

Transition to Primary School Guidelines

Contents

Introduction	5
Roles and responsibilities	7
Principals and school leadership	7
Teachers and educators	7
• Building relationships with children and their families	7
• Collaborating with early childhood educators	8
• Engaging with community groups	8
Transition program guidance	9
Purpose of the program	9
Duration	9
Enrolment	9
Risk management	10
Developing a risk assessment	10
Exploring the evidence on high quality transition to primary school	11
Rethinking ‘school readiness’	11
Key practices supported by evidence	12
• Ongoing collaborative partnerships	13
• Meaningful engagement with families	14
• Year-round transition practices	15
• Range of transition practices	15
• Age-appropriate play-based activities	17
Supporting diversity in transition	19
Valuing and acknowledging children and families	19
Creating an inclusive space	19
Transition support for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children	21
• School and family relationships	21

• Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff presence -----	21
• Cultural responsiveness -----	21
• High expectations -----	22
• Valuing Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Knowledge and ways of learning -----	22
Transition support for high potential and gifted children -----	23
Transition support for children from a language background other than English including children from a refugee background -----	23
Transition support for children with disability -----	24
Individualised transition planning -----	26
Continuous improvement and planning of transition practices -----	27
School improvement and excellence -----	27
Data to inform transition review and planning -----	29
Excellence in transition to school planning -----	30
Coordination of transition planning and evaluation -----	32
Planning tools -----	33
Professional development, collaboration and capacity building -----	33
Resources -----	35
Relevant literature and documents -----	35
Glossary -----	36
Acronyms -----	37
Appendix A – enrolment of students for transition to primary school programs -----	38
ERN registration -----	38
Quick Reference Guides -----	39
Appendix B – transition to school risk assessment scaffold -----	40
Appendix C – sample transition timeline -----	44
Appendix D – transition to primary school yearly activities -----	45
Appendix E – individualised transition plan meeting agenda -----	46
Appendix F – children with additional needs meeting agenda -----	48
Appendix G – transition to school statement meeting agenda -----	49

Appendix H – individual transition plan template ----- 52

Appendix I – transition practices checklist ----- 58

Appendix J – transition to primary school planning tool ----- 60

Appendix K – transition to school programs self-assessment tool ----- 62

References ----- 65

Introduction

The best place for children to experience quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) is within an early childhood setting, with a high quality and regulated program based on the approved Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). Schools should not offer transition programs that replace regular early childhood services where children are experiencing age-appropriate curricula and pedagogy.

These guidelines and accompanying resources provide NSW public schools with policy advice and practical, evidence-based strategies to ensure all children experience the best start in learning. The guidelines can support schools to:

- explore the evidence base, in particular the importance of cross-curricula and pedagogical links with early childhood education or curriculum, and the importance of young children attending an early childhood service prior to school
- unpack what is and isn't an appropriate orientation program
- highlight the importance of whole school transition planning that engages children and families, local early childhood service providers, other professionals and the community
- implement the principles of high-quality transition practices
- define what high-quality transition practices look like and develop a shared understanding of terminology.

Focused on children who are preparing to enter primary school, the guidelines provide a comprehensive framework to meet the diverse needs of all students and are informed by:

- **Australian Government** – [The Alice Springs \(Mparntwe\) Education Declaration](#) presents a vision for education across the early childhood education and care sector and schools. The Declaration has 2 distinct but interconnected goals.

Goal 1: The Australian education system promotes excellence and equity

Goal 2: All young Australians become:

- confident and creative individuals
- successful lifelong learners
- active and informed members of the community.

- **NSW Department of Education** – [Our Plan for NSW Public Education](#) highlights successful transition practices with the goal 'all children have the best start in life'. The plan details our agreed actions to create better transition practices between early childhood education and primary school.
- **Schools** – the [School Excellence Framework v3](#) (Learning Domain: Learning Culture) describes good practice as: 'a systematic approach for supporting the diverse range of student transition needs. This includes those at risk to ensure the continuity of learning and wellbeing of all students from entry to post school. Students and parents/carers are engaged early as key collaborators in all transition processes.'

- **Teachers** – [The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#) require teachers to:
 - know students and how they learn
 - engage professionally with colleagues, parents or carers and the community.

It should be noted that transition to school is much more than orientation or the first day at school. It is a process that occurs over time, beginning well before school starts and extending into the first year of school until children and families feel a sense of belonging. It is about each child, their family, their ECEC service(s), the school, other professionals and the broader community working together to support a successful transition to primary school.

Schools should regularly review how children and their families are transitioning to the school environment, seeking feedback and making observations, then considering if adjustments need to be made. A successful transition to school will only be fully realised when children and families feel a sense of belonging and are a valued part of the school community.

The Transition to Primary School Guidelines is an essential resource tailored for principals, leadership teams, and Early Stage 1 teachers in NSW public schools. This document informs and guides improvement planning and evaluation, fostering collaboration and community engagement to enhance the educational experience for our youngest learners.

Roles and responsibilities

Principals and school leadership

Effective transitions into primary school are crucial for setting children up for success in their educational journey. The principal and school leadership team play a pivotal role in fostering a school culture that prioritises and supports these transitions.

Clear guidance and direction should be communicated to all school staff regarding the importance of effective transitions. This will inspire and motivate teachers and school executive to prioritise this aspect of their work.

School leaders can encourage staff to access ongoing training and professional development opportunities related to transition practices. This will provide teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to plan and implement effective transition practices in schools. By investing in staff training, school leaders can empower teachers to create meaningful and supportive transition programs for children.

Principals and school leaders allocate resources effectively to support transition, including funding for materials, resources and programs, as well as dedicating time within the school schedule for staff planning and collaboration. By proactively supporting transitions from early childhood education and care services to primary school, school leaders can foster a culture that values collaboration, communication and continuity in children's educational journeys. Through effective leadership and resource allocation, they empower teachers and the school executive to plan and implement high-quality transition programs that benefit children, families and the entire school community.

Teachers and educators

Teachers play a crucial role in the successful implementation of transition programs by building relationships with children and their families, collaborating with early childhood educators and engaging with community groups.

• Building relationships with children and their families

Early engagement: begin building relationships with children and their families before the transition period. Host information sessions, open days or playgroups that invite families to meet teachers and explore the school environment. This early engagement helps families feel connected and informed about what to expect.

Open communication: establish open lines of communication with families through newsletters, social media or personal meetings. Share important information about the transition process, school routines and how they can support their child at home. Encourage parents to ask questions and voice concerns to foster trust and collaboration.

Supportive experiences: organise transition activities such as orientation days, classroom visits or buddy programs where older students assist incoming children. These experiences help children form connections with their new environment and peers, making transitions feel less daunting.

- **Collaborating with early childhood educators**

Information sharing: work closely with early childhood educators to gather insights about each child's strengths, interests and needs. Sharing this information can help you tailor your teaching strategies to support individual learners as they transition to primary school.

Joint planning: collaborate on joint planning sessions with early childhood educators to create a cohesive transition program. This can include aligning curricula, sharing resources and discussing effective practices that have been successful in early childhood settings.

Consistent practices: strive to maintain continuity of learning and expectations between early childhood education and care services and primary schools. This alignment helps children feel more secure as they transition, and experience familiar routines and approaches to learning.

- **Engaging with community groups**

Building networks: foster relationships with local community groups, such as libraries, health services and parent support networks. These connections can provide additional resources and support for families, ensuring a more holistic approach to transition.

Community events: involve community groups in transition activities, such as workshops or family days. This creates a sense of community and encourages families to engage with both the school and local services, further supporting children's readiness for school.

Access to resources: work with community organisations to provide families with information and access to resources, such as parenting workshops, literacy programs and social services. This support can significantly ease the transition for both children and families.

By focusing on building relationships with children and families, collaborating with early childhood educators, and engaging with community groups, teachers create a comprehensive and supportive transition process. This holistic approach ensures that every child feels valued and prepared for their journey into primary school, setting the stage for a positive educational experience.

Transition program guidance

Purpose of the program

Any transition to school program should aim to orient children to the school environment and support school staff to build relationships with the future cohort of children. This includes:

- the school team learning about each child's prior knowledge and dispositions for learning by collaborating with key stakeholders in children's lives, such as families, early childhood services and allied health professionals
- building children's familiarity with school routines including areas they will visit. This may include bathrooms, play areas and classrooms, as well as recognising sounds such as the school bell
- supporting children to develop positive relationships with various key staff at the school
- implementing age-appropriate pedagogy and curriculum not a 'push-down' Kindergarten curriculum such as teaching Early Stage 1 syllabus content
- supporting families in developing an understanding of learning during the early years of primary school.

Duration

Transition programs should be short-term and include a variety of strategies. The recommended duration without parents or carers onsite is for approximately 50 hours in total across the year in 2- to 3-hour session blocks.

Enrolment

An attendance register of children participating in any transition session is required to be maintained. Children attending a transition program on a school site can be enrolled up to a certain point via Enrolment Registration Number (ERN). Enrolling children provides up-to-date contact information to ensure parents or carers are readily available at all times that a child is attending a transition program. [Appendix A](#) provides the steps a school can follow to enrol children in a transition program.

