

# Transition to School

Starting school is a significant milestone in the life of any child and family. Our Service supports continuity of learning and transitions for each child by sharing relevant information, clarifying responsibilities and by developing strategies that support a positive transition to school (National Quality Standard 6.3). Furthermore, we are committed to engage children, families, professionals, educators, and community members in the transition to school process to ensure the implementation of this policy is meaningful, supportive and reflective of best practice. Transition is viewed as a collaborative and dynamic process occurring over time ensuring a sense of belonging in all environments (Transition to School: Position Statement, 2011).

**Ready families + Ready early childhood services  
+ Ready communities + Ready schools = Ready children**

## NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

| QUALITY AREA 6: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| 6.1  | Supportive relationships with families | Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role                                  |
| 6.1.1                                      | Engagement with the service            | Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in their service and contribute to service decisions   |
| 6.1.2                                      | Parent views are respected             | The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.  |
| 6.1.3                                      | Families are supported                 | Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing. |
| 6.2  | Collaborative partnerships             | Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.  |

## PURPOSE

Effective transition practices have as their base, a commitment to building secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships. One outcome of such relationships is that all participants regard themselves, and other participants, as valued members of the school community. (Dockett & Perry, 2001)

Our Service aims to liaise with local schools to develop a smooth and comprehensive transition to school for all children. We will support children and families by strengthening the development and delivery of transition programs and provide a shared understanding between our Service and local primary schools about what is important for children and their families during the transition to school process.

We believe it is vital to enhance children's social and emotional development to ensure a successful transition to school. By developing these skills and abilities and promoting their creativity and individuality, we promote children's ability to become confident and successful learners.

## **SCOPE**

This policy applies to staff, management and visitors.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Children are challenged with several transitional changes during early childhood. This includes orienting children into early childhood, transitioning between routines and rooms, and then transitioning into primary school. Children respond in different ways to transitions - some with confidence and others with hesitation. Children's confidence will be enhanced when changes happen gradually and when time is prioritised to support these transitions with sensitivity, planning, and preparation.

This first experience children have of school has a great impact on their progress and future schooling (Margetts, 2007). Transition to school should therefore be prepared for in an understanding, calm, organized, and knowledgeable manner. We acknowledge the critical role we as Educators have in providing an educational environment that supports children's wellbeing, promotes equity and celebrates diversity. Our transition to school program is developed in collaboration with all stakeholders and ensures children are active participants in their transition to school.

For children attending school the following year, our 'Transition to School Program' provides additional activities and experiences to help prepare them for a smooth transition to a primary school environment. This program refers to daily-programmed activities and experiences that are implemented throughout the year, encouraging the developmental skills that are optimal for children to retain before commencing school.

### TRANSITION TO SCHOOL PROGRAM:

As Early Childhood Educators who are instrumental in influencing children's learning patterns for later life, it is our responsibility to set them on a course that will inspire investigation, exploration, problem solving, questioning, discovery, and challenges.

To ensure the transition to school is a positive experience for children and families, we will implement a range of activities and experiences that may include, but is not limited to:

- Visits by children to local primary school setting
- Family information sessions
- Visits from Primary school teachers and/or Principals
- Exchanging information about a child's individual strengths and needs
- Networking with Educators, Primary school teachers and Principals
- Developing children's talking and listening skills
- Alphabet and number awareness
- Shapes and colour recognition
- Social and emotional enhancement
- Pre-writing development
- Name writing and recognition
- Concentrating on the task at hand
- Determination when faced with complications
- Responding positively to new situations
- Taking responsibility for their own behaviour
- Developing the communication skills necessary for group or individual play
- Developing positive feelings about themselves and others
- Experiencing a sense of self-satisfaction resulting from achievement
- Experiencing eating from lunch boxes, as we educate children about different foods eaten at recess and lunch and how to open different packaged foods.

