

TRANSITION: A POSITIVE START TO SCHOOL

RESOURCE
KIT





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HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE KIT

The Transition: A Positive Start to School Resource Kit (the Kit) is designed to provide contemporary, evidence-based, practical guidance for early childhood professionals working with children and families during the transition to school process.

This Kit is divided into six sections:


Section 1 provides an overview of transition to school, including why a positive transition to school is important, transition contexts and what effective transition looks like.

Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 outline the most important components of effective transition approaches and processes including the practice principles that are most applicable and some strategies to help implement them:

- **Section 2** focuses on relationships to support transitions between children, families, educators and other professionals.
- **Section 3** focuses on equity and diversity, including how to tailor transition approaches in response to the different contexts, characteristics, backgrounds and abilities that children and families may have.
- **Section 4** focuses on continuity of learning and development for children as they transition through different educational phases and settings.
- **Section 5** focuses on transition planning and evaluation.

Section 6 outlines some useful tools to support effective transition and continuity, including the Transition Learning and Development Statement (the Transition Statement) and a range of other assessment and planning approaches.

Online resources:

Throughout the Kit, this symbol  indicates that there are further resources provided in the online appendix. The online appendix will be updated regularly to provide the most up-to-date resources that are available.

Some key terms:

The term **early childhood professionals** in this document includes, but is not limited to, all early childhood practitioners who work directly with children in early childhood education and care settings, school teachers, maternal and child health nurses, family support workers, preschool field officers, inclusion support facilitators, student support service officers, primary school nurses, primary welfare officers, early childhood intervention workers, play therapists, health professionals and teachers working in hospitals, and education officers in cultural organisations.

The terms **foundation teacher** and **prep teacher** are used to refer to the person that teaches children in their first year at school, which in Victoria is called 'prep' or 'foundation', depending on the school sector.

The cultural knowledge story featured in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) and the Kit was written by Dr Sue Lopez Atkinson (Yorta Yorta) (2016) and the artwork is by Annette Sax (Taungurung) (2016)—**see Figure 1 on page 2.**

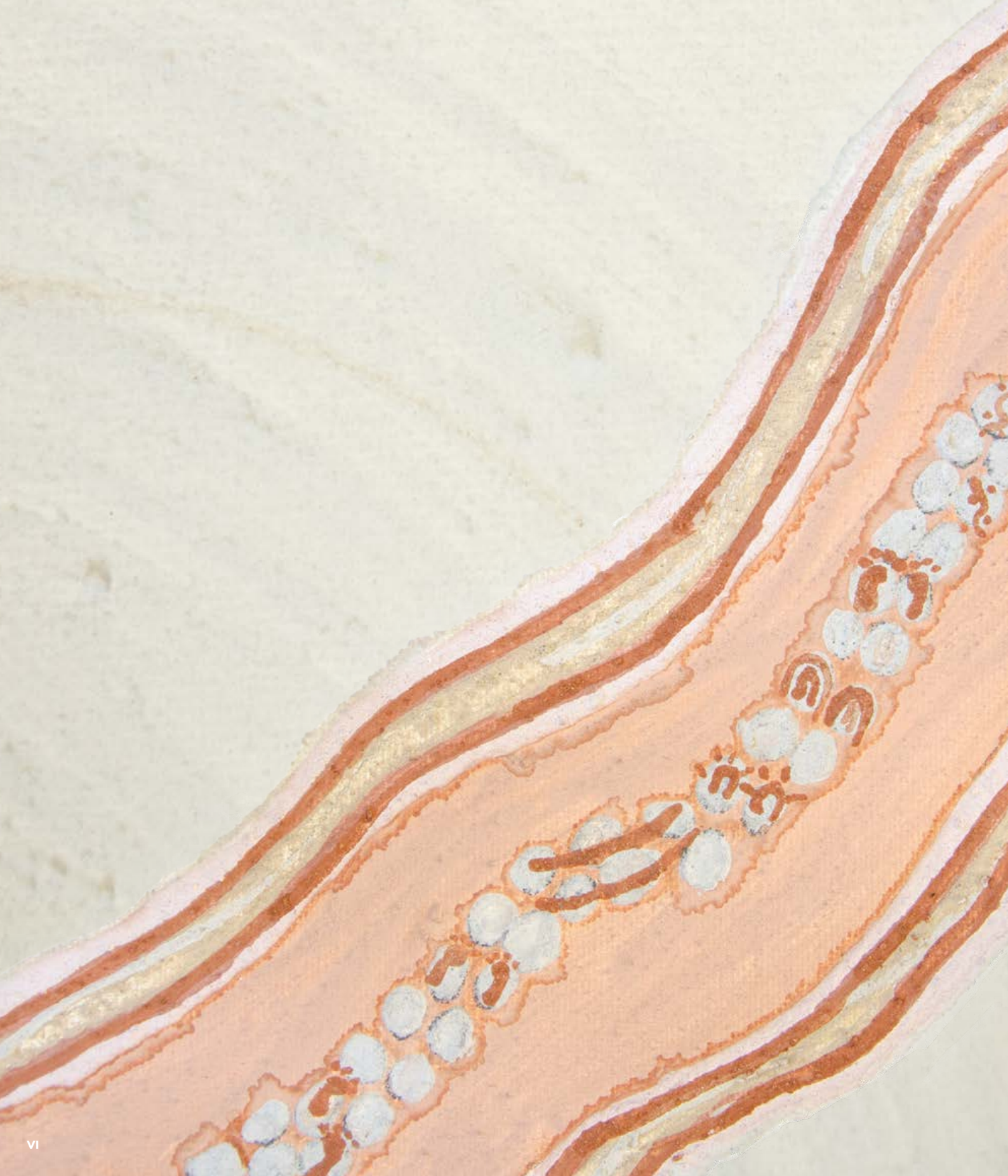
Further transition-related artworks based on the VEYLDF were developed by Annette Sax (2017) and are featured throughout this Kit.

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1 OVERVIEW OF TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

IN THIS SECTION

1. Overview of Transition to School

- What is transition?

1.1 The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)

1.2 How the VEYLDF practice principles apply to transition

1.3 Why is a positive transition to school important?

- Effective transition supports equity, resilience and wellbeing

1.4 The initiative 'Transition: A Positive Start to School'

- Background and purpose of the initiative
- Revision of the Transition Initiative
- What has changed?
- A new and improved Transition Learning and Development Statement

1.5 Transition contexts

- The Ecological Model: A child's life within a social, environmental, political and economic context
- The broader Victorian service system for children's learning and development

1.6 What does effective transition look like?

- Effective transition approaches in ECEC services and schools
- Effective transition approaches in OSHC
- Transition programs
- Reflective practice to support transitions

Further information and resources



Throughout this document, this icon indicates **additional resources are available** within online appendix at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/transitiontoschool>

WHAT IS TRANSITION?

Starting school is a major life transition for both children and their families. Both challenging and exciting, it is a time of change in which children, families and educators adjust to new roles, identities, expectations, interactions and relationships.¹

Along with the outcomes and practice principles, Transitions is one of three interconnected elements of the VEYLDF, which guides all early childhood

professionals working with children from birth to eight years and their families.

1.1 THE VICTORIAN EARLY YEARS LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (VEYLDF)

The VEYLDF guides early childhood professionals,² in collaboration with families, towards the achievement of the nationally agreed Early Years Learning Outcomes,³ in which children:

- have a strong sense of identity
- are connected with and contribute to their world
- have a strong sense of wellbeing
- are confident and involved learners
- are effective communicators.

In Victoria, these outcomes are linked to the first three years of the Victorian Curriculum Foundation–level 10 (F–10). **For further information, see section 4.1.**

The VEYLDF identifies eight evidence-based practice principles, which describe the most effective ways for early childhood professionals to work together, and with children and families, to facilitate learning and development.

The eight VEYLDF practice principles are:

- Reflective practice
- Partnerships with families
- High expectations for every child
- Respectful relationships and positive engagement
- Equity and diversity
- Assessment for learning and development
- Integrated teaching and learning approaches
- Partnerships with professionals.

FIGURE 1

VEYLDF Artwork by Annette Sax (Taungurung 2016)



1.2 HOW THE VEYLDF PRACTICE PRINCIPLES APPLY TO TRANSITION

The eight VEYLDF practice principles are interconnected. As such, an understanding of each one is crucial to enabling effective transition. The practice principles are a critical starting point when considering transition to school approaches that best support all children and families, and provide a useful lens for all professionals to consider when planning, implementing and evaluating transition to school experiences.

This Transition to School Resource Kit (the Kit) has been structured to emphasise the importance of the following components of effective transition:


- relationships to support transition
- equity and diversity
- continuity of learning and development
- planning and evaluation.

Each of these components is covered in a section of this kit.

Then, within each section, the most applicable VEYLDF practice principle or principles are highlighted and discussed.

The structure is as follows:

Section of this document	Applicable VEYLDF practice principles
2: Relationships to support transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respectful relationships and responsive engagement• Partnerships with families• Partnerships with professionals
3: Equity and diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equity and diversity• High expectations for every child
4: Continuity of learning and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrated teaching and learning approaches• Assessment for learning and development
5: Transition planning and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflective practice

A range of additional resources, including practice guides and videos, is available from the Department's website (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/veyldf>) to help embed the VEYLDF in professionals' practice with families and children from birth to eight years. 



Transitions in the VEYLDF

The VEYLDF highlights that for families with young children, transitions occur on a daily basis. A child may move from the care of a parent to a grandparent, or move into an early childhood education and care (ECEC) service, and between rooms within a service. As children become older, they may make the transition into a kindergarten program, and then experience transition to school.⁴

When considering transitions, it is important to acknowledge that the child is a unique, active and engaged participant in learning within their local context, shaped by family, culture and experience. Each adult around the child learns, leads, supports and actively invests in the child's success. Each professional who engages with a child and their family has a part to play. Local community reinforces a sense of belonging and wellbeing for a child and their family.⁵

Successful transitions require professionals to actively foster responsive relationships with each child and their families, as well as with each other, recognising the importance of continuity and consistency while acknowledging change. Families and early childhood professionals work together to provide consistent environments for children between home and other forms of education and care. Recognising and supporting families to manage transitions contributes to children's wellbeing.

Children, families and early childhood professionals are all actively involved in transition. Respectful, trusting and supportive relationships provide the context for effective transitions.

Children's confidence in managing change is enhanced when they feel secure in their relationships with others, including parents, early childhood professionals and peers. Children who are supported to manage change build resilience as they develop and try out a range of skills and strategies while moving between contexts.

Early childhood professionals can help children build the necessary skills by recognising the strengths they each bring to transitions, building on the competence they demonstrate and scaffolding the abilities of each child.

1.3 WHY IS A POSITIVE TRANSITION TO SCHOOL IMPORTANT?

The importance of transition is now well acknowledged in research, policy and early childhood professionals' practice with children and families.⁶ It is reflected in the National Quality Standard (NQS), which is the national benchmark for ECEC. This standard requires ECEC services to collaborate with other organisations and service providers to enhance children's learning and wellbeing. It also requires that continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by the sharing of relevant information and the clarifying of responsibilities.⁷

There is a large body of evidence that highlights the importance of the transition to school to children's later life outcomes. Recent research has reaffirmed the importance of careful transition planning for and with children and families, taking into account the importance of child, family, community and school characteristics.⁸ Starting school is a significant moment for children and their families, and although most children make this transition successfully, it is sometimes associated with anxiety, uncertainty and confusion.⁹

The abilities and skills of professionals to support children and families as they transition from one setting into another is also dependent on their abilities to collaborate in respectful partnerships that develop shared understanding and expertise. This was highlighted in the Supporting Reciprocal Visits Project (2014–15), in which visits to each other's classrooms or settings and associated debriefing conversations, plus shared professional learning sessions, fostered the development of trusting professional relationships among early childhood educators and school teachers. These relationships offered opportunities to share information, understand local pedagogies and practices, and support strategies to enhance the transition to school of young children and their families¹⁰ **(discussed further in section 2).**

Ensuring effective and positive transitions also supports the continuity of a child's learning and development. Placing greater emphasis on the continuity of learning recognises that building on children's prior and current experiences helps them to feel secure, confident and connected to people, places, events, routines and understandings. Promoting continuity of learning and development requires a partnership approach between families, early childhood educators and schools to find ways to link children's previous experiences with the new challenges and opportunities presented when a child moves into school.

EFFECTIVE TRANSITION SUPPORTS EQUITY, RESILIENCE AND WELLBEING

A positive start to school, leading to greater and ongoing connection with school, has been identified as a factor in disrupting cycles of social and economic disadvantage, and in promoting resilience among young people.¹¹

Successful transitions rely on children, families and early childhood professionals developing positive, supportive relationships. Within these relationships, children should feel that school is a worthwhile place to be, where people care about them and where they are likely to succeed.¹² Families should feel valued and respected as well as included in school life. Professionals should also feel valued, respected and supported by their colleagues, families and communities.


