

Early Childhood Resource Hub newsletter

Transitions

November is a time for preparing children to transition into primary school. Soon, too, we will be easing children into different rooms in the service, and thinking about how to welcome new families and children.

This newsletter has some practical ideas to support your work in transitions. You will find sample letters to children and parents, a case study, and links to transition tools and information about transitions for children with disabilities or developmental delays.

Case study: Welcoming new children

Jennifer Koutoulas describes how her NSW-based service prepares new children and families to become happy and confident participants in the service and in their transition to primary school.

Three+ preliminary visits

We feel we have a wonderful transition to our preschool program where parents attend the service with their child for three or more visits before the child starts. For new enrolments starting in January, we start from November. Families can attend as many times as they like (we may suggest more visits depending on the child's attachment with the family member). There is a maximum of three families at one time so as not to disturb the day for our current children and educators. We may vary the time of day so the child and family can understand fully how our day progresses.

Our Day at Preschool book

Our book *Our Day at Preschool* has photos showing play occupations and daily routines. We lend it out to families, which sounds weird to some people, but we find that when we provide information to keep instead of lending, it sometimes gets tucked away and forgotten!

Transitioning between groups

We also have children transitioning between two groups for intentional teaching as we are a single stream service. For example, when children turn 4, they join the older group of 4- and 5-year-olds. The older children participate in literacy and STEM activities which entail more detailed instructions, collaboration and project work with an ECT and educator.

Younger children learn from older children and older children have further opportunities to develop leadership skills. As I still work on the floor with Michelle who is also an ECT and two other educators, we can manage ratios when the environment changes.



Angela Hampton Picture Library/Alamy Stock Photo

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A new initiative

New parents now attend an additional meeting to review our centre procedures. This allows me to get to know new families and for them to meet me in a more private way. They also meet other new families who might be at the same meeting.

No tears

Ineffective transitions occur when children are rushed through the process. We have no tears at the beginning of the year and we believe it is due to our extensive orientation process. The child has a better sense of belonging as they have had several opportunities to meet us before they start.

‘... relaxed social opportunities make a big difference ...’

Transition to school

We take children in small groups each term to visit the infants section of the local primary school, and at the end of the year to participate in Christmas craft, songs, stories and play. These relaxed social opportunities make a big difference in easing our children into primary school.



Our children visit the primary school library

Tools for transition

The following links have been created by state-based departments.

- The [Electronic transition statement](#) (Victoria) is a Word document that can be downloaded and completed by early childhood services and families.
- The [Transition-to-school action plan](#) (Queensland) provides a template for thinking about strategies, roles, issues and key dates.
- The [Transition to school statement](#) (New South Wales) is a practical tool that enables information-sharing between families, early childhood services and schools. It is complemented by the *Transition to school statement* video.

The following three [KidsMatter activity books](#) are a great resource that can be used by educators and families to prepare individual children for primary school: *I am going to school next year*, *A picture book about me* and *I am starting school*.



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