

Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice

Transition to School



Introduction

Starting Primary school is a significant milestone in the life of any child and family. Kootingal and District Preschool 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. 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.

Goals – What are we going to do?

Kootingal and District Preschool will liaise with local schools to develop a smooth and comprehensive transition to school program. We will work in collaboration with families to support the individual strengths and needs of each child and provide a high-quality program to help children experiencing the transition to formal school.

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.

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.

Strategies – To achieve our goals

Starting school is a major transition for young children. When children know what to expect they are much more likely to feel confident and happy about starting school.

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 Statements

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.

Kootingal and District Preschool assists children to develop the following skills considered useful for engaging positively in the school environment:

- Concentrating on the task at hand
- Persevering when faced with difficulties
- Responding positively to new situations
- Taking some responsibility for their behavior if it impinges 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.

The Educational Leader will:

- Establish systems across the education and care service to ensure there is continuity of learning when children transition to school.

The educators will:

- Encourage children to start thinking and talking about school by exploring various elements of the school experience. (eg. uniforms, eating packed lunches, talking to older children 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 the service is meeting the individual strengths and needs of the 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 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 collaboration will ensure the best possible climate for this transition.
- Consider the individual rest or sleep needs of children in the months leading up to the transition to school.
- Focus on school readiness in all areas of development throughout the day. Children will be encouraged to extend their knowledge via their interests and educators will assist children to challenge their skills regularly.
- Regularly discuss children's development and readiness for school with families.
- Support each family's decision about when to send children to school, acknowledging the NSW Department of Education and Training's policy that:

“Your child can start Kindergarten at the beginning of the school year if they turn five on or before 31 July in that year. By law, all children must be enrolled in school by their sixth birthday. Because students start new work in their new class at the beginning of the school year, it would be an advantage for your child both socially and educationally, to start school as soon as possible in the new year.”

- Be supported to access professional development opportunities to ensure current knowledge and practice regarding transition to school is employed within the education and care service.
- 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.

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

Management and staff will monitor and review the effectiveness of the Transition to School Policy regularly. Updated information will be incorporated as needed.

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this policy every 12 months.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with Regulation 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Educators recognise the importance of a positive transition to school in a child's life. Educators support children and families to make the transition process positive and informative by liaising with the local schools and the wider community.

Links to other policies:

Interactions with Children

Additional Support Needs Policy

Related Legislation:

NQS

Quality Area 6		Collaborative Partnerships with families and communities
Standard	6.1	Supportive relationships with families
Element	6.1.1	Engagement with the service
Element	6.1.2	Parent views are respected
Element	6.1.3	Families are supported
Standard	6.2	Collaborative partnerships
Element	6.2.1	Transitions
Element	6.2.2	Access and participation
Element	6.2.3	Community engagement

National Regulations

Reg	118	Educational Leader
Reg	148	Educational Leader

Sources:

- Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, Commonwealth of Australia, 2009
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Guide to the National Quality Standard (3) ACECQA (2011)
- NSW Department of Community Services – School Readiness
www.community.nsw.gov.au/DOCSWR/assets/main/documents/school_readiness.pdf
- NSW Public Schools - <https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/going-to-a-public-school/enrolment/primary-school-enrolment>
- Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth – School Readiness – Various school readiness papers – www.aracy.org.au

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