Although most children make the transition to school successfully, research suggests that negative experiences during the transition to school can have longer-term impacts on children's resilience (that is, their ability to cope with change) and their image of themselves as a learner.¹³ When it is managed well, the transition to school can foster resilient attitudes and behaviour in children.¹⁴

1.4 THE INITIATIVE 'TRANSITION: A POSITIVE START TO SCHOOL'

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE INITIATIVE

The initiative 'Transition: A Positive Start to School' (the Transition Initiative) was originally launched in 2009, to improve the development and ensure the consistent delivery of transition programs. The Transition Initiative has also helped improve the relationships and sharing of information between children, families and early childhood professionals, including ECEC educators, outside school hours care (OSHC) educators and school teachers.

It included the previous version of this kit and a previous version of the Transition Learning and Development Statement.

The Transition Initiative also includes a range of other research, resources, programs and projects that have been developed or undertaken to improve our collective understanding of what effective transitions look like and how they can best be supported. 

Although the Transition Initiative has a focus on the transition from ECEC services into primary school and OSHC, the practices, processes and concepts described in this document are also relevant to other transitions that children and families experience—for example, attending an ECEC service or program for the first time, transitioning within settings (to a new room or educator), or moving between services or settings. It is also relevant for children who have not attended an ECEC service.

REVISION OF THE TRANSITION INITIATIVE

Much has changed since the introduction of the Transition Initiative in 2009. The ECEC and schools sectors have undergone significant reform, particularly with the introduction of the National Quality Framework, the VEYLDF, and most recently, the Education State Reforms and the Victorian Curriculum F–10 for schools.

Many ECEC services and schools have developed innovative approaches to support effective transitions and have embedded a number of the 'promising practices' that were identified through earlier transition research.¹⁵ Additionally, a considerable amount of research, evaluation and consultation has afforded even greater insight into what works well in supporting effective transitions, and why.

In March 2015, the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) released its Education Transitions report. It found that through the Transition Initiative and the VEYLDF, Victoria has developed a comprehensive, well-researched framework that has contributed to improved outcomes for children transitioning into their first year of school. It found that overall, ECEC services and schools are managing transitions well. VAGO recommended that there needs to be a focus on areas where there are differences in transition outcomes for children based on factors like gender, geographic location, culture and language. It also highlighted the need to further improve shared understanding between educators in ECEC services and schools about their role in transitions.



WHAT HAS CHANGED?

In response to the evidence and the VAGO recommendations, and to a statewide consultation on Transition to School¹⁶, the revised Transition: A Positive Start to School resources include a focus on:

- relationships
- equity in transitions
- continuity of learning
- planning and evaluation.

This kit has been revised to reflect these updated focus areas, as well as the VEYLDF outcomes and practice principles.

This kit has been designed to support professionals to intentionally improve the development and delivery of transition programs. It provides up-to-date, evidence-based information for ECEC services and schools on effective processes and practices in transition, including advice on providing tailored transition support where required for some children and families. The kit has been developed with input from a range of experts, families and early childhood professionals and leaders, including from long day care, kindergarten, family day care, OSHC and schools. It includes an online appendix that provides links to a range of useful resources and further information, indicated by the following icon:



Overview of the Transition to School Consultation

In 2015, the Department commissioned a series of consultations on transition to school across Victoria (the Consultation). The Consultation obtained qualitative feedback from key stakeholders to further strengthen the Department's understanding of current transition approaches, including Transition Learning and Development Statements and supporting resources.

The Consultation identified that the experience of transition to school is largely a positive one, and highlighted many examples of locally developed resources and processes to support children and families. It also identified opportunities for improvement, including the need for:

- additional resources to support children from diverse backgrounds and those experiencing disadvantage
- strengthening communication between early childhood educators and school teachers, including through local transition networks
- improvements to the Transition Learning and Development Statement
- better evaluation of local transition approaches and outcomes.

A NEW AND IMPROVED TRANSITION LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT

The Transition Learning and Development Statement (the Transition Statement) has been designed to assist families and educators share information and specific strategies to support each child's learning and development. The Transition Statement helps to connect ECEC services, schools, OSHC services and families all working together to support transition into school and the continuity of learning for each child.

The Transition Statement has been improved to make it easier for early childhood educators to complete, more useful for teachers in the early years of school, and simpler for families to complete. This has been done in collaboration with early childhood experts and educators from a range of ECEC services and schools, and with input from families, to ensure that it is useful for children, families and educators alike.

The Transition Statement can also now be completed online, making it easier and faster for educators to use. **Further information is provided in section 6.3.**



1.5 TRANSITION CONTEXTS

Research shows that transitions are context-dependent. All children influence and are influenced by the environments that surround them.

“Just as any child has the potential to experience a positive transition, almost any child is at risk of making a poor or less successful transition if their individual characteristics are incompatible with the features of the environment they encounter.”¹⁷

families experience and respond to the transition to school, and how early childhood professionals can best support them. This is explored further in later sections of this kit.

FIGURE 2

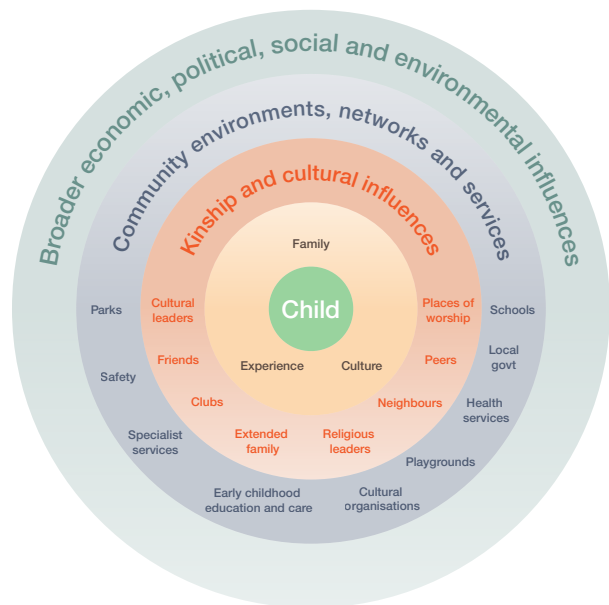
Ecological model of child development adapted from Bronfenbrenner, 1979

THE ECOLOGICAL MODEL:

A CHILD'S LIFE WITHIN A SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The Ecological Model that underpins the VEYLDF acknowledges the life of each child within a social, environmental, political and economic context (see **Figure 2**). This model illustrates the strong network of community, services and programs that support children's learning and development.

The model provides a useful way of thinking about the various people, cultural influences, environments and other factors that affect how children and




The Ecological Model

- Each child at the centre of the Ecological Model is unique, active, and engaged in their own learning and development within their local context, shaped by their family, culture and experience.
- Families and kinship members have primary influence on their children's learning and development. They provide each child with the relationships, opportunities and experiences that shape their sense of belonging, being and becoming.
- Each adult around the child learns, leads, supports and actively invests in the child's success. Each professional who engages with a child and their family has a part to play.
- Local community, cultural events, spaces and their accessibility, reinforce a sense of belonging and wellbeing for a child and their family.
- The broad interrelated system and policy settings reflect a vision for children's learning and development through the five Learning and Development Outcomes.¹⁸




their families experience a wide range of services in Victoria designed to support children's learning and development. These include (but are not limited to) maternal and child health, playgroups, long day care, family day care, occasional care, kindergarten programs, OHSC and schools.

Targeted and intensive services also provide learning and development support for those children and families who might require it. These include child and family support services and a range of community, primary and specialist health services, such as Allied Health Services. In addition, early childhood intervention (ECI) providers and services, such as the Preschool Field Officer Program, offer a range of services that support inclusion of children in ECEC programs. 

Services are provided by professionals with a broad range of qualifications and experience. These include teachers and educators in kindergarten services, long day care services, family day care and schools, maternal and child health nurses, allied health professionals (including social workers and psychologists) and inclusion support educators, integration aides and teachers' aides.

Each service is provided within a set of national and state-level legislation, frameworks and policies, including:

- the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care, including the National Law and Regulations
- the National Early Years Learning Framework Being, Belonging and Becoming and the Framework for School Aged Care, My Time, Our Place
- the VEYLDF
- the Victorian Education, Training and Reform Act 2006
- the Australian Education Act 2013
- the Victorian Curriculum F–10
- the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes
- a range of other program-specific policies and guidelines. 

THE BROADER VICTORIAN SERVICE SYSTEM FOR CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

An understanding of the broader service system that supports children and families in Victoria is essential for all early childhood professionals involved in the transition to school. From birth, children and



1.6 WHAT DOES EFFECTIVE TRANSITION LOOK LIKE?

Transition is not a one-off event. It is not complete at the end of the first day of kindergarten or school. It is a process that occurs over time. Even though groups of children might start a kindergarten program or school together, their individual characteristics and experiences make each transition a unique situation.¹⁹

Children's learning is promoted when they engage with interested others in environments that provide both support and challenge. Transitions are opportunities for educators to recognise each child's interests, cultures and abilities and to build on these in meaningful ways. Early childhood professionals are well placed to use transitions to promote learning when they share professional knowledge and their understandings of individual children, families and communities.

All children are different—even those of similar ages. When children start school, they experience environments different from home or their education and care service. It is not only the physical

environment, but also the social nature of school, approaches to learning, and academic expectations, that can be very different. Children may participate in larger groups, with smaller numbers of adults. The 'rules' about how they interact with these adults and the environment or setting might also change.

To help bridge the gap and support children and families to manage these changes, ECEC services, OSHC services and schools should collaborate to design, deliver and evaluate local transition to school programs. This kit describes how the VEYLDF practice principles underpin effective transition approaches, and provides strategies to help inform local transition planning.



In the *Transition to School: Position Statement*, transition to school is characterised by:

- **Opportunities:** for all involved to support change and continuity, to build relationships, extend their understandings through interactions and to recognise starting school and school age care as significant events in the lives of children and families.
- **Aspirations:** as all look forward to positive engagement with school and positive outcomes, both social and educational, professional partnerships are formed and communities provide support and resources to promote positive engagement with school.
- **Expectations:** as all enact high expectations for all participants in the transition, multiple participants are recognised and respected for their role in contributing to children's education, and children meet challenges with the support of friends and responsive adults.
- **Entitlements:** as high-quality services are provided for all children and families, families and communities are confident that access and equity are promoted; respect is demonstrated for existing competencies, cultural heritage and histories; and personal and professional regard is afforded to those involved in the transition to school and school age care.²⁰ 

EFFECTIVE TRANSITION

APPROACHES IN ECEC SERVICES AND SCHOOLS

Although the effectiveness of particular transition approaches will depend on the local context, including the characteristics and circumstances of the child and family, positive transitions are generally achieved when there is a sense of belonging and acceptance in the child's new learning environment.



Strategies to achieve this include:

- respectful, trusting and supportive relationships with children and their families
- reciprocal relationships that actively support sharing and valuing relevant information
- professional roles and partnerships that support ongoing reflective practice
- recognition of children's agency and their role in transitions
- demonstrated respect for the cultural histories and heritage of all involved in transition processes
- recognition of the strengths and capacities of all involved in transition, reflected in high expectations and a commitment to equity
- approaches that are adaptive for diverse family contexts in local communities
- availability of appropriate and ongoing support for educators, teachers, children and families.

These strategies are relevant for supporting all children and families. Additional considerations are outlined in section 3 regarding:

- gender differences in transition
- Koorie children
- children with a disability, developmental delay or health condition

- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children from families who have difficulties with literacy children who are gifted and talented
- children experiencing vulnerability
- children and families not participating in ECEC.

Although much attention is given to children being 'ready' for school, research highlights the importance of services and schools being 'ready' to support all children and families.²¹ Research²² has identified some common characteristics of ready schools, including:

- having identified staff member(s) responsible for developing, evaluating and modifying a range of transition to school processes and programs
- promoting professional development for educators and teachers (including those working in ECEC and OSHC services) that is focused on how to build relationships with all families during children's transition to school, and acknowledging that there can be a diversity of views on transition
- planning for each child's transition to school in the year before it happens, to support continuity of learning
- inviting all those involved in transition to participate in ways that are relevant and appropriate.

Ready schools provide environments that:

- are flexible and adaptable
- are responsive to individual children
- actively facilitate family engagement
- are guided by strong leadership
- connect respectfully and positively with ECEC settings and the broader community.

EFFECTIVE TRANSITION APPROACHES IN OSHC

OSHC educators are important partners in the transition process, because for many children, starting school also involves starting OSHC.²³

Many schools offer OSHC services, including before and after school, during the holidays and on student-free days. OSHC services are often located on primary school sites, but might also be offered in other locations, such as community centres, halls, neighbourhood houses or recreation centres.

