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1. Introduction


On 6 August 2009 the Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development released the Victorian Framework for trial and validation (the final framework was published in November 2009) and launched the Transition Initiative for implementation.

From 2009, all services offering a funded kindergarten program (whether this is in a long day care service or stand-alone kindergarten) will complete a Transition Learning and Development Statement (‘Transition Statement’) for children starting school in the following year.

Educators working in other early childhood services are also encouraged and supported to offer a Transition Statement for any child in their care who is starting school in the following year. If a child is enrolled at school without a Transition Statement, school staff are also encouraged and supported to work with families to complete Part 1: the family of the Transition Statement for their child.

It is important that all Victorian children are supported to make a successful transition to school, including those making the transition directly from home, via child care or kindergarten. Therefore, the new transition resources are available to all early childhood services, early childhood intervention services, outside school hours care services, schools (government, independent and catholic) and families.

To support educators in completing the Transition Statement, this professional development booklet has been developed. The content has been adapted from the face-to-face professional development that has been offered and will assist educators to write and interpret the Transition Statement, as well as increase knowledge of the Transition Initiative and Victorian Framework.

Please send feedback regarding professional development resources to psts@edumail.vic.gov.au
Required reading

It is essential that you read and have an understanding of the following documents before proceeding. These documents provide the foundation for professional development materials.

**Victorian Framework**

- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

**Transition: A Positive Start to School**

- Transition: A Positive Start to School – A guide for families, early childhood services, outside school hours care services and schools
- Transition: A Positive Start to School Resource Kit
- Transition Learning and Development Statement
- Guidelines to help families complete the Transition Learning and Development Statement – Part 1: the family
- Information Sheet for Families

2. Background information

Early childhood reform

The Victorian Government is committed to driving reform in early childhood. It began with the Premier’s Children’s Advisory Council which produced three Joining the Dots reports in 2004. These reports identified that integration between all services which support children and their families would help deliver better outcomes for children.

Joining the Dots also called for improvements in the quality of the early childhood service system and greater support for the early childhood workforce. It was the first document to mention an early learning framework that called for greater integration between early childhood education services and maternal and child health services.

These themes were continued and built on through A Fairer Victoria and the Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development.

Further information on policies and reforms can be found at http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/blueprint2008/appendix.htm
Victoria’s early childhood agenda

“Linking early childhood services and school education recognises that children’s development is a continuous process from birth to adulthood, and government services must reflect this to provide each child with the best opportunity.”

The Honourable John Brumby
Premier of Victoria
2 August 2007

Critical to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (‘Department’) is the opportunity to improve outcomes for children and families with a focus on learning and development for children and young people aged from birth to 24 years. The early childhood years—from birth to eight—focus on building continuity between the first years of schooling and the learning and development that precede these years.
Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development

The Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development ('Blueprint') released in 2008, sets the five year reform agenda for the Department and responds to new opportunities, including:

- Opportunities to build a more coordinated and integrated service system for children from birth to adulthood and, in particular, to integrate early childhood services and the school education system.
- Helping families support their children’s learning and development from early childhood and throughout school.
- Developing a birth to eight learning and development framework and common approaches to disability assessment and support.
- Implementing Transition Statements for children entering school.
- Joint professional learning between primary schools and early years services.

The Blueprint outlines three major strategies for reform:

1. **Partnerships with parents and communities**: Parents and families are valued partners in their children’s development and learning.

2. **System improvement**: All children and young people and their families have access to high quality schools and early childhood services

3. **Workforce reform**: Schools and early childhood services have skilled and committed staff who are supported to deliver their very best.

National Reform
The Commonwealth Government has recognised the importance of investing in early childhood education and care and committed to a range of reforms to drive quality improvement.

Through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), all States and Territories, in partnership with the Commonwealth Government, have agreed to:

- **A National Early Childhood Development Strategy** which provides the architecture for comprehensive and coordinated early childhood reform in Australia, which outlines an action plan for reforms in the early childhood area across Australia. The national strategy aligns with the Victoria’s own early childhood reforms.

- The four key elements of the **National Quality Agenda** are:
  - National Quality Standards
  - Enhanced regulatory arrangements
  - Quality rating system to drive continuous improvement and provide parents with robust and relevant information about the quality of care and learning
  - Early Years Learning Framework (National Framework).

- **Universal access to 15 hours of quality kindergarten** for four year olds.

Further information on the national reforms can be found at [http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Pages/default.aspx)

What exactly does this all mean?
The Victorian Framework and Transition Initiative—that this professional development resource is designed to explore—are products of the national and state early childhood reforms. They are key components in the delivery of reform and improvement of early childhood services in Victoria.

Children learn everywhere all of the time. It is now well recognised internationally that when children experience learning opportunities that are responsive to their strengths, interests, culture and abilities, and build on their previous experiences, their learning and development is enhanced.¹

This is known as continuity of learning and development.

The Victorian Framework promotes continuity of learning and development by providing all early childhood professionals with a common set of learning and development outcomes for all children birth to eight years and describing the most effective ways in which early childhood professionals can work with children and families to support children to achieve these outcomes. This means that no matter where they are, children in Victoria will experience continuity of learning and development from birth to eight years so that they can thrive, learn and grow.

¹ Moore (2008) Towards an Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, Centre for Community Child Health, Occasional Paper 4
The Victorian Framework does not replace the existing curricula, practice documents and other guidelines for early childhood professionals. Rather, it provides a common vision for children’s learning and development and a common way for all early childhood professionals to think about and talk about how best to support children to continue on their learning journey.

The work of educators in early childhood services for children aged birth to five is guided by the national Early Years Learning Framework (National Framework). The five learning outcomes of the National Framework are the same as the Victorian Framework and the pedagogy is also consistent. Educators looking for additional detail about early childhood pedagogy are advised to refer to the National Framework and the associated support material.

School teachers use the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) to guide children’s learning, and to guide the learning program in schools. The learning standards which children are expected to reach at school are outlined in the VELS. The Victorian Framework maps the five learning outcomes to the VELS to enable school teachers to see how the learning of each child in early childhood can be built on so that each child can achieve in the VELS.

Guiding school teachers’ interactions with children is the Principles of Learning and Teaching (POLT) and the E5 Instructional Model (E5)\(^2\). The Practice Principles of Learning and Development are underpinned by the POLT, the E5 and the early childhood pedagogy. School teachers use the common language created in the Victorian Framework to discuss children’s learning and development with other professionals, and refer to the VELS, POLT and E5 for more detailed information about children’s learning and how to support it in schools.

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\(^2\) E5 Instructional Model = Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate & Evaluate, more information at http://www.education.vic.gov.au/proflearning/e5/
3. Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

What is the Victorian Framework?
The Victorian Framework is a guide for families and all professionals involved with children’s learning and development from birth to eight years. It has been designed to:

- strengthen children’s learning and development
- enhance partnerships with families and early childhood professionals
- support children’s transitions both within early childhood services and at point of entry to school.

It provides information about how children learn and develop and how early childhood professionals can use this information to guide their partnerships with families and other professionals to improve outcomes for children.

The Victorian Framework describes common outcomes for children from birth to eight; the critical years of early childhood when brain development is at its peak.

Elements of the Victorian Framework
What is the purpose of the Victorian Framework?

The early years—from birth to eight years of age—is a vital and distinct period for learning and development when children acquire essential foundation skills and knowledge and when brain development is at its peak.

In this context the Victorian Framework:

- identifies what children should know and be able to do from birth to eight years
- promotes a common understanding of a child’s learning and development over this critical period of life for all professionals working with children aged birth to eight years
- supports continuity of learning across the birth to eight range
- acts as a support for integration of early childhood services.

How the Victorian Framework is linked with the National Framework and the Victorian Essential Learning Standards

The Victorian Framework takes the five learning outcomes and the pedagogy outlined in the National Framework and maps them to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) to describe what children should know and be able to do from birth to eight years and the ways in which all professionals can best support children’s learning and development.

The National Framework was launched by the Commonwealth Minister for Early Childhood with Premier John Brumby on 2 July 2009. It is designed to guide the work of all early childhood educators working with children from birth to five years.

The VELS is the Victorian school curriculum. Its first two levels relate specifically to the years prep, one and two.

The Victorian Framework promotes children’s learning and development from birth to eight years by providing all early childhood professionals with a common set of learning and development outcomes for all children, and describing the most effective ways in which early childhood professionals can work with children and families to support children to achieve these outcomes.
Belonging, Being and Becoming: the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia

The National Framework is part of the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) reform agenda for early childhood education and care and is a key component of the Australian Government’s National Quality Agenda for early childhood education and care.

