

Transition to School Policy

Transitions are times when children move between and adapt to different spaces or places and with different people, experiences, expectations and routines. The term encompasses regular transitions across a day and those that occur at significant times in children’s lives such as starting in an education and care service or starting full-time school (EYLF, p. 16).

National Quality Standards (NQS)

| Quality Area 6: Partnership with Families | |
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| 6.3.2 | Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities. |
| 6.3.3 | Access to inclusion and support assistance is facilitated |
| 6.3.4 | The service builds relationships and engages with their local community. |

PURPOSE

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

Transition from early childhood to primary school is an important milestone for children. A positive experience that has long term benefits for future learning and relationships. Our Service aims to support children and families by strengthening the development and delivery of transition programs, providing a shared understanding between our Service and local primary schools about what is important for children and their families during the transition to school progression. We believe it is vital to enhance children’s social and emotional development to ensure a successful transition to school by developing their skills, abilities and individuality which promote children’s ability to become prosperous learners.

SCOPE

This policy applies to staff, management and visitors

IMPLEMENTATION

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

This first experience children have of school has a great impact on their progress and future schooling (Margetts, K. 2007). For many children the change of setting and sense of moving on acts as a stimulus for development but if they find this change too abrupt there is a risk that the child will regress (Bennett, J 2007).

Our school readiness program refers to daily-programmed activities and experiences that are implemented throughout the year, encouraging the developmental skills that are optimal for children to retain before commencing school. For children attending school the following year, we will implement a ‘transition to school program’ which is additional activities and experiences offered to children to help prepare them for a smooth transition to a school environment.

Transition to School Program

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

- Visits by children to local primary care
- Family information sessions
- Visits from Primary School Teachers and/or Principals
- Exchanging information about a child's learning and development
- Networking with Educators, Primary School Teacher and Principals.
- School Readiness Checklists
- Alphabet and Number recognition
- Shapes and Colour recognition
- Social and Emotional enhancement
- Pre-Writing Development
- Name writing and recognition
- Concentrating on the task at hand
- Determination when faced with complications
- Responding positively to new situations
- Taking responsibility for their behaviour as it impacts on others in the group
- Developing the communication skills necessary for group or individual play
- Developing positive feelings about themselves and others
- Experiencing a sense of self-satisfaction resulting from achievement.

Management will:

- Establish methods across our Service to ensure there is continuity of learning when children transition to school.

Educators will:

- Incorporate transition to school into the daily program by encouraging children to think and talk about school by exploring various elements of primary school. (This may include uniforms, eating packed lunches, talking about school and how a school environment is different.)
- Talk with children about starting school, respecting any concerns and communicating these to families.
- Communicate with families to ensure we meet the individual strengths and needs of the children and families.
- Consider family priorities and any concerns about the transition process. Each families cultural and linguistic needs will be respected, along with family diversity.
- Develop a program to ensure a smooth transition for children from the education and care environment to the school environment. The program requires both parent and educator support for the child. This cooperation will ensure the best possible environment for children's transition.
- Contemplate the individual rest or sleep needs of children in the months leading up to the transitioning to school and whether a reduction in sleep times may prepare some children for the longer school day routine. Children will continue to have rest periods and quiet activities during the day. Beds will be available for any child who requires rest or sleep.
- Emphasis school readiness across each developmental area throughout the day. Children will be encouraged to extend their knowledge through their interests in which educators will assist children to challenge their skills regularly.
- Repeatedly discuss children's development and readiness for school with families

- Support each family's decision about when to send children to school, acknowledging the Victorian Department of Education and Training's policy that "children must turn five by April 31 in the year they start Kindergarten. All children in Victoria must start school by their sixth birthday". An exemption must be requested from DET if a child will repeat Kindergarten and turn 6 whilst still in Long Day Care.
- Develop an information package for families about the transition to school. This will include information on school readiness skills, how to support children and what to expect with the transition process. This package will be reviewed annually to meet the needs of the families and to integrate efficient information from local schools.
- Be supported to access and attend professional development opportunities to ensure current knowledge and practice regarding transition to school.
- Facilitate relationships and networking with local schools to support children and families with the transition process and to open lines of communication. The importance of school preparation through school visits, orientation days and meeting the Kindergarten teachers will be regularly promoted.
- Facilitate each child's development as a capable learner
- Be well planned and effectively evaluated
- Be flexible and responsive
- Take into account contextual aspects of community, and of individual families and children within that community.

(Adapted from *Transitions to School: Perceptions, Expectations and Experiences* by Sue Dockett and Bob Perry)

Transition to School Statement

The Victoria Transition to School Statement is a practical and simple tool designed to enable information to be shared between families, early childhood services and schools.

The Statement is completed by the child's early childhood educator in cooperation with the family. All information is provided voluntarily. The Statement is communicated to the child's intended school where it provides the school and teachers with information they can use in planning and preparing for the child's arrival and transition into the new learning environment.

Use of the Statement is required by the Department.

VICTORIA (VIC)

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

Source

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2015,
- ECA Code of Ethics.
- Guide to the National Quality Standard. \
- Supporting your child's transition to school
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/transition/Pages/supporttransition.aspx>
- National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program Newsletter No.70 – Transitions: Moving in, moving up and moving on

- Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth – School Readiness –Various school readiness papers –
www.aracy.org.au
- Transition to School Resource
<http://www.transitiontoschoolresource.org.au/tts-content/considering-when-to-start-school>

Review

Policy Review Date

September 2018

DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONE CHECKLIST – 3-5 Years is available on the Childcarers Forms page.