5. The Transition Learning and Development Statement

What is the Transition Learning and Development Statement?

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

The information in the Statement helps prep teachers get to know the children entering their classes, plan appropriate learning and teaching programs and provides an opportunity for children, their families and all the professionals who work with them to support a child's transition to school.

Transition to school should be understood as a process, not a point in time. It is an individual experience for everyone involved. Sharing information between the child, the family, the early childhood service(s) and the school is only part of this process.

How has the Transition Learning and Development Statement been developed?

The Transition Learning and Development Statement has been developed following wide consultation with early childhood educators, primary school teachers and other early childhood professionals and by obtaining evidence from the literature review and the evaluation of transition pilots across Victoria. Examples of statements or similar documents used across Victoria and in other states around Australia have also been considered and their key ideas incorporated where appropriate.

The Transition Learning and Development Statement provides a tool for the consistent transfer of information irrespective of the setting to, or from, which the child is transitioning. It reflects the learning outcomes identified for children in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework. It has also been linked to other initiatives that support transitions – such as the Sharing Our Journey process initiated for children with a severe disability – to form a cohesive and inclusive approach to transition for all children moving into the first year of school.

The Transition Learning and Development Statement has two parts: one for the family (Part 1) and one for the early childhood educator (Part 2).

Part 1, Section C is for families of children with additional learning and development needs, a disability or developmental delay to record information on the additional services the child and family have accessed prior to school or any other important information the school should know (if this has not already been recorded).

The Transition Learning and Development Statement has been designed to align with the requirements of privacy legislation and therefore cannot be locally adapted.

A primary school, with a kindergarten on site, was the setting for one pilot in metropolitan Melbourne that trialled a version of the transition to school statement. Involving families with multicultural backgrounds in the pilot was assisted by the use of interpreters (for verbal communication). The pilot found that keeping a simple document format proved effective.
Who owns the Transition Learning and Development Statement?

The Transition Learning and Development Statement is jointly owned and developed by the family and educator on behalf of the child. However, the decision about whether the information can be forwarded to the school and outside school hours care service remains with families through the parent or legal guardian.

It is important to maintain ongoing communication with families throughout the year about their child’s learning and development to assist them in developing a clear understanding of the information contained in the Transition Learning and Development Statement. Where families have concerns about the information contained in the Statement, early childhood educators should work collaboratively with them to ensure they understand the information and can make an informed decision about this information being forwarded to other services. As part of this process, it is critical that families understand not only what is written, but also how the information will be used to support their child’s learning and development at school.

Who is the Transition Learning and Development Statement for?

While it provides valuable information for children and their families, a child’s Transition Learning and Development Statement is ultimately for their prep teacher. The information assists educators in getting to know the children entering their classes and helps them support continuity of learning and development across learning environments. The Statement will also be used by those responsible for planning outside school hours care programs if a child is attending a service and the parent/guardian consents to the use of the information by the outside school hours care service.

Who completes the Transition Learning and Development Statement?

There may be a number of people contributing to the information included in the Transition Learning and Development Statement. Early childhood educators are best placed to coordinate the Statement as they are the main point of contact and support for the child and the family during the period when the Transition Learning and Development Statement is prepared. If a child is enrolled in multiple schools, the family becomes responsible for forwarding the Statement to the school and outside school hours care service (where applicable) the child attends.

Guidelines for families and educators have also been developed that explain the process for completing the Transition Learning and Development Statement.

- Guidelines for families
  
  Information sheet for families can be found in this section of the resource kit and at www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool/transitionstatement.htm#1
Guidelines to help families complete the Transition Learning and Development Statement – Part 1: the family can be found in this section of the resource kit and at www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool/transitionstatement.htm#4

- Guidelines for educators
  Professional Development Booklet: How to write and interpret the Transition Learning and Development Statement and other Resources for Professionals is available at www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool/profresources/default.htm

A good understanding of the Victorian Framework is required by both early childhood educators and prep teachers in order to write and interpret the information in the Statement. This is because Part 2: the early childhood educator is written to reflect the five learning outcomes in the Victorian Framework.

Refer to Part 3: Useful Resources for web links to the Victorian Framework, the Early Years Learning Framework and other resources.

The Transition Learning and Development Statement is available both electronically and in hard copy. To aid in the transfer and storage of the Transition Learning and Development Statement, it is recommended that the statement be completed and stored electronically. Where possible, any handwritten forms should be scanned and stored electronically.