The National Framework is for early childhood educators and aims to extend and enrich children’s learning from birth to five years and through the transition to school.

It describes the principles, practice and outcomes essential to support and enhance young children’s learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school. The National Framework has a strong emphasis on play-based learning as research has shown play is the best vehicle for young children’s learning, providing the most appropriate stimulus for brain development. The National Framework also recognises the importance of communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy) and social and emotional development.

The Victorian Framework shares the same learning outcomes as the National Framework.

Further information on the National Framework can be found at http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Policy_Agenda/Pages/home.aspx

Victorian Essential Learning Standards

The Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) set out the learning outcomes expected of all Victorian students from Prep to Year 10. The VELS overall aim is to equip students to manage themselves and their relations with others, to understand and to contribute to their world and to develop capacities to act effectively in the world.

The VELS are a framework for essential learning in two ways. First, the framework is based on the premise that there are three components of any curriculum which are necessary to enable students to meet the demands of a modern, globalised world. These components are:

- the processes of physical, personal and social development and growth
- the branches of learning reflected in the traditional disciplines
- the interdisciplinary capacities needed for effective functioning within and beyond school.

In the VELS, these components become the three core strands: Physical, Personal and Social Learning, Discipline-based Learning and Interdisciplinary Learning. Together the three strands provide the basis for students to develop deep understanding – an ability to take their learning and apply it to new and different circumstances.

Second, the VELS clarify the core elements of each component that students need to acquire if they are to succeed in further education, work and life.

Levels 1 and 2 of the VELS describe the learning outcomes for children in the first three years of school. The VELS emphasises that the first challenge at school is to become engaged behaviourally, emotionally and cognitively and that social engagement is critical to the development of cognitive skills.

At Level 1 (Prep) and Level 2 (Years 1 and 2) the standards focus largely on foundational literacy and numeracy skills and the development of physical, personal and social learning.
VICTORIAN ESSENTIAL LEARNING STANDARDS
A WHOLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Three interwoven purposes

To equip students with capacities to:
- manage themselves and their relations with others
- understand the world and
- act effectively in that world

This is achieved through the three core, interrelated strands of
- **Physical, Personal and Social Learning**
  - Knowledge, skills and behaviours in
    - Health and Physical Education; Personal Learning; Interpersonal Development; Civics and Citizenship
- **Curriculum based learning**
  - Knowledge, skills and behaviours in
    - The Arts; English and Languages Other Than English; The Humanities; Mathematics; Science
- **Interdisciplinary Learning**
  - Knowledge, skills and behaviours in
    - Communication; Design, Creativity and Technology; Information and Communication Technology; Thinking Processes

across the stages of learning

**Years Prep to 4**
Laying the foundations

**Years 5 to 8**
Building breadth and depth

**Years 9 to 10**
Developing pathways

To form

Victorian Essential Learning standards
a framework for whole school curriculum planning

Schools plan their teaching and learning programs, using the three strands, to enable:
their students to achieve the essential statewide learning standards.

Further information on the VELS can be found at [http://vels.vic.edu.au/](http://vels.vic.edu.au/)
The Victorian Early Years Learning Outcomes

The five learning outcomes in the Victorian Framework are as follows:

1. Children have a strong sense of identity (Identity)
2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world (Community)
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing (Wellbeing)
4. Children are confident and involved learners (Learning)
5. Children are effective communicators (Communication)

These outcomes can be used by professionals and families to guide their understanding of children’s learning and development.

The five outcomes provide a mechanism to begin to describe the broad accomplishments of children’s learning and development from birth. The learning outcomes help educators to consider differences in children's dispositions, learning styles and capacities, as well as in family and community expectations. This flexibility of the learning outcomes supports educators, families, children and local communities to negotiate priorities for children's learning and development.

Further information on the learning outcomes can be found on page 17-32 of the Victorian Framework.

Practice Principles for Learning and Development

The Practice Principles of Learning and Development outlined in the Victorian Framework are the foundations of professional practice for early childhood professionals working with children from birth to eight years in Victoria.

The Practice Principles are built on three fundamental commitments to professional practice in Victoria.

- **Collaborative:**
  - Family-centred practice
  - Partnerships with professionals
  - High expectations for every child

- **Effective:**
  - Equity and diversity
  - Respectful relationships and responsive engagement
  - Integrated teaching and learning approaches
  - Assessment for learning and development

- **Reflective:**
  - Reflective practice

Further information on the Practice Principles can be found on pages 9-14 of the Victorian Framework.

These principles have been built from the Principles of Learning and Teaching (POLT) in schools and the national Early Years Learning Framework.
4. Assessment and reporting for early childhood professionals

Victorian Framework – Assessing children’s learning

All approaches to assessment require educators, in partnership with children, parents and families and other educators to make sense of or interpret the information they have acquired.

In the Victorian Framework the five learning outcomes and their components provide educators with reference points for making sense of what they have learned about children’s learning and development. During the process of assessment using the learning outcomes, educators gain greater insight into children’s relationships, interactions, ways of participating, learning styles, responses to diversity, learning processes and dispositions, areas of interest and understanding of concepts.

Strength-based assessment

Credit-based Model

Carr\(^3\) emphasises the importance of credit-based (rather than deficit-based) model of assessment. A credit or strength-based model builds on what the child can do and takes an holistic view of learning and development, based on tracking the child’s dispositions, achievements and progress over time.

Features of a strength-based model include:

- its purpose to enhance learning
- the outcomes focus on learning dispositions
- the focus for intervention is credit-based; what the child has already mastered and disposition-enhancing is prioritised
- validity is determined by the focus on the child in context: interpretations of observations, discussions and agreements
- progression is identified as increasingly complex participation across a range of contexts: learning stories map progression and achievements over time
- the value to practitioners is communicating with four audiences: children, families, other staff and themselves.\(^4\).

\(^3\) Assessment in Early Childhood Settings: Learning Stories, Margaret Carr, 2001

\(^4\) Extracted from Play, learning and the early childhood curriculum, Elizabeth Wood & Jane Attfield, 1996
Approaches to assessment

Approaches to planning learning programs vary, but always involve three interconnected learning processes: planning, facilitating and assessing learning. The Victorian Framework supports these processes by providing a ‘scaffold’ or ‘frame’ upon which to develop high quality learning programs for young children.

Processes of Planning Learning Programs

Assessment for, as and of learning

Children’s learning becomes visible and assessable through what they do, say, make or write/draw. Broadly speaking, there are three main approaches to the assessment of learning and development in early childhood education:

**Assessment for learning** extends children’s learning by enhancing teaching. It is formative, occurring continuously throughout the learning process rather than at the end. Assessment for learning enhances the teaching process as educators develop a deeper understanding of the children with whom they work. What they have learned in their interactions with children, inform plans for ongoing learning. Assessment for learning is enriched when children, families and all educators are actively involved in the process.

**Assessment as learning** occurs when educators recognise the process of assessment as a powerful tool for learning. Assessment processes used as learning involve discussion with children, documenting learning together, enabling children to learn about themselves as learners and develop an understanding of how they learn. This occurs as educators and children talk about learning as it occurs, reflect on learning that has happened and plan together for future learning. Using assessment as learning requires the educator to view young children as competent, capable and active learners who are able to lead their own learning.
Assessment of learning emphasises the summative aspects of assessment and confirms what children know, understand and can do. Typically occurring at the end of a learning experience or at transition points in a child’s educational journey, it can also assist when educators or families have concerns about children’s learning or development. As with all approaches to assessment, the assessment of children’s learning is enriched when children, parents and families, educators and other professionals are actively involved in the assessment process.

These approaches to assessment help children, families and educators to know what children understand, know and can do. This knowledge guides educators in their interactions with young children and informs plans for future learning.

The term **formative** describes assessment processes that are ongoing and occur throughout the learning process. They contribute to children's learning by enhancing teaching.

The term **summative** is used to describe assessment processes that typically occur at the end of a learning experience or activity and ‘sum up’ what has been learned.

Assessment also assists in identifying where children and families may require additional support.

*Including children, families and other professionals in the development and implementation of relevant and appropriate assessment processes allows for new understandings to emerge that are not possible if educators rely solely on their own strategies and perspectives. Developing inclusive assessment practices with children and their families demonstrates respect for diversity, helps educators make better sense of what they have observed and supports learning for both children and adults.*

Assessment, when undertaken in collaboration with families, can assist families to support children’s learning and empower them to act on behalf of their children beyond the early childhood setting. When children are included in the assessment process they can develop an understanding of themselves as learners and an understanding of how they learn best.⁵

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 and settings that collect information about a child’s learning and development throughout the first eight years of their life. These services include, but are not limited to, Maternal and Child Health Services and Early Childhood Intervention Services.

