In an effort to help lower-income children get ready for school, the Denver Education Compact is launching a new program to help bridge the gap between preschool and kindergarten.

The Countdown to Kindergarten program will work with parents, teachers and principals at elementary schools and in Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs to create more connectivity between the programs and assist parents in preparing their children at home.
“There’s not a lot of work on transitions. Those two programs rarely talk to each other,” Denver Education Compact Director Terry Bower said. The compact is part of the office of Mayor Michael B. Hancock.

In the first year, Countdown to Kindergarten will focus on Barnum, Castro, Doull, Force, Knapp, Munroe, Newlon and Godsman elementary schools and the Charles M. Schenck Community School. The program will also focus on those schools’ ECE programs along with the Pascual LeDoux Academy and other area preschools.

Countdown to Kindergarten will officially get started Oct. 26 with a transition summit for program leaders and teachers. Starting in November, there will be quarterly workshops at area schools focusing on different topics geared toward getting children ready to start kindergarten.

“Countdown to Kindergarten will prepare our youngest students for the critical transition between preschool and kindergarten so that they can start school off ready to learn and ready to read. This will give them the best opportunity for academic success in kindergarten and down the road,” Hancock said.

The Denver Education Compact has worked closely with Denver Public Schools and superintendent Tom Boasberg sits on the compact board.

“It’s been really great to have the support of the city of Denver on these programs,” said Susana Cordova, chief academic officer for DPS.

Cordova added that the program is aptly focused in some of the lower income areas of the city where education gaps typically develop and less children show up ready to learn in kindergarten.

The program was officially kicked off Sept. 24 at the new Pascual LeDoux Academy in southwest Denver with Hancock stressing the program’s importance.

Joe Vaccarelli: 303-954-2396, jvaccarelli@denverpost.com or twitter.com/joe_vacc