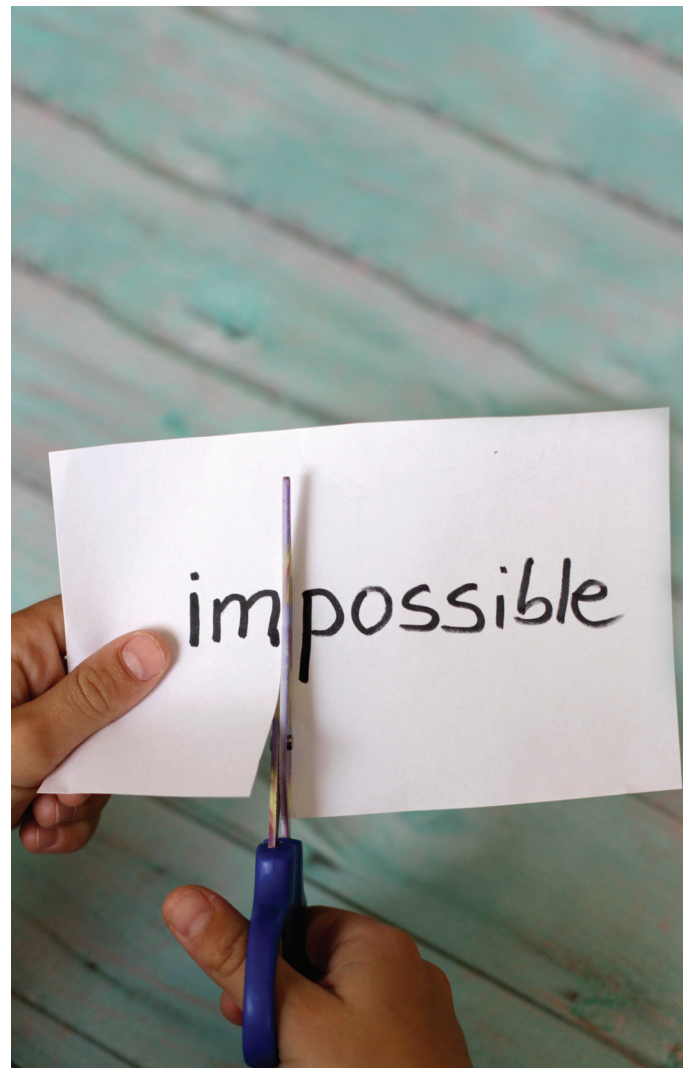
Part 6: Closing

 5 minutes

- ➔ If your school or program is conducting this session concurrently with the *Believing the College Dream* student curriculum, this may be a good place to inform participants of the topics students are covering in class and to encourage them to ask their children what they are learning about at school.
- ➔ Ask participants if they have any final thoughts.
- ➔ Thank participants for their presence and participation.
- ➔ Inform participants of the date and location of the next Community Conversations gathering.

RESOURCES

- ➔ GreatSchools.org
 - <https://www.GreatSchools.org>
- ➔ Family and Community Engagement
 - <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Student-Supports/Family-and-Community-Engagement/Getting-Involved-with-your-Child-s-Learning/Your-6th-to-8th-Grader/Helping-Your-Child-Make-Successful-Transitions-Mid>
- ➔ Resources for Mathematics
 - <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Mathematics/Resources-for-Mathematics/Transitions-from-High-School-to-College>
- ➔ SelfGrowth.com
 - <https://selfgrowth.com/articles/Helping-Your-Child-with-Transitions.html>



HANDOUT: CHANGES — WHAT TRANSITIONS WILL MY CHILD FACE?



NAME

Select one person to take notes and another person to read the questions one at a time. Take turns discussing your thoughts. Brainstorm ideas and possible ways to answer the question.

1. What challenges do your children currently face and what might they face in the future?

Currently	Future

2. How is what your child is experiencing different from what you experienced when you were growing up?

3. How will these challenges and experiences manifest themselves throughout your child's educational transitions? From elementary to middle school? From middle school to high school? From high school to college?

4. How can you best support your child during these transitions?

MAKING SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS

Students will develop academically, socially and emotionally with each major transition from one educational institution to the next and will need many new skills with each coming academic year. The following are some things to keep in mind as we accompany our children on this journey!