These assessments all address the specific needs of the child and their family at various points throughout early childhood. The Transition Learning and Development Statement addresses a specific need to provide relevant, timely information to schools, particularly Prep teachers, so that they can plan to support the continuity of learning and development of individual children. It provides a common tool for families to collate and communicate any of the information they have that is relevant to supporting their child as they transition to school.

⁵ Being, Belonging and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, 2009
Documenting learning

Documenting children’s learning involves collecting information and examples that detail and describe the diverse ways that children engage as learners in early childhood settings. Rich documentation incorporates multiple perspectives on a learning episode and captures and illustrates the complex nature of children’s learning. It places what is important to children in the foreground and emphasises the connected nature of learning (Carr 2001).

Documentation of a learning experience makes children’s learning ‘visible’ to children, families and educators. Used as a learning tool, it can assist children to develop an understanding of themselves as a learner and an awareness of how they learn. In addition, documentation serves as a form of accountability since it provides rich evidence of children’s learning in an early childhood setting.

Methods to document children’s learning

A range of methods can be used to document children’s learning. Educators make choices about the most appropriate methods depending on what they want to understand. The list below describes a range of methods that educators can use to document children’s learning in relation to the five learning outcomes in the Victorian Framework.

**Anecdotes:** Usefull for depicting children’s participation in individual and shared play experiences and processes of learning such as exploring, problem solving, hypothesising and researching. Anecdotes can also record verbal and non-verbal interactions in play and children’s emerging autonomy, interdependence, resilience and sense of agency. They can also note how children function in their attachment relationships and friendships and record their physical activity.

**Audio recordings:** Useful in documenting, sharing and revisiting children’s words, conversations, poems and songs.

**Checklists and rating scales:** Useful in providing a summary of children’s learning in a particular area such as physical development. They do not provide sufficient information to be useful for sharing with families or for planning to extend learning.

**Comments, narratives or explanations:** When made by children about their paintings, drawings and constructions, and the processes they engaged in, can provide insights into their processes of learning.

**Diagrams and sketches:** When made by educators of children’s play or the children themselves can show children’s capacity to investigate and manipulate resources and to take on different roles. Diagrams of children’s constructions can also reveal their use of shape, size and or colour to create patterns. Children’s plans or diagrams of completed constructions also demonstrate their emerging understanding of space and perspective.

**Jottings:** Brief notes that can include words used in interactions, the context for a photograph or sample, or an explanation of the processes a child or group of children engage in to create a product. These might include details about how children manipulate tools or their engagement in types of physical activities.

**Learning stories:** (Carr, 2001) Focus on children’s strengths, interests, actions and dispositions and are useful for documenting their involvement in learning, including communication, interactions and collaboration. Learning stories can be effective for capturing children’s dramatic play episodes as well as the different roles and contributions of each child. They can also document how children approach challenging tasks, demonstrate persistence and resolve situations of conflict.
**Lists of texts:** Texts that children engage with can indicate their engagement and interests. When family members and children also contribute to this list, children’s interest in a particular topic or in different types of texts such as magazines or computer-based texts can be identified.

**Pictorial graphs and charts:** Created by children on paper or screen to indicate features such as the frequency of an event or the growth of something over time can provide insights into children’s understanding of numeracy concepts such as measurement.

**Photographs:** Depicting children’s play and interactions can capture their investigations and are particularly useful for documenting very young children’s exploration. They can also demonstrate children’s curiosity and their interest in and appreciation of the natural environment and their attempts at a new task or skill. Children can take photographs of their own experiences—for example, their participation in movement, drama, dance and physical activities, including their mobility and dexterity with small tools.

**Running records:** Detailed narratives of children’s learning, running records often focus on one child’s learning and are written as learning is occurring. They are useful to capture details of social interactions and conversations between children. They can also be used to record a child’s reading or retelling of a familiar book.

**Samples of drawing and painting:** Created with paper and/or on screen and descriptive accounts of the processes children engaged in to create these works demonstrate ways in which children experiment with resources and explore colour, line and patterns. For older children drawing and painting will also indicate how they use visual arts to express ideas and make meaning. A series of samples can also illustrate children’s persistence and achievement of mastery over time. Displays of children’s work can also enhance their pride in their finished products.

**Samples of writing:** Marks, scribble writing, letters, numerals and words created on paper and/or on screen, demonstrate children’s interest in print and emerging understanding of symbols, letters, words and numerals. Descriptive accounts of the processes children engaged in to create these works provide further insights into their understanding about the processes of writing.

**Storylines:** Useful in documenting children’s dramatic play scripts and illustrating their understanding of relationships, character and plot.

**Texts:** Created by children can provide insights into their use of different media to create meaning. These could be print-based or multimodal texts such as a book with drawings and text or music and spoken words created by children on a music player, computer or paper.

**Transcripts of conversations:** Between an adult and a child or group of children, capture children’s language and conversation skills along with their ideas, questions and reflections. These transcripts can also depict children’s contributions to play and their responses to diversity, awareness of and respect for others’ perspectives and understanding of fairness and social justice. Children’s conversations can also provide evidence of their capacity to cooperate and negotiate and to share in group decisions.

**Video recordings:** Children’s explorations, physical play, movement, dance, dramatic play and performances can capture many aspects of children’s learning such as their use of their bodies, spatial awareness, exploration of different roles and identities and use of creative arts to express meaning. Videos can also record children’s levels of confidence and willingness to share aspects of their culture and home life with others.
**Webs:** Children’s thoughts about a particular topic can capture their ideas and questions as well as their capacity to make connections and generalise. When webs are completed at different stages during children’s investigations and projects, they can provide insights into the growing complexity of children’s understanding and the language they use to talk about these ideas. The addition of photographs and drawings can assist in capturing the ideas of younger children as well as those children with emerging language skills.

**Word lists:** Useful to document the words used by infants and toddlers, children with language delays and children learning English as a second language. These are most effective when compiled in collaboration with family members and when there are examples of words used in context.

Tools such as notepads, sticky notes, audio recorders (cassette tapes, MP3s, etc.), cameras and DVD or video recorders make it possible to record children’s ideas, actions and language. These tools also enable educators to make the most effective use of time and resources to collect meaningful data about individuals and groups of children and to capture the richness of children’s interactions and relationships and the co-construction of knowledge.

The following table outlines some useful phrases to assist educators to describe children’s learning and development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USEFUL PHRASES TO DESCRIBE CHILDREN’S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What does the child do, say, make, write or draw?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>React</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Making sense of children’s learning

While documentation makes children’s learning visible to children, families and other educators, it is not, in and of itself, assessment of children’s learning. All approaches to assessment require educators in partnership with children, parents and families and other educators, to make sense of or interpret the information they have acquired.

Educators draw on their own educational philosophies and a range of theoretical perspectives that explain how children learn and develop. Educators may find that different theoretical perspectives can be useful in providing different insights to children’s learning. For example, developmental perspectives can be useful in analysing children’s use of fine motor and gross motor skills, while post-structural perspectives can be useful in analysing children’s relationships, such as the extent to which particular children are included in or excluded from play. The learning outcomes of the Victorian Framework also provide educators with reference points for making sense of children’s learning.

Including colleagues with different experiences and qualifications, as well as families and children, brings multiple perspectives to the information that has been gathered and provides new insights into children’s learning. Collaborative partnerships encourage children and families to contribute examples of children’s experiences and learning at home. These contribute to interpretations and allow for the expression of diverse ideas and lead to the emergence of new insights.

Facilitating children’s ongoing learning

Processes of using children’s learning to support learning

As educators make sense of children’s learning, they gain greater insight into children’s relationships, interactions, ways of participating, learning styles, responses to diversity, learning processes and dispositions, areas of interest and understanding of concepts. Educators make good use of assessment information to:

- interact with children in learning experiences and activities
- promote sustained shared thinking
- initiate conversations with children
• offer feedback to children that sustains, extends or challenges children’s thinking about what they are doing and learning
• model thinking to children
• plan effectively for children’s current and future learning
• communicate about children’s learning and progress
• determine the extent to which all children are progressing toward realising learning outcomes, and if not, identify what might be impeding their progress
• identify children who may need additional support in order to achieve particular outcomes and provided that support or assist families to access specialist help
• evaluate the effectiveness of learning opportunities, environments and experiences offered and the approaches they take to enable children’s learning
• reflect on approaches to pedagogy that are responsive to the context of the early childhood setting.