In Victoria, in 2015, an average of 75,903 children per week, aged up to 12 years of age attended approved OSHC. Some children attend OSHC irregularly, others for a few hours each day, possibly before or after school, and with a weekly average of 7.9 hours. In some cases, children can spend almost as long in OSHC as they do at school.²⁴

In Continuity of Learning: A resource to support effective transition to school and school age care (2014), Dockett and Perry highlight that the same elements that underpin other effective educational transitions also apply to the transition to OSHC. These elements emphasise:

- the importance of relationships
- focusing on strengths and competencies, rather than deficits
- promoting inclusivity, rather than exclusivity
- responsiveness to local communities
- dedicated support and resources
- high-quality programs.

When Transition Statements are shared with and used by OSHC educators, continuity of children's learning and development can be supported across all of the new environments they experience when starting school.

TRANSITION PROGRAMS

Across Victoria, transition programs have been developed to help make starting school a positive experience for all involved. These programs include a range of activities or experiences designed to support children, families and early childhood professionals to become familiar with these changing environments and experiences during the transition to school.²⁵

The Consultation in 2015 provided a 'snapshot' of current efforts by educators, teachers, leaders and networks to develop positive transition approaches. It showed that a number of consistent transition strategies are used to facilitate positive transitions for children and families, while allowing for local context and individual variation.

The most successful transition approaches prioritised ongoing communication and relationships with children and families. Many of the transition strategies are consistent with the 'promising practices' identified in the evaluation of 30 transition pilots funded through the Transition: A Positive Start to School initiative, which ran from October 2008 to May 2009.²⁶ **These promising practices are explored in section 5.3 of this Kit.**

Importantly, the Consultation revealed many examples where educators in both ECEC and school settings had enhanced their transition approaches to ensure that all children and families were effectively supported. This included families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal families, families with children with disabilities or developmental delays, and families experiencing vulnerable circumstances. **These are explored further in section 3 of this Kit.**





REFLECTIVE PRACTICE TO SUPPORT TRANSITIONS

The VEYLDF recognises that reflecting on and critically evaluating practice is a core part of all early childhood professionals' work. It is at the heart of maintaining a learning culture in a service, setting or network and is linked with continuous improvement.²⁷ This principle applies throughout the process of considering, planning, developing and evaluating transition to school approaches.

The Early Years Planning Cycle as described in the VEYLDF outlines the process that early childhood professionals use, in partnership with children, families, kinship members and other professionals, to question, analyse, act and reflect on evidence they have collected to inform future planning and work (for more information refer to section 5.2). This process can be applied when considering transition planning at the level of the individual service or setting, within small groups of services or settings, and within larger networks or communities.

Section 5 of this Kit, *Transition planning and evaluation*, further details this process.



Further information and resources

More information and resources on the following are available on the online appendix at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/transitiontoschool>:

- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework Resources for Professionals
- The Transition Initiative – research, resources, programs and projects
- The Victorian service system for children's learning and development
- National and state-level legislation, frameworks and policies affecting schools and the delivery of services for children
- Transition to School Position Statement.

NOTES: SECTION 1

1. Department of Education and Training 2016, Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: For all children from birth to eight years, Department of Education and Training, Melbourne, p. 25.
- 2 The term early childhood professionals in this document includes, but is not limited to, all early childhood practitioners who work directly with children in early childhood education and care settings, school teachers, maternal and child health nurses, family support workers, preschool field officers, inclusion support facilitators, student support service officers, primary school nurses, primary welfare officers, early childhood intervention workers, play therapists, health professionals and teachers working in hospitals, and education officers in cultural organisations.
3. Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 2009, *Belonging, Being, Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, Council of Australian Governments, Canberra. 
4. Department of Education and Training 2016, Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: For all children from birth to eight years, Department of Education and Training, Melbourne, p. 23.
5. Ibid., p. 5.
6. Semann & Slattery 2015, *Transition: A Positive Start to School Initiative – Consultation 2015*, Department of Education and Training, Melbourne.
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2 RELATIONSHIPS TO SUPPORT TRANSITIONS

IN THIS SECTION

2. Relationships to support transitions

- Relationships: At the core of positive transitions

2.1 Applicable practice principles

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- Transition to school and 'readiness'
- Children's perspectives on transition to school
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2.3 Practice principle: Partnerships with families

- What is a family?
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- Discussing sensitive issues
- Family perspectives on transition to school
- Family perspectives from the Transition to School Consultation (2015)

2.4 Practice principle: Partnerships with professionals

- ECEC educators
- Health, wellbeing and early intervention professionals
- Teachers and other professionals in schools
- OSHC educators
- Building partnerships through reciprocal visiting and professional learning

Further information and resources



Throughout this document, this icon indicates **additional resources are available** within online appendix at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/transitiontoschool>

RELATIONSHIPS: AT THE CORE OF POSITIVE TRANSITIONS

Relationships are at the core of positive transition to school experiences.²⁸ When families, schools and communities work together in positive and collaborative ways, a child's capacity to achieve their learning potential is significantly enhanced—and so is their general health, wellbeing, positive outlook and sense of purpose in life.

Children's learning and development and wellbeing are supported when they are provided with opportunities, experiences and encouragement from within their families and local communities, in partnership with professionals. A key role of each early childhood professional²⁹ is to build children's confidence, sense of wellbeing and security, and their motivation to engage actively in learning and communication with others.

All children and families require targeted support at different times. All children influence and are affected by the environments that surround them. The Ecological Model underpinning the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) acknowledges the life of each child within a social, environmental, political and economic context. It illustrates the strong network of community, services and programs necessary to support children and their families.

2.1 APPLICABLE PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

Although the VEYLDF practice principles are interrelated, and each is relevant in some way when thinking about the key components of effective transition, for the purposes of this document, focus is given to the practice principles that are most applicable to each section.


The VEYLDF practice principles that are most applicable to relationships in transitions are:

- Respectful relationships and responsive engagement
- Partnerships with families
- Partnerships with professionals.

Read on to learn about how these practice principles can guide early childhood professionals in developing relationships to support effective transition.



2.2 PRACTICE PRINCIPLE: RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS AND RESPONSIVE ENGAGEMENT

The VEYLDF describes how warm and respectful relationships with adults nurture, regulate and provide protective factors to support children’s wellbeing, resilience and learning capabilities. Protective factors provide a secure base and act as a buffer to help children feel safe and confident enough to try new things and learn new skills and concepts.³⁰ This is especially important as children and families make the transition to an unfamiliar learning environment, where in some cases the practices, expectations and routines can be quite different to those that the children have previously experienced. 

Children are active participants and contribute diverse perspectives about transitions.³¹ Listening to and involving young children in transition planning is central to understanding them and supporting their learning. Valuing young children’s views has a positive effect on their self-confidence. This can help children who find it difficult to share their opinions, or who have few adults who listen to them.

We need to involve and listen to children because:

- it acknowledges their right to be listened to and for their views and experiences to be taken seriously
- it can make a difference to our understanding of children’s priorities, interests and concerns and how they feel about themselves
- listening is a vital part of establishing respectful relationships with children and central to the learning process

- involving children in transition planning can influence early childhood educators and prep teachers to think about how routines and activities can be improved.

TRANSITION TO SCHOOL AND ‘READINESS’

Focus is often placed on whether a child is ready for school, despite school readiness meaning different things to different people. Traditional concepts of school readiness are often criticised for their emphasis on a child’s academic or physical skills.³²

From birth, children learn and demonstrate knowledge, skills and understandings in different ways and at different points of time. The rate of individual progress is not always the same, nor is progress always easy or straightforward.

Some of the most important elements of helping children to be ‘ready for school’ relate to their health and wellbeing, and their confidence that school will be a positive experience for them and that they will feel supported by positive relationships. When children are happy to be at school, and feel valued, learning will be optimised. Developing strong, authentic, positive relationships is central to this.

Children are best able to develop a positive attitude to starting school when they have opportunities to talk about what it will be like and are given realistic information about school experiences and expectations. Participating in transition to school programs can be a positive way to help achieve this. In order to strengthen each child’s sense of identity and community, transition to school approaches should recognise and respond to the broad range of factors shaping this period of a child’s life, including the cultural background of the child and their family, participation in ECEC services, and the school environment.

CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES ON TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

Research into children's experiences of transition to school highlights that:

- it can be hard for children to understand, learn and follow school rules
- making and keeping friends can be difficult
- children's sense of wellbeing and positive engagement in learning depends on them having encouraging relationships with their educators
- children can find it hard to deal with the new experience and demands of the school routines and the added responsibility for their own care associated with starting school
- children often prefer play-based programs to more 'formal' learning and associate more formal learning with being at school.³³



Some suggested strategies for responding to these include:³⁴

- helping children and families become familiar with the processes, rules and expectations that are often present in school environments
- promoting the development of children's prosocial skills and respectful relationships with peers
- encouraging children to persist when faced with difficult tasks.

HOW CAN CHILDREN BE INVOLVED?

There are many ways to listen to young children, and more than one approach can be used simultaneously.³⁶ It is important to remember that listening in imaginative ways can support children as they adjust to change, such as the change of starting school.

Some strategies to involve children include:

- asking children to draw or paint what they think school might be like, what they are looking forward to and what their concerns might be
- asking children to add their explanations to these paintings or drawings and then discussing what has been included and why
- reading stories about starting school and discussing the various elements and expectations raised in these
- using modelling materials (such as dough, clay, box construction and sand) to create what children expect their school to be like
- providing a range of materials in play areas to stimulate discussion about school
- promoting role plays or scenarios that relate to school
- reciprocal visits for children (**see section 5.3 for further information**).



Key elements of children's experience that emerged from the Transition to School Consultation in 2015 highlighted the importance of:

- family support in preparation for the transition
- transition programs that included multiple visits and engagement in school activities and environments
- prior experience and assistance of siblings
- being able to clarify expectations about the characteristics of learning
- becoming familiar with the teacher and school routines
- valuing friends.³⁵

With each of these approaches, allowing time for children to talk about school is important and allows adults to address any misunderstandings and allay any fears that the child might be experiencing. They might want to talk about their experiences of transition programs or visits, the things their older siblings tell them, their expectations of what school will be like, or how school will be the same or different from their current ECEC service.

The Transition Statement has a section specifically for the child to consider what they would like their new setting to know about themselves. This provides valuable insights for the receiving school and OSHC service to use as a conversation starter, something to reflect on and consider as they get to know each child.

Making time for children to think about what information they want to share with their prep teacher and OSHC educator at school and how they prefer to do this is also important.



A group of Ascot Vale West children were surveyed about transition.

When asked what helped them get ready to start school, children overwhelmingly credited family members ("My sister was in this school and she told me what would happen at school"). When this query was followed with, "What should the teacher know about you?", the responses were personal and reflected the wish 'to be known' and 'to know the teacher'.


When prompted about starting school, the children commented on overcoming apprehension by becoming confident and making friends ("*When I first started school, the big boys were a bit scary then I opened my eyes and they weren't that scary!*"; "*I was shy; I'm not now. I talked to somebody and then I wasn't. I talked to my teacher and my friends*"). They also commented on gaining confidence with literacy and mathematics ("*It was scary to do writing but then I got better and better*"; "*First maths was a bit boring then it got not boring*").

There was also praise for visits and learning ("*I remembered I came to visit my teacher and got to learn things and I get excited when I start doing things with my teacher. Most exciting thing is when I learnt how to write*").³⁷

2.3 PRACTICE PRINCIPLE: PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES

Families know their children better than anybody. Sharing relevant knowledge that they have about their child with ECEC services and schools can help the transition to school. Families who support their children during transition to school, and who have positive relationships with staff, are likely to continue their and their child's positive engagement with school.

The research³⁸ consistently demonstrates that families have a major influence on all aspects of learning and a wide range of educational outcomes. When families and schools work together, children tend to do better in school and like school more.³⁹

The VEYLDF recognises that partnerships between professionals and families have not always been the norm, might not be an expectation of some families, or might not be recalled by families as a positive experience. This requires professionals to persist in establishing and strengthening partnerships, which might include partnerships with extended family members.⁴⁰ 

Early childhood professionals could hold personal and culturally influenced beliefs or values that might be different from those of the families they are working with (for example, in relation to children's learning and development, or other cultural practices). This mismatch might impact their ability to form an effective partnership. These challenges require professionals to critically reflect, consider and discuss their own strongly held beliefs and how these might impact the daily decisions they make about practice when working with children and families.⁴¹



Children learn most in their early years from those adults with whom they have the closest relationships. Families are the primary influence on children's learning and development. Families have a long-standing relationship with and unique perspective on their child. This includes valuable information about their child's strengths, abilities, interests and challenges.

