

Using the Transition Learning and Development Statement to inform curriculum design and delivery

A Practical Guide



Purpose of the guide

This guide has been developed in collaboration with Prep teachers. The case studies and examples included here are intended to facilitate the sharing of effective strategies for using the Transition Statement to design and deliver curriculum.

This guide is a starting point to help Preparatory Class (Prep) teachers use Transition Learning and Development Statements (Transition Statements) to inform curriculum design and delivery.

The guide has been designed to:

- provide a rationale for using Transition Statements in curriculum design and delivery
- provide practical advice to Prep teachers about how the information in the Transition Statements can be used to inform curriculum planning and delivery, and
- create clear links between the Transition Statement, the e5 Instructional Model, and the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), particularly for teachers in the government school system.

This guide is available for teachers in government, independent and Catholic schools on the transition website at www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool

What is the purpose of the Transition Statement?

The Transition Learning and Development Statement provides a **stimulus for conversations** between early childhood professionals, teachers, families and children and is a foundation tool for Prep teachers to support children in their first year of school.

Towards the end of each year, you or your school will receive Transition Statements for the children who will be in your Prep class the following year. You may wish to contact your local early childhood services to reach agreement about the best time for the Transition Statements to be received.

“The Transition Statement has proven helpful in understanding the background students have had at kindergarten and what was observed to be their strengths and areas for development. It has also helped to understand the structure of some families and the background the children have come from.”

Prep teacher, Loddon Mallee Region

The purpose of the Transition Statement is threefold:

1. To provide increased knowledge of children starting school,
2. To provide increased knowledge of children’s strengths and additional needs,
3. To improve curriculum design and delivery for children entering school— for individual children and/or small groups.

The information in the Transition Statement:

- summarises the strengths of a child’s learning and development,
- identifies their individual learning styles and their interests, and describes where the child is up to in relation to their learning and development,
- provides suggestions on how the child can be supported to continue learning.

Transition Statements can help you understand a child’s learning and development before they start Prep. Transition Statements can assist in identifying individual learning pathways for each child entering your class, and will help you design and deliver curriculum.

Who writes the Transition Statement?

The Transition Statement is written by early childhood educators and the child’s family.

The Transition Statement comprises two parts:

Part 1 consists of Sections A, B and C.

- Section A is written by the child’s family (usually their parents or guardians).
- Section B is written by the child with assistance from a family member or early childhood educator.
- Section C (optional) is written by the child’s family (usually their parents or guardians) and records information about the extra early childhood support services accessed by children who have additional learning and development needs, a disability or developmental delay or medical needs.

Part 2 is written by the early childhood educator and provides a description of the child’s learning and development against the five learning and development outcomes of the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*. A description of the early years setting and things that might help the child settle into school may also be included.

“I used the Transition Statement to help with class placements, planning the curriculum and developing a positive rapport with the kids.”

Prep teacher, Eastern Metropolitan Region

“It helped with establishing a background of what skills the children have and where we can build upon them.”

Prep teacher, Loddon Mallee Region

“[Transition Statements] give me a starting point of where the children are at in certain areas. It also assists with areas that are a priority (especially in those first few weeks of term one).”

Prep teacher, Hume Region

The Transition Statement may be written by an educator delivering a funded kindergarten program, an educator in a long day care service, other early childhood professional(s) who may have provided support to the child prior to starting school or a combination of these. The Transition Statement is written towards the end of the year prior to the child starting Prep.

How do I use a Transition Statement?

There is scope to use Transition Statements in a number of different ways to support children’s transition into Prep.

Prep teachers can make the most of the Transition Statements by:

- **using the information** to design and deliver curriculum that is appropriate for each individual child,
- **responding to requests by the early childhood educator** for further contact to be made regarding individual children (this request is noted on the front page of the Transition Statement). An early childhood educator will tick the box for you to contact them only if they believe it is absolutely necessary to effectively support that child’s transition,
- **reaching agreement** with colleagues in early childhood centres at the local level about the preferred time to receive the Statements. This step helps to adapt the process to suit local needs and address the considerable variations that can exist from school to school.
- **providing feedback** to the early childhood educator about what information was most useful and how it has been used.

This Practical Guide provides specific advice on using the Transition Statement to inform planning of curriculum prior to the first week of school, and throughout the Prep year.

What if a child does not have a Transition Statement?

If a child arrives at school without a Transition Statement, you may wish to provide the family with Part 1 to complete. This can assist you in gathering information to support the child’s transition to Prep and to identify any additional supports that the child and family may need.

The Transition Statement template is available to download at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool/>

The statements have provided information that I have used to organise groupings, both ability based and social. I found the statements also very useful in determining a starting point for planning my literacy and numeracy programs and being able to link these with the children's interests."

Prep teacher, Barwon South West Region

How can Transition Statements assist curriculum design and delivery?

The information in the Transition Statement will vary for each child. However, in every Transition Statement you will find information that relates to the five outcomes in the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (VEYLDF). These five outcomes are:

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective communicators.