Any transition session by schools should only be for children who will attend school the following year. Children can start Kindergarten at the beginning of the school year if they turn 5 on or before 31 July of that year. By law, all children must be enrolled in compulsory schooling by their 6th birthday. Schools should not include 2- and 3-year-olds in these programs.

Risk management

Developing a risk assessment

Following the department risk management processes will support schools planning their transition to school programs to identify hazards, assess, control risks and review as needed. Schools need to consider that the children attending an orientation program may be the youngest group of children onsite and plan accordingly.

[Appendix B](#) provides a list of factors for schools to consider when assessing the risks of operating a transition to school program.

Note: the [templates and tools from the department website](#) are available to facilitate collaborative discussions with your Work Health and Safety team and the staff involved in the transition to school program.

Exploring the evidence on high quality transition to primary school

There is a significant amount of international and national evidence outlining elements of high-quality transition to school practices. Contemporary research identifies crucial aspects of transition practices to guide schools, including collaborative and consultative processes reflecting the local school context, and evidence markers to enable continuous school improvement. Key studies identify how important it is that relationships between all stakeholders move from surface contact to meaningful pedagogical discussions and practices that support children in their transition, wellbeing and academic engagement (Bond et al. 2019). Another key finding is the re-evaluation of how school readiness is defined for children entering their first year of formal schooling.

Rethinking ‘school readiness’

Figure 1 – school readiness



Traditionally, the view of ‘school readiness’ was based on a child’s age, skills and academic knowledge. ‘Readiness’ is now understood to mean ready families, ready schools, ready early childhood services and ready communities supporting ready children. A successful transition into school focuses on a holistic understanding of each child and a shared responsibility between key stakeholders.

The [CESE Transition to school – Literature review](#) (2021) identifies key factors that contribute to a successful transition to school:

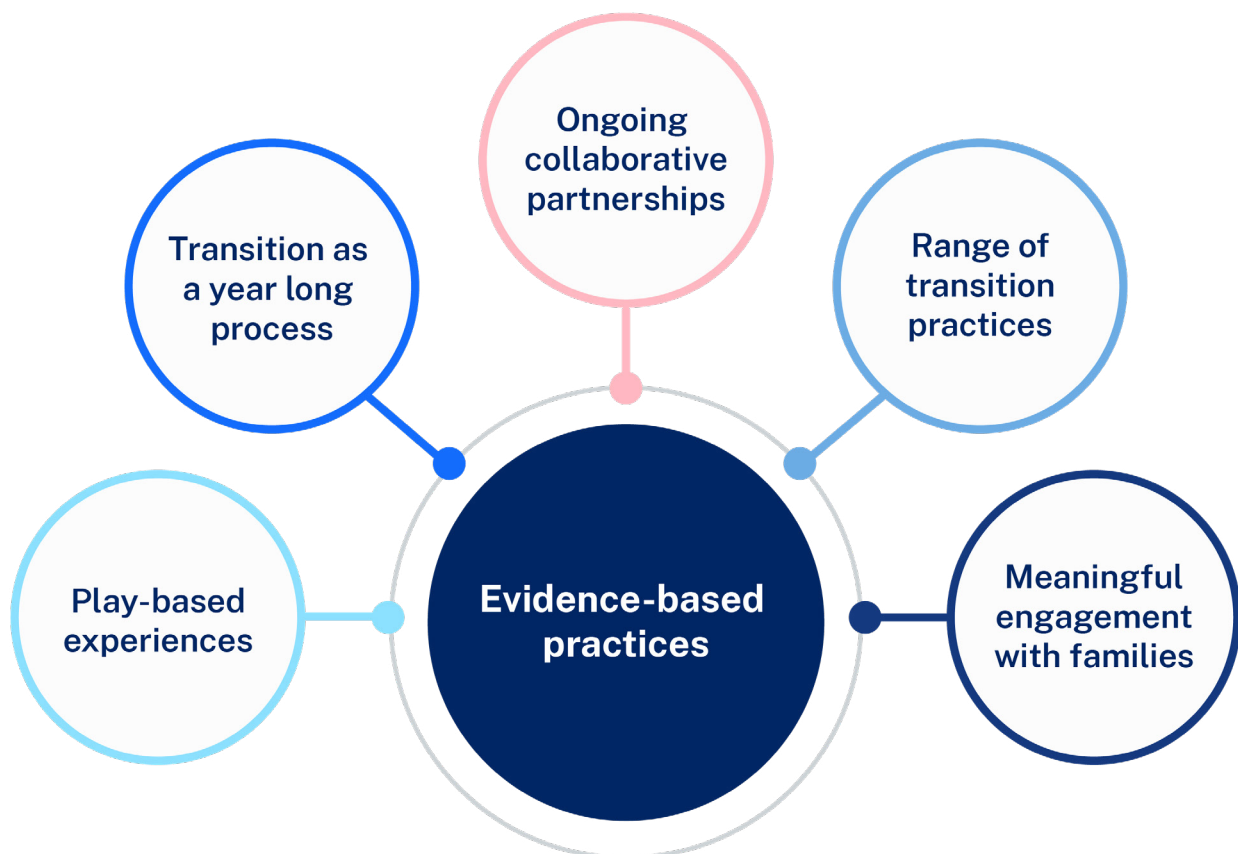
- the home learning environment and support from families
- attendance at high-quality early childhood education and care services
- collaboration between families, early childhood education and care services and schools.

The review concludes that:

- school readiness needs to be considered in a broader, more holistic way
- families, early childhood services and schools play an important role in the transition to school.

Key practices supported by evidence

Figure 2 – evidence-based practices



• Ongoing collaborative partnerships

Research identifies that strong ongoing collaborative partnerships between schools and key stakeholders in children's lives has the greatest impact on transitioning to school and student learning outcomes. Partnerships are founded on establishing mutual respect, familiarity and empathy. Transition is an opportunity to establish and sustain partnerships with early childhood educators, families and the community.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) [Starting Strong V: Transitions from Early Childhood Education and Care to Primary Education](#) report highlights the importance of engaging children, families, professionals, educators and community as key to planning meaningful transitions. The OECD report emphasises shared understanding and collaborative practice between early childhood and primary school educators. It identifies findings from international research that demonstrate the following key indicators for supporting successful transitions:

- shared views between early childhood education and care and schools on transitioning
- alignment and balance between what and how children learn in early childhood education and care and primary school including curriculum and pedagogical practices
- collaborative practices between preschool and primary school teachers, such as sharing written information on child development and children's experiences
- flexibility and responsiveness to individual communities, families and children
- collaboration among staff, managers, parents and the community based on reciprocal communication, inclusivity, mutual trust and respect.

Strategies for building and sustaining partnerships with local ECEC services:

- encouraging regular ongoing communication between educators across early childhood and primary school settings
- inviting local ECEC services to attend school events for example, book parade, NAIDOC events
- reciprocal visits where staff attend ECEC services and ECEC staff attend schools
- shared excursions and incursions
- using information within transition to school digital statements to plan for teaching, learning and wellbeing
- sharing pedagogy, programs and curriculum
- sharing professional learning
- developing a transition network.

• Meaningful engagement with families

Transition to school provides a key opportunity to build relationships with families before children even begin school. When schools actively engage and maintain meaningful connections with families, it has a significant positive impact on a child's long-term learning journey. This is especially important for families who have had previous negative educational experiences. When families and schools collaborate, children feel a sense of continuity, trust and belonging to their school. Strong partnerships with families can also have a positive impact on the child's learning outcomes, school attendance and willingness to participate in school processes.



Strategies to foster meaningful engagement with families:

- consider flexible arrangements and multiple opportunities for families to engage with the transition processes, for example, informal settings such as BBQs or picnic events
- host conversations with families and already trusted stakeholders, for example, local ECEC services, allied health professionals
- discuss reflective questions to guide transition practices.

Table 1 – reflective questions

School teams may consider the following reflective questions when planning meaningful engagement with families
• How will you 'set the scene' to ensure family engagement?
• How will you ensure family input informs transition practices?
• Have you provided a flexible approach to allow family engagement to fit around parents or carers schedules?
• How will you work with families of children who require additional support?
• How will you ensure families feel welcomed in all settings during transition to school?
• How can you support those families whose own experience of school may not have been positive?
• What practical support, advice and guidance can you give to families who are not confident in their ability to support their children's learning in their new setting?
• How will you ensure students and families feel culturally safe?

• Year-round transition practices

The process of effectively transitioning children into school begins long before they attend orientation sessions. Schools can plan and engage with children, families, local early childhood education and care services, and the community at various points throughout the year to strengthen the transition practices into Kindergarten. Transition planning often continues well into the first year at school until children and families feel a sense of belonging.



Transition as a year long process

By providing numerous opportunities for children, families and the community to participate in the transition process, schools can establish respectful and reciprocal relationships, form partnerships and ensure transition becomes a deliberate part of overall school planning.