Principles of assessment in the school system

There is substantial research on the characteristics of good practice for assessing student learning. This research is summarised in Current Perspectives on Assessment⁶ and in the following set of principles.

1. **The primary purpose of assessment is to improve children’s learning**

   Good assessment is based on a vision of the kind of learning we most value for students and how they might best achieve these. It sets out to measure what matters most.

2. **Assessment should be based on an understanding of how children learn**

   Assessment is most effective when it reflects the fact that learning is a complex process that is multi-dimensional, integrated and revealed in children’s learning over time.

3. **Assessment should be an integral component of course design and not something to add afterwards**

   The teaching and learning elements of each program should be designed in full knowledge of the sorts of assessment children will undertake and vice versa, so that children can demonstrate what they have learned and see the results of their efforts.

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⁶ Current Perspectives on Assessment is available online at
4. **Good assessment provides useful information to report credibly to families on children’s learning**

A variety of assessment methods provides educators with evidence of what children know and can do, and their particular strengths. Educators then can report to families on their child’s learning throughout the year and what can be done to enhance their learning.

5. **Good assessment requires clarity of purpose, goals, standards and criteria**

Assessment works best when it is based on clear statements of purpose and goals for the course, the standards which children are expected to achieve, and the criteria against which we measure success. Assessment criteria in particular need to be understandable and explicit so students know what is expected of them from each assessment they encounter. Educators, children and families should all be able to see why assessment is being used and the reasons for choosing each individual form of assessment in its particular context.

6. **Good assessment requires a variety of measures**

Generally, a single assessment instrument will not tell all we need to know about children’s learning and how it can be improved. Therefore, we need to be familiar with a variety of assessment tools so we can match them closely to the type of information we seek.

7. **Assessment methods used should be valid, reliable and consistent**

Assessment instruments and processes chosen should directly measure what they are intended to measure. They should include the possibility of moderation between educators, where practical and appropriate, to enhance objectivity and contribute to a shared understanding of the judgments that are made.

8. **Assessment requires attention to outcomes and processes**

Summative information about children’s learning is very important, but so too is formative information. Formative information provides children, educators and families with information about a child’s learning experiences along the way and the kind of effort that led to the learning outcomes.

9. **Assessment works best when it is ongoing rather than episodic**

Children’s learning is best fostered when assessment involves a linked series of activities undertaken over time, so that progress is monitored towards the intended course goals and the achievement of relevant standards.

10. **Assessment for improved performance involves feedback and reflection**

All assessment methods should allow children to receive feedback on their learning so assessment serves as a developmental activity aimed at improving children’s learning. Assessment should also provide children, educators and families with opportunities to reflect on both their practice and their learning overall.

The information contained in this section has been drawn from the Early Years Learning Framework: A Guide for Educators and Current Perspectives on Assessment.
Activity 1: Assessing and describing children’s learning

Assessing children’s learning and development is one of the key professional skills of the early childhood educator.

Assessing children’s learning is a combination of informed professional observation and judgement which is shaped by an understanding of how children’s development progresses. The Victorian Framework provides a basis for observing and reporting on children’s learning and development.

Instructions

Appendix A contains a number of descriptive sentences grouped in the five learning outcomes.

1. Select five descriptive sentences you feel should be included in Transition Learning and Development Statement for a particular child. Identify and describe your reasons for why you would include certain statements and exclude others.

In doing this you may consider matters such as:

• Does the descriptive sentence deal with the relevant issue under the Victorian Framework?

• Is it expressed objectively or does it provide a subjective interpretation of the child’s development?

• Does the descriptive sentence include evidence of observations to support its assessment conclusions?

• Does the descriptive sentence provide useful information for a Prep teacher to plan transition support or develop learning programs that are responsive to the needs of the children?

2. Select five descriptive sentences you feel should not be included in the Transition Learning and Development Statement.

When making your selection, consider:

• What you think the early childhood educator was trying to convey?

• How you could rewrite the descriptive sentence to improve it?

Appendix A

A summary of feedback from educators who participated in face-to-face professional development sessions is included after the activity so you can reflect on your selections.
5. Transition Learning and Development Statement

How will the Transition Learning and Development Statement be used?
The Transition Statement provides an opportunity for children, their families and professionals to contribute to the child’s transition to school.

The Transition Statement:

- Summarises each child’s strengths
- Identifies the child’s approaches to learning
- Notes their interests
- Indicates how they can be supported.

The Transition Statement is one part of the process of transition.

The Transition Statements will help Prep teachers get a better understanding of the children prior to them coming into their classes and ensure continuity of learning and development for each child is achieved.

This information will be used to effectively plan transition activities and class activities keeping in mind children’s individual requirements.

Who is the Transition Learning and Development Statement for?
The Transition Statement contains two parts: Part 1 for the family and Part 2 for the Educator. There is an optional section for families of children with an additional learning need, a disability or developmental delay (Part 1, Section C).

The Transition Statement provides valuable information for children and their families, and professionals in early childhood services, outside school hours care services and schools. The information assists educators in getting to know the children entering their classes and plan curriculum which builds on their previous learning and development.
Who develops the Transition Learning and Development Statement?

The Transition Statement is developed by the family and educator on behalf of the child. However, the decision about whether the information can be forwarded to school 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 families in developing a clear understanding of the information contained in the Statement. It is important that early childhood educators work with families to develop a clear understanding of the importance of sharing information with the school about their child’s learning and development, and how it will improve the support for their child.

Where families have concerns about the information contained in the Transition Statement, early childhood educators should identify what the issues are and the reason for their concerns. By working in partnership with families early childhood educators can remain better informed about family perspectives, assist to resolve any issues and improve families’ understanding of the information to ensure they are able to 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 the continuity of learning and development for their child.
Steps to completing the Transition Learning and Development Statement

The flow chart below shows the steps to completing the Transition Statement in what is considered to be ‘usual circumstances’.

Where a child is enrolled in multiple schools, the family becomes responsible for forwarding the Transition Statement to the school the child attends.

Transition: A Positive Start to School
Steps to completing the Transition Learning and Development Statement

**STEP 1**
The Early Childhood Educator gives the Parent/Guardian: Transition Learning Development Statement – Part 1: the family
Information sheet for families and the Guidelines to help families complete the Transition Learning and Development Statement – Part 1: the family

**STEP 1A**
The Parent/Guardian fills out Part 1: the family of the Transition Statement
The Parent/Guardian may choose not to complete Part 1 of the Statement, however, the remaining steps must still be completed.

**STEP 2**
The Early Childhood Educator fills out Transition Learning Development Statement – Part 2: the early childhood educator

**STEP 3**
The Early Childhood Educator compiles the full Transition Statement and gives it to the Parent/Guardian to review and asks for signed consent to share the information in the Transition Statement with the School and Outside School Hours Care provider

If the Parent/Guardian does not consent to share the information in the Statement a full copy is provided to the Parent/Guardian and the original kept on file at the Service

**STEP 4**
The Parent/Guardian signs consent section of the Transition Statement
The Statement cannot be shared without consent

**STEP 5**
The Early Childhood Educator shares the the information in the Transition Statement with the School and Outside School Hours Care provider (where applicable)

Copy of completed Transition Statement sent to School
Copy of completed Transition Statement sent to OSHC
Critical elements to be addressed under the learning outcomes

An extensive trialling process of the Transition Statement was undertaken which involved a diverse range of early childhood educators from early childhood settings and schools. This trial explored and highlighted important information the Transition Statement should include to best describe children’s learning and development.

Joint agreement was reached regarding the following critical elements which provide useful information under the learning outcomes in the Victorian Framework.

Identity

- Self regulation (separation, anxiety)
- Interact in relation to others with care empathy and respect
- Confidence
- Independence and autonomy
- Resilience
- Feeling safe and supported

It is worth noting that independence is more about a child’s sense of self rather than self care skills, which comes under Wellbeing.

Community

- Participating in groups (turn taking, sharing, helping peers)
- Respect for environment, community and self (and belongings)
- Respect and value diversity, social inclusion (indigenous, additional needs)
- Understanding learning in social context (following instruction, coping change, routines)

Wellbeing

- Recognising and expressing emotions appropriately
- Gross/fine motor and sensory skills
- Awareness and understanding of self safety
- Self care skills (toileting, dressing themselves)
- Interact with others and build relationships

Self safety is seen as particularly important information for Prep teachers in the context of larger play areas in schools.
Learning

- Collaborative learning (small and large group participation)
- Initiating activities independently and exploration
- Play and learning styles
- Persistence and concentration
- Share knowledge with other children and adults through range of mediums
- Dispositions of learning (curiosity)

Communication

- Oral language skills (strong emphasis)
  - Verbal/non verbal communication (speaking, listening and comprehension, responding appropriately, recall and retell stories, personal connections, receptive and expressive language)
  - Language background (ESL, English proficiency, other language proficiency)
- Engagement with texts (including concepts of print)
- Understanding of symbols and patterns
- Expression of ideas and ability to make meaning from a range of media
How should the Transition Learning and Development Statement be used in schools?