Early childhood professionals:

- show respect in their relationships with families, adopting an open, non-judgemental and honest approach that is responsive to a family's situation
- listen to each family's understanding, priorities and perspectives about their child with genuine interest to inform shared decision-making and promote each child's learning and development
- actively engage families and children in planning for ongoing learning and development in the service, at home and in the local community
- establish partnerships in which information-sharing supports families' confidence, identify what families do well, and recognise families' critical importance in their child's life.⁴²

WHAT IS A FAMILY?

In this Kit, the term 'family' incorporates the widest definition of family, recognising the broad range of family structures and members. It is important to respect the different interpretations of a family. Children might also perceive their family in many ways, even to the point of including much-loved pets or toys.

Children might have a range of carers, from parents, siblings and grandparents to extended family members and family friends who look after them and support their learning and development. For children in out-of-home care, their sense of belonging to a family might also include the people who care for and support them on a day-to-day basis—for example, their foster families.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HARDSHIP

Some families have additional pressures on them. For example, they might experience significant adversity and hardship, family violence, trauma and loss. Differences related to language, cultural or socioeconomic background, health or disability-related issues could create barriers for families, and they might not feel confident speaking with early childhood educators and prep teachers if they feel unwelcome or find conversations challenging.

In these circumstances, extra effort and skills are required by educators and teachers to fully engage and support families. This requires professionals to be genuinely interested in and open to others' ideas. The ability to listen is paramount. Professionals must then go beyond listening and demonstrate what families and children have told them in practice.

Seeking families' views can be challenging when there is limited time for conversations. It is common in ECEC services as well as schools for conversations with families to occur typically at the busiest times of the day.

Nevertheless, professionals should work towards overcoming obstacles such as this by considering how they could seek out families' opinions at the most appropriate times and by paying attention to these opinions with genuine interest.⁴³

Further information and strategies for effectively supporting children and families experiencing vulnerability is provided in section 3.12.

DISCUSSING SENSITIVE ISSUES

In some instances, early childhood professionals need to raise sensitive or difficult issues with families, such as when there are concerns about a child's behaviour or development. These issues can also relate to concerns for a child's safety and protection.

Early childhood professionals who are culturally competent respect multiple cultural ways of knowing, seeing and living, celebrate the benefits of diversity and have an ability to understand and honour differences. This is evident in everyday practice when educators demonstrate an ongoing commitment to developing their own cultural competence in a two-way process with families and communities.



Some strategies for early childhood professionals when discussing sensitive or difficult issues with families include:

- investing time beforehand in building meaningful relationships with families based on mutual trust and respect
- being warm, genuine and non-judgemental
- being accepting and appreciative of diversity, avoiding stereotyping individuals or groups of people
- engaging with families in numerous conversations, over time, about a range of issues, including those that acknowledge family strengths and successes
- acknowledging that families might differ in their communication styles and preferences. Talking with families as part of the transition process provides another opportunity to find out about their preferences for having conversations, including difficult ones, in the future.⁴⁴

Regardless of the circumstances, it is in the child's best interests for there to be effective, sustained, collaborative partnerships between families and all professionals. This requires early childhood professionals to use multiple ways to communicate with families, to negotiate and overcome barriers to equity and engagement.⁴⁵

ECEC services across Victoria have been actively supporting families to complete Transition Statements. In the northern suburbs of Melbourne, educators report that a greater feeling of empowerment among families in the transition process has been achieved through providing the opportunity for families to work with their child's early childhood educator to share information about their child with their new school.⁴⁶

More information on families completing the Transition Statement is provided in section 6.3.

FAMILY PERSPECTIVES ON TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

Families' own level of confidence in managing the transition to school affects their child's subsequent engagement with school.⁴⁷ Research into families' experiences of and perspectives on transitions to school highlights that families:⁴⁸


- have diverse views about what matters when young children make the transition to school
- are often concerned about how their child will adjust to school, asking, 'Can my child fit in and be respected, happy and safe?'
- might experience additional concerns related to their circumstances. For example, a fear for some families living in rural and remote areas is that the additional time needed to travel to a new school could disrupt established family routines
- might have concerns about the need for their children to learn English prior to starting school when children do not have English as their first language
- usually want contact with the school prior to their child's attendance and to understand how their child's school works
- in some cases, want their children to receive formal academic instruction in their first year of school
- might experience feelings of loss for the relationships they and their child have developed in the ECEC service
- might have concerns about new responsibilities such as managing homework and balancing family, school and work.

Family members' personal experiences of school might influence the messages and levels of encouragement and support that they provide to children. If a parent, for example, had a negative school experience, they could find it difficult to provide support and encouragement to their children. Similarly, it might be many years since a family member had commenced prep, and many things are likely to have changed. This lack of recent experience could lead to a family's misconception or a lack of confidence prior to their child starting school.



Some strategies to effectively support families during transitions include:

- assisting families to have an up-to-date view of the support available within schools for early childhood learning and development
- providing opportunities for families to meet and get to know each other informally, particularly for 'first-time' families. For example, schools and ECEC services might like to organise picnics, BBQs, family fun days, children's cultural festivals or library events
- families with older children might be more comfortable about the transition process and can provide good support to families experiencing it for the first time.

The Department of Education and Training provides numerous resources to help families and children prepare for the transition to school, including practical advice for traveling to school, uniforms, immunisation, literacy and maths tips, and where to go for further support. 





FAMILY PERSPECTIVES FROM THE TRANSITION TO SCHOOL CONSULTATION (2015)

There was wide variation in families' experiences of and expectations about starting school. Families who were comfortable with their children's transition to school valued conversations with trusted teachers, both in ECEC and schools, as well as school transition programs and activities.

Families also identified a range of opportunities for strengthening their child's transition experience. The importance of increased communication between families and educators, as well as a greater understanding of the child- or family-specific circumstances that might impact on a child's transition, were frequently mentioned.

Many families noted the value of Transition Statements, but expressed concern about whether they were being used by prep teachers.⁴⁹

2.4 PRACTICE PRINCIPLE: PARTNERSHIPS WITH PROFESSIONALS

Along with partnerships with families, partnerships between early childhood professionals involved in the transition to school are an essential factor that can influence transition experiences and outcomes for children and families.

Early childhood professionals have diverse disciplinary backgrounds, levels of training and experience. A culture of inquiry and challenge builds robust collaboration and continuous improvement. Effective partnerships with other professionals require leadership, common goals and communication across disciplines and roles to build a sense of shared endeavour.

Early childhood professionals work in partnership to:

- research, share information and plan together to ensure holistic approaches to children's learning and development
- respect each other's practice, skills and expertise
- collate and use the evidence of children's prior and current learning and development to build continuity in learning and development



- acknowledge the significance of transitions in ECEC services and schools, and work in partnership to ensure that families and children have an active role in the transition process
- work to improve the continuity of practice between settings, including the daily transitions for children and their families
- develop and promote collaborative partnerships in early years networks.⁵⁰




A range of professionals might be involved in the lives of children and families, influencing and contributing diverse perspectives to the transition process. These include professionals from:

- ECEC services
- maternal and child health services
- health, wellbeing and early intervention sectors
- Child Protection and Community Service Organisations
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations
- OSHC services
- schools.

“ When educators collaborate, transitions can be regarded as opportunities to forge partnerships and to create potential meeting places, where educators can engage in reflection, analysis and critique, develop joint understandings and share their expertise. When transition creates a meeting place, there is potential for many perspectives and interactions to be regarded as valuable.⁵¹ **”**





In some cases, schools and services for children and families are located together, or are within easy walking distance of each other, making it easier for professionals from different services or settings to develop partnerships with each other and with families. In other cases, particularly in rural areas, some services are isolated because they are physically remote. Services in urban areas, too, can be relatively isolated—for example, stand-alone services where professionals are not linked in to broader professional networks. The more isolated a professional or service is, the more important it is to take even small steps to establish partnerships. 

Some strategies that support collaboration include:

- having a designated person whose central role is to bring about and strengthen collaboration and partnerships
- holding meetings that encourage open communication and consideration of all perspectives, acknowledging that each professional brings an important and unique set of experiences and perspectives to supporting children and families through the transition to school
- embedding formal processes to support collaboration rather than it being an ‘add-on’—for example, ensuring that in an integrated service, regular meetings are held with all the professionals who work in the setting
- sharing information—for example, through newsletters, electronic networks and shared professional learning opportunities
- gaining commitment and support from managers and leaders to provide required resources.

Further information about local transition planning and establishing collaborative networks is provided in section 5.4.



ECEC EDUCATORS

Most children will start school after having attended a kindergarten program, either in a stand-alone service or as part of long day care. Other children might have attended long day care (with no kindergarten program), family day care, occasional care, or playgroups. Some children might not have attended any formal ECEC service. However, all children will have developed a range of skills and abilities that form the basis for further learning and teaching.

Early childhood educators have specialised knowledge about how a child's learning and development has progressed prior to starting school. Importantly, they also understand what sorts of teaching strategies work best for individual children. This information is important to share with those who help children settle into school and should be included in the Transition Statement. This is valuable information to support continuity of learning during transition and supporting the best 'next steps' that will actively promote and advance the child's learning and development. **(For more information, refer to section 6.3).**

HEALTH, WELLBEING AND EARLY INTERVENTION PROFESSIONALS

A range of professionals from health and wellbeing sectors might be involved with children and families, such as those from maternal and child health (MCH), early childhood intervention (ECI), family services, allied health and child protection. These professionals should be engaged to gain important insights to support the transition to school process and to support continuity across services and settings. This is particularly important for children who have a developmental delay or disability, or children experiencing vulnerability that might have impacted on their early health and wellbeing⁵² **(sections 3.7 and 3.12 provide further information on this topic).**

MCH nurses can be critical partners in supporting the health and wellbeing of a child and family, along with ECEC services and schools. MCH services are often co-located with ECEC services and sometimes with schools. In many cases, they have developed a relationship with the child and family over several years, and can provide vital information to support the transition to school—particularly when children and families have attended the Key Ages and Stages visit at age three and a half years.

TEACHERS AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS IN SCHOOLS

Prep teachers, transition coordinators and other professionals in schools use a range of approaches to understand children's prior learning and abilities and to support children starting school to adjust to their new learning environment. These can include transition or orientation sessions, meetings with families, visits to ECEC services, buddy programs, open days, using Transition Statements for planning, and undertaking assessments for areas such as literacy and numeracy **(discussed further in section 6.1).**⁵³

OSHC EDUCATORS

For many children, starting school also involves starting OSHC. OSHC educators work with a group of children ranging in ages, generally from five to twelve years. OSHC educators are in a unique position to support the social and emotional wellbeing of children transitioning to school as they learn to navigate a much larger social setting in the school environment, and to support the ongoing connection between schools and families.

OSHC services are often located on school sites; however, OSHC educators are not necessarily employed directly by the school. A consequence of this situation is sometimes a lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities around communication with families. This is particularly relevant for children and families making the transition to school, and has implications for the sharing of information between prior-to-school ECEC services, schools and OSHC services (such as Transition Statements).⁵⁴ Developing relationships between educators, teachers and families across all settings makes it easier to agree and adhere to these roles and responsibilities, which in turn avoids confusion and helps ensure that important information and issues are not overlooked.

When early childhood professional collaborate, and when Transition Statements are shared with and used by OSHC educators as well as schools, continuity of children's learning and development can be supported across all of the new environments that they experience when starting school.



BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH RECIPROCAL VISITING AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING


The Supporting Reciprocal Visits project sought to build on current research that identifies the importance of shared pedagogical perspectives between professionals working in ECEC and school settings, through shared professional learning combined with reciprocal visiting. A combination of these two promising practices has proven to be beneficial to children and families, as well as the professionals themselves.

Across 2014 and 2016, the Department commissioned a series of reciprocal visit projects across six sites in Victoria to strengthen transition to school processes for children, families and teachers.

The aim was to build on and enhance existing relationships between early childhood educators and primary school teachers.

Monash University facilitated the Puckapunyal and Banyan Fields reciprocal visits, while Semann & Slattery in collaboration with Macquarie University facilitated the Tarneit, Bendigo, Mildura and Morwell reciprocal visits.

The Supporting Reciprocal Visiting Project final reports outline the number and nature of the reciprocal visits and joint professional learning sessions, participants involved, the impact of the project, and suggestions for future work to support children's transition to school.

Additionally, video vignettes were developed to support ongoing professional learning for all professionals on the use of reciprocal visits as a vehicle to reflect on and enhance children's learning and transition experiences. 



Further information and resources

More information and resources on the following are available on the online appendix at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/transitiontoschool>:

- VEYLDF practice guide: Respectful relationships and responsive engagement
- VEYLDF practice guide: Partnerships with families
- Choosing and enrolling in a primary school
- Practical advice to help families prepare for the transition to school
- VEYLDF practice guide: Partnerships with professionals
- Building partnerships through reciprocal visiting and professional learning.