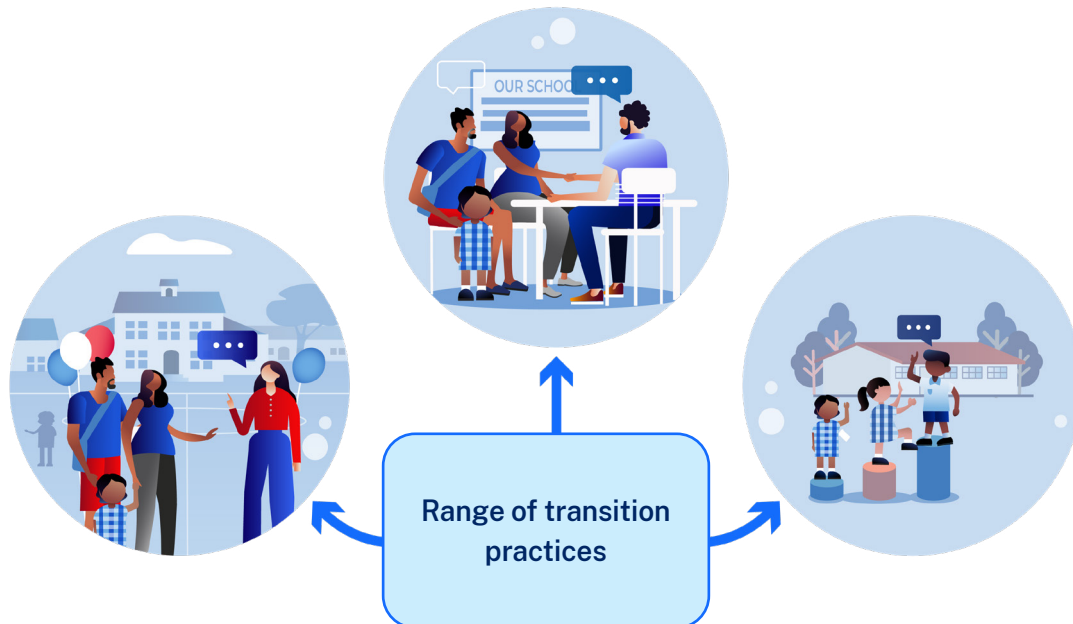
Further school planning support is provided in the continuous improvement and planning of transition practices section.

Strategies for developing year-round transition practices:

- identify, adapt and contextualise a range of activities suggested in Appendix C – sample transition to school timeline that could support building partnerships with ECEC services or families
- use Appendix D – Transition to primary school yearly activities to map out the year (for example, making contact with local ECEC services, scheduling time to read Transition to School Digital Statements)
- develop a community transition to school website or social media page
- plan whole-of-community transition activities, celebrations and events
- establish routines which are familiar to children and families to support continuity within the first weeks of Kindergarten.

• Range of transition practices

Supporting a strong and successful start in learning involves rethinking how transition to school has been traditionally viewed and embracing new and innovative ways of working. It's important to provide children and families with multiple opportunities to feel they belong to the school community. This can be achieved through various transition practices, such as an orientation program, school tours, classroom visits, invitation to school events, family sessions and connecting with local early childhood education and care services and community groups.



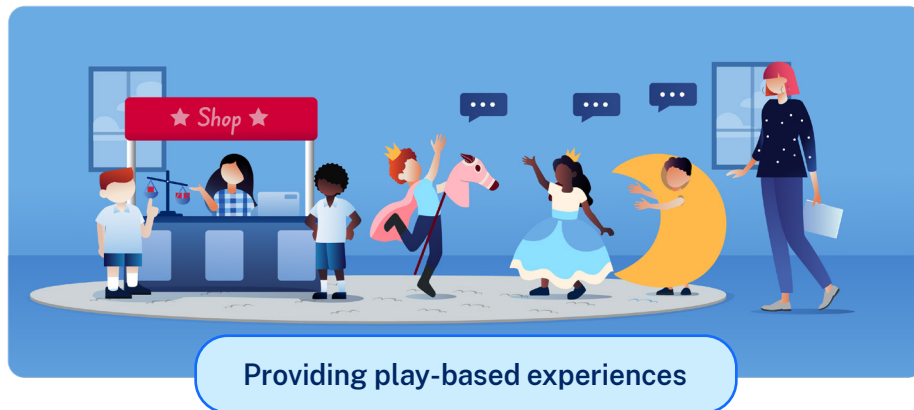
Strategies for including a range of transition practices:

- acknowledging that children start school with funds of knowledge and have already begun their educational journey both at home and/or in an ECEC service and connecting with these stakeholders to provide a holistic view of the child
- viewing transition as a two-way experience, both an opportunity to build relationships with children, families and community, as well as an opportunity to orientate children and families to the school site and school systems
- accessing and allocating time to effectively use the information about each child's development and learning dispositions provided from the Transition to School Digital Statements developed by ECEC services
- understanding what and how children learn in early childhood settings and how it connects with school curriculum
- promoting transition programs through school expos and community advertising
- establishing a playgroup to build connections between the school, families, children and the local community.

Note: the [Implementing a playgroup on a public school site](#) on a public school site resource and [Playgroup information for families](#) can guide public schools to implement a playgroup as an effective transition strategy. The checklist included in the resource will guide you through the steps of planning and implementing a playgroup on your school site.

- **Age-appropriate play-based activities**

Transition practices should be appropriate for the age of the children attending a transition program. Research shows the more age and child appropriate pedagogical practices are the greater the benefits for children's social and cognitive development (OECD 2017). Age-appropriate pedagogies are evidence-based teaching strategies that are developmentally appropriate and tailored to the age, development and abilities of children. Early childhood, spanning from birth to 8 years, is a critical developmental phase that requires specific approaches to support young children's learning through **play-based pedagogies**.



When schools invite preschool children and their families to visit the school as part of orientation, it is important to provide familiar, play-based activities that invite engagement and participation. Play is familiar, non-threatening and full of learning potential. Children, families, teachers and other staff are free to interact, encouraging rapport to be built. When play-based learning is embedded within transition programs, children are more willing to engage within the setting.

Strategies for implementing age-appropriate play-based pedagogy include:

- providing a balance of child and adult initiated learning experiences and promoting wellbeing and development
- providing resources that encourage children to explore, solve problems, create and construct
- choosing equipment and materials that can be used in multiple ways and allow the environment to be rearranged or adjusted
- including natural materials in all learning areas (twigs, leaves, stones and sand)
- providing a 'loose parts' collection of items (often natural or repurposed materials) which can be used flexibly and creatively
- provoking interest, creativity, sustained shared thinking and collaborative learning.

Table 2 – reflective questions

School teams may consider the following reflective questions when planning play-based activities and experiences

- Are the transition experiences age-appropriate?
- Are experiences set up in an inviting way to encourage exploration?
- How will students and families feel culturally safe and included?

Additional play-based learning resources:

- [Early learners – animations for families](#)
- [Early learning curriculum links professional learning – Microlearning modules](#)
- [The Early Years Learning Framework.](#)

Supporting diversity in transition

Valuing and acknowledging children and families

High-quality transition practices include avoiding a ‘one-size fits all’ approach to children starting school. Differentiating approaches support success for equity groups to experience a positive start to school. These groups include but are not limited to, children with disability, high potential and gifted children, children from a low socio-economic background, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children, children with a language background other than English and children in out-of-home care. Schools must ensure that they are prepared for children with a range of diverse needs and are inclusive of children and families at all stages of transition to primary school.

Positive beginnings at school occur when schools implement practices such as facilitating supportive relationships, affirming identity and valuing and responding to diversity. When planning a strengths-based approach to transition, school readiness should be viewed holistically, not only as an inherent quality of the child. The family, early childhood settings, communities, personal identity and family cultural and linguistic background shape the learning and development of children coming into school.

Effective transition to school is based on recognising and acknowledging the strengths of children and holding high expectations for their participation and learning progress. Schools support children from all cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds to transition to school successfully when schools show that they value children’s cultural capital and communicate well with their families. The evidence base highlights the importance of a personalised approach depending on the identified needs of the child. An understanding of the child’s existing skills, development and knowledge enables schools to provide a differentiated approach.

Creating an inclusive space

Showing respect for the many ways families express and live their culture is an important part of transition planning. Diversity can be about ethnicity, culture, gender, language background, ability or many other individual differences. It is important to recognise that while some families may have similar cultural backgrounds, they live in individual ways. Welcoming environments that understand and show respect for the diversity of the community and the individuals within it, lead to everyone feeling cared for, valued and accepted. Engaging with families by inviting them to share their stories and traditions can build strong connections and enhance the school community. Implementing culturally inclusive and responsive practices, such as using inclusive language and considering significant cultural or religious events that may fall during transition, and planning accordingly, further demonstrates respect for diversity.

All school staff can contribute to creating a welcoming environment for children and their families as part of a strong and successful start to primary school. From families first point of contact with the school, it is important to set the tone for a positive transition process including both the physical environment and interactions with staff.

Table 3 – reflective questions

School teams may consider the following reflective questions when planning to support children from diverse backgrounds
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the school website up to date and culturally inclusive?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have families been met with a warm welcoming attitude either on the phone, or at the school office or front gate?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is inclusive language being used?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there clear and adequate signage for new children and families to navigate the school spaces?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has multilingual support been made available if required?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have accessibility issues been considered including ramps, wide doorways and tactile elements for those with visual impairments?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there artworks, language and symbols displayed that reflect the cultures, histories and the abilities and contributions of various communities?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are meeting spaces designed to encourage communication and collaboration?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do we learn about the cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds of children and their families during transition?