For Prep teachers in government schools, it is important to note that the VEYLDF maps the curriculum for early childhood to Levels 1 and 2 of the VELLS, clearly showing the link between what children learn in early years settings and what they learn at school.

Understanding the VEYLDF and the links between the five learning outcomes and VELLS Level 1 will assist Prep teachers in government schools in using the Transition Statement for curriculum design and delivery. You may find the information useful to help determine where an individual child is on the learning continuum.

For more information about the VEYLDF visit <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/e5/default.htm>

Prep teachers should use the information contained in Transition Statements to make decisions about classroom structure at the commencement of the year and to plan activities to stimulate identified areas of learning and development, based around the interests of each individual child. This planning process links with the **e5 Instructional Model** for teachers in government schools.

Using the e5 Instructional Model as the framework, the Transition Statement helps you '*build knowledge of the learner and context*'. By reviewing the information in the Transition Statement, Prep teachers are able to draw on the expertise of their early childhood colleagues and the family's knowledge of their child to support each child's individual learning and development.

This knowledge is built upon as you '*consider new knowledge of learners to inform the next stage of instruction*'.

* www.education.vic.gov.au/proflearning/e5/default.htm

“The statements enabled a differentiated approach from the beginning of the year.”

Prep teacher, Eastern Metropolitan Region

“Initially I was able to use some information to plan starting points for literacy.”

Prep teacher, Grampians Region

“Having some knowledge of where the children are at has assisted me in planning the curriculum to meet the individual needs of the students to some degree.”

Prep teacher, Hume Region

Many Prep teachers also choose to re-visit the Transition Statement throughout the year. This may help as you encounter new situations in which the information in the Statement can assist you to continue to ‘build knowledge of the learner and context’.

The cycle of data collection, planning and review continues throughout the year.

What other data is collected to assist with curriculum planning and design in the Prep year?

Transition Statements contain a significant amount of information about a child. However there are a number of services and settings that also collect information about a child’s learning and development during this time.

Prior to school assessments are undertaken by services including Maternal and Child Health Services and Early Childhood Intervention Services. These assessments identify the specific needs of the child and their family at various points throughout early childhood.

In addition, a number of assessments take place when children enter school. These include, but are not limited to, the English and Mathematics Online Interviews. These assessments provide the opportunity for teachers to be informed about each child’s learning and development.

Together, the Transition Statement and all the other information collected about an individual child, provide a strong foundation to plan effectively and support the continuity of each child’s learning and development.

Prep teachers can use the information in the Transition Statement to develop differentiated strategies to support individual children’s learning from the first day of school, and supplement this with additional information that is gathered about a child’s learning and development in the school environment.

Can the Transition Statement be uploaded to the Ultranet?

As the privacy rules underpinning use of the Ultranet require that no health or wellbeing information be posted, Transition Statements themselves must not be uploaded to the Ultranet. The Ultranet enables teachers to collaborate with colleagues within and across schools, facilitating knowledge transfer and sharing. Design spaces can be built by Prep teachers within a school or network to create professional online communities to share practical examples of how Transition Statements are being used to support and inform curriculum planning and delivery.

Specific examples of the use of Transition Statements

Children have a strong sense of identity (identity)

| What is the outcome? | Early years learning framework (birth to five years) – example of how this develops | VELS Level 1 – corresponding example of how this develops | Typical examples of content of the Transition Statement | How this might inform curriculum planning |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| Children feel safe, secure and supported | Children share aspects of their culture with other children and educators | Learn about and celebrate special cultural, local, community and national days | <i>“James is proud of his Aboriginal culture and he is confident sharing stories with educators and other children. He enjoys telling the other children about his family and seeks opportunities to present his ideas in a variety of ways including at story time and through visual means.”</i> | James would be encouraged by his prep teacher to make a contribution to the class or school recognition of Aboriginal cultural days of significance. James’ family or elders may also be invited to these sorts of events in order to create an holistic community approach to embracing cultural diversity. Encourage James to share stories with small groups of students and the whole class. |

“I was able to tailor the activities I set out for developmental play to start the day. This allowed the children to engage in play and get to know each other and find others with common interests.”

Prep teacher, Southern Metro Region

Children are connected to and contribute to their world (community)

| What is the outcome? | Early years learning framework (birth to five years) – example of how this develops | VELS Level 1 – corresponding example of how this develops | Typical examples of content of the Transition Statement | How this might inform curriculum planning |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Children become aware of fairness | Children become aware of ways in which people are included or excluded from physical and social environments | Children explore possible actions and responses to social situations through dramatic play | <i>“Lila is becoming used to her wheelchair and engages confidently in play with other children. She enjoys dressing up and doing role plays and uses that opportunity to express her desire to be included in the group’s activities.”</i> | Knowing that Lila may respond well if given the chance to engage in role play you could set up your classroom to maximise her access to that activity. This would increase her sense of comfort and belonging in the Prep classroom. |

“The statements were useful when deciding on the activities we would have during the first transitional weeks of schools - I particularly liked knowing what the children enjoyed doing at kinder/child care”

