TRANSITION TO SCHOOL POLICY

[REVIEWED JUNE 2026 – We have undertaken a comprehensive review of this policy to ensure its accuracy and relevance.]

Starting school is a big step for both children and families. We support continuity of learning and smooth transitions for each child by sharing relevant information, clarifying responsibilities, and developing strategies for a positive, confident start to school. We see transition as a social process, working with children, families, professionals, educators and the community to ensure it is meaningful, supportive, and grounded in best practices. We believe continuity of learning is key to children's wellbeing, balancing familiar routines with new environments and building on children's prior learning and experiences - it reduces anxiety and fosters a sense of familiarity and belonging.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 1: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE		
1.1.1	Approved learning framework	Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
1.2.1	Intentional teaching	Educators are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.
1.2.2	Responsive teaching and scaffolding	Educators respond to children's ideas and play and extend children's learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback.
QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN		
5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
5.2.1	Self-regulation	Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.
QUALITY AREA 6: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES		
6.1.2	Parent views are respected	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected, and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
6.2.1	Transitions	Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing information and clarifying responsibilities.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
S. 2A	Paramount consideration—safety, rights and best interests of children
S. 3A	Paramount consideration
73	Educational program
74	Documenting of child assessments or evaluations for delivery of educational program
75	Information about educational program to be kept available
76	Information about educational program to be given to parents
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups
170	Policies and procedures to be followed

RELATED POLICIES

Additional Needs Policy Anti-Bias and Inclusion Policy Educational Program Policy	Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Respect for Children Policy

PURPOSE

Effective transition practices are based on building secure, respectful and trusting relationships. (Dockett & Perry, 2014). We liaise (where possible) with local primary schools, families, children and other professionals to develop a smooth transition to school process for all children.

We believe it is vital to talk with children about the school environments, i.e., what is similar and what is different, to better prepare them for what is to come. We also believe it is important to enhance children's social skills and to support the growth of their self-help skills, self-regulation, confidence, creativity and individuality. Developing these abilities and dispositions further will help children adjust to school and become confident learners.

In all decisions and practices related to transitions, the paramount consideration is each child's safety, rights and best interests. We prioritise environments and approaches that support children to feel secure, respected, and supported as they move into new settings.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, educators, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, volunteers and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Children experience many changes and transitions during early childhood. This includes transitioning into early childhood, between routines and rooms, and then eventually to school. Children respond to transitions in different ways - some with confidence and excitement, while others may experience hesitation, stress or anxiety. The first experience children have of school has a great impact on their progress and future. We believe that gradual changes, along with dedicated time for planning and preparation, will help support children's ability to navigate these changes and adapt.

We acknowledge the critical role we have in providing an educational environment that supports children's wellbeing, promotes equity and diversity. We develop and communicate our transition to school practices with our stakeholders, which includes children who are active participants in this process. Children attending school the following year will be learning about school, engaging in discussions about school, teachers and environments, and engaging in various learning experiences.

TRANSITION TO SCHOOL PRACTICES

To make sure the transition to school is a positive experience for both children and families, we will offer a variety of experiences that encourage communication between the two settings – early childhood education and school – and promote familiarity. These experiences may include (where possible), but are not limited to:

- children visiting local primary schools
- information sessions for families
- visits from primary school teachers and/or principals to our Service
- sharing information about each child's learning, wellbeing, interests and needs with future teachers (with approval) and with families
- networking opportunities for educators, primary school teachers and principals.

As early childhood educators, we play a key role in shaping children's learning. It is our responsibility to set them up for success by inspiring investigation, exploration, problem-solving, questioning, discovery and the ability to take on challenges.

We will offer play-based learning experiences focused on (where appropriate):

- developing children's speaking, listening, and concentration skills
- developing communication skills for group and individual experiences
- early literacy through rhymes, chants and songs
- developing alphabet and number awareness
- recognising shapes and colours
- developing pre-writing, name writing, and name recognition
- building perseverance, especially when facing challenges
- responding positively to new people and situations
- learning to understand and manage their own feelings and behaviours
- building positive self-esteem, such as feeling proud of their achievements
- practical skills like opening bottles and packages, eating from lunchboxes, dressing, washing hands and toileting somewhat independently.

PREPARING CHILDREN AS THEY TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

While there are some similarities between early childhood settings and the school environment, there are also many important differences that children should become familiar with before the transition. These may include:

- having one teacher for most of the day
- different indoor and outdoor environments (e.g., size, equipment, access)
- attending before and after school care
- adjusting to new rules, routines, and expectations, such as
    - full week, longer school days
    - toileting and handwashing without supervision
    - asking for permission (e.g., to use the bathroom)
    - wearing uniforms and sitting at a desk
    - more structure, less agency, and less time for play
    - taking responsibility for their own belongings
    - bringing a lunchbox or eating at a school canteen
    - listening to instructions and participating in focused lessons
    - raising a hand to speak
    - following the school bell or siren for set breaks
    - navigating a larger playground, equipment and resources
    - having homework.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:

- discuss expectations with families as they prepare their child for a transition to school
- know the Education Departments' (see below state-by-state specifications) cut-off dates and share this information with families
- support inclusive and culturally responsive practices to ensure all children and families experience equitable access and participation, and provide flexible, tailored transition to school programs
- work with families to ensure a positive, informed transition supporting each child's development
- tailor transition programs to meet each child's specific needs
- support and advocate for enhanced transition programs for children with specific needs
- share information between our Service, schools and families, and complete Transition to School Statements
- ensure there is some level of continuity of learning during the transition, so children experience familiar ways of learning and doing things.