Transition support for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children

The document [Supporting Transition to School for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children: What it means and what works? | SNAICC – National Voice for our Children](#) identifies that for transition to school practices to be effective for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, they require a multidimensional approach. According to the longitudinal study [Starting school: a strengths-based approach towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children](#), the success of a strengths-based approach is evident when schools acknowledge and plan according to the skills, cultural knowledge and understanding that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children bring to school with them. This is also acknowledged in [The NSW Department of Education and NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group \(AECG\) Incorporated Partnership Agreement](#). Recognition by the school's transition planning team that it is crucial to work in partnership with the community needs to be highlighted and included throughout the transition process. Collaborative relationships with families encourages belonging, and positive expectations of children as learners facilitate a successful transition to school. Schools may choose to include planning for transition to school in the [Personalised Learning Pathways](#) collaborative process.

- **School and family relationships**

Transition to school is a pivotal time for children and families and, for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander families, this process can be particularly sensitive. Understanding the historical context and acknowledging past experiences with educational settings is crucial for schools. Building trust requires intentional, respectful communication and a commitment to inclusivity. Schools can create a welcoming environment by offering a variety of communication options, including informal gatherings and community events that allow families to engage comfortably. Recognising and valuing families as partners in the decision-making process during transition programs is essential, empowering them to share their insights and expectations. By prioritising trusting and collaborative relationships, schools can help to create a supportive foundation for positive ongoing engagement in education for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

- **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff presence**

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander teachers and support staff bring invaluable perspectives that can enrich the educational experience for all children. Their presence not only enhances cultural understanding but also helps to build trust with Indigenous families, facilitating open communication and engagement. By working collaboratively with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander educators and support staff, schools can integrate culturally responsive practices into their transition programs and practices.

- **Cultural responsiveness**

Cultural responsiveness among staff is a crucial element in designing transition to school programs that effectively support Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and their families. Culturally responsive educators possess the skills and knowledge necessary to engage meaningfully with

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities, thereby enhancing the agency of these families in schools. By acknowledging and respecting the rich cultural heritage of First Australian peoples, schools can create environments that are not only safe but also affirming of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identities. Training and professional development in cultural responsiveness is essential to equip staff to meet the diverse needs of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children. By embedding cultural safety and actively valuing the cultural capital of families and the community, schools can create transition programs that empower Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander families, ensuring a successful and supportive start to school for their children.

- **High expectations**

Establishing high expectations for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children is crucial during their transition to primary school, as it significantly influences their identity as learners. During this critical period, children begin to form their self-concept as learners, which is directly shaped by the expectations set by teachers. An environment where Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children feel strong and proud of their cultural identity is important to support a positive transition to school

- **Valuing Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Knowledge and ways of learning**

To ensure positive educational outcomes for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children, it is essential that schools actively value and incorporate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge and learning approaches into transition to primary school programs. By adopting a strengths-based approach, educators can build on the existing knowledge and skills of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children, fostering a sense of pride and belonging. Recognising and valuing home languages affirms children's cultural identities but also enriches the learning environment for all. Incorporating Indigenous perspectives into transition programs helps create a more inclusive and relevant educational experience. By honouring and integrating Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing and learning, schools can support a smooth transition to primary school, empowering children to thrive academically and socially.

Supporting connections with families, caregivers and community is especially important for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and crucial when planning transition. An environment that acknowledges, respects and values Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures supports all children in their learning and development. The Australian Government supports schools and early learning services across Australia to develop these environments through the [Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning program](#).

Transition support for high potential and gifted children

High potential and gifted children are represented in all communities, and this must be considered when designing inclusive transition to primary school practices. High potential and gifted (HPG) children have advanced learning capacity compared to same-age children and schools should consider the needs of these children across all domains of potential: intellectual, creative, social-emotional and physical.

Within the department's [High potential and gifted student education policy](#), communicating assessment information to support transition and collaborating with families, early education and care services and communities is identified as a responsibility of the principal. Engaging families and early educators during the transition planning process is crucial for developing tailored support plans. Schools should hold discussions with families to understand their children's strengths, interests and any specific challenges they may face. By collaborating with early childhood educators, schools can gain insights into the child's previous learning experiences and preferences, allowing for a more seamless transition. Engaging with the Transition to School Digital Statement and having early childhood services included in the planning will support the school to meet the specific learning needs of high potential and gifted children.

High potential and gifted children may require specific [adjustments](#) or interventions in transition programs to ensure they thrive. Recognising that these children may be at greater risk for underperformance and social isolation is essential. Schools should be proactive in identifying these needs and implementing strategies that encourage engagement and foster connections with peers.

It is vital to involve specialist staff, such as school counsellors and learning support teachers, in planning for and supporting high potential and gifted children during the transition process. These professionals can provide targeted [interventions](#), social-emotional support and expert guidance tailored to the unique needs of these children, helping them navigate the challenges of their new educational environment.

Transition support for children from a language background other than English including children from a refugee background

To ensure a positive and inclusive transition to school for children and families from [language backgrounds other than English](#), as well as children from refugee backgrounds, schools can implement strategies for creating an equitable transition experience. It is important to ensure that schools respect the languages and dialects spoken by Aboriginal children, acknowledging both similarities and differences to standard Australian English (SAE). Ensure Aboriginal children who may speak a dialect or have Aboriginal ways or an Aboriginal language and who are still learning to use SAE for school learning, are included in school English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) planning and programs as required. Recognising and valuing the languages spoken at home is crucial for fostering a sense of belonging. Schools can encourage the use of community languages during transition to school programs. This not only validates children's cultural identities but also enhances their confidence and engagement in learning. Incorporating bilingual resources and materials such as picture books and translation picture dictionaries can support language development and promote inclusivity. Translated transition social narratives can support families to help their child understand what will happen at school. This can also support families to understand the way schools work in Australia, which may differ from how schools operate in other countries.

Clear communication is essential for families navigating the transition to primary school process. Schools may provide [translated documents](#) containing essential information about transition to school programs, school policies and resources available to families. Translated documents are also a useful resource to use when incorporating translator services. This ensures that families with a language background other than English understand the expectations and supports that are available, enabling them to participate fully in their child's education.

When necessary, schools can offer [translator services](#) to facilitate effective communication between educators and families. This can include in-person interpreters during meetings or events, as well as phone or video translation services. The [Interpreting and translations guidelines](#) will support schools to access these services. Ensuring that families can communicate comfortably in their preferred language helps build trust and rapport, making the transition smoother for both children and their parents.

Engaging specialist staff with expertise in supporting children who are learning English as an additional language or dialect is vital during the transition process. These educators can provide targeted language support, helping children develop their English language skills in a nurturing environment. They can also assist in liaising with families, offering guidance and resources tailored to their specific linguistic and cultural contexts.

Working collaboratively with families, early childhood educators and community support organisations is essential for identifying and planning for the unique needs of each child. Schools can actively seek input from families about their children's strengths, challenges and cultural backgrounds. This collaborative approach may lead to the development of individualised transition plans that ensure children and families feel supported as they enter primary school.

For children and families from a [refugee background](#) schools can actively collaborate with community settlement services that support refugee families. These organisations can provide valuable insights into the specific needs and challenges faced by families from refugee backgrounds. It is essential for staff to understand trauma-informed practices and the refugee experience. Many children from refugee backgrounds may have encountered significant challenges and trauma, which can impact their emotional and social well-being. Understanding this helps educators respond sensitively to the varied experiences of refugee children, fostering resilience and promoting positive educational outcomes. Schools can facilitate tailored transition plans that addresses the unique circumstances of each family, ensuring they feel safe, welcome and supported in their new environment.

Transition support for children with disability

Children with disability have the right to enrol in their local school on the same basis as children without disability. Schools are required to provide [Inclusive education for students with disability](#). The [Disability Standards for Education 2005](#) (the Standards) define the educational rights of people with disability and are Australian law under the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) (DDA). Under the Standards, all Australian schools have a legal obligation to make sure that every child can access education and participate on the same basis as their peers. For some children, schools will need to make reasonable adjustments to the curriculum, to instruction or to the learning environment in consultation with the child and the family. Strong collaborative and consultative practices with allied health professionals is also crucial to inform successful transition planning.

When a child has a disability and/or diverse learning and support needs, transition to school can be a very anxious time for families. However, with some adjustments and modifications of transition plans, children can engage successfully with the school. Personalised planning based on consultation and collaboration is important for successful transition. Principals and other school staff, families, early childhood and early intervention professionals, medical specialists, therapists, allied professionals, the community, other advocates and the child themselves all have important roles to play.

Schools will need to draw on the expertise of the family, early intervention services and professionals to plan for transition. Processes may need to be put in place for health care, mobility and positioning needs, personal hygiene or sensory needs which may require purchase in advance or building modification. It is also important for the school to listen to the child, their voice provides crucial input into adjustments and personalised planning.