The primary purpose is to transfer information to families and primary schools to:

- assist planning of curriculum which builds on individual child strengths and their previous learning
- identify special/additional needs and plan support
- assist in planning for the child to settle into school (using identified strategies to support children during transition)
- help the child feel safe and comfortable about school
- help early childhood educators and Prep teachers speak the same language and communicate the support needs for children and their families during transition to school
- facilitate a team approach and support collaborative practise
- assist schools to form classes
- support the continuity of learning for a child.
Activity 2: Evaluating the Transition Learning and Development Statement

There are four Transition Learning and Development Statements in Appendix B which have been compiled from versions provided by early childhood educators who participated in trialling the Transition Statement.

Instructions
1. Evaluate each of the four Transition Statement examples in terms of the following criteria:
   - Do these statements provide adequate descriptions in terms of the five outcomes of a child's development?
   - Do these statements provide tangible evidence to support the evaluations?
   - Are these statements expressed in appropriate professional language?
   - Do these statements represent the interests of the family adequately?
   - Do these statements provide appropriate guidance for prep teachers?
2. For each of the four Transition Statement examples, note a short statement evaluating their usefulness as transition statements.

Appendix B
A summary of feedback from educators who participated in face-to-face professional development sessions is included after the examples so you can reflect on your evaluations.
6. 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 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.

**Consent**

The Transition 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 provide 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 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 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 participate in completing the Transition Statement, the early childhood educator can still complete Part 2 of the Statement and give it to the family. No part of the Transition 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 a simple guide, it is easy to do the right thing.

Information is available to guide you in upholding privacy principles and protecting information in a child’s Transition Statement. The Transition Statement has been developed to meet privacy requirements.

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.

Appendix A

Activity 1: Descriptive statements for each learning outcome

Below are a number of statements against each learning outcome. Select the five statements you feel should and five statements you feel should not be included in a Transition Learning and Development Statement.

Outcome One: Children have a strong sense of identity

1. Child is developing his understanding of the rules and responsibilities necessary for successful relationships and friendships.

2. He asserts himself during conflicts and will also respond physically.

3. Child attempts to instigate interactions with peers physically by poking them or attempting to hug them quite forcefully. This is his way of getting attention but understandably, others do not often react positively. He rarely speaks to them first.

4. Child moves smoothly between transition periods and adjusts well to new situations. She self-selects a wide range of experiences and benefits from pre-warning and sufficient time to adjust before moving.

5. Child plays cooperatively with others, taking turns in negotiating play. She uses thinking skills to resolve conflict.

6. Child demonstrates a clear sense of identity. He knows he is valued and his contributions are useful and respected. He is thoughtful about people, places, animals, things and more.

7. Child is able to demonstrate pride in his own work. He participates in dramatic play taking on different roles. He is able to recognise his roles in the environment.

8. Child needs to be challenged and will rise to these challenges and is able to persist if these challenges are difficult.

9. Child has developed his confidence in feeling safe and secure in his environment. Child has built a strong attachment to his prime caregiver and over the past term has developed a relationship with other staff when in the room. He now confidently expresses his needs/wants to staff. He has developed his independence especially at managing his belongings.

10. Child always comes into his kindergarten with a smile. He happily separates from his family and likes to explore the setting and show us new physical skills such as jumping before he then begins to involve himself in play.

11. Child is always eager to talk about his home environment and his family in both English and Somali and to share their stories with us.

12. Child is independent and can easily assert her own needs to teachers and peers. She can make her own decisions and when she experiences difficulties she can seek help from a teacher. She displays strong foundations in her own culture and a particular interest in learning about the cultures of others.
13. Child is a sensitive child who after a hesitant start is now establishing sound relationships with peers and has developed strong attachment to staff and to two particular children. Makes comments about the children's actions and play.

14. Resistance behaviours have decreased. He knows his own name and has learned some of the other children's names.

15. Child is beginning to develop a sense of autonomy and has developed feelings of empathy towards his peers.

Outcome Two: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

1. When the child is given the opportunity to participate in small groups he has a much better chance of being an active contributor to the group.

2. Child is well liked by his peers and has few beginning relationships, but his preference is to play either alone or alongside others.

3. He is involved in music sessions - singing, moving, playing and creating.

4. He has begun to be very playful and responds positively to others.

5. When asked, the child is able to take on classroom roles e.g. leader, follower, helper. With support he shares his personal experiences as a member of the family, community and class e.g. "I have two brothers" or "I saw a lady at the shop".

6. Child is a responsible member of the class.

7. The child is progressing in listening to the ideas of others and understanding of negotiating relationships in play with others e.g. if a child doesn't want to play with her she believes that they are not her friend.

8. With explicit support he shows some interest in exploring what is fair or unfair in interactions and, with encouragement, will participate in the kinder routine and the environment.

9. One of his favourite pretend games is to make the noise of the telephone. He speaks aloud to the teacher and then talks to the teacher on the phone, hangs-up and then repeats the play, often screaming with delight.
Outcome Three: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

1. Child loves drawing and is enjoying writing stories about his drawings and his sense of humour shines through this.

2. He calls out “watch me” as he shows us his hopping on one foot or the new break dance he has learned from his brother.

3. Child sometimes finds challenges and change confronting. She benefits from educator support to fully assess the program during these times.

4. When in solitary play, the child is always willing to allow peers to enter into her world with a friendly smile.

5. He is extremely competent in managing his own health and hygiene and is developing an awareness of safety issues and how these may impact on him.

6. With adult encouragement - beginning to accept challenges and take calculated risks. With support - able to judge body space in relation to other children during games. The child uses familiar equipment, materials, tools and objects with increasing coordination and strengthen control, although his rhythm of movements may be a irregular.

7. He has a left hand preference and a precise script when manipulating familiar equipment, materials, tools and objects.

8. With occasional prompts the child is able to make choices to maintain his own personal safety.

9. Child is a happy, easy going child, who enjoys sharing herself with those around her.

10. Child is able to articulate his physical and emotional needs and take responsibility for meeting those needs. For example, he reflects on what clothing is appropriate for the weather and makes necessary changes with complete independence.

11. He enjoys laughing and is developing his own unique sense of humour.

12. Child coordinates his body movements to climb and use equipment well and is able to manipulate small items with increasing control, including pencils and construction pieces.

13. Using concrete objects and photos to show her steps to hand-washing, toileting, opening lunchbox, for example, have been successful in supporting her self-care skills.

14. With staff assistance, child is beginning to use a choice board to make choices of activities.

15. We have seen child’s fine motor skills really improve this year.
Outcome Four: Children are confident and involved learners

1. Child's fine motor skills are still developing and he is beginning to attend these types of experiences of his own free choice.

2. He has an amazing memory.

3. With support child observes and discusses obvious relationships by comparing e.g. "I am taller than you", exploring cause-and-effect relationships, e.g. mixes colours together and observes changes, and exploring part/whole relationships, explores how to put pieces together in a puzzle or combines materials in a collage.

4. Child makes simple plans and chooses materials and actions asking for help when needed e.g. "I'm going to make a robot; I'll need some paper, glue and scissors. I will need some crayons to colour".

5. Child is able to use a range of tools independently and successfully. His sensory issues have really lessened this year although he really still enjoys all types of tactile experiences.

6. Interested in all that is happening within programme.

7. Develops ideas for play.

8. Child has established her ability to extend her own interests with enthusiasm and energy.

9. Child is curious and interested in all that is going on around him. He is beginning to use reflective thinking to consider why things happened.

10. Child likes to predict what will happen to other children while they are working i.e. if they build it too high the blocks will fall, being careful with scissors etc. Child likes to use books to helping gain more knowledge about things that interest him. He knows that the Internet can give you information about Batman and asks how to use these with the teachers.

11. Child is always fascinated with the introduction of new interest areas. She asks questions and is always willing to engage in activities. She perseveres with activities always seeing them through to completion.

12. He has a fantastic memory for the actions and words to songs and games. He enjoys playing games of "the same and different" and will often point out things within our environment which are the same with great delight. He has just recently started to use sticks to "write" and draw patterns in the mud. He has been very interested in the patterns he is making spending lengthy periods of time at these experiences.
Outcome Five: Children are effective communicators

1. In his enthusiasm to pass on information he often speaks very quickly and at times out of context. Encouraging him to slow his speech down, assists in his ability to express his thoughts and needs.