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54. *Ibid.*

3 EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

IN THIS SECTION

3.1 The importance of equity and diversity to effective transition

3.2 Applicable practice principles

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- Building positive relationships with families and children experiencing vulnerability
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- Refugee children and families

3.13 Transition for children and families not participating in ECEC services Further information and resources



Throughout this document, this icon indicates **additional resources are available** within online appendix at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/transitiontoschool>



3.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF EQUITY AND DIVERSITY TO EFFECTIVE TRANSITION

All children and families require extra support at different times, and are all influenced and affected by the environments that surround them. The Ecological Model that underpins the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) (featured in section 1.5 of this Kit) acknowledges the life of each child within a social, environmental, political and economic context. It illustrates the strong network of community, services and programs necessary to support children and their families.

Throughout this document, the term Koorie is used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Use of the term Aboriginal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Indigenous are retained in the names of programs and initiatives, and unless noted otherwise, are inclusive of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people hold a unique status as First Peoples. The Koorie community, with its rich culture and heritage, is the foundation upon which today's multicultural Victoria is built. The Koorie community holds distinct cultural rights protected under the Aboriginal Heritage Amendment Act 2016. These include the right to recognise, protect and conserve their identity and culture; to maintain and use their language; to maintain their kinship ties; and to maintain their distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land, waters and other resources with which they have a connection under traditional laws and customs.

Victoria's community is a multicultural society comprising people from more than 200 nations, speaking more than 200 languages and dialects and following more than 120 faiths. The richness that such diversity brings to the Victorian community is highly valued in Victoria and reflected in the Multicultural Victoria Act 2011. The right for children and families to enjoy their culture, to declare and practise their religion, and to use their language is also enshrined in Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

Transition programs that support and celebrate diversity, and early childhood professionals⁵⁵ who are culturally aware and competent, help to support a positive start to school for all children and families. Respecting diversity, helping to foster supportive relationships and encouraging a strong, positive sense of identity are all key practices that will help early childhood education and care (ECEC) services and schools facilitate a transition process that leads to success in educational outcomes.



The level and type of support required can vary from child to child and family to family.


Some strategies to support equity and diversity include:

- adapting learning environments to make them more welcoming and accessible to all children and all families
- engaging interpreters and providing information in languages other than English
- building a child's confidence to try new things and become more independent in self-care skills
- supporting the family to attend their three-and-a-half-year Maternal and Child Health Key Age and Stage visit (which can be undertaken when the child is four or five)
- making referrals to early childhood intervention (ECI) professionals for further assessment and advice (for example, paediatrician, occupational therapist or speech pathologist)
- applying for funding where significant support is required (such as the Program for Students with Disabilities for children attending government schools, kindergarten inclusion support and flexible support packages, and inclusion support for children attending outside school hours care (OSHC))

- developing appropriate learning and development plans in collaboration with relevant specialised professionals
- linking families to community support agencies or Koorie Engagement Support Officers
- providing aids and equipment (for example, mobility aids or communication devices).

Creating positive transitions for all children, especially children with disabilities or those experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage, can be achieved through inclusive service and school-wide policies and professional practices

that actively address any barriers and challenges specific to the child and family context. Careful planning and inclusive practices are essential to support all children and families, including those who require targeted, differentiated support for a positive transition to school.

The Department of Education and Training provides numerous resources to help families and children prepare for the transition to school, including practical advice for traveling to school, uniforms, immunisation, literacy and maths tips, and where to go for further support. 

3.2 APPLICABLE PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

Although the VEYLDF practice principles are interrelated, and each is relevant in some way when thinking about the key components of effective transition, for the purposes of this document, focus is given to the practice principles that are most applicable to each section.



The VEYLDF practice principles that are most applicable to supporting equity and diversity in transitions are:

- Equity and diversity
- High expectations for every child.

Read on to learn about how these practice principles can guide early childhood professionals in developing relationships to support effective transition.



3.3 PRACTICE PRINCIPLE: EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

The VEYLDF recognises that children's identity and their family and cultural histories shape their learning and development, and that all children have the capacity to succeed, regardless of their circumstances and abilities. Equitable opportunities for children maximise their learning and development outcomes.




Values and attitudes, understandings of community and individual, and ways of communicating and behaving, all impact on children's sense of belonging and acceptance. When children experience acknowledgment of and respect for diversity, their sense of identity becomes stronger.

Inclusion is the active response by early childhood professionals to understand all children's and families' experiences, as well as children's individual capabilities.

Early childhood professionals:

- promote cultural awareness in all children, including greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing and being
- nurture children's evolving capacity to learn from birth, regardless of circumstance or ability
- support all children to develop a sense of place, identity and a connection to the land and the natural world
- ensure that the interests, abilities and culture of every child and their family are understood and valued
- ensure that all children have equitable access to resources and opportunities to demonstrate their learning
- identify and implement the type and level of support or intervention that is required to demonstrate and improve children's learning and development
- recognise multilingualism as an asset and support children to maintain their first language, learn English as an additional language, and learn languages other than English
- are committed to equity and avoid practices that directly or indirectly contribute to gender inequality, prejudice and discrimination.⁵⁶

EQUITY IN TRANSITIONS

Equity refers to the qualities of fairness and justice. In education, this means that the rights of the child to participate are honoured, and that all children have the opportunity to succeed. It is not about providing equal support, but about recognising that some children will require additional support to reach their potential. 

01.



In the first image, it is assumed that everyone will benefit from the same supports. They are being treated equally.

02.




In the second image, individuals are given different supports to make it possible for them to have equal access to the game. They are being treated equitably.

03.



In the third image, all three can see the game without any supports or accommodations because the cause of the inequity was addressed. The systematic barrier has been removed.

Equity in transitions means that barriers to engagement, participation and achievement are consciously addressed within a strength-based approach, in consultation with children, families and communities.  **Strategies to achieve this are outlined throughout section 3.**

CULTURAL COMPETENCY



Educators who are culturally competent respect multiple ways of knowing, seeing and living, celebrate the benefits of diversity and have an ability to understand and honour differences. This is evident in everyday practice when educators demonstrate an ongoing commitment to developing their own cultural competence in a two-way process with families and communities.

Educators view culture and the context of family as central to children's sense of being and belonging and to success in lifelong learning. Educators also seek to promote children's cultural competence.

Cultural competence is much more than awareness of cultural differences. It is the ability to understand, communicate and effectively interact with people across cultures. Cultural competence encompasses:

- being aware of one's own world view
- developing a positive attitude towards cultural differences
- gaining knowledge of different cultural practices and world views
- developing skills for communication and interaction across cultures.

There are many documents that contain advice and information for educators about developing cultural competence in children. These include:

- **Exploring Diversity and Developing Intercultural Understanding** – provides advice for teaching about cultural diversity. 
- **The Keynotes Project** – covers topics such as understanding conflict and violence and how schools can address issues of intolerance. 

3.4 PRACTICE PRINCIPLE: HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR EVERY CHILD

The VEYLDF describes how high expectations and encouragement are closely linked with a child's agency and sense of capability.

High expectations act as an important protective factor in achieving better outcomes for all children, including those who encounter more risk and fewer protective factors within their everyday lives.



Early childhood professionals:

- commit to having high expectations for every child's learning and development
- show sensitivity to the messages they convey about the child's and family's unique abilities
- notice and actively avoid the negative effects of low expectations, prejudice and low levels of attention to any child's learning and development
- value children's strengths and differences and communicate high expectations to them
- ensure that every child experiences success and is motivated to accept new challenges through which to learn and grow
- recognise that every child learns from birth, but some children require different opportunities, spaces and specific supports, in order to learn effectively and thrive
- work with all families, in particular those experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage, to promote the importance of having high expectations for their children
- expect and ensure that children express their views and contribute to decisions that affect them, including children who are not able to communicate with words.⁵⁷

In transitions, having high expectations for every child means:


- being open to possibilities about children's capabilities and avoiding being locked into ideas about what children are capable of at a certain age or stage

- recognising and affirming the high expectations that all families have for their children as they start the next phase of their education
- recognising and responding to children's ability to contribute to their own transition to school experience in a range of ways
- focusing on what the child can do and strategies to support children's learning and development, rather than focusing on deficits
- considering children's learning progress along a continuum, and identifying when they might have developed understandings and abilities beyond the expected level (this can be communicated in the Transition Statement)
- recognising children's prior learning progress and achievements, and providing opportunities to build from this level when they start school.

STRENGTH-BASED APPROACHES IN TRANSITIONS

The 'strength-based approach' views situations realistically and looks for opportunities to complement and support existing abilities and capacities as opposed to focusing on, and staying with, the problem or concern. The problem and the person are separate; however, the problem is never minimised.

The strength-based approach supports professionals to consider and identify strategies that match and extend upon the child's abilities, skills and dispositions. In other words, the strength-based approach is about assisting people (educators, children and families) to build a picture of what a child's learning and development is currently, and consider the most appropriate strategies and actions to intentionally scaffold the child's learning.

A strength-based approach is not about describing a child's learning and development only in a positive light and neglecting to identify areas for further development or areas of concern. Nor is it about framing the learning and development message one way for families and another way for prep teachers or OSHC educators—it requires consistent sharing of information. **Strength-based approaches to Transition Statements are discussed further in section 6.3.** 

3.5 CONSIDERATIONS OF GENDER

All children have individual strengths and abilities that should be considered and addressed through the transition process. It is important to establish equitable opportunities and high expectations for every child (see sections 3.3 and 3.4) to ensure that all children have the opportunity to engage, participate and succeed socially and academically in their education. This is critical for all children and particularly critical when considering the potential impact of gender on transition.

It is accepted that children's initial adjustment to school is paramount for their development, overall wellbeing and continuing academic success. Research indicates that successful transitions of children from home and ECEC services into school can result in positive student engagement and enhanced social and educational outcomes. Within this context there is a significant body of educational and developmental research on gender which suggests that boys and girls enter school with comparable levels of cognitive and academic skills, but with significant variation in language, social, emotional and behavioural abilities.⁵⁸ When these differences are not effectively addressed, boys can be at greater risk of experiencing a poor transition, which can result in disengagement and/or poorer educational outcomes in later schooling. However "not all boys are at risk and that their poor performance is not inevitable."⁵⁹ Masculinity and femininity are socially and culturally constructed. Some children have already developed expectations about how girls and boys ought to behave in a range of areas including, but not limited to, literacy (Martino & Kehler, 2007) and physical activity (Watts, 2013). These social expectations can contribute to the belief that boys are less ready for school than girls and to gendered differences in children's perceptions of their own abilities.


Most children, irrespective of their gender, will navigate the transition from home and ECEC services to school successfully. Understanding that gender intersects with other social and cultural factors may help to determine the amount and type of support required for each child in the transition process. What we know about gender differences in early childhood, children's family and cultural

backgrounds, prior participation in early childhood programs, and other factors, can be used to further develop specific and successful transition programs for all children.

Along with the strategies already discussed in this resource, further considerations and strategies that will benefit both boys and girls, and that can be used by early childhood educators, OSHC educators and primary teachers in the development of transition programs, include:

- providing support both in the classroom and the playground to further strengthen children's capacity to identify and regulate their emotions and behaviour and to predict the emotions of other children. This includes providing predictable routines, engaging materials and educational programs and clear behavioural expectations for all children
- explicitly teaching and modelling social skills (turn-taking, sharing, listening and reading non-verbal cues) and prosocial behaviours (kindness, empathy, consideration for others, helpfulness) in the early childhood setting or school
- concentrating on strategies to build relationships, specifically the development and continuation of friendships between children and positive relationships between children and their teacher(s)
- having a continual focus on progressing language skills, particularly receptive (listening, attentional

and understanding) language abilities, throughout early childhood and early school years programs

- professionals being aware of their gender biases and challenging gender stereotypes to help children develop a secure sense of self and respectful relationships, as well as to ensure high expectations for all children
- professionals supporting families to understand gender differences in transition to school, including potential gender biases and stereotypes
- enabling small group learning experiences with all children to improve executive function, working memory, cognitive flexibility and interference control
- assisting children to set clear goals for learning and providing regular, specific and clear task-related feedback
- introducing buddy programs during orientation to help foster respectful relationships between older students and prep students. 

3.6 TRANSITION FOR KOORIE CHILDREN⁶⁰

Koorie cultures are complex and diverse. Koorie children, people and communities have a unique contribution to make to Victorian society and to their local community.

Koorie people have a spiritual, social, cultural and economic relationship with their traditional lands and waters, and have made a unique and irreplaceable contribution to the identity and wellbeing of Victoria.

Maintaining a connection to family and community can be especially important to Koorie people. It is this connection that helps maintain the links to their cultural identity. Reconnecting and remaining a part of a family or kinship group are important issues. Learning the intricate pattern of kinship is part of every Koorie child's education.

