

Transition to school programs self-assessment tool

Overview

This self-assessment tool aims to help school leaders and teams evaluate their existing transition to school programs in accordance with the transition program guidance. Additional information can be found on the Transition to primary school webpage.

The best place for children to experience quality early childhood education is in 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. It is important to ensure that schools are operating transition or orientation programs that reflect evidence-based transition practices outlined in the transition to primary school.

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; bathrooms, play areas, 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/carers onsite is for approximately 50 hours in total across the year in 2- to 3-hour blocks.

Enrolment

- An attendance register of children participating in any transition session is required to be maintained.
- [Enrolling children for transition programs on ERN](#) provides guidance for how children can be enrolled via Enrolment Registration Number (ERN).
- Any transition sessions offered by schools should only be for children who will attend school in 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.

Self-assessment tool for transition to school practices

The self-assessment tool below can be used to evaluate the current state of transition practices in your school. Each column is labelled 'implemented', 'partially implemented' or 'not implemented'.

For support with embedding the transition program guidance or self-assessment tool, please email earlylearning@det.nsw.edu.au.

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.	Parents are asked for a voluntary contribution.	No fee is charged to attend the program.
Staffing	The transition program has insufficient recommended adult-to-child ratios and lacks appropriate staff.	The transition program has insufficient recommended adult-to-child ratios.	The transition program is structured to ensure staffing is organised to follow appropriate adult-to-child ratios maximising supervision and interaction. *The recommended adult to child ratio for 3- to 5-year-old children is 1:10.

	Not implemented	Partially implemented	Implemented
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.
Curriculum / Pedagogy	Operates with NSW Department of Education staff who do not implement age-appropriate pedagogies/ curriculum.	Operates with NSW Department of Education staff who implement some age-appropriate pedagogies/curriculum.	Operates with NSW Department of Education staff who implement age-appropriate pedagogies including the Early Years Learning Framework.
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.

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