

Sharing Our Journey

The transition from
kindergarten to school



Every
child,
every
opportunity



Some questions you might like to ask your school

- How are parents involved in the school?
- Daily routines (e.g. assembly, 'little' lunch, 'big' lunch etc) and the names the school uses for these
- Start and finish times for preps
- Pick up and drop off routines
- Are there particular school rules?
- School procedures in the event of an accident/illness
- How will I be involved in decisions around my child?
- How often are the Student Support Group meetings held?
- Are there any extra education staff available? Special needs teacher, special education teacher, teacher aide etc.
- What extra supports might be sought for my child?
- What staff will teach specialist programs? e.g. swimming, music, PE, library, computers etc.
- How will these people learn about my child's needs?
- Who will assist my child to transition to these other locations?
- Does the school have special days? e.g. sports days
- Does the school have a buddy system?
- What is the school's anti-bullying policy?
- What assistance is provided in the playground?
- Is there an Out of School Hours program? How will my child be supported to attend this if needed?
- Is there a School Holiday program? How will my child be supported to attend this if needed?
- What excursions are typically planned for the prep grade? How will my child be supported with these?
- How will the Prep teacher and I communicate regularly? E.g. communication book, email, scheduled catch-ups etc.
- How can I support my child's successful inclusion at school?



Schools usually provide an information kit for children starting prep. This contains a lot of information. Schools also have comprehensive websites you can access. Information about starting school is also available from <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/aboutschool/lifeatschool/default.htm>



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I am going to school...

Starting school is a big and exciting step for all children. Everyone wants your child to enjoy school and be successful there.

All children can expect to have a positive start to school and successfully participate in a happy and safe environment.

As a parent it is important that you and others work together to plan a positive start. There may be things you want to know about the school. There will be information you will want to share with the school. Building positive relationships and good communication will assist you and your child.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development recognises the importance of planning as children move from kindergarten to school and has introduced a new initiative to support all kindergarten children as they transition to school - Transition: A Positive Start to School. Your child's kindergarten teacher can give you further information regarding this initiative.

If your child has a disability or additional needs there might be extra things to think about and do.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has a process to assist children who have been receiving a support package from the Kindergarten Inclusion Support Service to make a positive move from kindergarten to school. This process includes a protocol for early childhood services and schools, support groups for families and professionals, and an information kit for families.

Kindergarten to School Protocol

The protocol has been developed for early childhood education services, early childhood intervention services, schools and others to assist them to implement a plan that will support children to move easily from kindergarten to school. The protocol outlines the responsibilities of early childhood and school personnel.

Support Group

A support group is a collaborative partnership between parents and professionals ensuring that the program is responsive to a child's individual needs. All children with additional needs will benefit from the shared information and individual planning that a support group provides.

Whilst your child is at kindergarten and receiving a Kindergarten Inclusion Support package you are part of a Program Support Group. This group usually includes the parent/carer, kindergarten teacher, early childhood intervention staff and others as appropriate. The Program Support Group has been identifying your child's individual needs and setting goals for the kindergarten program.

When your child moves to school you will be part of a Student Support Group. The Student Support Group is a cooperative partnership between parents, carers, school representatives and professionals ensuring coordinated support for the child's educational needs. A Student Support Group is required to make an application for support through the Program for Students with Disabilities. Government



schools have guidelines regarding this process. These are available at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/disability/default.htm>

Planning the Move from Kindergarten to School

There will be at least two support group meetings to assist you and your child as you make the move from kindergarten to school: the initial one held in either Term 3 or 4 of your child's kindergarten year and another meeting in Term One of your child's school year. These meetings are an important part of the journey as your child moves from kindergarten to school.

The first of these support group meetings focussing on the move from kindergarten to school will be organised by the kindergarten teacher and can be held at the kindergarten your child attends, school, or other venue of your choice. This meeting will be similar to other program support meetings that have been held throughout your child's kindergarten year but membership will be widened to include school personnel who will be involved with you and your



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child at school.

At this meeting a plan will be written to record actions that will support your child's journey from kindergarten to school. A key early childhood worker will be identified. This person will assist you in any further planning and collecting of information and reports that you wish to pass on to the school. This person could be your child's early childhood intervention family service co-ordinator. A key person from the school will also be identified. This person will be your contact with the school and could attend any further meetings.

