TRANSITION TO SCHOOL POLICY

Starting school is a significant milestone in the life of any child and family. Our Service supports continuity of learning and transitions for each child by sharing relevant information, clarifying responsibilities and by developing strategies that support a positive transition to school (National Quality Standard 6.2). Furthermore, we are committed to engage children, families, professionals, educators, and community members in the transition to school process to ensure the implementation of this policy is meaningful, supportive and reflective of best practice. Transition is viewed as a collaborative and dynamic process occurring over time ensuring a sense of belonging in all environments (Transition to School: Position Statement, 2011).

Ready families + ready early childhood services
+ ready communities + ready schools = ready children
(Kagan & Rigby, 2003)

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

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

RELATED POLICIES

Additional Needs Policy Anti-bias and Inclusion Policy Educational Program Policy	Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Respect for Children policy

PURPOSE

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

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

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

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, educators, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, volunteers and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

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

This first experience children have of school has a great impact on their progress and future schooling (Margetts, 2007). Transition to school should therefore be prepared for in an understanding, calm, organised, and knowledgeable manner. We acknowledge the critical role we as educators have in

providing an educational environment that supports children's wellbeing, promotes equity and celebrates diversity. Our approach to transition to school planning and practices is developed in collaboration with all stakeholders and ensures children are active participants in their transition to school. This approach is inclusive of children and families at all levels of transition. For children attending school the following year, we offer high quality transition practices including additional activities and experiences to help prepare them for a smooth transition to a primary school environment. These positive practices refer to daily programmed activities and experiences that are implemented throughout the year, encouraging the developmental skills that are optimal for children to develop before commencing school.

TRANSITION TO SCHOOL PROGRAM/PRACTICES

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

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

- visits by children to local primary school setting
- family information sessions
- visits from Primary school teachers and/or Principals to our Service
- exchanging information about a child's individual strengths and needs
- networking with educators, primary school teachers and Principals
- developing children's talking and listening skills
- early literacy- rhyme, chants, songs
- alphabet and number awareness
- shapes and colour recognition
- social and emotional enhancement
- pre-writing development
- name writing and recognition
- concentrating on the task at hand
- determination when faced with complications
- responding positively to new situations
- taking responsibility for their own behaviour
- developing the communication skills necessary for group or individual play

- developing positive feelings about themselves and others
- experiencing a sense of self-satisfaction resulting from achievement
- experiencing eating from lunch boxes, as we educate children about different foods eaten at recess and lunch and how to open different packaged foods.

PREPARING CHILDREN AS THEY TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

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

- having one teacher for the majority of the day
- toileting without supervision
- wearing uniforms
- transport
- sitting at a desk
- responsibility for own belongings
- listening to instructions
- specific focused lessons
- a school bell or siren indicating set breaks
- negotiating a large playground
- homework
- the canteen or tuck shop
- before and after school care

MANAGEMENT WILL

- establish strategies across our Service to ensure there is continuity of learning when children transition to school
- advocate for *'ready'* by ensuring schools are ready for our children to transition into their environment
- discuss expectations with families for their child as they prepare to transition to school
- work in partnership with families to ensure children's transition to school is positive, informed, and enhances individual development
- be aware of critical cut off dates with various Education Departments to accommodate children with a disability or developmental delay into new educational settings and share this information with families

- support and advocate for enhanced transition programs for children with a disability or developmental delay with feeder primary schools
- be flexible and ensure transition programs are tailored to the specific needs of all children in our Service

  share information between our Service, schools and families to facilitate a successful transition. (This may include completing Transition to School Statements with parent/carer approval to share information).

EDUCATORS WILL:

- incorporate transition to school into the daily program by encouraging children to think and talk about school by exploring various elements of primary school (This may include uniforms, eating packed lunches, talking about school and how a school environment is different).
- talk with children about starting school, respecting any concerns and communicating these to families
- ensure children are active participants in their transition to school
- communicate with families to ensure we meet the requirements of the individual strengths and needs of all children and families
- consider family priorities and any concerns about the transition process. Each family's cultural and linguistic needs will be respected, along with family diversity.
- develop a program/practices 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 transition to school and whether a reduction in sleep time may prepare some children for the longer school day routine. Children will continue to have rest periods with quiet activities during the day. Beds will be available for any child who requires rest or sleep.
- discuss children's development, strengths, and competencies for transition to school with families
- support each family's decision about when to send children to school, acknowledging the state laws of when children must begin formal schooling
- develop an information package for families about transition to school. This will include information on how to support their child/children and what to expect with the transition process. This package will be reviewed annually to meet the needs of the families and to integrate current information from local schools.

- be supported to access and attend professional development opportunities to ensure current knowledge and practice regarding transition to school
- facilitate relationships and networking with local schools to support children and families with the transition process and to open lines of communication. The importance of school preparation through school visits, orientation days and meeting the kindergarten teachers will be promoted.
- facilitate each child's development as a capable learner through open ended learning experiences
- effectively evaluate our Service's transition program
- be flexible and responsive to the needs of children and families
- take into account contextual aspects of community, and of individual families and children within that community.

(Adapted from Dockett & Perry, 2007.)

TRANSITION STATEMENTS

Transition to School Statements vary in each state and territory in Australia.

Some states are mandatory, whilst others are optional. The following is for Victoria.

VICTORIA STATE GOVERNMENT EDUCATION AND TRAINING- TRANSITION LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT

Transition to School Statements have been introduced across some Australian states and territories. The aim is to improve information sharing and communication between Early Childcare Services and schools. The Transition to School Statement provides a snapshot of each child's strengths, interests, learning interests and background.

Transition to School Statements are mandatory as part of our Kindergarten Funding Agreement.

WHEN A CHILD MAY NOT BE READY TO TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

We understand that all children are unique and achieve milestones in their own time. Parents and carers know their child's strengths, interests and needs better than anyone and have expectations about what they think their child should be able to do. Parents may ask educators their opinion on specific skills such as pre-writing skills, numbers, social and emotional development to assist in making decisions about starting school. The decision for when their child starts school is an individual decision. For some children, starting school at age six rather than five may provide them with an additional year to mature and increase independence.

We believe that early childhood educators have professional insight to assist families in making the decision about a child's transition to school as they have developed trusting and supportive relationships over time. However, prior to speaking with families about their personal views, educators will discuss their thoughts with management about the child's individual strengths and needs and any recommendation about beginning school will be communicated with families during a scheduled meeting. We encourage parents/carers to discuss the timing of their child's school entry with other professionals who know their child well such as early intervention practitioners. Our staff will adhere to confidentiality at all times.

STATE SPECIFICATIONS

VICTORIA (VIC)
• Children must turn 5 before 30 April to attend school that year • Children must be at school in the year that they turn 6 years old • Foundation (Prep) Enrolment Information Pack for Early Childhood Sector • Victoria State Government Education • Transition to school resource kit • **Transition Statement**- Completing this statement is a kindergarten-funding requirement. The statement is prepared by early childhood educators and families and includes outcome descriptors describing children's learning and development against the five outcomes of the VEYLDF. Parents have an option to share this statement with the child's future school or 'opt out'. Online Transition Learning and Development Statement (Online TLDS)

SOURCE

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The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne. (2008). Policy brief: Rethinking school readiness: https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccch/PB10_SchoolReadiness.pdf

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Krystle Hills	Centre Manager	03/07/2024
POLICY REVIEWED	July 2024	NEXT REVIEW DATE	July 2025
MODIFICATIONS	• annual policy review • state/territory requirements checked and amended as required • removed milestones from end of policy- available on ACECQA website		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE
May 2023	Policy created		June 2024