For more information about privacy when storing and transferring the Transition Learning and Development Statement electronically, see A guide to upholding privacy principles in this section of the resource kit.

To order hard copies of the Transition Learning and Development Statement please contact psts@edumail.vic.gov.au
How will the Transition Learning and Development Statement be used?

The Transition Learning and Development Statement is one part of the process of transition. It is a vehicle for sharing information and facilitating communication between early childhood educators, schools, families and the children themselves.

The Statements will help prep teachers get a better understanding of the children coming into their classes. Prep teachers will use this information to plan transition and class activities, keeping in mind individual requirements and ensure continuity of learning and development for each child is achieved.

The Transition Learning and Development Statement is also a valuable tool that schools can use to nurture a partnership with each Koorie child, their parent/guardian and, where necessary, a regional Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO). Information in the Statement should be used to inform the development of each Koorie child's Individual Education Plan (IEP). All government schools are required to have an IEP in place as soon as Koorie children begin prep. Linking the Statement to the IEP supports the child as they continue on their learning journey.


Other important sources of information

It is important to recognise that, while the Transition Learning and Development Statement will contain a significant amount of information about a child, there are a number of services that collect information about a child's learning and development throughout their first eight years. These services include, but are not limited to, maternal child and health services and early childhood intervention services. A summary of the tools currently available for the assessment of children in the birth to eight period is provided in Figure 5.1. These tools are also described in more detail below.

Prior to school assessments

Maternal and child health checks are encouraged for children at two, four and eight weeks, four, eight, 12 and 18 months and two and three years. These checks also include a home visit in the first week. They evaluate children's health and development, including growth, physical movements, behaviour, play, and interactions with family members and their peers. There may also be additional checks as required, such as a physical exam, hearing or eye screenings or play observation. For more information, visit www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/mch/childhealthrecord/

The Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS) assessment is becoming more widely used in Victoria. It is a methodology for detecting developmental and behavioural problems in children from birth to eight years of age and involves families answering
a ten-item questionnaire. The PEDS can be used in a number of different ways. Some professionals may use the PEDS on a regular basis (e.g. on a child's birthday or at a scheduled visit with the maternal and child health nurse), while others may administer the PEDS when the child is first enrolled in a particular community setting (e.g. kindergarten or school) or at regular family interview times. PEDS can be used as a formal developmental screening test and as an informal assessment to elicit and respond to family concerns. The flexibility of the PEDS means that it can be used in a variety of ways, enabling developmental concerns and progress to be monitored over time.

The Brigance screening test is used by a range of early childhood professionals (health and education) to identify developmental delay in children from birth to eight if the child is considered at ‘high risk’ or ‘medium risk’ via a PEDS assessment. The screen consists of a series of measures with one form completed per year of age.

No common specialist intervention assessments are used in early childhood intervention services. Rather, the appropriate early childhood educators will use one, or a suite, of tools they believe appropriate to assess the needs of the child involved. As a general rule, assessments will identify family concerns as well as child development and functioning. These assessments recognise that families are key decision makers and must be given the information they need to make well-informed decisions. The planning process is directed by the family identifying their priority needs for services. Over time, as the child's and family's needs change, the level and type of involvement and participation should respond accordingly.

Healthy Kids Check is a Commonwealth Government initiative to assess four-year-olds’ health prior to starting school. It promotes early detection of lifestyle risk factors, delayed development and illness, and provides guidance for healthy lifestyles and early intervention strategies. For more information about the Healthy Kids Check, visit www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/Healthy_Kids_Check

‘On Entry’ to school assessments

A number of assessments take place when children enter school. Some are completed by their families, some by their teachers. These assessments provide the opportunity for teachers to find out more about each child, their abilities and interests. These assessments play a role in assisting the school and prep teachers to understand the learning and development needs of each child.

The School Entrant Health Questionnaire (SEHQ) is a family reporting instrument that records a family's concerns and observations about their child's health and wellbeing. It is also a tool for clinical practice and a point of engagement with families and educators. The questionnaire is sent out to the families of all prep students following the start of school.

The English Online Interview and the Mathematics Online Interview are assessments used to determine the level of understanding of English and Mathematics that children have at the point at which they enter formal schooling. They provide the prep teacher with
comprehensive information about the child’s understanding of literacy and numeracy and informs the curriculum planning undertaken for each child. Both interviews facilitate the monitoring of children’s progress throughout the first three years of school.