This meeting will also explore the possibility that your child may be eligible for the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) at school. Applications for PSD commence from May in the year prior to school entry. You may have already started this process. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provides an outsourced assessment service for applications for the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) in the categories of Intellectual Disability and Severe Language Disorder with Critical Educational Needs. Eligibility assessments for children who were supported by the Kindergarten Inclusion Support Service, who may be eligible for additional resources for the PSD in schools in these two categories, will be given priority assessment.

Once your child commences school

A Student Support Group meeting will be held in Term One to review your child's move to school. This meeting will involve you, the prep teacher and perhaps the principal from the school where you have enrolled your child, as well as your child's kindergarten teacher, early childhood intervention family services co-ordinator and other early childhood intervention workers if required. Following this meeting formal contact with the early childhood programs ceases. However Student Support Group meetings will be

convened regularly by the school to review your child's progress.

In addition, most schools conduct prep orientation programs for families where they are able to meet with the principal and teacher and see the prep classroom. Some children require an extended orientation. This can be organised with the school and may involve more visits to the school and visits by the prep teacher to observe the child in kindergarten. Don't be afraid to ask for additional meetings with the prep teacher or principal if you have further questions.

Disability Services

Disability Services in the Department of Human Services are responsible for funding and providing a range of services for people in Victoria with intellectual, physical, sensory and dual disabilities, neurological impairments and acquired brain injury. You may already have received some services such as Aids and Equipment program or Early Choices. Your child may be within the target group for services and supports provided by the Disability services program.

For further information about Disability Services ask your Early Childhood Intervention Services contact or check the website www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability. Disability Services regional Intake and Response teams can also be contacted on 1800 783 783.

Sharing Our Journey Kit

The Sharing Our Journey kit includes some questions you may want to ask the school, activity suggestions for you and your child in the months leading up to school, and a planner outlining actions to assist the move from kindergarten to school. This kit also includes opportunities for you to share information about your child with the school via the following forms:

The family section of the Transition: A Positive Start to School Learning and Development Statement (Part 1).

A guide for completing this is also

included. All children moving to school from kindergarten will have a Learning and Development Statement prepared by their kindergarten teacher in consultation with families. Your child's kindergarten teacher can assist you to complete this section.

The enhanced section of the Learning and Development Statement (Part 1A). This section is optional and gives you the opportunity of providing further information regarding your child's abilities, strengths and needs. You can also provide information regarding the support services involved with your child. Your early childhood intervention services worker can assist you to complete this section.

Working together will help you and others to:

- Understand your child's abilities, strengths and needs
- Acknowledge the role of the family
- Listen to your views of your child
- Share relevant information
- Acknowledge the progress your child has made at kindergarten
- Develop relationships and networks with service providers who may be supporting your child now or in the future
- Learn about your child's school
- Establish a relationship and ongoing communication with the school
- Plan for your child's positive start to school
- Feel confident that your child will be able to successfully participate at school

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Sharing Our Journey

Some suggestions to help get you started



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Term 3 & 4 of Kindergarten

- Complete the Transition: A Positive Start to School Learning and Development Statement Part 1. Ask your kindergarten teacher for assistance to complete the form.
- Complete the Learning and Development Statement Part 1A of the statement to record any support services your child has received and additional information to support your child's learning at school (Optional). Ask your early childhood intervention services worker for assistance to complete this form.
- Visit the school with your child. Ask the Principal the best time to do this
- Ask the school what orientation program it runs and try to attend this. Request further visits if needed
- Attend any information sessions that may be provided by school or your child's kindergarten/childcare
- Ask as many questions as you need (see sample questions)
- Ask for a tour of the school that includes the toilets, drinking taps, prep play area etc. Let your child practice these activities
- Find out the Prep school routines and the names the school uses for these routines e.g. playtime/recess/little lunch etc
- Ask the kindergarten, school or early childhood intervention service to develop a simple social story that you can read to your child to help prepare them for school
- Your child will finish with early childhood intervention services once they commence school. They may be within the target group for supports and services offered through Disability Services. Ask your early childhood intervention service provider about linking into this service.