FROM ELEMENTARY TO MIDDLE SCHOOL:

- Read, read, read! Read with your children and encourage them to read on their own. Students should learn an average of 3,000 words each academic year in order to be successful as they go on to the next grade. Reading is the best way to acquire vocabulary and language. Reading often and in progressively larger quantities will prepare students for how difficult school will be in the future.
- Help students strengthen their study skills. Students need to know how to organize information effectively, including knowing how to do outlines, take notes, and structure and assemble information.
- Students will need to fulfill the expectations of six or more different teachers.
- Students will need to be more self-motivated to make personal choices and good decisions.

FROM MIDDLE SCHOOL TO HIGH SCHOOL:

- Students need to consume large amounts of information in an efficient manner.
- Students need to learn to adapt to working with more teachers and will have to acquire information through listening to lectures, often without much interaction during the class period.
- Students will need to seek out academic counseling services and understand how to make use of support services.
- Students will need to complete homework assignments and attend classes with minimal prodding from school staff.
- Students may need to adjust to a more depersonalized setting if they attend a large, comprehensive high school. In such an environment, many teachers and staff will not know your child's name.

FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE:

- Academics: Students will have the opportunity to choose courses in subjects they enjoy. Encourage your children to know the graduation requirements



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for both their major and general education.

Encourage them to find out how many units they need to be considered full-time students. Suggest they take a minimum course load during their first year. This will give them time to adjust to all the changes of college life while not being overwhelmed by their studies.

Encourage students to speak to professors and teacher's assistants during office hours, particularly if they are having trouble with a class. Encourage them not to fall behind on their coursework, which can lead to low grades, course incompletes, academic probation and eventually expulsion from school.

- **Academic Support:** Make sure you and your child make a thorough assessment of all the academic support resources available on campus. Encourage your child to be proactive and know what is available so that he or she will know exactly what to do when he or she needs help and support.
- **Credit:** College students are bombarded with credit card offers from the moment they step foot on campus, so it is important to talk to your child about managing their credit and finances. Make sure to talk to your child about the importance of having good credit and that how he or she manages these issues in college will have a profound effect on his or her abilities to do things he or she will want to do later in life, including buying a car or a house.
- **Financial Aid:** Make sure to make copies of all correspondence that is sent to your child by the financial aid office. Remember, the financial aid office is there to serve your child so no matter how frustrating it may become at times, be persistent and make sure to get all the aid your family needs for your child to continue his or her education. Encourage your child to get to know at least one financial aid officer on a first-name basis so he or she has a specific person to go to when he or she has a problem with financial aid. Undocumented students may not have access to financial aid and laws vary greatly from state to state. For example, in California, undocumented students cannot apply for financial aid; but under AB540, they can be considered California residents for tuition purposes and, if they qualify, are exempt from paying out-of-state tuition. Please check the laws and requirements in your own state.
- **Scholarships:** Beware of companies guaranteeing scholarships in return for a fee. You can get all of the information you need about avoiding scholarship scams at <https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/how-avoid-scholarship-financial-aid-scams> or about applying for scholarships at <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/scholarships>, including where to find scholarships. There are also many scholarships that do not require U.S. permanent residency or citizenship. For more information on scholarships for undocumented students, you can go to <https://www.maldef.org/resources/scholarship-resources>.
- **Housing:** Make sure your child is honest with himself or herself about what kind of living situation he or she wants. If your child is going to live in the dorms, he or she will probably be given a questionnaire about roommate preferences. Your child should think not just about what he or she wants, but also about the person who will be living with them. (Students who mark that they want to stay up late may find that they don't really want a roommate who is up until 3 a.m. on a regular basis.) If your child looks for an apartment, make sure to look early because off-campus housing can be difficult to find, especially in large, urban areas.
- **Safety:** Safety is extremely important on all college campuses, not just the ones located in urban areas. Make sure your child knows where the police department is located on campus. Encourage him or her to utilize any services that may be available to them such as the escort service, which walks them to their dorm or apartment late at night from campus, and self-defense classes. Encourage both male and female students not to walk around alone at night. It is always wise to use the buddy system, even in college.
- **Social Life:** College is a wonderful opportunity to grow and experience life as a young adult. Regardless, one needs to be careful when engaging in social activities. Every campus offers a variety of social events, but using good judgment is crucial regardless of where your child goes to school, and whether he or she stays home or goes away to college. There may be opportunities to continue to participate in activities he or she did in high school, or he or she might decide to try something entirely new. No matter what your child is interested in, you want to encourage him or her to participate in activities he or she feels passionate about and that will contribute to continued success in the journey!