Many Koorie children make a positive transition to school. Koorie children and their families will have high expectations of their child's learning and development experiences and it is important that strategies developed for Koorie children are culturally appropriate and respectful.

Gifted children occur in the same numbers in all socioeconomic and cultural groups, including Koorie children. The challenge for early childhood professionals is to be aware and know how to identify Koorie children who are gifted and talented. See section 3.11 for detailed information regarding transition to school for children who are gifted and talented.

A positive climate is a prerequisite for good learning and development outcomes. For Koorie learners, this includes an environment where they are able to feel proud and strong in their cultural identity—evidenced through an environment where Koorie culture is acknowledged, respected and above all, valued.⁶¹





ECEC services and schools should develop strategies to help further support the transition to school for Koorie children.

Some suggested strategies include:

- acknowledging and supporting engagement with Koorie children's families, recognising that this might include a wider group of people beyond the immediate family
- inviting family members to come and stay in the classroom for a little longer at the start of the day
- recognising that oral communication is greatly valued and used widely within Koorie communities when engaging with Koorie children and their families
- giving local Koorie history and culture a higher level of visibility.⁶²

- incorporating resources reflecting Koorie culture into local programs and curriculum such as books, music and movement activities or Aboriginal art and flying the Aboriginal flag together with the Australian flag
- undertaking professional development to find out more about Koorie culture.

These strategies make places more welcoming for Koorie children and their families and give consistent, inclusive and strong messages to those visiting and attending ECEC services and schools.

It is fundamental to work with local Koorie communities, seeking their guidance on how best to support and respond to the needs of their children as they transition to school.



The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) is the peak body in Victoria that represents the Koorie Community in relation to education policy development and strategic programming at the local, state and national levels.




VAEAI's main functions are to provide advice on Koorie education issues, monitor education trends and advocate for the needs of our community.


VAEAI advises education systems of ways to improve the outcomes and educational experience of Koorie students, maintaining longstanding working relationships with State and Commonwealth departments of education and training.

VAEAI is the Victorian Government's principal partner for Koorie Education. Victoria's Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan 2016–2026 was developed together with VAEAI, the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency and the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation.

KOORIE EDUCATION SUPPORT

Victoria has specific Koorie support workers in each DET region who support the engagement of Koorie children between ECEC services, schools and Koorie families. Their connections with Koorie communities are valuable to the planning of transition programs. These include:

- Koorie Preschool Assistants 
- Koorie Engagement Support Officers 
- Koorie Education Coordinators. 

There are also 32 voluntary Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECGs) across Victoria that can support partnerships between Aboriginal families and educational services. 

LAECGs provide Koorie parents, carers and community members with a platform to contribute and have a say about any matter relating to education. LAECGs represent local Koorie community perspectives and have statewide coverage. Their role includes:

- providing advice on all education and training matters affecting Koorie children and young people
- monitoring the current trends in education that impact on all Koorie children and young people
- advocating for Koorie students and their families in respect of education matters
- providing representation to local and regional committees and forums in relation to education and training
- providing representation to all VAEAI forums.

3.7 ENHANCED TRANSITIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH A DISABILITY OR DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY

All children benefit from preparation and planning to facilitate an effective transition from ECEC to school and, if applicable, to OSHC. Many of the strategies for transition planning discussed below are beneficial for all children; however, they are particularly important for children with a disability or developmental delay. This includes identifying whether the child will be attending OSHC so that educators can be included in the transition process.

When planning transition programs and completing the Transition Statement, it is important that early childhood educators engage with the family and other professionals who know the child. Understanding the holistic impact of a child's disability or developmental delay on their learning and development helps shared planning for any adjustments or resources required.





Issues to be considered when designing and developing transition programs for children with disabilities and developmental delays include:

- the importance of long-term family and cross-sector collaborative planning to enable continuity of support around transitions
- transition to school as a highly complex and anxious time for families
- the possibility that some children have learning difficulties in some areas of their development, but are gifted in other areas
- the negative long-term implications that exist if transition problems emerge that are not addressed.⁶³



Families with children with a disability or developmental delay whose child experienced positive transitions to school noted that the success of the transition process was primarily due to:

- the information provided by the ECEC service and school—this led to ‘no surprises’ when the child started school
- teachers reading the Transition Statement and listening to the family, which made the family feel valued in the process and ensured that information did not have to be provided more than once
- flexibility in the approach, ensuring that each child has a transition plan that is tailored to their specific abilities.⁶⁴

Participants in the 2015 consultation on transition to school identified several important practices that assist in supporting children with disabilities and developmental delays through transition:

- additional time and information on services available to the family
- personalised and tailored approaches that detail the steps taken to transition from early learning setting to school
- support meetings throughout the year, not only in Term 4
- collaborative approaches, involving families, schools, ECEC services, early intervention services, and other supporting professionals.⁶⁵



Enhanced transition planning for children with a disability or developmental delay supports their continuity of learning and development.

Some strategies include:

- starting transition planning early
- using Program Support Groups to bring key adults together to support transition planning
- involving a range of other early childhood professionals
- gathering additional information about the child that might need to be assessed and made available to the school (for example, detailed reports and advice from allied health professionals)
- establishing links with the child's prospective school earlier than usual.

Early childhood educators should also identify key personnel and activities to support the child with a disability or developmental delay to start school, and seek their input when completing the Transition Statement. Many early childhood educators already do this by arranging Program Support Group meetings early in the year. The Program Support Group brings together key people to collaborate and support inclusive planning from the time a child is enrolled in the kindergarten program and through to their transition to school.

Where parents are uncertain which school their child will attend the following year, Term 2 is a good opportunity for parents to investigate school options and, once decided, enrol their child. If the child's attendance at an ECEC service has been supported by a Kindergarten Inclusion Support package or Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) service, this is useful information to pass on to the school at enrolment time because it supports the school to plan an enhanced transition for the child.



SECOND YEAR OF FUNDED KINDERGARTEN⁶⁶

In most cases, it is appropriate for a child to transition to school after their kindergarten year. Schools are responsible for ensuring all students have access to a quality education that meets their diverse requirements and are obligated under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 to make adjustments to accommodate students with a disability.

In circumstances where a child is observed to display delays in key outcome areas of learning and development, the possibility of a second year of funded kindergarten could be considered. However, a second year should only be considered where the kindergarten program is deemed to be the most appropriate learning program and environment for that individual child, and that the child will achieve better outcomes at kindergarten than if they go to school.

Careful consideration should be given to this decision because in many cases, school can be the most appropriate environment for a child with identified delays or disabilities. This is due to numerous reasons, including:

- increased contact time in an educational environment
- strong peer or friendship group support
- access to additional support, equipment or specialist staff.

It is important to consider the anticipated barriers to the child achieving good outcomes in school and what the experience of an additional year in kindergarten will provide to address these barriers.

PROGRAM SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

Through Program Support Group meetings, educators work with families and other professionals to support positive participation and learning outcomes for a child with a disability or developmental delay during their kindergarten year. A Program Support Group helps supported families through the transition into kindergarten and into school, and to feel confident that their child's interests, abilities and requirements are understood.

By Term 3 of the year before school, the early childhood educator should convene a Program Support Group meeting specifically focusing on the development of a plan to support the child's move to school. The meeting will include the parent(s) or guardian(s) and their advocate if desired, the early childhood educator, a key school contact, and other relevant professionals as required (for example, an ECI professional, additional school personnel and an OSHC educator).

The purpose of the meeting is to:

- enable the family and others who know the child to share a picture of the child's abilities, strengths and requirements
- discuss approaches and initiatives that have supported the child's participation and engagement in the early childhood program
- consider how this information might inform planning for the child's inclusion at school, for example, any adjustment, adaptations or supports that might be required to assist the child's active and successful participation at school
- appoint a kindergarten-to-school transition coordinator. This could be the early childhood educator, relevant school personnel, or another early childhood professional supporting the child
- discuss the school's orientation program and additional opportunities to visit the school
- consider, where appropriate, whether an application should be initiated for the Program for Students with Disabilities or equivalent program in Catholic and Independent schools, if this has not yet occurred
- consider, where appropriate, whether the child should be enrolled in a special developmental school
- agree to further actions required, including who will take responsibility for which action and by when.

Consulting with families about the time and place of this meeting is essential. It will be similar to other Kindergarten Inclusion Program Support Group meetings held throughout the child's kindergarten year, but will also include school personnel who will be involved with the child and family at school.

Local initiatives designed to support children with a disability or developmental delay include those that develop contextual solutions, such as this example from a network in Mildura:

“To assist parents and families in navigating what services and supports are available for children with disabilities, we have developed a guide for children with disabilities, from diagnosis to early intervention support, childcare, kindergarten and into prep.”

– Mildura participant⁶⁷

WHAT FAMILIES MIGHT WANT TO SHARE WITH THE SCHOOL


All families are experts about their child and are critical to supporting the child's transition to school. Through the development and maintenance of respectful relationships with families, educators play an important role in empowering and supporting families to recognise the importance of sharing relevant information about their child. They also play an important role in encouraging families to seek the participation of their child's early intervention professionals, or other relevant professionals, in transition planning.


Transition to school works well when families can see that teachers and schools have the best interests of their child at heart and that the family's knowledge of the child is valued. Families of children with disabilities or developmental delays might wish to discuss with or tell the school about:

- any fears and anxieties they might feel about their child starting school

- what they might wish to have communicated to other families about their child and how it is to be communicated
- their child's interests, strengths and abilities
- what to do in an emergency (for example, if the child is having an epileptic seizure) and what additional safety precautions might be required
- practical skills and tips for their child's day-to-day self-care (for example, how to help their child get changed for physical education)
- approaches that help settle their child (for example, soothing movements and sounds, strategies to engage or redirect the child)
- how to assist their child to be as independent as possible (for example, at lunch time)
- approaches that assist the child to respond to instructions
- cues and prompts that help engage their child (for example, picture exchange cards)
- potential stress triggers and strategies to manage any challenging behaviours
- assessment reports that they might like to share with the school or prep teacher about their child's medical background and early intervention history.

Section 1.2 of the Transition Statement gives educators the opportunity to provide further information about children with a disability or developmental delay, in discussion with families and other professionals supporting the child. The Transition Statement can be completed in June–July and shared with the school (if known), and can be updated in October–November with any additional information. **This is covered in more detail in section 6.3.**

Early childhood professionals must consider that families might find it difficult to share some sensitive information about their child, particularly if they have only recently been diagnosed with a disability or developmental delay. Developing trusting and respectful relationships with families is critical to ensuring that they feel well supported and confident to share their perspectives and concerns during this process. The Department of Education and Training has developed several resources to support families in their conversations with educators. 

Additional resources to support families and services to plan for their child's transition to school are also available. 

To help support children with a disability or developmental delay, a service developed a 'Boardmaker' service. Boardmaker software is used to produce printed picture-based communication and special education materials supporting language. The service was designed to promote stories about the child (social stories) that can be used for conversations with the child and visual prompts to help children understand and adapt to new routines at home and school, which could be used by both families and educators.

“With parent consent, we start a dialogue about how to support their child's transition. We have a Parent Support Group meeting for a family with a child with high and ongoing support needs. This includes the school, kindergarten, family and other relevant support people. This helps us understand the level of need and what the school needs to do to be ready.”
– **Warrnambool school teacher**⁶⁸

WHAT OTHER SERVICES MIGHT WANT TO SHARE WITH THE SCHOOL

Children with disabilities or developmental delays might have had extra support within an ECEC setting from a Preschool Field Officer (PSFO), the Kindergarten Inclusion Support Program, an inclusion professional, or from allied health therapists and ECI professionals.

Each professional involved can support the child and family's preparation for transition to school. Some services might finish when a child starts school; therefore, it is important that (with families' consent) information specific to each child is shared with the school to assist with planning and organisation.



Such information could include:

- how to support the child's safety and wellbeing at school
- a child's level of learning and development
- a child's preferred approaches to learning new things
- specific skills that the child has developed and other skills they are working on
- the child's level of independence
- equipment or aids that assist the child's vision, hearing, mobility, play or self-care skills, or that assist them to record their school work
- types of support required (for example, supervision in the playground or assistance to hold objects)
- potential modifications required within the school environment.

As previously noted, incorporating this information will require early childhood educators to work with other professionals when completing the Transition Statement. In collaboration with the family, relevant reports to support the child's inclusion at school can be provided with the Transition Statement. **This is covered in more detail in section 6.**

WHAT THE SCHOOL MIGHT WANT TO KNOW

All schools need to be ready for every child that will attend. Schools might want additional information that helps them understand a child, including:

- the impact of a child's disability or developmental delay on learning
- how the disability or developmental delay might affect their participation
- if there are any key strategies they should be aware of to help children settle into the school environment and support their learning and development
- what programs have been accessed by the family during the previous year(s)
- what additional support might help the child and family with a more successful transition to school.