School Holiday Break

- Make sure you all have a good holiday break
- Talk to your child about school and share their excitement
- Have a practice 'little' lunch and 'big' lunch and ensure your child can unwrap these. Use the same terms that the school uses e.g. playlunch or fruit snack, and explain what is eaten at these different times. Have a picnic using the same foods as you will provide for school
- Write the school start day on the calendar, ask your child to colour in the square for this date
- Organise a 'play date' for your child with another child attending Prep
- Go to your local library and let your child choose books to borrow
- Practise putting on school shoes and walking in them and wearing the school uniform
- Label your child's belongings/clothes Add a novelty key ring or tie to your child's school bag for easy recognition
- Can you visit the school playground in the holiday time? Practise drinking from a bubbler tap and playing in the Prep play area
- When out, take your child to use the public toilets and practise using the door locks. Explain that there is a girl's toilet and boys toilet at school. Teach boys how to use the urinal if they don't know



Term 1 of School

- Well done! You started your child at school. Plan something nice for yourself on the first day
- Remember to take a photo on their first day!
- Arrive on time to drop off and collect your child. Make sure your child knows where you will be picking them up (usually from the classroom)
- Be prepared for your child to be very tired after school so don't plan too many after school events
- Send your child in clothes they can manage
- Check in with your child's Prep teacher regularly. Plan with the Prep teacher how you will communicate e.g. communication book, email, regular weekly chat, etc
- Don't forget there will be a Student Support Group meeting this term that will also include the early childhood teacher and early childhood intervention family services co-ordinator
- Talk to your child about school and share their excitement
- The planning you have done has helped make a great start to your child's schooling

Helping _____ to move from kindergarten to school

At the meeting we held at _____ (venue) on _____ (date),

attended by _____

We decided the following:

Early Childhood Key Worker _____ Phone _____

The name of my school contact is _____ Phone _____

_____ will visit the kindergarten on _____ date/s)

_____ (child's name) and parent will visit the school on _____ date/s)

The school orientation dates are _____

Would a social story assist the move to school?

Who will be responsible for doing this?

Should there be a formal application for support at school, including a request for assessment? **Yes / No**

How will this be progressed?

Children who have a disability may be within the target group to receive supports and services from the Department of Human Services Disability Services.

Has Disability Services information been provided to the family? **Yes / No**

(Early Childhood Intervention Services can provide this information)



Transition Learning and Development Statement

Child's first name: Surname:

Child's date of birth: Child's gender: Male Female

Child's primary school (where known):

Outside school hours care service child will attend (if applicable):

Child's photo or drawing of self
(Attach an additional sheet if required)

Parent/Guardian contact details:

Name:

Relationship to child:

Phone:

Email:

Early Childhood Service contact details:

Name of service:

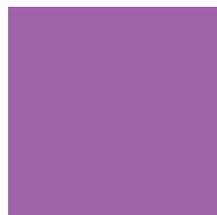
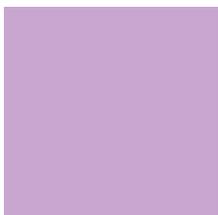
License ID:

Educator's name:

Position:

Phone:

Email:



Transition: A Positive Start to School

Child's name:

FOR PARENT/GUARDIAN

The Transition Learning and Development Statement summarises your child's strengths as they start school, identifies their interests and indicates how they can be supported to continue on their learning journey.

Please read the *Guidelines to help families complete the Transition Learning and Development Statement – Part 1: the family* for more information about the Transition Learning and Development Statement; how to fill in your part of the Statement and what happens to the Statement once it is completed.

Guidelines to help families complete the Transition Learning and Development Statement – Part 1: the family has been translated into 21 community languages which are available at www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool/profresources/caldresources/htm.

When you have completed *Part 1: the family*, your child's early childhood educator will put it with *Part 2: the early childhood educator* and give you a copy of the full Statement. **If you give consent**, the early childhood educator will pass it on to your child's school (where known) and outside school hours care service (if applicable).

You can request access to the personal information about you and your child contained in the Statement and you can request that it be corrected. This information will be retained by the early childhood service, school and outside school hours care service in accordance with Victorian privacy laws.