EDUCATORS WILL:

- incorporate a focus on the transition to school into the daily program, such as talking about school and exploring aspects of primary school (e.g., uniforms, eating packed lunches, talking about school and how a school environment is similar or different)
- talk with children about starting school, noting any excitement or worries, and share these conversations with families
- actively engage children in their own transition to school
- talk with families about each child's strengths, interests and needs to support a smooth transition
- consider family priorities and address any concerns they may have about the transition
- develop transition programs with best practices in mind, using meaningful input from children, families, educators, and schools
- consider children's individual rest and sleep needs leading up to the transition. Gradual adjustments to sleep time and regular rest periods may help children adapt to the school routine
- support each family's decision about when their child starts school, while acknowledging the [Vic] requirements for school starting age
- develop an information package for families about the transition to school, or use one from a relevant authority (if available). This package should include tips on how to support their child and what to expect during the transition process.
- network with local schools (where possible) to support continuity of learning, such as promoting school visits, orientation days, and meetings with primary school teachers

- engage in collaboration with primary school teachers, where possible, so teaching approaches can be broadly aligned with those used in our Service, supporting continuity for children
- promote each child's development through play-based learning experiences, supporting their continued growth and development
- consider the unique needs of families and children, as well as the community context, in planning the transitions
- access and participate in professional development opportunities to stay up-to-date with best practices in the transition to school
- evaluate our Service's transition to school strategies and programs to ensure they are effective and meet the needs of all children and families.

TRANSITION TO SCHOOL STATEMENTS

Some Australian states and territories have introduced Transition to School Statements. These statements aim to improve communication and information sharing between early childhood settings, families, and schools. They provide important information about a child's interests, learning and development, and the teaching strategies used. The information may help primary school teachers get to know each child and plan suitable programs.

Transition to School Statements are [mandatory] at our Service. [We believe these statements are key in supporting each child's continued learning. We prepare them in consultation with children and families, and share them with school teachers during the transition.]

WHEN A CHILD MAY BENEFIT FROM EXTRA TIME AND SUPPORT BEFORE STARTING SCHOOL

Each child's learning and development is unique. Families know their child's strengths, interests and needs better than anyone. They also have expectations about what they think their child should know and be able to do. Families may ask educators about their child's skills—such as social and emotional development, self-help, and early academic skills like pre-writing and number awareness—to help guide decisions about when to start school. The decision about when a child starts school is an individual one. For some children, starting school at age 6 rather than 5 may provide an additional year for maturation and greater independence, while for others it may not offer the same benefit.

We believe that early childhood educators have valuable professional insights to support families in making decisions about a child's transition to school. They have built trusting relationships and know each child and family well. Before discussing their views with families, educators will first consult with

management about the child's individual strengths and needs, while maintaining confidentiality at all times. We encourage families to discuss their child's school entry with other professionals who know their child well, such as inclusion or early intervention professionals.

STATE/TERRITORY SPECIFIC INFORMATION

VICTORIA (VIC)
• Children must turn 5 before 30 April to attend school that year • Children must be at school in the year that they turn 6 years old • Foundation (Prep) Enrolment Information Pack for Early Childhood Sector • Starting primary school in Victoria; Transition to school resource kit • **Transition Learning and Development Statements (TLDS)** - Completing TLDS is ***mandatory*** for services receiving kindergarten funding. TLDS are prepared by early childhood educators and families and include outcome descriptors, describing children's learning and development against the 5 outcomes of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF). Families have the option to share it with the child's future school or 'opt out'.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Transition to School Policy* will be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis or earlier if there are changes to legislation, ACECQA guidance or any incident related to our policy. Feedback will be requested from children, families, staff, educators and management, and notification of any change to policies will be made to families within 14 days.

RELATED RESOURCES

Transition to School: Family Conversation Guide Transition to School: Resource for Observation and Planning	Transition to School: School Engagement Guide

SOURCES

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (n.d.). *Developmental milestones and the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Standards*
Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). *Guide to the National Quality Framework*
Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). *Information sheet: Continuity of learning and transitions*.
Australian Government Department of Education. (2022). *Belonging, being & becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (Version 2.0).*

Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO). *Early childhood learning trajectories*
Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) Ltd. (2022). *Measuring effective transitions to school*.
Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2014). *Continuity of learning: A resource to support effective transition to school and school age care*. Canberra, ACT: Australian Government Department of Education.
Early Childhood Australia. (2016). *Code of Ethics.*
Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2021). *Transition to school: literature review*
State of Victoria (Department of Education). (2022). *Transition. A Positive Start to School Resource Kit.*

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	[NAME] Amy Flockhart	[POSITION] office admin	[DATE] 16/07/2026
POLICY REVIEWED	JUNE 2026	NEXT REVIEW DATE	JUNE 2027
VERSION NUMBER	V12.06.26		
MODIFICATIONS	• Major rewrite of policy to reflect emerging research and a strengthened focus on continuity of learning in the EYLFV2.0. • Sources checked for currency • New sources added		
PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS			
JUNE 2025	• annual policy review • sources checked for currency and updated as required • new section: Childcare Centre Desktop Related Resources		