### PREPARING CHILDREN AS THEY TRANSITION TO SCHOOL:

There are many unique differences in the school environment which children should become familiar with as they prepare to transition to school. This includes:

- Having one teacher for the majority of the day
- Toileting without supervision

- Wearing uniforms
- Transport
- Sitting at a desk
- Responsibility for own belongings
- Listening to instructions
- Specific focused lessons
- A school bell or siren indicating set breaks
- Negotiating a large playground
- Homework
- The canteen or tuck shop
- Before and After School Care

#### MANAGEMENT WILL:

- Establish strategies across our Service to ensure there is continuity of learning when children transition to school.
- Advocate for 'Ready' by ensuring schools are ready for our children to transition into their environment.
- Discuss expectations with families for their child as they prepare to transition to school.
- Work in partnership with families to ensure children's transition to school is positive, informed, and enhances individual development.
- Be aware of critical cut off dates with various Education Departments to accommodate children with a disability or developmental delay into new educational settings and share this information with families.
- Support and advocate for enhanced transition programs for children with a disability or developmental delay with feeder primary schools.
- Be flexible and ensure transition programs are tailored to the specific needs of all children in our Service.

#### EDUCATORS WILL:

- Incorporate transition to school into the daily program by encouraging children to think and talk about school by exploring various elements of primary school (This may include uniforms, eating packed lunches, talking about school and how a school environment is different).
- Talk with children about starting school, respecting any concerns and communicating these to families.

- Ensure children are active participants in their transition to school.
- Communicate with families to ensure we meet the requirements of the individual strengths and needs of all children and families.
- Consider family priorities and any concerns about the transition process. Each family's cultural and linguistic needs will be respected, along with family diversity.
- Develop a program to ensure a smooth transition for children from the education and care environment to the school environment. The program requires both parent and educator support for the child. This cooperation will ensure the best possible environment for children's transition.
- Contemplate the individual rest or sleep needs of children in the months leading up to the transitioning to school and whether a reduction in sleep time may prepare some children for the longer school day routine. Children will continue to have rest periods with quiet activities during the day. Beds will be available for any child who requires rest or sleep.
- Discuss children's development, strengths, and competencies for transition to school with families.
- Support each family's decision about when to send children to school, acknowledging the Victorian Department of Education and Training's policy on school commencement dates.
- Develop an information package for families about transition to school. This will include information on how to support their child/children and what to expect with the transition process. This package will be reviewed annually to meet the needs of the families and to integrate current information from local schools.
- Be supported to access and attend professional development opportunities to ensure current knowledge and practice regarding transition to school.
- Facilitate relationships and networking with local schools to support children and families with the transition process and to open lines of communication. The importance of school preparation through school visits, orientation days and meeting the Kindergarten teachers will be promoted.
- Facilitate each child's development as a capable learner through open ended learning experiences.
- Effectively evaluate our Service's transition program.
- Be flexible and responsive to the needs of children and families.
- Take into account contextual aspects of community, and of individual families and children within that community.

(Adapted from Dockett & Perry, 2007.)

## TRANSITION LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT: VICTORIA STATE GOVERNMENT EDUCATION AND TRAINING

This Learning and Development Statement summarises children's abilities as they start school. The statement assists teachers to get to know the children beginning school and their individual learning styles. Completing this statement is a kindergarten-funding requirement. The statement is prepared by early childhood educators and families and includes outcome descriptors describing children's learning and development against the five outcomes of the VEYLDF. Parents have an option to share this statement with the child's future school or 'opt out'. The transition statement is completed electronically and can be downloaded to share with families and early childhood services.

A child's transition learning and development statement (TLDS) summarises their abilities as they start school and identifies their individual approaches to learning. It is passed on to the child's future school. The TLDS:

- summarises a child's learning and development
- identifies their individual approaches to learning and their interests
- indicates how the child can be supported to continue learning.

The information in the TLDS helps prep teachers get to know the children entering their classes, and to plan appropriate learning and teaching programs. The TLDS is not a report card.

### WHEN A CHILD IS NOT READY TO TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

We understand that all children are unique and achieve milestones in their own time. Families have expectations about what they think their child should be able to do. They may ask Educators their opinion on specific skills such as pre-writing skills, numbers, social and emotional development etc.