For more information visit www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool or phone the DEECD Information and Referral Service for your DEECD Regional Office on **1800 809 834**

CONSENT

Do you consent to this Statement being shared with your child's school? Yes No

Do you consent to this Statement being shared with your child's outside school hours care service (if applicable)? Yes No

Do you consent to the early childhood educator discussing the information in this Statement with your child's prep teacher? Yes No

Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR

Early childhood educator requests opportunity to discuss this information further with prep teacher Yes No
(Parent/Guardian consent is required for this contact to be made)

Preferred contact: By phone Best time(s) to call:

By email Best email address:

Signature of Early Childhood Educator Date



Transition: A Positive Start to School

Child's name:

Transition Learning and Development Statement – Part 1: the family Section C (optional)

SECTION C

This section is to be completed by the child's parent/guardian.

This section provides information if your child has additional learning and development needs, a disability or developmental delay.

Prior to starting school, your child may have received extra support from early childhood services. Staff in these services can work with you and your child's early childhood educator to complete this section.

For more information visit www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool or phone the DEECD Information and Referral Service for your DEECD Regional Office on **1800 809 834**

Early childhood support service details

(e.g. speech pathologist, occupational therapist, preschool field officer, early childhood intervention or other support service)

Name of service:

Address:

Contact person:

Position: Phone:

Email:

Name of service:

Address:

Contact person:

Position: Phone:

Email:

Name of service:

Address:

Contact person:

Position: Phone:

Email:

Transition: A Positive Start to School

Child's name:

My child learns and responds best when...

(e.g. humour works well, seating at the front of the class, showing as well as giving instructions, etc)

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My child is really interested in...

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My child might need some help to...

(e.g. tie shoelaces, understand long sentences, manage the move between classrooms, etc)

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You can help by...

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Things that might upset my child...

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You can help by...

(e.g. using a calming activity/music, etc)

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• Once completed, attach Section C to *Part 1: the family* (Sections A and B) and give the Statement to your child's early childhood educator.

Child's name:

Transition Learning and Development Statement – Part 2: the early childhood educator

This part is to be completed by the child's early childhood educator.

A Professional Development Booklet: *How to write and interpret the Transition Learning and Development Statement* is available at www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool/profdevelop.htm or phone the DEECD Information and Referral Service for your DEECD Regional Office on **1800 809 834**

Name of early childhood educator:

Position:

The context of the early years setting

This may include:

- Philosophy of learning environment
- Description of program delivery
(*e.g. five hour sessions twice a week, total number of children, part of long daycare program*)
- Attendance history of child

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Things that might help the child settle into school

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• The space provided is a guide. Attach additional information if needed. Responses may be in dot point form if preferred.

Transition: A Positive Start to School

Child's name:

COMMUNICATION – The child's communication skills

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The child's interests

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Additional information: (optional)

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• Once completed, attach to *Part 1: the family* Sections A, B and C (if applicable) and obtain consent to share information with the child's school and outside school hours care service (if applicable).

Guidelines to help families complete the Transition Learning and Development Statement – Part 1: the family

Starting school is a major life transition for your family and your child. It is a time of change that can be both challenging and exciting.

Your child's experience of school is likely to be different from yours. As families, the support you give your child to start school is important.

Families, early childhood services, schools and outside school hours care services are partners in children's learning and development. Your views about your child and your child's views about starting school are important. Sharing information about your child's background and experiences at home and in the community helps schools provide support for your child during the important transition to school.

To make it easier to share this information between families, services and schools a **Transition Learning and Development Statement** has been developed.

What is the Transition Learning and Development Statement?

The Transition Learning and Development Statement summarises your child's strengths as they start school, identifies their interests and shows how they can be supported to continue on their learning journey.

Filling out the Statement is one part of a program of transition-to-school activities you and your child can participate in before school starts and throughout the school year.

Which part of the Statement do I fill in?

Transition Learning and Development Statement – Part 1: the family (Section A and B) is for you and your child to fill in.

Section C (optional) is for you to complete if your child has additional learning and development needs, a disability or developmental delay.

Transition Learning and Development Statement – Part 2: the early childhood educator is for your child's early childhood educator to fill in.

What information do I need to put in the Statement?

Part 1 Section A: Information you think will help your child transition to school

Section A records the information you think will help your child transition to school. This could include:

- **Your child's background**
Background information can help teachers understand some of the things that are important to you and your child. Knowing some of these things can help teachers respond in appropriate ways to your child and your family and will support your child's learning and development. Some things you might like to include in this section are:
 - Names of relatives and friends who are important to your child
 - Language(s) you speak at home
 - Events in your family, for example the birth of a baby, a family holiday or moving house
 - Changes to your family structure.