The English Online Interview is generally completed in late February/early March. The interview is carried out on a one-to-one basis at a pace that suits the child, for approximately half an hour. It provides information that contributes to building a holistic picture of the child’s English language development and specifically enables evaluation of a child’s learning growth in speaking and listening, reading and writing.

The Mathematics Online Interview gathers information on the strategies that children use in their mathematical thinking. Data from the Mathematics Online Interview enables teachers to develop a detailed understanding of individual and group/class skill levels in the stages of mathematical development.

**Other assessments that may assist with transition planning**

There are also a range of population level assessments that can help services identify the needs of local children and their families.

The *Australian Early Development Index* (AEDI) is completed by prep teachers based on their knowledge of the children in their class between May and July. Questions are answered about children’s physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and communication skills, cognitive skills and general knowledge. The AEDI is a population measure rather than an individual assessment. The AEDI helps communities understand the needs of their local children and enables comparison with children nationally and in other communities. This comparison helps ensure appropriate services and resources are available and accessible to support children and families. The AEDI pinpoints the strengths of.
Maternal and child health checks are undertaken at birth, 2 weeks, 4 weeks, 2 months, 4 months, 8 months, 18 months, 2 years and 3 years (operated by Local Government)

**Specialist Intervention Assessments:** Any of these assessments may prompt a referral, which may involve additional, individual non-standardised assessment(s) through Early Childhood Intervention Services and Student Support Services

**Universal**
- Parents’ Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS)
- Brigance

**Tertiary**

**Figure 5.1: Summary of tools currently available for monitoring and assessment of children birth to eight**

- Birth to 3 years
- 3 to 6 years
- 6 to 8 years

- Children’s learning and development – birth to 8 years

- Universal
  - Parents’ Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS)
  - Brigance

- Tertiary
  - Specialist Intervention Assessments

- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
- National Early Years Learning Framework
- Victorian Essential Learning Standards

- Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for Koorie Children
- School Entrance Health Questionnaire (SEHQ)
- English and Maths Online Interviews (Prep Start)
- English and Maths Online Interviews (Prep End)
- English and Maths Online Interviews (End Year 1)
- English and Maths Online Interviews (End Year 2)
Privacy and consent when sharing information

Early childhood services and schools must be reasonable and fair in their treatment of personal and health information, not only for the benefit of staff and children but also to maintain the service’s reputation.

Privacy laws provide a guide to information handling. The application of information privacy principles enables early childhood services and schools to bring their practices into line with community expectations and legal requirements. These principles will be particularly relevant to services when implementing the Transition Learning and Development Statement.

Privacy


These laws regulate the way early childhood services, schools and outside school hours care services can collect, use, retain, secure and dispose of personal and health information. This includes information or opinion about an individual whose identity is apparent or can reasonably be ascertained from the information.

**Personal information** means recorded information or opinion, whether true or not, about an identifiable individual. Personal information can be almost any information linked to an individual, including name, address, sex, age, financial details, marital status, education, health information, criminal record or employment history.

Privacy legislation requires, among other things, that organisations advise individuals from whom they collect personal information:

- the purpose of collecting the information
- to whom the information would normally be disclosed
- how individuals access information the organisation holds about them
- any consequences for not providing some or all of the information requested.

This obligation is complied with by the inclusion of the privacy and consent notice on page two of the Transition Learning and Development Statement to be signed by the parent/guardian.

When considering privacy issues, it is important for early childhood services and schools to consider the following requirements:

- **Collect**: Collect only the information that is needed and be clear about the purpose for which it is being collected.
- **Inform**: Tell the person why the information is needed and how it will be handled.
- **Disclose**: Disclose the information only as necessary for the primary purpose of collection.
• **Access:** Provide the person with access to their information on request, unless there are concerns that information contained in the files may cause harm to the individual or others.

• **Security:** Keep personal information secure and safe from unauthorised access.

With limited exceptions, all public organisations must comply with the ten information privacy principles contained within the *Information Privacy Act 2000* and/or have an approved code of practice/policy identifying how staff will manage personal and health information. **This approved code of practice/policy must be made available to anyone who asks for it.**

For more information see *Simple steps to upholding privacy principles* found in this section of the resource kit and at [www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool/transitionprivacy.htm](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool/transitionprivacy.htm)


**Consent**

The Transition Learning and Development Statement can only be forwarded to a school and/or outside school hours care service when parent/guardian consent has been given. The Statement includes a notice on page two for the parent/guardian to give their consent.