We believe that Early Childhood Educators have professional insight to assist families in making the decision about a child's transition to school as they have developed trusting and supportive relationships over time. However, prior to speaking with families about their personal views, Educators will discuss their thoughts with management about the child's individual strengths and needs and any recommendation about beginning school will be communicated with families during a scheduled meeting. Our staff will adhere to confidentiality at all times.

## VICTORIAN SPECIFICATIONS

- Children must turn 5 by 30<sup>th</sup> April to attend school that year.
- Victoria State Government Education and Training  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/transition.aspx>  
<http://www.liveinvictoria.vic.gov.au/living-in-victoria/education-and-childcare/primary-schools#.V8gSQ5h97IV>
- Transition Learning and Development Statement  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/transitionstat.aspx#link70>

## SOURCE:

A Policy Brief about Rethinking School Readiness- The Royal Children’s Hospital Melbourne

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth: School Readiness: Various school readiness papers available from <https://www.aracy.org.au>

Connections: *A resource for early childhood educators about children’s wellbeing.*

Continuity of Learning: *A resource to support effective transition to school and school age care.* Research Institute for Professional Practice, Learning and Education Charles Sturt University. (2011).

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. (n.d.). *Developmental milestones and the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Standards.*

Docket, S., & Perry, B. (2001). Starting school: Effective transitions. *Early Childhood Research & Practice*, 3(2). Retrieved from <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v3n2/dockett.html>

Docket, S., & Perry, B. (2007). *Transitions to school: Perceptions, expectations and experiences.* Sydney, Australia: UNSW Press.

ECA Code of Ethics.

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2015).

Guide to the National Quality Standard.

Kagan, S. L., & Rigby, D. E. (2003). *Improving the readiness of children for school: Recommendations for state policy.* Washington, DC: Centre for the Study of Social Policy.

Margetts, K. (2007). Understanding and supporting children: Shaping transition practices, *Informing Transitions in the Early Years*, 1, pp. 107 – 119.

Mielekamp, R. (2008). *Sharing our journey: School Readiness.* Australia: Rachel Mielekamp.

National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program Newsletter No.70 – *Transitions: Moving in, moving up and moving on.*

Transition to School Resource:

<http://www.transitiontoschoolresource.org.au/tts-content/considering-when-to-start-school>

Transition to School: Position Statement (Educational Transitions and Change (ETC) Research Group, 2011).

Revised National Quality Standard.

**REVIEW**

| POLICY REVIEWED | OCTOBER 2018  | NEXT REVIEW DATE | OCTOBER 2019 |
|-----------------|---|------------------|--------------|
| MODIFICATIONS   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>References corrected, added &amp;/or updated.</li> <li>Sources/references alphabetised.</li> <li>Current best practice added.</li> </ul>   |                  |              |
| POLICY REVIEWED | PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS  | NEXT REVIEW DATE |              |
| AUGUST 2017     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major changes made to policy, identifying varying aspects of transitioning children to school and discussing with families if a child is not ready to start formal schooling.</li> </ul> | AUGUST 2018      |              |
| OCTOBER 2017    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard</li> </ul>   | OCTOBER 2018     |              |

Continued next page: Developmental Milestones

# DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

## 3-5 YEARS

Excerpt from Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. (n.d.). *Developmental milestones and the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Standards.*

| CHILD'S NAME       | AGE   | DATE   |          |  |
|--------------------|---|--|----------|--|
| EDUCATOR'S NAME    |   |  |          |  |
| DEVELOPMENTAL AREA | OBSERVED  | LINK TO EYLF & NQS   | COMMENTS |  |
| PHYSICAL           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dresses and undresses with little help</li> <li>• Hops, jumps and runs with ease</li> <li>• Climbs steps with alternating feet</li> <li>• Gallops and skips by leading with one foot</li> <li>• Transfers weight forward to throw ball</li> <li>• Attempts to catch ball with hands</li> <li>• Climbs playground equipment with increasing agility</li> <li>• Holds crayon/pencil etc. between thumb and first two fingers</li> <li>• Exhibits hand preference</li> <li>• Imitates variety of shapes in drawing, e.g. circles</li> <li>• Independently cuts paper with scissors</li> <li>• Toilet themselves</li> <li>• Feeds self with minimum spills</li> <li>• Dresses/undresses with minimal assistance</li> <li>• Walks and runs more smoothly</li> <li>• Enjoys learning simple rhythm and movement routines</li> <li>• Develops ability to toilet train at night</li> </ul> | <p><b>EYLF Outcome 3:</b> Children have a strong sense of wellbeing - Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing. E.g. "Promote continuity of children's personal health and hygiene by sharing ownership of routines and schedules with children, families and the community." (p.32)</p> <p><b>NQS: Areas 1, 2, 3, 5, 6</b></p> |          |  |

