Contact Tips for educators for School Transition

Transitions are about movement, change, continuity or discontinuity. Transitions are points of vulnerability and possibility. They can be stressful or calming, points for positive growths or for setbacks. If children, if people of any age in fact are to feel secure, it is essential that transitions be given careful consideration in order for them to be positive.

The *Transition to School* is one of the most significant transition points in a person's life. Effective *Transition to School* can provide continuity for young children and assist them to develop resilience as they move from one learning environment to another.

Curriculum Framework for Children's Services - The Practice of Relationships (Stonehouse & Duffie, 2002).

What do teachers from school and prior-to-school settings say is important for transition programs?

- Exchanging relevant information
- Developing relationships and networks between stakeholders
- Listening to the views of children
- Acknowledging the role of the family and
- Ensuring the program is responsive to current community needs and context.

What could teachers in each setting do to enhance their transition program?

- Visit prior-to-school and/or school settings in the year before children start school and promote connections that will facilitate continuity
- Develop relationships with colleagues in both settings
- Liaise with each other, parents and community representatives in planning and implementing transition programs
- Share relevant information with parental permission
- Respect the learning from both settings and talk to children about the differences and similarities between prior-to-school and school
- Work closely with and welcome families
- Share responsibility for *Transition to School*
- Include *Transition to School* activities in prior-to-school and school planning
- Train older students as *buddies or mentors* who can support young children starting school
- Link with *Families NSW* initiatives such as regional *Transition to School* projects
- Conduct *Transition to School* sessions for parents and young children.

5. Other school staff

Others who may be critical players in the *Transition to School* program include:

- Aboriginal Education Officers
- Community Liaison Officers
- Community Languages Teachers
- Road Crossing Supervisor
- Teachers Aides
- Support or specialist teachers

http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/gotoschool/primary/transition/keyplayers/index.php

Ten promising practices that support the transition to school

- Reciprocal visits for children across early years services and schools.

- Reciprocal visits for educators across early years services and schools.

- Transfer of information via transition statements and meetings.

- Joint professional development for early childhood professionals and school staff.

- Local transition networks that involve a broad range of stakeholders.

- Buddy programs for children starting schools, as well as parent groups.

- Family involvement strategies, tailored to meet the needs of families attending early childhood services or schools.

- Developmentally appropriate educational practices, also commonly referred to as "play-based learning".

- The use of social story boards for children.

- Community-level transition plans and timetables.

https://aifs.gov.au/publications/family-matters/issue-90/starting-school

As an educator you:

- Play an essential role in the transition to school for young children with disabilities
- Develop trusting relationships with children and their families over a number of years, often during the critical early childhood period when families are adapting and adjusting to their child's disability
- Have strong knowledge and experience of child development and the types of skills and behaviours which impact on children's functioning and independence.

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- Observe and relate to young children in a group context, and are uniquely placed to support children with developing social interaction skills, practicing and generalising self-help skills and learning to regulate emotions and behaviour

  These are all priority areas identified by Kindergarten teachers in terms of children's adaptation to school life.
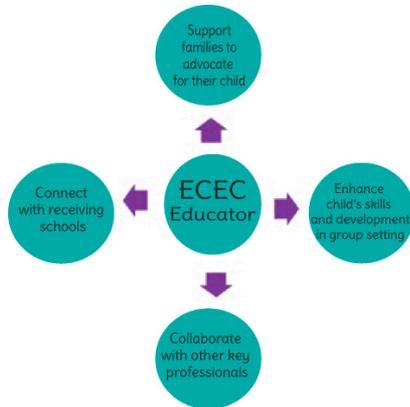
What do teachers in receiving schools find helpful?

Information about:

- The child's strengths and needs from professionals who already know the child in a group context. This can include information about what strategies have been in place to support their learning before school
- The strategies that have worked (and not worked) for the child in ECEC settings
- Any possible triggers of challenging behaviour
- What they may be able to do to prepare for potential challenges
- Making an observation visit to children in their ECEC service where possible has helped teachers to see what practices are being used and learn about what has supported the child to date
- Observing children during general orientation sessions, and seeing how they respond in the school environment.
- Having children visit for additional sessions at school during term 4 to prepare them for particular school routines e.g. assembly, sport, music, recess and lunch times
- When parents and carers understand the varied nature and demands of a school teacher and how this might differ from ECEC professionals
- Open, honest communication with the family and previous services

Self-Reflection questions

Working with families

1. Does our service begin conversations with families of children with additional needs about transition to school by the time the child turns 3?

2. Do we ask parents what their priorities and longer term goals are for their child and incorporate these into our programming?

Working in partnership

1. Does our service link with other professionals to provide a consistent approach to transition to school?

2. Does our service make contact with the school to invite staff to visit, meet and observe children with a disability in our setting?

3. Does our service offer to attend transition meeting/s and/or provide concise information to the school (with parental permission) about what has worked to support the child's inclusion in our service?

Supporting the child's development

1. Does our service place an emphasis on increasing a child's participation and independence across all aspects of our program?

2. Does our service collect information to identify differences and delays in children's development and discuss any concerns in a sensitive manner with families?

3. How do I engage with the child to ensure they are as prepared and as aware as possible about what going to school will mean for them?

http://www.transitiontoschoolresource.org.au/tts-content/are-you-an-early-childhood-education-and-care-professional#ECE role in TTS