For some children with disability, separation from their primary care giver may require additional planning. If a child has previously had challenges with separation, early planning for how to manage separation when they start school can help.

- visit the departments' [anxiety page](#) for evidence-based strategies for separation anxiety
- talk with the child's family to come up with suitable solutions for the child and their family
- consider any teaching strategies or recommendations in the child's transition to school statement
- explain to children what doesn't change between settings. Highlight the similarities between their former ECEC setting or school and their new school so that they feel confident they already have some of the skills they will need
- provide visual supports such as photos, videos, maps, checklists and visual timetables.

Social narratives are an important resource when preparing children for change, new environments and life transitions. They support the continuity between settings by explicitly illustrating:

- details about the setting
- events or routines that typically happen in that setting
- the actions or behaviour that are typically expected in the setting.

Note: the [starting school social narratives](#) is a template for schools to use as part of their transition practices and to share with families when welcoming new children to the school. The inclusive learning hub also has [social narratives](#) that may assist some children. Social narratives can help children understand what to expect at school or they can be used to support transition.

Individualised transition planning

All children should enjoy educational opportunities that support them to access, engage and participate in school and to achieve socially and academically. Highly collaborative and more detailed transition planning is important for children with a disability and/or learning support needs. Establishing ongoing collaborative relationships is crucial for effective transition planning. Schools should actively engage with families, early childhood educators, community support organisations and specialist school staff to create a comprehensive support network. Collaboration with early intervention support providers is vital in developing [individualised support plans](#). These professionals offer valuable insights and expertise that can inform the transition process, ensuring that children receive the most appropriate resources and strategies tailored to their specific needs. These relationships help ensure that the child's needs are understood and addressed holistically. Schools can provide opportunities for children with their families to have a voice in the transition planning process. By encouraging children to share their thoughts, feelings and preferences, schools can gain a deeper understanding of their individual needs and aspirations. This empowerment fosters a sense of agency and belonging as children and their families engage with the school. Through ongoing collaboration, schools can plan individualised support that addresses the specific needs of each child. These plans should outline strategies, adjustments and resources that will be implemented during transition to primary school.

For example:

- extended transition programs
- applications for funding support or specialised class placement
- support from specialist staff such as EAL/D teachers and Aboriginal Education Officers
- support from Learning and Support Teachers (LaST) and student learning support officers (SLSO)
- specialised equipment such as hearing augmentation systems, mobility equipment and communication devices
- adjustments to the school facilities such as ramps, handrails and tactile systems for the vision impaired.

Planning should be documented to support delivery, monitoring, reflection and adjustment and to ensure all key stakeholders have clear communication of the strategies and actions that will need to be put in place and their timelines.

Note: the following templates can support school staff in documenting for differentiated transition planning:

- [Appendix E – individualised transition plan meeting agenda](#)
- [Appendix F – children with additional needs meeting agenda](#)
- [Appendix G – transition to school statement meeting agenda](#)
- [Appendix H – individual transition plan template.](#)

By tailoring support to each child's unique circumstances, schools can create a nurturing environment that promotes engagement in transition to primary school programs and a successful start to their educational journey.

Continuous improvement and planning of transition practices

School improvement and excellence

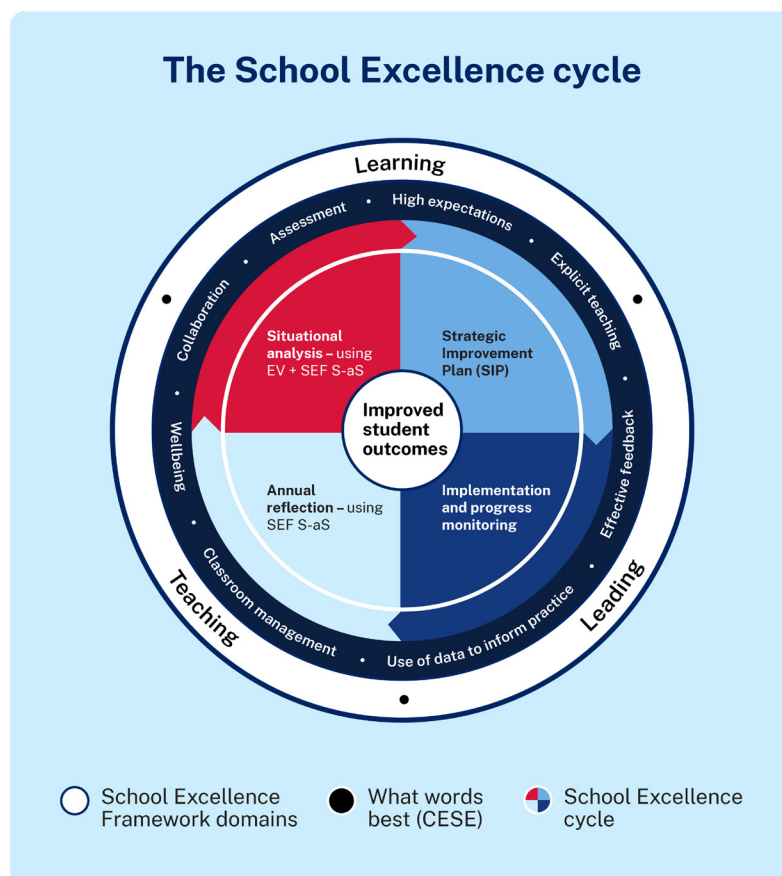
School improvement is at the heart of the work schools do as teachers and leaders, and needs to ‘touch every classroom’, be the work of every teacher and impact every student. School improvement is grounded in rigorous self-assessment and analysis of a school’s current situation with respect to student outcomes and teaching and leadership practices.

It uses a rich evidence base of quantitative and qualitative data, and is:

- research informed
- continuous
- focused on improving learning, teaching and leadership practices.

The School Excellence cycle is underpinned by the School Excellence Framework (SEF) and supports all NSW public schools in the pursuit of excellence.

Figure 3 – the School Excellence cycle



The School Excellence Framework supports all NSW public schools in their pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of the key elements of high-quality practice across the 3 domains of learning, teaching and leading.

All schools have areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. The Framework identifies quality practice across these 3 key domains to help schools plan and monitor strategies for ongoing improvement.

The School Excellence Framework supports school leaders to ensure that consistency, expectations and assumptions are aligned across all teaching and learning at school, and there is strong alignment between the SEF and the themes of CESE's 'What works best'.

Schools include improvement measures in their School Excellence Plans (SEP) that outline key focus areas of improvement for the school. Schools use this information to complete an annual reflection at the end of each year, where they evaluate the effectiveness of their initiatives in achieving their improvement measures and improved student outcomes.

Planning for strong and successful transition practices is a highly effective means through which a school can plan to meet the needs of its community and invest in the ongoing cycle of assessment and change through every child, every teacher and every school improving. As well as improvement measures in focus areas such as reading and numeracy, schools are also able to set additional school-developed improvement measures, for example, on wellbeing or writing, based on the needs of students. To support this purposeful focus, schools are encouraged to use the annual reflection process to identify those initiatives in their SEPs which are most impactful.

In schools that excel, the school culture is strongly focused on learning and transitions, wellbeing, fostering educational aspirations and ongoing performance improvement throughout the school community. The focus for effective transition to school practices is articulated in the element of learning culture.

The SEF provides the following continuum descriptors to guide schools in planning for ongoing improvement within the transitions and continuity of learning theme.

Delivering: the school actively plans for student transitions (for example, into K; Y6 to Y7; Y10 to Y11, across stages and post school). The school engages with and clearly communicates its transition activities to the school community.

Sustaining and growing: the school collects and analyses information to inform and support students' successful transitions. The school promotes strong partnerships with parents or carers including those with students whose continuity of learning or wellbeing is at risk.

Excelling: there is a systematic approach for supporting the diverse range of student transition needs. This includes those at risk to ensure the continuity of learning and wellbeing of all students from entry to post school. Students and parents or carers are engaged early as key collaborators in all transition processes.

Data to inform transition review and planning

It is important for schools to continually reflect on transition to school practices considering current research and the needs of all children and families and plan accordingly. Supporting successful transitions requires careful collaborative evaluation and effective use of data that leads to targeted, evidence-based action plans and evaluation.

Schools may consider data from the following to self-assess the effectiveness of their transition practices and plan for the future:

- community consultation/engagement
- literacy and numeracy links, for example, Best Start Kindergarten Assessment
- attendance, wellbeing and behaviour data. Scout data may support schools in establishing baselines for improvement in relation to the SEF. This may inform how schools target specific areas of transition planning (for example, attendance patterns).

Transition to School Digital Statements (TTSDS)

When schools use the TTSDS as a springboard for creating partnerships, more information can be shared, and children's learning is scaffolded. It also provides rich information to use for the planning and evaluation of transition practices.

The Transition to School Digital Statement is a practical tool for sharing information and supporting continuity between early childhood services and schools. Early childhood educators complete the statement which is then forwarded to the school with parental permission. It gives a snapshot of the learning, development and background of children moving from an early childhood service to Kindergarten. Links to the EYLF and Early Stage 1 outcomes are embedded throughout the document. As part of working with local early childhood education and care providers, public schools can access the completed statements for children who will be attending their school via a digital dashboard. The school transition planning team can reflect on information provided in the statements, considering how information can be shared with teachers and how it can inform programming. Schools can draw on partnerships with early childhood education and care services to unpack TTSDS and inform future planning for each child.

