Protocol for enhanced transition from Kindergarten to School for children receiving Kindergarten Inclusion Support funding packages

Background:
The early years are critical to long-term health and development of children and their future life choices. The Victorian Government’s Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development brings together a range of strategies to improve performance and promote excellence across Victoria’s schools and early childhood services. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development recognises the importance of transition planning as children move from kindergarten to school. The Transitions: A Positive Start to School initiative aims to improve children’s experience of starting school by enhancing the development and delivery of transition programs.

All children benefit from transition planning to make a smooth move from kindergarten to school. This is particularly so for children with disabilities or developmental delays who may require extra planning so that the necessary adjustments and supports are in place prior to school entry. The Department has a commitment to kindergartens and schools working together to support children with disabilities and their families.

Before they start school, children with disabilities and developmental delays may have received extra support from an early childhood intervention service, a preschool field officer or a Kindergarten Inclusion Support Service package. Staff in these services, the kindergarten teacher and the child’s family can assist in providing the school with information about a child’s developmental needs, abilities and strengths and interests, particular learning styles and effective strategies that promote learning and development.

This protocol sets out a plan to assist the transition from kindergarten to school for children who have severe disabilities and who have received a Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services package. If an application is to be submitted for the Program for Students with Disabilities, that operates in Government Schools, additional assessment may need to be carried out with the student. The Department provides an outsourced assessment service for applications on behalf of students in the categories of Intellectual Disability and Severe Language Disorder with Critical Educational Needs. The assessment and application process will be coordinated by the school the child is to attend.

The purpose of transition planning is to:
- Share relevant information
- Develop a relationship between the kindergarten, family and school
- Support the child’s successful participation in school

Sharing Our Journey Parent Kit:
Parents of children in receipt of a Kindergarten Inclusion Support Service package will be provided with a Sharing Our Journey Kit that contains information and activities supporting the child’s transition to school, as well as a planner and a copy of the Transition: A Positive Start to School Learning and Development Statement family sections Part 1 and Part 1A.

Enquiries
If you require further clarification please call your local kindergarten or school or 1300 731947. Please advise that your enquiry relates to transition to school for a child in receipt of a Kindergarten Inclusion Support funding package.


Sharing our journey
Protocol
## Protocol for enhanced transition from Kindergarten to School for children receiving Kindergarten Inclusion Support funding packages

### Terms 2 & 3 of Kindergarten

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protocol/Action</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Enrolment</strong>&lt;br&gt;The parent enrolls the child at the school and advises the kindergarten of the school the child will be attending. The kindergarten teacher will follow this up with the parent if this has not yet occurred.</td>
<td>The parent enrols the child at the school and advises that their child has additional needs, and has received additional support at kindergarten via a Kindergarten Inclusion Support package and may require extra planning/support. Some children may be eligible for the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) or the equivalent program in the Catholic and Independent schooling sector. In this situation, the school will then initiate the information gathering and assessment processes that need to occur to start an application for additional program support from the PSD.</td>
<td>Schools, Kindergartens &amp; Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sharing Our Journey Parent Kit</strong>&lt;br&gt;Parents of children who are receiving a Kindergarten Inclusion Support package will receive the Sharing Our Journey Kit. This Kit will be provided by the Kindergarten teacher or the Early Childhood Intervention Service. The Kit will include copies of the Transition: A Positive Start to School Learning and Development Statement family sections Part 1 and Part 1A.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kindergarten Teacher and/or Early Childhood Intervention Service</td>
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### Terms 3 & 4 of Kindergarten

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protocol/Action</th>
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<th>Responsibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information gathering</strong>&lt;br&gt;Information is collected about the child’s developmental status, abilities, strengths and interests</td>
<td>Information gathering commences and may include:&lt;br&gt;- Medical and child development documentation (e.g. test results, medical reports, early intervention assessment reports)&lt;br&gt;- Kindergarten observations or portfolios&lt;br&gt;- The Transition: A Positive Start to School Learning and Development Statement family sections Part 1 and Part 1A for children with a disability or developmental delay</td>
<td>Parent, Kindergarten teacher and early childhood intervention services family services coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identification of key school contact</strong>&lt;br&gt;The principal allocates a key school contact for the family.</td>
<td>The school contact may be the Prep teacher for the following year, special education coordinator, transition coordinator, or other appropriate person. The key school contact will attend the Kindergarten to School Support Group meeting</td>
<td>School Principal</td>
</tr>
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## Kindergarten to School Support group meeting