2. He is beginning to develop an understanding of basic literacy and community concepts.

3. He loves to contribute to group times; his contribution is often focusing on what he is thinking about rather than what is being discussed.

4. The child has mature and well-developed communication skills. He uses these with confidence in play situations and with most group situations.

5. Her drawing is at the representational stage.

6. She loves books.

7. Child speaks confidently in Somali to his friends and speaks to non-Somali speaking teachers and children in English.

8. Able to use language and loves to engage in symbolic play. She describes what you need to do when you are a mum - feed your baby, bath your baby etc.

9. Child’s first language is Somali. Is attending speech therapy to assist his language development. He uses simple sentences from a limited vocabulary to describe objects and people.

10. The child displays reading behaviours e.g. hold book right way, turns pages, makes meaning from pictures. He shows an interest in familiar texts such as toy catalogues and magazines. He is able to recognise and label some letters and numbers and count in rote to ten and count small collection of objects to five.
Activity 1: Educators’ feedback

During the professional development sessions, samples of statements considered to be most useful and least useful were identified by early childhood educators. They have been listed below for your reference.

Outcome One: Children have a strong sense of identity

Most useful

3. Child attempts to instigate interactions with peers physically by poking them or attempting to hug them quite forcefully. This is his way of getting attention but understandably others do not often react positively. He rarely speaks to them first

This offers useful information to teachers and allows them to prepare a strategy for assisting the child’s development

10. Child always comes into his kindergarten with a smile. He happily separates from his family and likes to explore the setting and show us new physical skills such as jumping before he then begins to involve himself in play.

Offers useful information to the school teacher regarding the child’s sense of autonomy

11. Child is always eager to talk about his home environment and his family in both English and Somali and to share their stories with us.

Provides information about the child being bilingual and which languages he/she speaks

Least Useful

2. He asserts himself during conflicts and will also respond physically.

Possibly labels the child negatively and is open to interpretation

7. Child is able to demonstrate pride in his own work. He participates in dramatic play taking on different roles. He is able to recognise his roles in the environment.

Does not offer useful information to the Prep teacher and would be better accompanied with an example to clearly describe the child’s learning and development

13. Child is a sensitive child who after a hesitant start is now establishing sound relationships with their peers and has developed strong attachment to staff and to 2 particular children. Makes comments about the children’s actions and play.

The information is not current and does not provide useful information for the Prep teacher
Outcome Two: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

**Most Useful**

1. When the child is given the opportunity to participate in small groups he has a much better chance of being an active contributor to the group.

   Offers a strategy for the prep teacher to use to assist with the child’s learning and development

3. He is involved in music sessions - singing, moving, playing creating.

   Provides useful information on the child’s interests

7. The child is progressing in listening to the ideas of others and an understanding of negotiating relationships in play with others e.g. if a child doesn't want to play with her she believes that they are not her friend.

   Gives specific information on the child’s development and offers an example

**Least Useful**

4. He has begun to be very playful and responds positively to others.

   The statement is too general and would be better with an example

6. Child is a responsible member of the class

   This is vague information and to open to interpretation, it would be more useful if accompanied by an example

9. One of his favourite pretend games is to make the noise of the telephone, he speaks aloud to the teacher and then talks to the teacher on the phone, hangs-up and then repeats the play, often screaming with delight.

   This statement does not offer clear information about the child’s learning or development
Outcome Three: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

**Most Useful**

10. Child is able to articulate his physical and emotional needs and take responsibility for meeting those needs. For example, he reflects on what clothing is appropriate for the weather and makes necessary changes with complete independence.

This statement paints a good picture of the child for the Prep teacher

5. He is extremely competent in managing his own health and hygiene and is developing an awareness of safety issues and how these may impact on him.

Information highlights the child’s self management skills which is informative and relevant to the learning outcome

6. With adult encouragement is beginning to accept challenges and take calculated risks. With support is able to judge body space in relation to other children during games. The child uses familiar equipment materials, tools and objects with increasing coordination, strengthen control, although his rhythm of movements may be a irregular

A good amount of clear and specific information is offered about the child

7. He has a left hand preference and a precise script when manipulating familiar equipment, materials tools and objects.

This statement provides clear information of the child’s left handedness and fine motor skills

**Least Useful**

2. He calls out “watch me” as he shows us his hopping on 1 foot or the new breakdance he has learned from his brother.

This statement does not offer clear information about the child’s learning or development

11. He enjoys laughing and is developing his own unique sense of humour

This statement does not offer clear information about the child’s learning or development

15. We have seen child’s fine motor skills really improve this year.

Does not offer any clear information with regard to the level of improvement and final capability
Outcome Four: Children are confident and involved learners

**Most Useful**

3. With support child observes and discusses obvious relationships by comparing e.g. "I am taller than you", exploring cause-and-effect relationships, e.g. mixes colours together and observes changes, and exploring part whole relationships, explores how to put pieces together in a puzzle or combines materials in a collage.

This statement is informative with good examples

11. Child is always fascinated the introduction of new interest areas. She asks questions and is always willing to engage in activities. She perseveres with activities always seeing them through to completion.

Offers a good description of the child’s learning and development in relation to the learning outcome

12. He has a fantastic memory to the actions and words to songs and games. He enjoys playing games of "the same and different" and will often point out things within our environment which are the same with great delight. He has just recently started to use sticks to "Write" and draw patterns in the mud. He has been very interested in the patterns he is making spending lengthy periods of time at these experiences.

This statement offers a clear example of the child’s actions

**Least Useful**

2. He has an amazing memory.

This statement is too vague and open to interpretation

7. Develops ideas for play.

With no example offered, this offers little information on the child’s learning and development
Outcome Five: Children are effective communicators

Most Useful

1. In his enthusiasm to pass on information he often speaks very quickly and at times out of context. Encouraging him to slow his speech down and assists in his ability to express his thoughts and needs.

Offers a strategy for the Prep teacher to assist with the child’s learning and development

9. Child’s first language is Somali. Is attending speech therapy to assist his language development. He uses simple sentences from a limited vocabulary to describe objects and people

Provides useful and relevant information to the Prep teacher

Least Useful

2. He is beginning to develop an understanding of basic literacy and community concepts.

This statement is too vague and open to interpretation, more information is needed

6. She loves books

More details regarding the child’s learning would make this statement more valuable, such as the child’s familiarity with concepts of print, her ability to read and retell stories
Appendix B

Activity 2: Example statements
These are the four Transition Learning and Development Statement examples which have been compiled from versions provided by early childhood educators who participated in trialling the Transition Statement.

Example: Statement One
The context of the early years setting
The Child attended this kindergarten for three year old kindergarten and has attended 10.5 hours per week over 3 three and half hour sessions this year.

The kindergarten offers a play based curriculum, with children encouraged to make independent activity choices, both indoors and outdoors. Children are expected to participate in group sessions and snack time is a whole group activity.

Things that might help the child settle into school
The Child is a strong character and is confident and enthusiastic to learn and engage with others. I feel he will settle easily into school. He will enjoy opportunities to contribute to the group and will confidently take to leadership and mentoring roles.

IDENTITY – The child’s sense of identity
The Child is confident and comfortable at kindergarten. He initiates and joins in play with his immediate friends and others. He interacts and talks confidently and easily about his own experiences and observations with staff and peers. He shows an awareness and concern for the needs of others and is interested in all that is happening around him. He is aware and comfortable with his own culture.

COMMUNITY – The child’s connection with and contribution to their world
The Child shows awareness of children’s differences within the group and interacts positively to be inclusive.

He contributes positively to group decision making and shares his knowledge and experiences with the group. He follows kindergarten rules and routines confidently.

The Child uses play to investigate and explore new ideas. He co-operates and works collaboratively, often taking the role of leader.

WELLBEING – The child’s sense of wellbeing
The Child participates enthusiastically in physical play activities. He runs, jumps, climbs and participates in all play activities confidently. He is independent in personal hygiene, care and safety.
He makes choices, accepts challenges and takes considered risks. He manages change and copes with frustration and the unexpected easily and calmly.

The Child is assertive and independent and often takes a leading role in play.

**LEARNING – The child’s confidence and involvement in learning**

The Child works alone and co-operatively. He perseveres at difficult tasks and enjoys sharing his success. He is a curious and enthusiastic participant in his learning who uses play to investigate, imagine and try out ideas. He follows his own interests with enthusiasm and asks questions and seeks information from a variety of sources.