Sharing information about a child's skills and knowledge through the TTSDS is just one part of the whole transition to school process and complements ongoing collaboration between all those involved in a successful transition. It provides a baseline for teachers to begin planning forward for the start of the Kindergarten year and beyond.

Note: search [Transition to School Digital Statement](#) for additional information.

Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)

Through the AEDC schools and communities can access data on children's development in their local area and see the strengths and needs of children in their communities. The AEDC data can guide schools as they plan for the children transitioning and as they collaborate with local early childhood services, families and the community. Schools and communities can access information about the number and percentage of children who are developmentally vulnerable, at risk or on track across the 5 AEDC domains:

- physical health and wellbeing
- social competence
- emotional maturity
- language and cognitive skills (school-based)
- communication skills and general knowledge.

Excellence in transition to school planning

Rigorous assessment of a school's current transition plan will inform the improvement journey and support all children to have a strong start to school. When reviewing current practices, schools might ask if their transition practices support children to experience a successful start to school.

Table 4 – evaluation reflection questions

School teams may consider the following evaluation reflective questions	
• What data do we have on transition, and what does it tell us?	
• How can we capture the child's experiences, aspirations for learning and their learning journey?	
• What are our measures of successful transition?	
• What about families, early childhood services, community and other agencies? What do they think, and how would they rate our transition practices?	
• How can we reflect on our school improvement measures and identify where transition practices have influenced learning outcomes, attendance and behaviour?	
• How will we measure our responsive strategies to ensure they are effective and relevant to our current context?	

School teams may consider the following evaluation reflective questions

- How can we sustain ongoing evaluative practice?
- How will we know when we are there?

Table 5 – planning reflection questions

School teams may consider the following planning reflective questions

- How can we use the Australian Early Development Census data to identify vulnerabilities in the community and plan accordingly?
- Are our transition practices tailored to our unique context?
- How do our transition practices align to current education priorities?
- How are we contributing to the department's outcome that all children make a successful transition to school?
- What does research identify as effective transition strategies?
- What practices support our school in striving towards excelling in the theme 'Transitions and continuity of learning'?

Table 6 – implementation reflection questions

School teams may consider the following implementation reflective questions

- How can we seek opportunities within and beyond the school's network that are contextually relevant to our transition practices?
- How can we transfer and adapt other high-impact practices and initiatives?
- What commitment are we making to pursue excellence in transition?

By looking inward, looking outward and looking forward, a school gains the clarity to envision and map future directions for transition planning to ensure a strong start for children. Allocating time and resources to assess and evaluate transition practices and inviting feedback from children, families, early childhood services and the broader community are just a couple of ways to ensure that transition practices support the use of data and reflection.

Note: the [Transition planning to support a strong start](#) animation explores how deliberate and purposeful transition planning is an important aspect of the school excellence cycle and can embed strong and sustainable transition to school practices.

Coordination of transition planning and evaluation

Transition planning is an important part of school leadership and school improvement planning. It is ideal for schools to invest in a strong and committed transition team and/or leader who will coordinate transition to school planning.

Transition is about schools and early childhood services working together with young children, families and the wider community to help them make a smooth and seamless start to school. Planning will vary between and within schools to meet the individual needs of key stakeholders.

It is crucial for schools to consider how they will connect with children, families, other educators and professionals and the community throughout each stage of the transition planning process. Additionally, evaluation at each stage of implementation will ensure that required adjustments are made and will enhance sustainability of the transition plan. Drawing on the evidence and research, community data, understanding of equity groups and collaborative processes, schools bring it all together in a school transition action plan.

A transition planning team may consist of:

- principal and/or executive and appointed transition leader for example, ES1 AP
- early childhood educator(s) from early childhood centres and preschools
- support staff such as Learning and Support teacher, AEO, CLO, school librarian
- early intervention staff
- families and carers
- community agencies, for example, Samaritans
- health and Aboriginal Medical Services (AMS), for example, speech therapist or physiotherapist
- NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc representatives
- Early Stage 1 or Stage 1 teacher.

Planning tools

Transition planning tools support and guide effective planning and processes and supports ongoing identification of areas for continual improvement.

It is anticipated that the tools will support planning which will have buy-in from all stakeholders within the school's transition team.

Note: the following templates can support school staff in documenting transition planning:

- [Appendix C – sample transition timeline](#)
- [Appendix I – transition practices checklist](#)
- [Appendix J – transition to primary school planning tool](#)
- [Appendix K – transition to school programs self-assessment tool.](#)

Professional development, collaboration and capacity building

Schools that engage in professional learning communities commit to the belief that teachers learn best through collaboration with colleagues and have a collective commitment to improving student outcomes. When fostering the sharing of expertise, schools can reflect on best practice for orientation and transition and call on each other to discuss shared understandings of effective practices. Together, they can begin to interrogate their practice, then learn and apply better approaches to enhance student learning through strong transition practices.

A committed team within a school collaborating with a range of stakeholders and guiding the process, ensures evidence-based practices are embedded to inform improvement. When children experience an informed and supported transition, including reciprocal visits between early childhood services and schools, their prior skills, knowledge and dispositions are acknowledged and incorporated into ongoing planning. This allows teachers to provide continuity of learning for children and to build relationships with families. Children benefit when schools actively seek information from early childhood services to support their plans for teaching and learning as children start school.

Professional learning networks with local early childhood educators that work with community groups, including the local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc, or local cultural group can strengthen every child's start to school. These transition practices are equally relevant for children transitioning at other times from lower to upper primary, or when families move schools, or indeed as children move from primary to secondary.

Families and children are likely to experience positive transitions between stages and across school

years when schools provide early positive connections. When they experience meaningful relationships, regardless of the transition point, opportunities for ongoing achievements are set.

When children feel equipped with the tools required to transition through significant changes, they can take these skills with them throughout their school life, and generally into lifelong success. Collaboration with all stakeholders is a powerful element that supports quality transition practices. Partnering with early childhood services and including local community groups during transition planning are just a couple of ways a school can share the responsibility to ensure children have a strong start to school and demonstrate excellence in transition.

Resources

Relevant literature and documents

- [Early learners – animations for families](#)
- [Early learning curriculum links professional learning – Microlearning modules](#)
- [The Early Years Learning Framework](#)
- [Starting school: a strengths-based approach towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children](#)
- [The NSW Department of Education and NSW AECG Incorporated Partnership Agreement](#)
- [Personalised Learning Pathways Guidelines and Self-reflection](#)
- [Aboriginal Children’s Early Childhood Education Strategy \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)
- [Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning program](#)
- [High potential and gifted student education policy](#)
- [Differentiation Adjustment Tool](#)
- [HPGE research](#)
- [English as an additional language or dialect](#)
- [Translated documents](#)
- [Interpreting and translations guidelines](#)
- [A whole school response](#)
- [Inclusive education for students with disability](#)
- [Disability Standards for Education 2005 – Department of Education, Australian Government](#)
- [Federal Register of Legislation – Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
- [Anxiety](#)
- [Starting school social narratives](#)
- [A school day narrative](#)
- [Personalised learning and support procedures](#)

Glossary

Throughout these guidelines a range of terminology is used to describe elements of high-quality transition, the following definitions are included to ensure a shared understanding.

Transition to school: is an active process of continuity of change as children move into the first year of school. The process of transition occurs over time, beginning well before children start school and extending to the point where children and families feel a sense of belonging at school and when educators recognise this sense of belonging.

Continuity of learning: is where children experience familiarity in how and what is taught and have opportunities to build on, apply, transfer and adapt their learning in a new context. The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) is the framework that guides curriculum and pedagogy in early childhood education, including setting learning outcomes for children. Understanding the links between this framework and the NSW syllabuses is crucial to support continuity of learning.

Transition practices: are embedded behaviours, plans and strategies supported by evidence-based research and engaged by schools within the transition process. Transition practices are long term and apply to all components of transition to school, such as connecting and building relationships with all stakeholders. Ongoing evaluation of practices supports continual improvement.

Orientation programs: are short term and involve visits to the school by children and families for the purpose of orienting them to the school environment. They may include school tours, classroom visits, family activity days or social events, whole school activities, such as Book Week, and so on, and provide a familiarity and sense of belonging for children and families.

School readiness: the traditional use of this term focusses on the child, and their readiness for school in terms of academic knowledge. School readiness programs aim to ‘make’ the child ready for school, however the focus of readiness should be on more than a child’s age and academic knowledge. Holistically, school readiness refers to ready children and ready schools, as well as the family and community’s readiness to promote and support the child’s transition. School readiness refers to a shared responsibility that should be viewed in a broad, holistic way, incorporating not only a child’s readiness for the learning environment and learning dispositions, but also the learning environment’s readiness for the child.