Prep teacher, Eastern Metro Region

Children have a strong sense of wellbeing (wellbeing)

| <i>What is the outcome?</i> | <i>Early years learning framework (birth to five years)- example of how this develops</i> | <i>VELS Level 1 – corresponding example of how this develops</i> | <i>Typical examples of content of the Transition Statement</i> | <i>How this might inform curriculum planning</i> |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| Children become strong in their social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing | Children develop trust and confidence | Children identify the qualities of a friend and demonstrate care for other students | <i>“Julie is quiet and tends to seek out other children who are also quiet. Pairing Julie with a quiet peer will help to build her confidence to communicate and share her ideas and feelings about school. If Julie becomes intimidated by other, more dominant children, she withdraws very quickly and will engage in solitary play.”</i> | Julie would benefit from building her confidence by being paired with ‘quieter’ children initially. |

“The information confirmed whether some children required further follow up assessment and this was carried out promptly. It identified students and families who might require further assistance with transition into the school.”

Prep teacher, Northern Metro Region

Children are confident and involved learners (learning)

| <i>What is the outcome?</i> | <i>Early years learning framework (birth to five years) – example of how this develops</i> | <i>VELS Level 1 – corresponding example of how this develops</i> | <i>Typical examples of content of the Transition Statement</i> | <i>How this might inform curriculum planning</i> |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, creativity, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity | Children participate in a variety of rich and meaningful inquiry-based experiences | Children reflect on their thinking, for example why they think what they think about a text, and take time to consider before responding | <i>“Isa writes his own name and recognises some letter and numerals. He enjoys listening to stories and reading books alone and with friends. He is able to retell stories and his own experiences confidently.”</i> | You might plan your curriculum to provide Isa with opportunities to extend his learning by asking him to reflect on his thinking about a book he has read. |

“The statements definitely help you to plan learning experiences for each child. You can begin to plan early intervention if needed. Extension and support programs can be based on the individual needs of each child.”

Prep teacher, Northern Metropolitan Region

Children are effective communicators (communication)

| What is the outcome? | Early years learning framework (birth to five years) – <i>example of how this develops</i> | VELS Level 1 – <i>corresponding example of how this develops</i> | Typical examples of content of the Transition Statement | How this might inform curriculum planning |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| Children begin to understand how patterns and symbols work | Children begin to recognise patterns and relationships and the connections between them | Children begin to recognise the continuity of time and the natural cycles such as day-night and the seasons | <i>“Xavier is able to confidently describe and discuss how patterns and symbols work. He enjoys playing with objects, for example cars and trucks, sorting them into groups and talking about how the objects relate to each other. He is displaying considerable aptitude for mathematical concepts.”</i> | Provide Xavier with a range of different objects to count and classify, encouraging him to explain what he is doing. |

“Teachers used the information in the statements to help with their initial planning for our Developmental Curriculum and also referenced them in their start of year parent interviews.”

**Prep teacher,
Hume Region**

“The [Transition Statements] provided the impetus for greater communication between the school and local kinders - transition was an area of interest for prep staff at my school who had sought higher levels of feedback and information regarding prep entry students.”

**Prep teacher,
Northern Metro Region**

Overcoming the barriers

Using the Transition Statement to inform the design and delivery of curriculum in the classroom will in most cases be straightforward. However, in some cases barriers to using the Statements may arise, for example:

- lack of time to read the Statements or receiving the Statements too late,
- lack of familiarity with the language in the Statements (VEYLDF),
- feeling that enough information has already been provided.

Acknowledging the barriers is important. However there are a range of useful strategies for tackling these barriers including:

- making time to read the statements and using them as the basis for a brief discussion with each child,
- communicating with local early childhood services to ensure that the process for sharing statements is coordinated and timely,
- having the statement handy when you meet with the parents or guardians to enable you to gather further insights,
- reading the VEYLDF and organising an opportunity to discuss with colleagues the relationship between the five outcomes and the VELs,
- building and strengthening professional communication and relationships with local early childhood educators.

Supporting transition to school depends on reciprocal, respectful relationships between early childhood professionals, teachers, families and children. Good communication is critical for those relationships to be established and sustained.

Early childhood educators and Prep teachers agree that communication is critical when supporting children and families in transition to school.

“The initiative has enabled closer contact with our preschool teachers. The communication lines have been established and have brought us closer together under the one umbrella. The professional dialogue is fantastic.”

***Prep teacher,
Eastern Metro Region***

Effective communication between early childhood educators and Prep teachers helps to ensure that:

- early childhood professionals know what information is most useful to Prep teachers to include in the Transition Statement,
- prep teachers value and build on the professional expertise of the early childhood professional(s) writing the Statement,
- a timeline for sending the Statement to the school can be established to meet the needs of both the early childhood professional and the Prep teachers,
- children’s transitions to school support the continuity of learning.

Building relationships takes time and effort. The Transition Statement is a useful tool to instigate, or continue, invaluable conversations between early childhood educators and Prep teachers.

For more information

Transition Learning and Development Statement and *Transition: A positive start to school*
www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool

Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/eyldf/default.htm>

The e5 Instructional Model
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/proflearning/e5/default.htm>