It is important that early childhood educators work with families to develop a clear understanding of the importance of sharing information with schools and outside school hours care services (about their child's learning and development) and how sharing information will improve the support for their child.

By working in partnership with families, early childhood educators can:

- stay informed about family perspectives
- help resolve any issues or concerns, and
- improve families’ understanding of the information being shared to ensure they are able to make an informed decision about this information being forwarded to their child's school and outside school hours care service.

As part of the Transition Learning and Development Statement process, it is critical that families understand not only what is written but also how the information will be used to support their child's learning and development at school.

Families need to understand that they have a choice whether or not to complete *Part 1: the family* in the Transition Learning and Development Statement and that **part or all of the information in the Statement cannot be passed on without their consent.**

If a family chooses not to complete Part 1 of the Statement, the early childhood educator should still complete Part 2 of the Statement and give it to the family. No part of the Statement can be forwarded to the child's school or outside school hours care service without parent/guardian consent (i.e. parent/guardian has signed the consent section on page two of the Statement).
A guide to upholding privacy principles

Privacy is a serious matter, but by following these simple steps, it is easy to do the right thing.

This information will guide you in upholding the privacy principles and protecting the information in a child’s Transition Learning and Development Statement. The Statement has been developed to meet privacy requirements.

Collecting the information

Inform the child’s parent or legal guardian about the Transition Learning and Development Statement process. Tell them that the Transition Learning and Development Statement supports the continuity of their child’s learning and development as they transition to school. The Statement will provide valuable information for families and will assist school staff (particularly prep teachers) to get to know and more effectively support the children entering their classes.

Provide families with a copy of Part 1: the family of the Statement and the Guidelines to help families complete the Transition Learning and Development Statement – Part 1: the family. This explains what the Transition Learning and Development Statement is, how to fill in their part and what happens to the Statement once it is completed.

For families where literacy is an issue, it is important to discuss the details of what is in the Guidelines. The Guidelines have been translated into 21 community languages which are available at www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool/profresources/caldresources/htm

Provide families with information about how you will handle the information collected in the Statement i.e. it will be kept private, secure and safe from unauthorised access. It is also important to explain what information you will include in the Statement. Let them know that you will not forward any information to the school or outside school hours care service without their consent (see ‘Disclosing the Information’).

Families that speak a language other than English may benefit from the use of an interpreter to assist in gaining the parent/guardian’s informed consent for the final Statement. The Department provides funding for early childhood services to access on-site interpreting (both spoken and sign language) and telephone interpreting through All Graduates Interpreting and Translating Services. For more information about the Interpreting Service or to book an Interpreter, call All Graduates on 9605 3000 or visit www.allgraduates.com.au

If the child has not attended an early childhood service, schools may find it helpful to assist families to complete Part 1: the family of the Transition Learning and Development Statement as part of their enrolment process (Part 2 will not be applicable in these situations).

There are a few simple ways that you can meet your privacy obligations:

- Collect only the information that is needed and be clear about the purpose and inform the person why it’s needed and how it will be handled.
- Disclose information only as necessary for the purpose.
- Provide the person with access to their own information on request.
- Store information securely and safely.
- Dispose of information at the required point in time.
Disclosing the information

When Parts 1 and 2 of the Transition Learning and Development Statement are finished, the early childhood educator must provide a copy of the completed Statement to the family and ask the child's parent or legal guardian to review the content and give consent to the early childhood educator to share and/or discuss the information in the Statement with the child's prep teacher and outside school hours care service (if applicable). There is a privacy and consent statement for them to read and sign on page two of the Statement.

It is important to consider whether the family will require support to understand the content of what is written. This may require the early childhood educator to discuss the information in the Statement with families where literacy issues exist and/or use an interpreter.

Those families that speak a language other than English may benefit from the use of an interpreter. The Department provides funding for early childhood services to access on-site interpreting (both spoken and sign language) and telephone interpreting through All Graduates Interpreting and Translating Services. For more information about the Interpreting Service or to book an Interpreter, call All Graduates on 9605 3000 or visit www.allgraduates.com.au

Electronic Statements

If you are completing the Statement electronically and gaining consent from the family electronically (via email) include the following text when you email the copy of the completed Statement:

We have attached <insert child’s name here> the completed Transition Learning and Development Statement. This information about your child and family has been collected to support the continuity of your child’s learning and development as they transition to school. Please advise by return email that you consent to share this information with the school and outside school hours care service (if applicable).