- **Your child's experiences at home and in the community**

Before they go to school many children attend early childhood services such as playgroups, long day care, family day care, occasional care, outside school hours care, funded kindergarten programs and specialist educational support services.

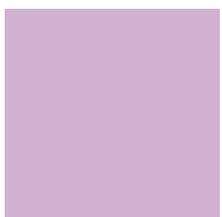
Knowing about these experiences can help teachers make connections with your child and support them at school. Where possible, it is helpful to note the services your child has attended and, if you are happy for the services to be contacted, their contact details.

Some children may also access ongoing services when they start school. It is important to note these services on the Statement and to talk with teachers about them.

If your child has a severe disability and is receiving a Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services (KISS) package, please talk to your child's early childhood educator about the *Sharing Our Journey* transition to school process.

- **Your questions and views about your child starting school**

When first thinking about your child starting school, you may be keen to know who their teacher will be, what the curriculum will be like, what provisions are made for children with special educational needs or what happens in the first few weeks of school.



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You are encouraged to use this section to ask questions about your child starting school. You may also wish to note your expectations for your child at school and your involvement with the school, for example:

- what you hope your child will gain from being at school
- what you would like your child to be involved in at school
- how you would like to be involved at your child's school
- how you can support your child's learning in partnership with your child's teacher.

If you have any issues about your child starting school, you can note them here. When teachers are aware of your concerns, they can discuss them with you and help address them.

- **What you think might help your child settle into school**

It may be useful to note things your child might need assistance with and the things you do to help them, for example dressing themselves, communicating, concentrating or participating in group activities. Providing details of the things that might upset your child and how you respond to these situations can also help teachers quickly identify when things are not going well and how best to respond.

Part 1 Section B: Your child's views about starting school

Children are usually excited and/or a bit nervous about starting school. They might think it will be a fun new experience and they may be very keen to be considered 'big', but they may be a bit anxious when they are not exactly sure what will happen.

Section B records your child's views about starting school. It may be filled in by you or the early childhood educator who works with your child. It is important that this section reflects your child's own views.

Completing this section with your child provides an opportunity to talk about starting school. This section could include:

- **What your child is looking forward to about starting school**

Some questions you might like to ask your child could include:

- What would you like to do at school?
- What do you think school might be like?

- **What your child wants to know about their school**

Children are likely to have questions about:

- the physical facilities of the school, for example where the toilets are
- school rules
- the school day and their teachers
- making and keeping friends
- getting themselves ready for school at home.

- **What your child wants their prep teacher to know about them**

Some questions you might like to ask your child could include:

- what they find hard, easy or fun
- What things are you good at that we can tell your prep teacher about?
- What things might you need help with at school?
- How will your teacher know when and how to help you?
- Is there anything else that your teacher might be able to do to help you feel happy at school?

Part 1 Section C (optional)

Section C (optional) is for you to complete if your child has additional learning and development needs, a disability or developmental delay.

Information about additional services you have accessed before your child starts school can be recorded here.

If you need more information about Section C, speak with your child's early childhood educator.

What happens after I have filled in my part of the Statement?

When you have filled in your part of the Statement, there are a number of steps to follow so this information gets to your child's prep teacher.

1. You return *Part 1: the family (Section A and B)* to your child's early childhood educator. If you have filled in *Section C*, return it with *Section A and B*.
2. The early childhood educator puts your part of the Statement with *Part 2: the early childhood educator*.
3. You read the full Statement.
4. The early childhood educator will ask you to give consent for the Statement to be shared or discussed with your child's school and outside school hours care service (if applicable). If you have any questions about giving consent, please speak to your child's early childhood educator. **The Statement cannot be passed on without your consent.**
5. The early childhood educator gives the Statement to your child's school and out of school hours care service (if applicable), gives you a copy and keeps a copy on record.

If you are not sure which school your child will attend, you will need to give a copy of the Statement to the school when you enrol your child.

For more information

Please visit www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool or phone the DEECD Information and Referral Service for your DEECD Regional Office on **1800 809 834**

This document has been translated into 21 community languages which are available at www.education.vic.gov.au/profresources/caldresources.htm