**COMMUNICATION – The child’s communication skills**

The Child writes his own name and recognizes some letters and numerals. He enjoys listing to stories and ‘reading’ books alone and with friends. He is able to retell stories and his own experiences confidently.

The Child expresses his own ideas, feelings and points of view with confidence. He communicates confidently and easily with adults and peers and shows respect for others ideas and perspectives by listening attentively.

**The child’s interests**

At kindergarten the Child is enthusiastic and interested in all that goes on. He enjoys looking at books with friends, puzzles, construction activities and creative activities. Outdoors he enjoys working in the sand pit and digging patch, dramatic play with friends, running, climbing and playing ball games.
Example: Statement Two

The context of the early years setting

We are a kindergarten attached to a school and currently this year we are a K-4 campus. The group that the Child is part of is a 12 hour group where the Child comes to for two 6 hour sessions (from 9am – 3pm) The session is broken up into a morning construction play (focussing on fine motor and cooperation skills), music/dancing, lunch, You Can Do It program, indoor play (focus on creativity, sensory, literacy & numeracy) planning (children are active participants in the planning of the program) outdoor play, snack and end story time. We are actively involved in the school and begin activities with the Preps from the beginning of the year (reciprocal visits).

Things that might help the child settle into school

The Child has had an unsettled start to his kindergarten year. He joined the group 5 weeks into Term One due to late enrolment and experienced several weeks of separation anxiety. The Child was very hesitant to enter the room and needed an adult (Mum or Dad) to enter with him and also an adult teacher to sit with him to ease the separation. Staff offered a comfort toy (normally car, train or truck) to help with settling. At the beginning The Child did not share morning news with his friends and rarely participated in music and movement. The Child would seek a certain staff member to engage in activities with him. It took approximately 6 weeks for the Child to display confidence in seeking peers to play with. Staff encouraged these skills and role modelled appropriate ways to communicate and play with his peers. The Child gained these skills over Term 2 and by the end of Term 2 he was displaying much more confidence in most areas of the kindergarten program. The Child still relies on adults especially when conflict arises and he needs to resolve certain issues. The Child has begun to self regulate his emotions which is fantastic to see – although sometimes needs help to express his needs/wants.

IDENTITY – The child’s sense of identity

The Child has developed his confidence in feeling safe and secure in his environment. The Child has built a strong attachment to his primary caregiver and over the past term has developed a relationship with the other staff within the room. The Child now confidently expresses his needs/wants to staff and is developing his skills and confidence in communicating these to his peers. The Child has shown a real improvement in developing his autonomy, resilience and independence. The Child has also developed empathy for his peers and displays consideration and thoughtfulness for others in the group. The Child has also developed his independence especially at managing his belongings. The Child confidently packs and unpacks his bag, opens his own lunch box and is able to dress himself. The Child is able to follow the class rules and is able to follow the routine. The Child has also developed his expressive skills in terms of representing his feelings and thoughts through drawing and art work. The Child is also developing his skills in participating and confidently expressing himself in group situations (for example sharing morning news).

COMMUNITY – The child’s connection with and contribution to their world

The Child has shown a strong sense of community and belonging to a group. The Child was an active learner when the class participated in the inquiry planner and especially the community through line. The Child understood the concept of what it meant to belong and be part of a community. The Child has also begun to participate in a variety of group experiences where he is interacting and being part of a team (for example when we use the large parachute for music/movement).
The Child is able to understand that his peers learn differently and that we need to accept these differences. The Child has been involved in several special events during the year such as Harmony Day, Mothers Day, Red Nose Day and more. As mentioned previously the Child has developed empathy for his peers and can understand how his actions and the actions of others affect his peers and the wider community (for example the Child understood and grasped the concept of the bushfires and how it affected people). The Child is also aware of his environment and ensures that the room is clean and safe.

WELLBEING – The child’s sense of wellbeing

The Child is still developing his sense of wellbeing and has shown a huge improvement this far in terms of developing confidence. The Child understands the concept of friends and is able to determine when his peers are being “friendly”. The Child is developing his use of appropriate language and actions when he is faced with conflict. The Child has been an active participant and contributes to discussions regarding the You Can Do It Program and when the group is discussing emotions. The Child is able to understand the way he feels and is mostly able to express these feelings to staff – he is continually developing his skills to express these needs to his peers. The Child has really developed his skills and ability to take responsibility for his own health and physical wellbeing. The Child is able to recognise when he is hungry, thirsty and needs to go to the toilet. The Child is able to recognise what is in his lunch box and knows what is unhealthy and healthy food. The Child is able to share the equipment, turn take and cooperate.

LEARNING – The child’s confidence and involvement in learning

The Child has developed his skills and is an active and involved learner and is continually developing his confidence. The Child will ask questions during discussion to further his knowledge and deepen his thinking and understanding. The Child is also able to reflect on his understanding and learning and can respond to text and use recall to describe past events. The Child is a curious learner and has developed his confidence so that if he is unsure of something he is able to ask questions or seek further information to understand events/circumstances/directions/instructions. The Child uses all his senses within the program to further his understandings. The Child is able to persist at tasks in order to complete them. The Child is able to write his name and he is also able to rote count to 20 with ease. The Child is able to recognise common shapes and colours. He is also able to understand the difference between up/down, under/over and in/out etc. The Child is also an active member of the group at planning times and is able to convey his thoughts and ideas to contribute to the plan. The Child is able to explore and investigate the environment and manipulate the equipment and take the direction of play in different ways.

COMMUNICATION – The child’s communication skills

The Child has increased his skills and confidence and is developing his skills at being effective communicators. The Child is able to interact verbally and non verbally with his peers in a number of purposes and settings. The Child is able to join in with the group and sing songs, chants and rhymes. The Child is able to create dimensional art work and creations. The Child is able to express most of his feelings through facial expressions and body language. As mentioned above The Child is able to share morning news with the class and is able to speak at an appropriate volume. The Child is also able to follow directions and instructions and can usually follow a three – four step instruction. The Child is able to write his name and is able to recognise some letters in the alphabet. The Child understands common book concepts such as front/back cover, spine, blurb, author, illustrator and understands that text goes from right to left and from up to down. The Child understands symbols and patterns and is able to recite the days of the week. The Child is able to group and sort common
objects (such as colour, size, type etc) L is developing his computer skills and confidence in the classroom.

**The child’s interests**

The Child enjoys role playing and engaging in imaginative play across the program. He has a specific enthusiasm for cars, garages and trains. He also enjoys different varieties of lego such as fire station, house, tunnel and space. The Child also thrives in the home corner/dramatic play area and has begun to take on a leader role in these situations.

The Child does engage in some creative/art work although normally needs adult direction or prompts to engage in this type of play. The Child displays a range of play skills and has really begun to enjoy and interact in group play situations.
Example: Statement Three

The context of the early years setting

The Child attended this kindergarten for three year old kindergarten and has attended 10.5 hours per week over 3 three and half hour sessions this year.

The kindergarten offers a play based curriculum, with children encouraged to make independent activity choices, both indoors and outdoors. Children are expected to participate in group sessions and snack time is a whole group activity.

Things that might help the child settle into school

Until the Child is confident in her new environment and with new peers and adults she may need assistance and support to ask for help and to interact within the group.

The Child often prefers to observe situations and actions before she becomes involved – physically and verbally.

The Child needs time to observe and become familiar with the environment and tasks, and how she can fit in, before she is able to confidently participate and contribute.

IDENTITY – The child’s sense of identity

The Child takes some time to adapt to new situations and tends to withdraw when she is in a new or unfamiliar situation. When she is feeling confident and secure she communicates well and interacts confidently and is able to share her own knowledge, stories and experiences.

COMMUNITY – The child’s connection with and contribution to their world

The Child and her family enjoy a variety of family trips and outings. The Child enjoys sharing her experiences from these outings and trips with friends and adults at kindergarten.

In imaginative play she takes on roles and co-operates with others within the play scenario.

She can become confused and looks to adult support when there is conflict with others, or when others around her become upset. She shows genuine concern for others who are upset or unhappy.

WELLBEING – The child’s sense of wellbeing

The Child is able to co-operate and work collaboratively with others, particularly in the areas of dramatic and imaginative play. At other times, e.g. when completing puzzles or when she is involved in drawing or painting she prefers to work alone, and limit her interactions with others (while still being very ware of all that is going on around her).

The Child can be hesitant at participating in new or unfamiliar activities or interacting with new people.