The kindergarten teacher will convene a Support Group meeting specifically focusing on the development of a plan to support the child's move to school. The meeting will include:

- Parent
- Kindergarten teacher
- Key school contact
- Early childhood Intervention services
- Family Services Coordinator
- Other school personnel
- Early intervention workers
- Family advocate

The purpose of the meeting is to:

- Share information about the child
- Start planning using the Sharing our Journey planner
- Appoint a kindergarten-to-school key worker
- Consider an application for the PSD and refer for priority assessment where applicable
- Plan for further meetings in Term 4, if required.

### Context

This meeting should be held in the setting of the parent's choice. It will be similar to other Kindergarten Inclusion Program Support Group meetings that have been held throughout the child's kindergarten year, but membership will be widened to include school personnel who will be involved with the child and family at school.

### Purpose of this meeting

- Enable the family and others who know the child to share a picture of the child's abilities, strengths and needs
- Provide an opportunity to start to plan regarding adjustment, adaptations and/or supports that may be required to support the child's active and successful participation at school
- Appoint a kindergarten-to-school key worker. It is recommended that, where possible, this role be undertaken by the Early Childhood Intervention Family Services Coordinator as this is consistent with their role with the family
- Discuss the school's orientation program and further opportunities to visit the school
- Sharing Our Journey Planner is completed outlining actions to support the child's move from kindergarten to school
- First support group meeting will consider whether an application should be initiated for the Program for Students with Disabilities or equivalent program in Catholic and Independent schools if this has not yet occurred.
- Children who may be eligible for additional resources through the school's Program for Students with Disabilities will be prioritised for assessment when referred to DEECD assessment service provider.

### Responsibility

Kindergarten teacher (lead)
## Protocol for enhanced transition from Kindergarten to School for children receiving Kindergarten Inclusion Support funding packages

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visit to School</strong></td>
<td>The child and parent will visit the school supported by the kindergarten-to-school key worker</td>
<td>Early Childhood Intervention Services family Services Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Further Information Gathering</strong></td>
<td>Kindergarten teacher and early childhood intervention Family Services Coordinator will provide the parent with relevant assessment reports and other information that are able to be passed on to the school. They will also assist the parent to complete the Transition: A Positive Start to School Learning and Development Statement family sections (Part 1 &amp; 1A). This process to be led by the kindergarten teacher. The school will provide details of what information the school requires to ensure effective planning is able to occur.</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Support group meeting</strong></td>
<td>It is recommended that the Student Support Group meeting is planned ahead of term 1 to enable full participation of support group members.</td>
<td>Key School contact</td>
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### Term 1 of School year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protocol/Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kindergarten-to-School key worker follow up</strong></td>
<td>Key worker to have phone contact with the family and prep teacher to follow up initial progress in Term 1 prior to the school's Student Support Group meeting.</td>
<td>Kindergarten to school key contact worker (e.g. early childhood intervention family services coordinator)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Support Group Meeting</strong></td>
<td>The school coordinates a Student Support Group meeting in Term 1 of the child’s first school year.</td>
<td>Key School contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Further Information Gathering</strong></td>
<td>Kindergarten teacher and early childhood intervention Family Services Coordinator will provide the parent with relevant assessment reports and other information that are able to be passed on to the school. They will also assist the parent to complete the Transition: A Positive Start to School Learning and Development Statement family sections (Part 1 &amp; 1A). This process to be led by the kindergarten teacher. The school will provide details of what information the school requires to ensure effective planning is able to occur.</td>
<td>All</td>
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*Every child, every opportunity*
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
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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Department of Education & Early Childhood Development
Level 2, 2 Treasury Place
East Melbourne,
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July 2009

Every child, every opportunity
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](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/aboutschool/lifeatschool/default.htm)

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?
Sharing Our Journey
Some suggestions to help get you started

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)
Other things to consider:

For example:
Other plans that will need to be made, e.g. medical plan, behavioural support plan, personal care/hygiene support plan, communication plan etc.

Key information to be gathered e.g. paediatrician report etc

Other people who may need to be involved

Other helpful information e.g. modifications or adaptations, physical access check, useful training (Makaton, PECS, etc)

We will be meeting again on_________________________ (date)