Push-down curriculum: this term is used to describe early childhood education services adopting practices that are more related to primary school (for example, more teacher-directed pedagogies, less opportunity for play, greater attention given to academic content), in the belief that this will support school readiness. Research is showing this is counterintuitive. The more age and child appropriate pedagogical practices are, the greater the benefits for children’s social and cognitive development (OECD 2017).

Play-based learning: a context and a process for learning through which children organise and make sense of their social worlds, as they engage actively with people, objects and representations (EYLF 2022).

Acronyms

Table 8 – acronyms

Acronym	Full name
EAL/D	English as an Additional Language or Dialect
LBOTE	Language Background Other Than English
SAE	Standard Australian English
AEO	Aboriginal Education Officer
AECG	Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
AMS	Aboriginal Medical Service
SLSO	Student Learning Support Officer
LaST	Learning and Support Teacher
EYLF	Early Years Learning Framework
TTSDS	Transition To School Digital Statement
HPG	High Potential and Gifted
CLO	Community Liaison Officer
AP	Assistant Principal
AEDC	Australian Early Development Census

Appendix A – enrolment of students for transition to primary school programs

ERN registration

- Provide the parent or carer with an [enrolment form](#) to fill out and return for Kindergarten.
- Search for the student in ERN registration:
 - if there is already an existing student registration number (SRN), the registration must be managed to the current calendar year (for example, 09/10/2024) and scholastic year for Kindergarten with a **registered interested status**
 - if there is no existing SRN, select **create new student** and the student can be entered into ERN registration with a status of **registered interested**.
- Enter the intended start date for the date the student will be starting the transition program (prior to attending Kindergarten the following year).
- Ensure that the **Students main school is a Non-Gov School** category is changed to **Yes** once the student has been registered in ERN under student details. This will not include this student's SRN in any data collected for census data.

Figure 1 – selecting a main school as a Non-Gov School



Other Student Details

First Australian Enrolment Date : 05/02/2025

Students main school is a Non-Gov School : No

Student is receiving a Centrelink benefit : No

Behaviour Management Plan (violence) developed? : No

- At the end of the transition program, you can withdraw the registered interested student status from the place management in ERN.
- More information on registration can be found in the [Quick Reference Guides \(QRGs\)](#) webpage.

Quick Reference Guides

- There are 3 QRGs to assist schools, depending on their circumstances:
- if the student does not have an SRN in ERN and no siblings enrolled at a department school
 - [Enter a quick registration – QRG](#)
- if the student already has an SRN in ERN
 - [QRG-How-to-Manage-Registration-returning-students](#)
- if the student does not have an SRN in ERN but has siblings enrolled at a department school
 - [Register a sibling – QRG.](#)

Consult [QRG – Registration Statuses](#) to check what each ERN registration status means.

Appendix B – transition to school risk assessment scaffold

Risk management process

(insert rows as required)

Hazard(s)	Risk(s)	Risk rating	Control action(s)	Risk rating after controls	Responsible	Due	Complete
What presents the potential risk to health and/or safety?	What might happen, how likely is it and what could be the consequence(s)?	Apply WHS Risk Matrix	What action(s) will be taken to eliminate the risk(s) or at least reduce them to an acceptable level?	Apply WHS Risk Matrix	Who is responsible for putting controls in place?	When should the controls be put in place?	When were controls implemented?
Arrival	Absconding Child left without parent or carer		Families are invited to bring children at _____ avoiding the morning congestion. What time are the gates open? How do families know to wait with the child until the session begins?				
Departure	Absconding Child left without parent/carer		If a child is not collected by _____, parent/carer is contacted (what is the process) Staff member remains with child/ren to ensure supervision until parent/carer arrives				

Hazard(s)	Risk(s)	Risk rating	Control action(s)	Risk rating after controls	Responsible	Due	Complete
Supervision	Absconding Accessing various parts of the school		(Number of staff) are allocated to support the sessions A meeting prior was conducted to ensure all staff are aware of the supervision requirements				
Bathrooms/ toileting	Children being locked in the cubicle		The ___ block toilets have been allocated				
Meal times/ health care plans	Medical attention needed		When and how were the enrolment forms reviewed? Are there any control actions needed? (e.g. EpiPen etc)				

Hazard(s)	Risk(s)	Risk rating	Control action(s)	Risk rating after controls	Responsible	Due	Complete
Emergency evacuations	Practice or actual emergency situations		Where will the additional children part of transition/ orientation meet? Who is responsible for checking all children are present? An attendance register is collected each session. Emergency contact information is kept with the children's enrolments				
Use of playground (including interaction with older peers)			Are there any barriers or visuals to support children understanding the boundaries of the environment?				
Medication/ first aid			Where is this kept? How will it be accessed?				

Hazard(s)	Risk(s)	Risk rating	Control action(s)	Risk rating after controls	Responsible	Due	Complete
Any hazards within indoor/ outdoor environment	Children accessing hazards Trips, slips and falls		A check of the room/ space is conducted prior to children entering The GA is available to assist as needed				
Access to parent/ carers	Required access to parent/carer for various needs including the need for the child to be collected						

Appendix C – sample transition timeline

Term 1

- Evaluate transition, access planning tool and assess to identify needs
- Create action plan and allocate responsibilities
- Organise the transition team
- Build partnerships with local early childhood services
- Connect with transition network (or create one)
- Begin access request process



Term 2

- Connect with local services and preschools
- Plan logistics such as risk assessments, timetables and responsibilities
- Connect with the community including health and AECG
- Engage with the local transition network
- Create a calendar of events for families and promote it in all school/community communications



Term 3

- Collaborate with local playgroups
- Collate student information
- Ongoing reciprocal visits with early childhood services
- Review health professional documents such as paediatrician and speech therapist reports
- Plan for classroom visits and opportunities for family connections and gatherings, including orientation day(s)

Term 4

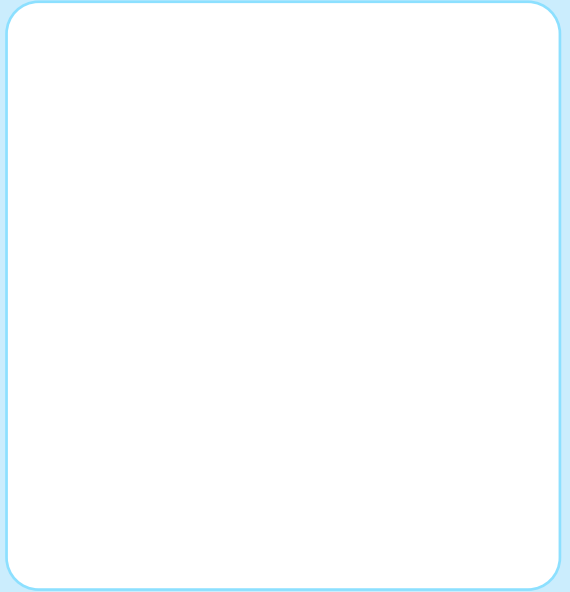
- Provide ongoing classroom visits
- Kindergarten teachers visit local early childhood services
- Celebrate with the children and families by having community days at the school (fun day, BBQ)
- Engage with the Transition to School Digital Statements to support planning

Appendix D – transition to primary school yearly activities

Term 1



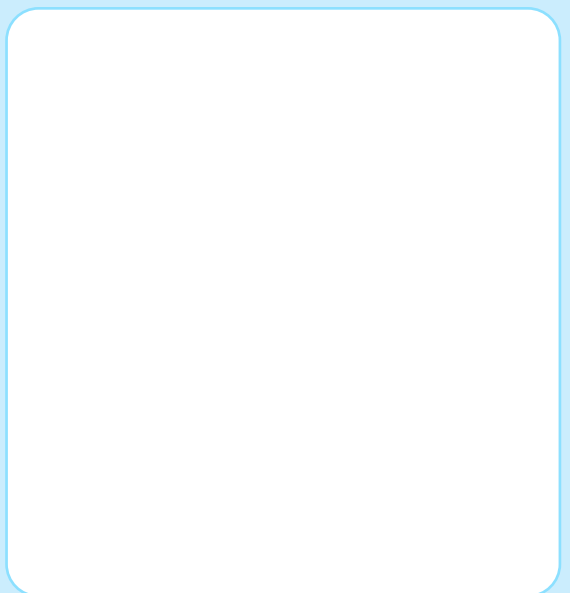
Term 2



Term 3



Term 4



Appendix E – individualised transition plan meeting agenda

Table 1 – individual transition to school meeting agenda

Items for discussion	Minutes	Actions to be taken
Introductions		
Child's strengths and interests Questions for the family: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell us about your child. • What are their strengths? • What do they like to do? 		
Child's current support needs Questions for early childhood services or family: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What supports do you have in place at home that you know work? • What supports has your child had in their early childhood education setting? • Do they work with allied health professionals? • Do you have reports or assessments that you can share? 		

Items for discussion	Minutes	Actions to be taken
<p>Child's support needs for a smooth transition</p> <p>Questions for early childhood services or family:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of support do you think they will need? For example, academic, social, physical, emotional. • How do you see that we can make the biggest difference to ensure a smooth start to school for your child? 		
<p>Next steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date of next meeting • Who else may need to be involved? 		