To support children with a disability or developmental delay to make a positive transition from ECEC services into school, it is recommended that section 1.2 'Enhanced transitions for children with a disability or developmental delay' be completed (along with the remaining sections). Completing this section enables the school to be aware of the supports and services that the child has received prior to school, gather the wide range of information that might be available about the child, and begin to plan for any requirements and adaptations to support the child to participate fully.

Early ABLES is an assessment-for-learning tool and programming resource that can assist early childhood educators to understand a child's learning progress and plan appropriate next steps when a child has a disability or developmental delay (**more information is provided in section 6.1**). Sharing the Early ABLES Learning Reports can support continuity of learning as children transition to school. School personnel can then build on this information by utilising the ABLES tool to assess and appropriately plan for the child in the school setting.


Recognising that schools need time to plan for any outsourced assessment and adaptations or supports that the child might require, it is important to ensure a timely referral to the school—preferably before Term 3 of the child's kindergarten year. Families should be encouraged to explore school choices early in the year prior to school entry and enrol their child at the school of their choice. This enables the school to participate in the transition planning process and enables the family and school personnel to build the collaborative relationship that underpins a positive transition to school.

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS ATTENDING GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

All Victorian Government schools receive base funding to cater for students with disabilities or developmental delays, and can access additional programs available at all schools.


The Department is committed to delivering an inclusive education system that ensures all children and young people have access to a quality education that meets their diverse needs. A range of policies, programs and resources for schools exist to support the delivery of high-quality schooling for all students,

including children and young people with disabilities and developmental delays.


These resources can be provided in the Student Resource Package, through student support services (a workforce including psychologists, social workers, youth workers, speech pathologists and visiting teachers), or through specific early identification and intervention programs. The Program for Students with Disabilities is one such form of provision available to schools. 

Not all children with a disability or developmental delay will meet the Program for Students with Disabilities eligibility criteria; however, all children benefit from a planned approach to support sharing of knowledge and preparation for the child's learning at school.

DISABILITY STANDARDS FOR EDUCATION

Education providers must comply with the Disability Standards for Education. This includes schools and services providing kindergarten programs. To comply, an education provider must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate a child or young person with a disability. The Disability Standards for Education 2005 apply to all children and young people with disability, not just those who are eligible for support under the Program for Students with Disabilities. 

STUDENT SUPPORT GROUPS

A Student Support Group (SSG) is a cooperative partnership between the parent/guardian/carer(s), school representatives, and professionals such as allied health professionals, to ensure coordinated support for a child's educational needs and meet obligations under the Disability Standards for Education 2005. For children entering prep, it is advisable to include relevant early childhood educators, preschool field officers or early intervention workers in initial SSG meetings. 

It is the responsibility of the SSG to:

- identify the child's needs and determine any adjustments to be made to the curriculum, teaching and learning
- plan an appropriate educational program
- develop a Personalised Learning and Support Plan


- discuss the plan with teachers and provide support to implement the learning plan
- provide advice to the principal concerning the additional educational and support needs of the child and what might be required to meet these needs
- review and evaluate the child's program once per term, and at other times if requested by any member of the group.

PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) provides targeted supplementary funding to Victorian Government mainstream and specialist schools. It provides resources to schools for a defined population of students with disabilities, with moderate to severe needs. These students meet the eligibility criteria for one of seven program categories:

- physical disability
- visual impairment
- severe behaviour disorder
- hearing impairment
- intellectual disability
- autism spectrum disorder
- severe language disorder with critical educational needs.

The program assessment and application processes will be coordinated by the school that the child is to attend. The Department provides an assessment service for potential applications on behalf of children in the categories of 'intellectual disability' and 'severe language disorder with critical educational needs'.


Early planning will assist both transition to school and the PSD application processes. Principals can facilitate the transition process by discussing enrolment procedures with the family when approached for enrolment, convening an SSG, informing the family of their rights within the SSG process, and providing them with a copy of the SSG Guidelines. An SSG is central to making an application under PSD. 

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS

ATTENDING NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

For children starting at a Catholic school which is part of the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM), early childhood professionals should contact the Student Support Service for advice on how to support the learning of the child with a disability or developmental delay, their family and prep teachers.



If the child is enrolling in an independent school, there will be similar processes for planning a child's school program. A program support group might be established as part of this consultation. 

SUGGESTED TIME FRAMES FOR ACTIONS SUPPORTING TRANSITION

FOR CHILDREN WITH A DISABILITY OR DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY

Term 2 of kindergarten

School visits and enrolment

Where parents are uncertain which school their child will attend the following year, Term 2 is a good opportunity for parents to investigate school options and, once decided, enrol their child. If the child's attendance at kindergarten has been supported by a Kindergarten Inclusion Support package or ECI services, this is useful information to pass on to the school at enrolment time because it signals that the school might need to plan an enhanced transition for the child.

Term 3 of kindergarten

Information gathering

The Transition Statement can support the gathering and sharing of key information and might include medical and child development documentation (for example, test results, medical or diagnostic reports, early intervention reports and so on).

Identification of a key school contact

The school principal allocates a key contact who will attend the Kindergarten-to-School Program Support Group meeting.

Kindergarten-to-School Program Support Group meeting

The early childhood educator convenes a Kindergarten-to-School Program Support Group meeting with a specific focus on planning actions to support the child's move to school.

Term 4 of kindergarten

Update or finalise the child's Transition Learning and Development Statement

The early childhood educator, family and child information is completed or updated and is shared with the school.

Visit to school

School orientation visits provide an opportunity for the child to become more familiar with the school and for parents to ask questions, tour the school (and if applicable, the OSHC program) and gain an understanding of any adaptations or adjustments that might need to be planned prior to school entry.

Term 1 of school year

Student Support Group meeting

The school coordinates a Student Support Group meeting in Term 1 of the child's first year at school. Early childhood professionals can be invited to this meeting.

3.8 TRANSITION FOR CHILDREN WITH HEALTH CONDITIONS

Children often attend school with either medical or health conditions that, for most of the time, do not impact on their ability to participate in school life. It is important, however, that accurate information is provided to the school. This information might indicate issues about the medications a child takes or what emergency procedures are required when, for example, a child requires an EpiPen® or has asthma.


In cases where a child has a chronic condition—for example, one that impacts on their movements and energy levels—schools should be advised early in order to review their school program to meet the needs of all children from the first day at school.

The process for sharing this information is the same as it is for other children, although it might need to occur earlier in the year, such as at the time of enrolment. When appropriate, other reports should be submitted with the Transition Statement to support the prep teacher to plan for the coming year.

Information about a child's health is also provided through the school's enrolment form and the School Entrant Health Questionnaire.

STUDENT HEALTH SUPPORT PLAN

Government schools are required to have a Student Health Support Plan for a child with an identified health condition (for example, diabetes, asthma or epilepsy), or, in the case of anaphylaxis, an Anaphylaxis Management Plan. This plan should be guided by medical advice received by the child's medical or health practitioner and developed in consultation with the child and their family.

It is useful for schools to fill out the Student Health Support Plan as part of the transition program. Where this is relevant for an individual child, it should be completed with family input. 



3.9 TRANSITION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FROM CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

'Recognition of diversity at the individual child, family and community level underpins effective approaches to transition to school.

Recognising, respecting and responding to cultural and linguistic diversity is one essential element of this.'⁶⁹


Developing strong, effective partnerships with families with diverse cultural backgrounds or who speak languages other than English provides a critical foundation in supporting the child's identity

and wellbeing in the transition period and beyond. It also assists children and families to navigate the sometimes complex and unfamiliar cultural expectations of schools.



The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority has developed a comprehensive online resource *Supporting English as an Additional Language at Transition to School*, in collaboration with the Department of Education and Training and early childhood expert Dr Priscilla Clarke.

The resource provides advice and practical examples of how children and families with English as an Additional Language (EAL), can be supported to make a successful transition to school. It is designed to assist and guide early childhood professionals and teachers in school and includes five case studies as well as video vignettes to illustrate approaches to:

- building relationships with children and their families
- supporting home language
- supporting English language development
- supporting transition to school. 



“ Children and families from Arabic backgrounds were supported in the transition to school process in a Melbourne-based pilot that held a number of bilingual workshops for them in English and Arabic. The workshops gave families information and guidance on supporting their child’s literacy development and explained the benefits of playing, how to engage their child in literacy and play activities, and what is involved in the transition process.

In another metropolitan area, group gatherings were held in familiar venues (such as community houses or church halls) to engage children and families from language backgrounds other than English. Interpreters were available at these sessions along with translated materials. Transport, childcare and culturally appropriate food were provided for families to support their participation and to make them feel more welcome.⁷⁰ ”

It is important for early childhood professionals to ensure that they are providing genuine opportunities for families to engage in transition by adapting transition practices to address their varying circumstances and experiences. Improving the way children and their families are included in the transition planning processes and ensuring that programs respond to cultural or linguistic diversity are critical to ensuring the transition to school is a positive experience.



Some strategies for developing partnerships with families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds include:

- finding ways to support cross-cultural communication, such as through using interpreters or having resources translated
- considering the impact on refugee families of experiences of trauma or war, and understanding that families and children might need additional time and support to develop trust and a feeling of safety in a new cultural context
- being flexible and attuned to the pressures of resettlement (for example, understanding that documentation such as immunisation records might not be readily available, and navigating transportation to arrive on time could be difficult for some families)
- understanding that there are different cultural expectations of families’ engagement in school and that this can lead to uncertainty about the contribution that families can make to their children’s education.

COMMUNICATING AND PLANNING WITH FAMILIES FROM CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

Given the diversity within and across cultures in Australia, it is important not to make assumptions about families’ backgrounds, cultures or practices, as these can be very different from family to family. Taking time to talk with families directly about their lives and culture is the best way to find out more about families’ histories and cultural practices.





Some strategies for communicating and planning support for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds about transition into school include:

- being open to different notions of 'family'
- acknowledging that while some families might share common cultural practices, values and beliefs, they all have individual features and characteristics
- working in partnership with other agencies who are involved with the family
- regularly reviewing the environment and resources used in programs and being aware of the messages that they convey to families
- talking to families about how they would like to participate and how they view their role as their child transitions to school
- linking families with one another and encouraging them to support each other and discuss mutual concerns
- making sure transition programs are flexible and encouraging children and their families to participate
- providing opportunities for children and their families to give feedback on transition programs and participate in any evaluation exercises, to ensure transition programs are relevant and meet their requirements.

Some strategies that can help to enable clear communication with children and families from language backgrounds other than English include:

- using interpreters, bilingual staff, aides, and translated materials to help families understand and feel comfortable
- displaying information in community languages
- becoming familiar with local agencies that provide language services in the relevant languages

- speaking clearly and using pictures and photographs to help communicate with families
- choosing words carefully, using plain language and making a conscious effort to avoid using colloquial language. Multi-word expressions such as 'get up to', 'catch up' and 'to do with' can be confusing for someone whose first language is not English.

When working with an interpreter, it is important to:

- speak slowly and clearly
- try not to say too much at once, so that the interpreter can remember what was said
- focus on engaging with the family, not the interpreter, in face-to-face meeting situations
- ask the family questions to see if they have understood what was said
- provide opportunities to listen to what families want to say and provide them with the information they might require.

All early childhood services funded by the Department of Education and Training (and who do not receive direct funding for language services) are eligible to access interpreting services through the Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service (VITS) to support the delivery of services to children and families, including telephone, video and on site interpreting services.

UNDERSTANDING THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Before children start school, educators play an important role in assisting families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to understand the school system in Victoria. In particular, it is essential that families:

- understand the benefits of the range of supports in the school, such as targeted English language support
- understand school rules, norms and expectations
- understand the information that is sent home and why, in some cases, permission is required and forms need to be signed.

Educators, bilingual staff members and Multilingual Education Aides (MEAs) can help the families understand the process of starting school so that they can support their children by speaking to them in their home language about the process of starting school.

For example, families might not know the names of routine times used at school, such as 'playtime', 'mat time', 'news time', and these could be explained to families and children in their home language.

SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN FROM LANGUAGE BACKGROUNDS OTHER THAN ENGLISH IN SCHOOLS


A range of services and resources is provided to government schools to support students from language backgrounds other than English and for English as an Additional Language (EAL) programs.



- Some children who speak a language other than English as their main language at home will require additional support in learning English as an additional language. If they are enrolled in a government school, they are eligible for EAL programs
- Funding is provided to government schools with significant numbers of EAL students through the Student Resource Package. EAL funding is given to schools to staff EAL programs. A targeted specialist EAL program is informed by a good understanding of each child and their learning background, including their stage of English language development
- Funding might also be provided for MEAs in schools who can assist with:
 - effective communication between students and teachers in the classroom
 - integrating EAL learners into school activities by helping them to understand school expectations and goals
 - assisting teachers to understand the home cultures and the expectations that families have of the school and education in general
 - assisting newly-arrived families in their settlement into the new educational community
- Government schools have access to Regional EAL Program Officers in each of the four Department regional offices. Regional EAL Program Officers provide EAL program support and advice to schools, as well as professional learning opportunities for teachers in government schools in the region
- Children who have recently arrived in Australia might also be eligible for additional support if they are enrolled in a government school, through the New Arrivals Program.

