

The BRIDGE To Transition



A Parent's Guide: Transitioning from KidsAbility School To Your Community School

Transition from KidsAbility School to Community Schools:

Through inter-ministerial partnerships (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Child & Youth Services), KidsAbility School provides education, therapy and assistive technology to junior kindergarten-aged children with complex needs so that they can achieve their potentials and become active participants in their lives at home, at school and in the broader community.

In order to achieve this overall goal, KidsAbility School is committed to the following:

- a multidisciplinary, family centered approach in which specialist teachers, therapists and other professionals create opportunities for student success in literacy development, augmentative and alternative communication and the use of technology for learning.
- a family-centred model that ensures parents/guardians are integral members of the school team in planning and decision making.
- a specialized Individual Education Plan in which education and therapy are interwoven.
- successful transitions of students to community schools with replicable strategies for participation in learning.
- the transfer of knowledge from KidsAbility School teachers and KidsAbility therapists to teachers and special education staff in the broader educational community.



KidsAbility School - WATERLOO
500 Hallmark Drive
Waterloo, ON N2K 3P5
Phone. 519-886-8886
Fax 519-885-6222



KidsAbility School - CAMBRIDGE
c/o Chaplin Family YMCA
250 Hespeler Road
Cambridge, ON N1R 3H3
Phone 519-621-7580 Fax 519-621-4651

The process for transitioning students from KidsAbility School to Community Schools is outlined in the following chart:

| Timing | Activity | Responsibility |
|------------------|---|--|
| October | A superintendent of the school board is notified that your child is attending KidsAbility School (KAS). | Principal of KAS |
| November | Parents sign a permission form for KAS to share information with your child's school board at the Individual Education Plan (IEP) conference. | Parent(s) KAS Teacher |
| January/February | A letter is sent to your child's school confirming his/her attendance in senior kindergarten (SK) in September. KAS staff meet with Special Education School Board staff to share information about your child. Parents register their children for SK in September at the home schools. The home school is the school within the geographical boundaries defined by the school board. Refer to the school boards' websites for boundary information. | Principal of KAS KAS teacher Special Education School Board staff Parent(s) |
| February - April | School Board staff visits your child's KAS classroom. | KAS Teacher School Board staff |
| May/June | A transition meeting for your child is held at KAS. At the transition meeting, the Principal of the receiving school will sign a form asking KAS to send your child's Ontario School Record (OSR) to the receiving school. The receiving school is the school which your child will attend. | Parent(s) KAS Principal KAS Teacher Staff from receiving school School Board staff |
| June | Transition folders are prepared and sent to receiving school. All student information and records are forwarded to the receiving school. The WRDSB or WCDSB is notified of special education equipment (SEA) to be transferred to the receiving school. | KAS teacher KAS Office Staff KAS Office Staff |
| June - September | To support the transition to the new school, parents may choose to do the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Arrange a visit to the SK classroom through the teacher and/or principal. ➤ Attend parent meetings regarding programs being offered by the receiving school board. ➤ Take photographs of receiving school, principal, teacher(s), classroom, etc. to include in a book for your child. ➤ Prepare an 'All About Me' booklet. ➤ Visit and explore the playground at the receiving school. ➤ Attend community events held at receiving school. ➤ Arrange play date(s) with other children who will also attend your child's receiving school in September. | Parent(s) |
| September | Parents make copies of psychological assessments, KidsAbility or other reports for the SK teacher at the receiving school. If needed, call KAS Special Education Liaison Teacher for consultation during transitioning process at the receiving school. | Parent(s) Teacher/Parent/ Principal/ Consultants /Resource Staff |



Acronyms & Definitions

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| Augmentative Communication Services | ACS | Augmentative and Communication Services provides assessment and consultation services for children and youth who find it difficult to communicate through talking or writing. |
| Community Care Access Centre | CCAC | These professionals provide assessment and consultation regarding your child's needs and then develop an intervention plan. |
| Developmental Services Access Centre | DSAC | This is a single point of access to developmental services in Waterloo Region. They will assist you and your child in connecting with community services and support. |
| Identification, Placement and Review Committee | IPRC | This committee determines whether or not your child will be identified as exceptional, identifies the area of exceptionality (i.e., Communication, Intellectual, Physical, Behaviour, Multiple) and decides the appropriate placement. Identification and placement are reviewed annually. |
| Individual Education Plan | IEP | An IEP is a written educational plan developed by teachers and parents to help a child succeed in school. |
| KAS Special Education Liaison Teacher | | This teacher provides information and support to parents and WRDSB or WCDSB school teams during the transition process from KidsAbility School. |
| Ontario Education Number | OEN | This is your child's identification number that is assigned by the Ministry of Education and follows your child through elementary and secondary school. |
| Ontario Student Record | OSR | The OSR is a confidential record of your child's educational progress through their school years. Parents, principals and teachers have access to the OSR. |
| Psychological Assessment Report | | This report summarizes information gathered from interviews, tests and observations to formulate a diagnosis. |
| Senior Kindergarten | SK | SK is an optional program which may be full or alternate days for children who turn 5 before the end of December of the school year. |
| School Health Support Services | SHSS | CCAC manages this program that supports children's school based needs. These supports may include OT, PT, SLP, nursing and nutritional counselling. A referral for these services is initiated by the school principal. |
| Special Education Resource Teacher | SERT | This teacher has specialized qualifications in special education and works with the classroom teacher in meeting the special needs of your child. |
| Special Education School Board staff | | These are consultants in the Waterloo Regional District School Board (WRDSB), and resource teachers in the Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB), who are assigned to each school. These consultants and resource teachers meet with their schools on a regular basis to advise, consult and support the staff and students. |
| Special Equipment Amount | SEA | SEA funding is allocated to school boards by the Ministry of Education to purchase equipment recommended by a qualified professional. This equipment is essential to a student's successful functioning at school. |
| Special Services at Home | SSAH | This Extend-A-Family program helps families who are caring for a child with a developmental or physical disability. SSAH helps families pay for special services in the home or community. Participation in this program helps the child learn new skills and abilities. Families can also get money to pay for services that give them a break (respite) from day to day routine. |
| Superintendent | | This person holds an administrative position at a school board. She/he is responsible for overseeing the daily management of a school board (e.g. special education). |
| Transition | | This refers to any exit/entry from one educational placement to another. |
| Transition folder | | The transition folder contains examples of your child's work from KAS. |
| Transition meeting | | This is a meeting at which information about your child is shared to help ensure a successful transition for your child to his/her new school. |