Should you choose not to consent to the disclosure of part or all of the information in the Statement, please contact me to discuss this further.

Families must then provide confirmation that they consent to share the information in their return email. This email must be kept on record.

If families do not consent to this information being provided to the school or outside school hours care services then it must not be forwarded on. In these instances, the family should be provided with a copy for their records and the early childhood service should keep a copy (see ‘Storing information securely and safely’).
Password-protecting electronic Statements

When sending electronic versions of the Statement via email, you need to take the following basic security steps:

- Password-protect the Statement document. To do this, open the word document (electronic version of the Statement).
- From Tools, select Options, then Security.
- Type your password in the ‘Password to open’ box (use a mixture of upper and lowercase letters and numbers), then press ‘OK’. Retype the password in the ‘re-enter password to open’ box and press ‘OK’.
- Send this password to the recipient in an email for this purpose.
- Attach the electronic Statement to another email.
- Send the electronic Statement to the recipient - do not include the password in this email.

It is a good idea to request read receipts for these emails. It is important for early childhood services to develop processes to ensure recipients details are checked before sending the email.

Any information to be included or attached to the Statement must be seen by the family and consent given to share this with the school and outside school hours care service (if applicable) before it can be forwarded.

Three or four copies (paper-based or electronic) of the completed and signed Statement are required:

- one for the family to keep
- one for the school the child is enrolled in
- one for the outside school hours care service where applicable
- one for the early childhood setting.

Paper-based copies must be posted to a named person (e.g. the prep teacher, Transition Coordinator, Principal or Manager of the outside school hours care service). This helps make sure that the information can only be seen by an appropriate person. If you do not have a named person, you should contact the school to find out who you should send the Statement to.

While registered mail is the preferred delivery method as it provides more security and a delivery confirmation notice for early childhood services, posting personal information via regular mail is acceptable. Early childhood services will need to decide which delivery method to use depending on the resources available to them.
If a child’s school enrolment has not been confirmed, then the family should deliver the Statement to the school and outside school hours care service (where applicable) when they enrol their child.

As previously stated, when sending electronic versions of the Statement via email to the school or outside school hours care service, you need to take basic security steps (see ‘Password-protecting electronic Statements’).

**Accessing information**

You must allow the child’s parent or guardian to see a copy of their child’s information if they request it within two years of forwarding the Statement to the school (these requests are likely to be minimal, as the family will have its own copy).

You must allow access to view a child’s Statement by staff within your organisation if their need to view the information is in line with the purpose of the Statement (i.e. to support the child’s learning and development as they transition into school).

Your service or school should regularly review and monitor access to information as part of the service’s standard organisational procedures and processes.

**Storing information securely and safely**

Secure and safe storage implies that paper-based Statements are kept in named files and in locked filing cabinets only accessible to appropriate staff. Electronic Statements should be kept in password-protected computers, with up-to-date antivirus software. Authorisation to access these documents should be clearly understood by all staff.

Safely store paper-based and electronic copies of Transition Learning and Development Statements according to your organisation’s policy:

- Early childhood services (including outside school hours care services) – will have their own privacy policies to comply with the *Children’s Services Act 2004* and the *Children’s Services Regulations 2009*
- Government schools – see instructions in the Victorian Schools Reference Guide
- Non-government schools – will have their own policies or may follow similar guidelines to government schools.

**Disposing of information**

Services are required to keep a copy of any Statements for a minimum of two years as a temporary record. This advice applies to paper-based and electronic Statements prepared by all early childhood services, outside school hours care services and schools with the exception of childcare and early education services within municipal jurisdictions that must keep them for seven years after last attendance of the child.

These time frames are in line with Retention and Disposal Authorities (RDAs) issued by the Public Records Office Victoria.
After two years (or seven years for services in municipal jurisdictions), paper-based and electronic Statements should be disposed of securely and safely in line with your organisation’s procedures and processes. Paper-based Statements should be shredded. Electronic Statements should be permanently deleted (seek technical advice when necessary to ensure the deletion is permanent).

This is particularly relevant if the organisation is considered a Public Office (for example government schools or services with a funded kindergarten program or child care centres run by Local Government Authorities) where disposal schedules must be followed and destruction of documents should be recorded. Enquires can be made through www.prov.vic.gov.au