|                  |   |  |  |
|------------------|---|--|--|
| <p>SOCIAL</p>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoys playing with other children</li> <li>• May have a particular friend</li> <li>• Shares, smiles and cooperates with peers</li> <li>• Jointly manipulates objects with one or two other peers</li> <li>• Develops independence and social skills they will use for learning and getting on with others at preschool and school</li> </ul>  | <p><b>EYLF Outcome 1:</b> Children have a strong sense of identity - Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect. E.g. “express a wide range of emotions, thoughts and views constructively.” (p.24)<br/> <b>NQS: Areas 1, 5, 6</b></p>                                |  |
| <p>EMOTIONAL</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands when someone is hurt and comforts them</li> <li>• Attains gender stability (sure she/he is a girl/boy)</li> <li>• May show stronger preference for same-sex playmates</li> <li>• May enforce gender-role norms with peers</li> <li>• May show bouts of aggression with peers</li> <li>• Likes to give and receive affection from parents</li> <li>• May praise themselves and be boastful</li> </ul>   | <p><b>EYLF Outcome 2:</b> Children are connected with and contribute to their world - Children respond to diversity with respect. E.g. “plan experiences and provide resources that broaden children’s perspectives and encourage appreciation of diversity.” (p.27)<br/> <b>NQS: Areas 1, 2, 5, 6</b></p> |  |
| <p>COGNITIVE</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands opposites (e.g. big/little) and positional words (middle, end)</li> <li>• Uses objects and materials to build or construct things, e.g. block tower, puzzle, clay, sand and water</li> <li>• Builds tower eight to ten blocks</li> <li>• Answers simple questions</li> <li>• Counts five to ten things</li> <li>• Has a longer attention span</li> <li>• Talks to self during play - to help guide what he/she does</li> <li>• Follows simple instructions</li> <li>• Follows simple rules and enjoys helping</li> <li>• May write some numbers and letters</li> </ul> | <p><b>EYLF Outcome 5:</b> Children are effective communicators - Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media. E.g. “use language and engage in play to imagine and create roles, scripts, and ideas.” (p.42)<br/> <b>NQS: Areas 1, 5</b></p>  |  |

|                |  |  |  |
|----------------|--|--|--|
|                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engages in dramatic play, taking on pretend character roles</li> <li>Recalls events correctly</li> <li>Counts by rote, having memorised numbers</li> <li>Touches objects to count - starting to understand relationship between numbers and objects</li> <li>Can recount a recent story</li> <li>Copies letters and may write some unprompted</li> <li>Can match and name some colours</li> </ul>     |  |  |
| LANGUAGE       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speaks in sentences and use many different words</li> <li>Answers simple questions</li> <li>Asks many questions</li> <li>Tells stories</li> <li>Talks constantly</li> <li>Enjoys talking and may like to experiment with new words</li> <li>Uses adult forms of speech</li> <li>Takes part in conversations</li> <li>Enjoys jokes, rhymes and stories</li> <li>Will assert self with words</li> </ul> | <p><b>EYLF Outcome 5:</b> Children are effective communicators - Children use information and communication technologies to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking. E.g. "Provide children with access to a range of technologies." (p.44)</p> <p><b>NQS: Areas 1, 5, 6, 7</b></p> |  |
| SEEK ADVICE IF | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is not understood by others</li> <li>Has a speech fluency problem or stammering</li> <li>Is not playing with other children</li> <li>Is not able to have a conversation</li> <li>Is not able to go to the toilet or wash him/herself</li> </ul>   | <p><b>NQS: Areas 1,5,6,7</b></p>   |  |