Frequently Asked Questions

When should I register my child for senior kindergarten?

Registration for senior kindergarten is held in January or February. For registration information and dates, call your home school, check the local newspapers, or go to the website for Waterloo Region District School Board (www.wrdsb.ca) or website for Waterloo Catholic District School Board (www.wcdsb.edu.on.ca).

What do I need to take for registration?

You need your child's birth certificate, immunization record or a letter of exemption from the Waterloo Region Health Department, proof of address and relevant Catholic baptismal certificate for WCDSB. Tell the school about your involvement with KidsAbility School. Make an appointment with the principal to discuss your child's special needs.

What therapy can I expect to receive next year?

In SK, your child's therapy will change. Speech and Language services become the community school board responsibility. KidsAbility-Centre for Child Development does not provide speech and language services to SK children.

Your child may be eligible for the School Years Program at KidsAbility. Your child's KAS therapist(s) will inform you of their eligibility. If your child is *not* eligible for KidsAbility School Years Services, your child will be discharged from KidsAbility therapy services.

To receive School Health Support Services, your child must have a school-based need. SHSS is administered by Community Care Access Centre of Waterloo Region. The school principal at the receiving school initiates referrals for SHSS.

If you have insurance, you may be able to hire private therapists. Contact the Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (www.osla.on.ca) for private Speech-Language Pathologists in your area. Contact the Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists (www.osot.on.ca) for private Occupational Therapists in your area.

What should I include in an 'All About Me' booklet?

Information you share could include:

- "About Me" booklet written from the child's perspective (e.g. a photo of your child with some background information, siblings, pets)
- Words people use to describe me (e.g. happy, funny, bossy, moody)
- Things I'm really good at (e.g., my favourite things, special interests)
- My challenges (e.g. things that make me anxious or upset)
- Strategies that work (e.g. pictures to warn me about transitions, key words or phrases that help me stay calm or understand you)
- Things you really need to know (e.g. allergies, diet concerns, medications)
- What I'm looking forward to doing this year (e.g. parents' target goals)

When can I visit the school?

Contact the Principal or the secretary of the receiving school to arrange a school or classroom visit in June or during the last week of August. Visit the school playground with your child and talk about what to expect at the new school.

What questions should I ask when I visit the school?

- Have you received the folders, work samples and reports from KidsAbility School?
- How is special education staff support allocated in your school?
- What will my child's daily schedule look like?
- Does your school have full or alternate day SK?
- What happens at lunch time?
- What does my child need to bring to school?
- Where are the bathrooms?
- What happens at recess time?
- What time does my child need to be at school and what time does school finish?
- How do you keep the children safe at recess, before school and after school?
- How will school and home communicate?
- Is there a social story book that might aid in transition to new community school?
- Is there a parent information session?

How can I prepare my child for senior kindergarten?

- Teach your child his/her name and the names of family members.
- Encourage the use of good manners with children and adults (e.g. please, thank you, excuse me).
- Help your child make choices (e.g. clothes to wear, activities to do).
- Provide opportunities for your child to be with other children, to learn to share, wait, and take turns.
- Provide new situations for your child (e.g. going to the library for story time). Talk about what to expect beforehand.
- Encourage independence in dressing, toileting, looking after their belongings and personal hygiene, etc.
- Involve your child in writing (e.g. drawing, making cards and signing). Talk about letters and practise making letters in your child's name. Encourage and celebrate your child's attempts to write.
- Read daily. Talk about pictures, ideas, etc. Tell stories and recite poems and rhymes in the language spoken in your home.
- Talk with your child about things they see or hear on walks and trips. Notice changes that occur (e.g. seasons, growth, construction).
- Involve your child in sorting activities (e.g. toys, clothes, utensils). Talk about shapes and patterns in environment. Play games (e.g. matching and counting, cards, simple board games).
- Encourage your child's use of imagination through drawing, building, moving to music, and acting out stories.
- Provide opportunities for your child to exercise and develop large muscles (e.g. running, climbing, playing with a ball), and small muscles (e.g. crayons, pencils, play dough).

A special thank you goes out to the KidsAbility School Council for their support in creating the parent resource "A Bridge to Transition."