LEARNING – The child’s confidence and involvement in learning

The Child is able to think, reason and make predictions but is often hesitant in communicating that thinking. She is hesitant to seek help when she needs it. She enjoys success and is proud when she achieves or completes a tasks to her satisfaction.
COMMUNICATION – The child’s communication skills

The Child has well developed oral language skills and retells events and stories confidently. In play, with her peers, her language is colourful and expressive. In larger group situations she needs encouragement to contribute and share ideas. She is familiar with a range of songs, chants and rhymes and is becoming more confident in join in with the group. She enjoys books and stories, and is interested in reading and is able to recognise familiar letters and numerals.

The child’s interests

At kindergarten the Child enjoys imaginative and dramatic play, puzzles and drawing activities, and running and being active in imaginative play games outside.
Example: Statement Four

The context of the early years setting

The Child attends a play based indoor/outdoor kindergarten program for 10 hours a week on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday mornings. There are 28 children in his group with one teacher and one assistant. Each kinder session allows time for free play/self selected experiences as well as teacher initiated/structured small and whole group learning. Curriculum content is based on children's needs, interests and abilities.

Things that might help the child settle into school

Ideally the Child would have opportunities to explore the school environment and get to know the prep teacher prior to starting in 2010. A gradual start to school would give the Child time to feel relaxed and at ease with changes in routine.

If the Child becomes distressed, it is best to move him to a quiet area – such as book corner, away from the group so that he can calm himself down.

The Child is quiet, and tends to seek out other children who are also quiet. Pairing the Child with a quiet peer will help to build his confidence to communicate and share his ideas and feelings about school. If the Child becomes intimidated by other, more dominating children he withdraws very quickly and will engage in solitary play.

The Child loves listening to stories and playing games with rules, such as card games and board games. Allowing him to lead the game or chose a story to read, will empower him and help to build his confidence in the classroom. He loves receiving praise for all efforts.

IDENTITY – The child’s sense of identity

The Child shows increasing independence and self-confidence when managing and negotiating resources and spaces needed for a variety of learning experiences. He responds positively to occasional encouragement from others. He understands and, with prompts, willingly follows familiar classroom rules, routines and events. He sometimes needs reassurance to cope with unexpected changes to classroom routines, environments and people. The Child takes increasing responsibility for personal belongings, e.g. puts own bag away and art work. With limited prompts, the Child shares, takes turns, negotiates, follows rules, enters and exits play with peers in familiar situations. He uses and discusses agreed ways of behaving, interacting and communicating at Kinder. He uses a small range of ways to resolve conflicts in familiar situations, sometimes with prompts. With help, explains his problem and suggests simple options for resolving conflicts, e.g. “I’ll have a turn first and then he can have a turn next.”

COMMUNITY – The child’s connection with and contribution to their world

With some prompts, the Child willingly considers others’ ideas, feelings and needs while negotiating in learning situations. When asked, The Child is able to take on classroom roles, e.g. leader, follower, helper. With support, he shares his personal experiences as a member of a family, community and class. e.g. ”I have 2 brothers” or “I saw an old lady at the shop”. The Child participates in discussions about unfair, stereotypical or biased ideas or practices within the context of personal experiences, e.g. “Girls and boys are both allowed to play with dolls house.” With prompts, he willingly contributes to caring for the classroom environment, e.g. wipes the tables after eating or playing in an area.
WELLBEING – The child’s sense of wellbeing

The Child shows an awareness of the need for hygiene, nutrition and maintaining a healthy lifestyle across a number of learning contexts. He will sometimes encourage others to be aware of hygiene, health and safety. E.G. “go back and wash your hands”. With occasional prompts, he is able to make choices to maintain his own personal safety. During discussions and role play he draws on understandings about familiar community health services and personnel. E.g. will pretend to be a doctor, dentist or nurse. During outside play, the Child plans and considers movements and alternative pathways in a range of settings, with increasing confidence. With support he is beginning to use familiar language to describe and plan gross-motor movements and experiences, e.g. “I am going to swing my legs to keep moving”

With support, the Child is able to judge body space in relation to other children during games. The Child uses familiar equipment, materials, tools and objects with increasing coordination, strength and control although his rhythm of movements may be irregular. After explanations and demonstrations, he willingly tries to integrate movements or manipulate new/unfamiliar equipment, materials, tools and objects.

He has a clear hand preference and a precise grip when manipulating familiar equipment, materials, tools and objects.

LEARNING – The child’s confidence and involvement in learning

With support, The Child observes and discusses obvious relationships by comparing, e.g. “I am taller than you”, exploring cause and effect relationships, e.g. mixes colours together and observes changes and exploring part-whole relationships, e.g. explores how to put pieces together in a puzzle or combine materials in a collage. The Child makes simple plans and chooses materials and actions, asking for help when needed, e.g. “I’m going to make a robot; I’ll need some paper, glue and scissors. I will need some crayons to colour”. With support, he solves problems of personal interest in real-life and play situations and experiments with options for solving problems while collaborating with adults, e.g. changes actions or materials, asking for help, finding information. With support, The Child is beginning to try out different ways to represent ideas, experiences and possibilities, e.g. draw, construct, model, make a diagram or map, role-play, and move to music. He appears to enjoying joining in simple singing and musical games. He is beginning to recognise that music can be used to express feelings and represent ideas. The Child copies and experiments with new language for describing the features and sensory qualities of his own or others’ artworks and art experiences, e.g. “I used red paint to make lines and dots” and “the drum is very loud when you bang it with your hand”.

COMMUNICATION – The child’s communication skills

The Child’s first language is English. He independently uses a range of spoken strategies to join play and social situations. He appears confident using language to interact and collaborate with one or more children. He can use language to express needs and feelings independently and makes attempts to use language to help other children settle conflict and join play. During whole group times the Child uses behaviours, including looking at the speaker, attentive listening, taking turns.

He is able to follow simple one- or two-step instructions independently and reliably.

The Child is beginning to make meaning from texts. He uses texts for familiar and specific purposes, e.g. role play reads to a friend. With support he will discuss some features of texts that help to convey meanings. “Reads” familiar texts using memory of text and the visual cues, e.g. “reads” the pictures. Can point to print when asked “Show me where to read” the Child knows the names of most letters of
the alphabet and is able to use the terms “numbers” and “letters” correctly. He can sometimes identify what is meant by “first” and “last” letter, “starts with” and is able to write his own name independently. The Child is able to count consistently using the standard counting sequence and count objects to 10 with one-to-one correspondence. With support, The Child counts to identify the next number in a counting sequence and makes collections of different quantities and identifies the number of objects. He is able to compare small collections to identify which has “more” or “less”.

**The child’s interests**

The Child loves constructing using blocks, Lego, boxes, straws etc.... and spend a large part of his kinder day painting, drawing, pasting and cutting. The Child loves helping out and is very good at following directions.

He does gymnastics, so he loves spending time refining his skills and showing peers how to do tricks on the climbing equipment. The Child loves his mum! As the youngest of three boys, The Child has a very close relationship with his mum and loves to share stories from home through drawing and conversations.
Activity 2: Educators’ feedback

During the professional development sessions, samples of statements considered to be most useful and least useful were identified by early childhood educators. They have been listed below for your reference.

Do these statements provide adequate descriptions in terms of the five outcomes of a child’s development?

Examples 1 and 3 were preferred by the educators because they addressed the outcomes succinctly (provided descriptions of a child’s learning and development in short clear statements).

Example 1 was considered to have accurately reported according to the outcomes but could have been improved with more evidence and examples.

Do these statements provide tangible evidence to support the evaluations?

Examples 2 and 4 were preferred due to the detailed examples to support the comments about children’s learning and development, although the length of both was raised as a concern.

Favoured examples were:

- Follow a three-four step instruction
- Write his name
- Rote count to 20 with ease
- Understood the concept of bushfires and how they affected people
- Sometimes needs support to cope with unexpected change
- Suggests simple options for resolving conflicts e.g. “I’ll have a turn first…”

Are these statements expressed in appropriate professional language?

Educators felt that all examples were written in professional language however examples 1 and 3 were preferred due to the outcomes being addressed accurately and succinctly.

General consensus was that phrases such as “I feel” or “I believe” should be avoided, and the focus to remain on observations of the child.
Do these statements provide appropriate guidance for Prep teachers?

Prep teachers provided feedback indicating they favoured 'short, succinct' statements that focused on strategies, learning preferences, independence milestones and behaviour. Examples include:
- works well in small group
- retells stories
- takes responsibility for belongings
- takes turn while participating in activities
- negotiates with other children
- recognises familiar letters and numerals
- rote counts to 20
- follows classroom rules and enters into play with others.

Highlighting the strategies used in early childhood services to support to the learning and development of a child were seen as very useful.