Appendix F – children with additional needs meeting agenda

Table 1 – transition planning agenda

Items for discussion	Minutes	Actions to be taken
Have Transition to School Digital Statements been shared for the students who have been discussed today?		
Who are the children who will require additional support?		
What kind of support will they need?		
Who are the children with diagnosed disabilities requiring significant support and/or differentiation to have a successful start to school?		
What can you tell us about them?		
Let us set a date to meet with yourself, the family(ies) and myself to discuss what we can do to ensure a strong start to school for this child or these children.		

Appendix G – transition to school statement meeting agenda

Table 1 – transition planning agenda

Items for discussion	Minutes	Actions to be taken
Introductions		
Sharing information about family and cultural background <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is their cultural background?• Is there a language background other than English?		

Items for discussion	Minutes	Actions to be taken
<p>Sharing information about learning frameworks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to share information about the Early Years Learning Framework and the Early Stage 1 curriculum. 		
<p>Information about children transitioning</p> <p>Questions for early childhood service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are their strengths in relation to: identity, connection, wellbeing, being a confident and involved learner, and communication? • What are their literacy and numeracy strengths? • What do they like to do? Do they have a particularly strong interest in any area? • Are you concerned about any aspect in particular? Have they expressed anything they are concerned about? • What do you think they might need help with? Have they expressed anything that they would like to smooth the transition? 		

Items for discussion	Minutes	Actions to be taken
<p>Information about children's support networks</p> <p>Questions for early childhood service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there anything specific that we need to know about the families of these children or other people supporting them? 		
<p>Next steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some ways that we can work together over the next couple of months to ensure each child is known, valued and cared for? 		

Appendix H – individual transition plan template

Table 1 – child’s information

Family name		Days/times attending	
Given name			
Date of birth		Start date	

Table 2 – school or early childhood service information

School or early childhood service information	Details
Service/school name	
Address	
Phone	
Email	
Primary contact person school/service	
Preferred contact mode	
Primary contact person family	
Preferred contact mode	
Best times for family to contact school/ service	
Best times for school/service to contact family	
Date of meeting(s)	
Planned review dates	

Table 3 – current support information

Current support information – include relevant contact information	Details
Strengths	
Interests	
Additional support needs/diagnosis	
Medical information/reports	
Early childhood education services	
Other support professionals or agencies	
NDIS information	

Table 4 – consultation notes

Consultation with family, other service providers and professionals, and the child themselves if possible	Details
<p>Parents/carers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do they imagine transition will go? • Do they have any concerns as their child transitions? • Do they have suggestions that would support transition for the child? 	
<p>Service providers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How they imagine transition will go? • Do they have any concerns as the child transitions? • Do they have suggestions that would support transition for the child? 	
<p>Student</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will the new school or early childhood service might need to know about them? • Do they have any concerns about transition? 	

Table 5 – transition and support action plan

Support area	Strategies/action/resources Draw on strategies identified through the collaborative planning tool process	Person(s) responsible
Within school/service support		
Targeted support Applications or access request submissions		
Plans to support transition prior to starting		
Planning and preparation for orientation		
Planning and preparation for the first day		
Ongoing strategies after the first day		
Other action to support transition		

Table 6 – contributors to the transition plan

Name	Role	Signature	Date

Table 7 – reflection and evaluation

Reflection and evaluation	Response
What worked well?	
What did we learn?	
What new adjustments need to be made?	
Who does this need to be communicated to?	

Appendix I – transition practices checklist

Transition plans are an integral part of the school's School Excellence Plan (SEP). Use the table below as a quick reference guide to support your transition planning.

Transition practices	Comments
The school has an identified transition to school coordinator and an inclusive school transition team.	
Key contacts have been identified in the local area – Early Childhood Education and Care services (ECEC) and preschools, early intervention professionals, and community and government services.	
Transition practices and orientation visits operate within suggested guidelines in reference to duration and purpose.	
Collaboration with local early childhood services and preschools in the year prior to school, including reciprocal visits to create a shared understanding of pedagogies and begin relationships with children and families.	
The school uses data from the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to assess strengths and vulnerabilities of children and families in the local school area and uses this data to inform transition planning.	
A planning and evaluation cycle exists to guide continuous improvement of transition practices.	

Transition practices	Comments
Strategies are included in the transition plan to identify and connect with vulnerable groups and children requiring additional support.	
Transition, orientation and early Kindergarten experiences based on continuity of learning and appropriate pedagogy, including play and language, rich experiences and an understanding of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).	
The Transition to School Statement is used in conjunction with the Best Start Kindergarten Assessment to inform planning.	
The school prioritises time to meet with families to discuss their child.	
Feedback from families actively informs transition planning and is evident in practice, including the culture, language and traditions of all families.	
The school works closely with their learning and support team and early childhood teachers to identify and respond to children with disabilities.	
Transition practices are constructed in response to children's prior knowledge and there are opportunities to hear children's voices – questions, interests, stories and concerns.	

Appendix J – transition to primary school planning tool



Supporting a successful start to school involves schools engaging with high-quality transition practices for children and families. Using this planning tool after engaging with the transition to school guidelines and the transition to school programs self-assessment tool will support schools to implement evidenced-based and effective transition strategies.

Plan and act

Table 1 –planning template

Strategic direction			SEF element	
Activity	What do we intend to do?	Team When	Resources	Evaluation and evidence
Identify a high-quality transition practice which you will implement. Remember to include specific strategies to build meaningful partnerships.	Note the required steps to implement the practice (be as specific as possible)	Allocate responsibilities and decide on a timeframe	Note the required resources and/or funding	How will you know if the practice has been effective? What was the impact? Where to next? Specify the success measures.

Strategic direction			SEF element	
Activity	What do we intend to do?	Team When	Resources	Evaluation and evidence

Appendix K – transition to school programs self-assessment tool

Self-assessment tool for transition to school practices

	Not implemented	Partially implemented	Implemented
Enrolment processes	Children are not enrolled in Kindergarten prior to participation, there is no genuine intent from parents to enrol their child in the school and/or no information collected from parent/carers.	The school has collated enrolment forms completed by parent/carers for children who are enrolled to start Kindergarten at the same school in the following year. School administrative team has not entered data in ERN.	The school has collated enrolment forms completed by parent/carers. School administrative teams have entered data in ERN for children who are enrolled to start Kindergarten at the same school in the following year.
Access to parents/carers	Parent/carers are not available or easily contactable if needed.		Parent/carers are readily available during orientation or transition visits and have access to their children at any given time. This can include being on the school site or being contacted via phone (if children are attending independently for up to 50 hours). Parent/carers may be onsite and engaged in transition activities.
Duration	Transition program operates for a full day, all year or several days a week for most of the year.	Transition program operates for 2- to 3-hour blocks at any given time for more than 50 hours but less than 60 hours per annum.	Transition program operates for 2- to 3-hour blocks at any given time, for approximately 50 hours or less in total per annum.
Fees	Fees are charged for participation in the transition program.		No fee is charged to attend the program.

	Not implemented	Partially implemented	Implemented
Staffing	The transition program has insufficient recommended adult-to-child ratios and is not run by qualified staff.		The transition program is structured to ensure staffing is organised to follow appropriate adult-to-child ratios maximising supervision and interaction. The program is run by a qualified staff member. *The recommended adult to child ratio for 3- to 5-year-old children is 1:10.
Risk management plan including physical space	The physical space is not appropriate for the children including access to suitable toilets and/or is not secure. No risk management plan is in place.	The physical space is appropriate for children. A risk management plan has been developed but not shared to all staff involved in the transition program operating.	The physical space is appropriate for the children including access to suitable toilets and/or is secure. A risk management plan is in place for potential hazards. The risk management plan has been shared with all staff involved in the transition program.
Age-appropriate pedagogies	Implements inappropriate strategies, pedagogy or activities not suitable to the age group. This may include push down curriculum, overly structured or teacher directed play, lack of choice in activities and inappropriate behaviour management strategies.	The transition program is focused on specific skill expectations that children should meet before they start school, rather than age-appropriate practices.	The transition program embeds age appropriate, play-based learning experiences. Curriculum and pedagogy is focused on orientating the children to the school and not educating them. This may include school tours and classroom visits that provide familiarity and sense of belonging for children and families.
Range of transition practices across the year	The school implements one to 2 transition practices at the end of the year. Children and families have a limited number of opportunities to become familiar with the school before starting kindergarten.	The school implements limited transition practices in the second half of the year and there is occasional contact between the school and early childhood education and care (ECEC) services and families.	The school consistently implements multiple, effective transition program practices throughout the year. For example, operating a playgroup, inviting families to events and on school grounds, information sessions and orientation sessions. See transition timeline for more examples.

	Not implemented	Partially implemented	Implemented
Collaborative partnerships	The school does not yet collaborate with ECEC services, the community or with families to support transition programs.	The school occasionally collaborates with ECEC services and families and offers a limited number of opportunities to interact before the child begins Kindergarten.	The school has a highly collaborative, ongoing, reciprocal relationship with local early childhood education and care services, families and the community to support transition programs. There are multiple opportunities for families and children to become familiar with the school and staff, and build relationships throughout the year prior to starting school.

References

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