The Guidelines for Managing Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Schools provide an overview of Government policies and the Department's initiatives in relation to the prevention of discrimination and harassment. These guidelines also include a range of learning materials.

To improve support for refugee children, the Department has developed *Strengthening Outcomes – Refugee Students in Government Schools*, which contains information for schools and other service providers about the range of resources available to support students from refugee backgrounds in Victorian schools.

Interpreting and translating services are also available free (within guidelines) to government schools. The services ensure that parents and guardians who require an interpreter have access to school information and are better able to communicate with schools. 

For more information about supporting children with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who attend Catholic schools, visit www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au or for those who attend independent schools, visit www.ais.vic.edu.au

3.10 TRANSITION FOR FAMILIES WHO HAVE DIFFICULTIES WITH LITERACY

Some families who have difficulties with literacy might speak a language fluently (which may be English or another language), but have trouble reading and writing. They might have certain literacy skills, but might require additional support at times.

This section is most relevant for families from English-speaking backgrounds who have difficulties with the written aspects of literacy. Though some of it is relevant for families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, **further information about supporting these families is in section 3.9.**

It might not be obvious to early childhood professionals and school teachers that some families experience difficulties with literacy, and families might not feel comfortable asking for assistance.

There are many ways to improve communication with families who have difficulties with literacy. Many of these strategies are useful to engage all families.

Some strategies include:

- talking with families about transition processes, and seeking their advice on how they would like to be involved
- holding family information nights about transition, where information is provided verbally to all families
- incorporating visual cues in information provided to families about transition to school processes and programs
- working with individual families on documentation.
- making use of multimedia tools to provide information about transition processes and programs.

Families with low literacy skills might have particular difficulties engaging with and completing the Transition Statement. By providing opportunities for all families to meet in person to discuss and complete the Transition Statement together, families who experience difficulties with literacy can feel more empowered—especially if they are able to invite a friend or relative to complete the Transition Statement with them. **The Transition Statement is covered in further detail in section 6.3.**



3.11 TRANSITION FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE GIFTED AND TALENTED

As with all children, every gifted and talented child is an individual, with a unique developmental and learning profile. To identify a child as gifted is to recognise this individuality and respond appropriately.


Research shows that gifted children might have different expectations of starting at school from those of other children. Where some children might be more focused on making new friends and the rules that will apply at school, young gifted children often feel that the prospect of new learning will be the most exciting feature of starting school. However, some gifted children are at risk of experiencing social and emotional difficulties in adjusting to a new learning environment when there is not adequate planning for their learning progress.⁷¹

The particular challenge for the young gifted child is that the expectations and approach to learning can be distinctly different between home experiences and the format of learning in the early childhood or school curriculum.

Some strategies that are important for supporting gifted children (and may be useful for other children) include:

- discovering what and how the young gifted child has learnt at home or in their previous ECEC setting
- incorporating familiar aspects within the new learning program to support the continuity of learning for the child, and help alleviate any social or emotional concerns the child might experience
- helping the young gifted child learn 'how to learn' in the new setting
 - upon transitioning to school, a young gifted child might benefit from acquiring more independent learning skills with less dependency on adults to provide intellectual stimulation
 - they might also require explicit explanations of the new expectations about learning. For example, 'In this group the resources are on open shelves and you help yourself to what you need' or 'In this class you check your spelling by yourself from the class dictionaries; over there on the shelf'.

When a gifted child also has disabilities (dual exceptionality), these disabilities can hide or mask the giftedness or talent. Educators should be aware that gifted children can show learning that might not fit within conventional ideas about achievement. They should share this important information with the receiving school to ensure the child's ability and disability is well supported with appropriate strategies.

The resource *Making a Difference for Young Gifted and Talented Children* provides further information and guidance. 




3.12 TRANSITION FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES EXPERIENCING VULNERABILITY

Children are vulnerable “if the capacity of parents and family to effectively care, protect and provide for their long-term development and wellbeing is limited.”⁷² Certain factors can contribute to vulnerability, for example, living in out-of-home care, having a refugee background and experience of trauma and intergenerational poverty. Other stressors affecting a family or community can also contribute to vulnerability for children, such as family stress, economic hardship, unemployment, homelessness, violence, alcohol and substance misuse, and mental health problems.⁷³

This may leave children vulnerable to child abuse, neglect or family violence. The signs of child vulnerability may include poor attendance at kindergarten or school, developmental delay for younger children or presentation at hospital for suspected abuse. The evidence shows that where there are multiple factors present, the chance a child is vulnerable increases.⁷⁴

The Victorian Government is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. As part of the Victorian Government’s commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Betrayal of Trust report, which found that more must be done to prevent and respond to child abuse in our community, there is a new regulatory landscape surrounding child safety, underpinned by the new PROTECT Child Safe Standards.

The Child Safe Standards are compulsory minimum standards for all Victorian early childhood services and schools, to ensure they are well prepared to protect children from abuse and neglect. 

It is important to ensure that children and their families experiencing vulnerability are well supported in their ECEC service, school and OSHC service especially as they transition from one setting to another⁷⁵, to minimise any risk of disengagement.⁷⁶

It is also important for professionals to understand and respect the lived experiences of children and families, including acknowledging families’ prior experiences of their own education (which might not have been positive) and the complex situations families could be dealing with.

“ It is very contextual. There is no blanket approach to supporting families as their needs are all so unique. ”

- Early childhood professional

Families might experience challenges outside the family—for example, in the neighbourhood or community, a lack of community resources or additional supports, service inconsistencies, or other barriers preventing them from easily accessing services and schools. Families might also have difficulties with transportation, there might be limited or no access to the internet in the home (preventing them from completing online school enrolments, for example), there might be cultural considerations and preferences regarding when a child should commence school, and families might not be literate in their home language or in English, making it difficult to read community notices about ECEC and school.



BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND CHILDREN EXPERIENCING VULNERABILITY

Supporting families experiencing vulnerability requires the diversity of contexts to be recognised, along with the many ways of approaching situations. This means being non-judgemental, culturally aware, sensitive and respectful when working with families and children. This type of approach supports the development and fostering of positive relationships.

Taking the time to reflect critically on one's own attitudes, values and experiences is vital for building positive relationships. For children experiencing vulnerability, an even greater focus is required by early childhood professionals on building trusting relationships that are non-stigmatising and respectful of diversity, to enable them to reach their full potential.


Further strategies and approaches on how to support children and families experiencing vulnerability during early years transitions are outlined below.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES EXPERIENCING VULNERABILITY

Professionals need to learn about and be responsive to the unique circumstances of families in order to tailor the transition support to individual families. The term 'families' includes more than parents and children, with extended family members, such as grandparents, siblings, foster carers or other carers sometimes taking the lead in caregiving (**this is discussed further in section 2.3**). Taking this into consideration when communicating with families will make everyone feel connected and engaged.

Building partnerships with families to make them feel valued and respected is paramount to supporting families experiencing vulnerability. Taking on the attitude and approach of working with families rather than doing things to families, along with taking a genuine interest in them, can make a positive difference to a family.

One organisation has the respectful approach and motto of an 'open-door policy'. They believe that 'no door is the wrong door to knock on', illustrating the respectful way of viewing all family concerns as worthy concerns. Professionals also need to combine an 'open-door policy' with a pro-active approach in engaging and building partnerships with families.

Professionals that know what services and supports are available within their community can better assist families experiencing vulnerability as they transition to school. Pointing families in the possible directions, providing a personal introduction, a specific name or a contact within a service or school can go a long way to ease anxiety as children move from one setting to another. Professionals can refer families to parenting programs for children and families experiencing vulnerability. 


Quickly addressing specific information and questions that families might have can make a positive difference. It is helpful, for example, that families know who the prep or foundation teacher will be, so that they can start to build relationships with them early on. Some professionals choose to accompany families to initial school appointments to help establish positive connections with the school. Family members have noted how beneficial this can be, particularly if they have not had a positive experience at school themselves or they do not feel confident approaching the school without support.

Taking relevant professional learning courses (along with taking the time to understand and acknowledge diverse family contexts) can help professionals to understand and respect children and families experiencing different complexities and life challenges. Examples of relevant courses include 'Bridges out of Poverty' (through a number of different providers), 'Trauma Training' (Australian Childhood Foundation) and 'Cultural Diversity Training' (Victorian Cooperative on Children's Services for Ethnic Groups – VICSEG). 



BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS WITH PROFESSIONALS

Participating in multidisciplinary teams or networks to support children and families experiencing vulnerability (with teams that include, for example, ECEC services, schools, OSHC, health and family services, and child protection) is another positive practice. Professionals can participate in local transition networks where information and approaches are shared and there are consistent expectations for all children and families.


One example of this type of teamwork is educators and teachers working closely with child protection practitioners to build awareness and skills in interacting respectfully with families, thus making transitions more seamless for families experiencing vulnerability. Professionals can connect to programs that support integrated services models, such as 'Patchwork', allowing them to broaden their network and find useful information. 

PROVIDING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT TO FAMILIES EXPERIENCING VULNERABILITY

It is important that professionals prioritise time to work more intensively with children and families experiencing vulnerability. This can mean that professionals talk to families individually about ECEC and school processes, provide information in their home languages, or assist them to complete and lodge relevant forms and documents, such as school enrolment forms.

Tailoring early years transitions for individual children and families experiencing vulnerability can make a positive difference. Suggested strategies, some of which can apply to all children, include:

- assisting children to integrate into a school setting through activities such as developing social story books
- making the transition process as predictable as possible, including having structure and routines and consistent relationships with educators and teachers
- providing extra transition days above what is usually offered

- providing opportunities for primary school teachers to get to know preschool children and their families during the preschool year, including reciprocal visits for ECEC educators and school teachers
- considering all the funding options to provide further support to eligible families as required, such as the State School Relief Fund 
- connecting with support services that can offer practical assistance to families in crisis, including housing, food, health care, transport and recreation options.⁷⁷

It is also important that professionals take time to reflect, discuss and debrief with others about how to best support families experiencing vulnerabilities.

Although there are general strategies and approaches that can support children and families experiencing vulnerability, research points to some additional ways of working that might be beneficial for certain types of vulnerability, for example, children in out-of-home care, children and families experiencing trauma and refugee children.

CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

In some cases, children experiencing vulnerability might be receiving support from child protection services or living in out-of-home care (OoHC). Children and young people in OoHC are a diverse group who have been removed from their family home (through a protective intervention process) after experiencing abuse or neglect within the family. Some of these OoHC placements are voluntary and some are statutory, and vary in length of stay from overnight to several years. The Victorian Government, through the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and DHHS-funded and registered Community Service Organisations (CSOs), is responsible for looking after these children and young people by providing a range of placement types, including:

- foster care: a foster carer who has been trained and approved to look after children looks after a child (in the foster carer's home)
- kinship care: a child is placed with a relative or family friend
- residential care: rostered trained workers, employed by a CSO, care for up to four young people in a residential unit.

Child Protection also aims to make sure that children and young people receive services to assist them in dealing with the effect of abuse and neglect on their wellbeing and development. Who has the authority to make decisions about a child's education will vary according to the specific court order. The DHHS Child Protection Manual provides the following information regarding the process for authorising carers to enrol children in education:

“Where the child will be enrolled in child care, kindergarten or school, the carer will need a second signed instrument of authorisation they can give to the relevant facility for their records. Additional copies may be provided if needed. Where a placement provider is involved, the placement manager is to be provided with a copy of the documentation provided to the carer.”

(<http://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/advice-and-protocols/advice/out-home-care/administration/authorising-carers>).

The Early Childhood Agreement for Children in Out-of-Home Care (the Agreement) focuses on children aged from birth to four years and aims to increase the participation of young children in OoHC in high-quality ECEC services, with a particular focus on Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and kindergarten services.

Transitions for children in OoHC might be particularly unsettling for children, families and carers, and require coordinated support from the professionals involved with the child and families to ensure children do not miss out on learning and development opportunities. Under the Agreement, early childhood professionals have a range of responsibilities. Those relevant to transition to school include:

- providing an inclusive and culturally appropriate environment and practices, responsive to each child
- working with carers to support ongoing participation and engagement in ECEC services and to promote a stimulating home learning environment
- working collaboratively with DHHS, local government, the Department of Education and Training, other service providers and carers to

support transition across ECEC services and to school, including completing a Transition Statement, Koorie Education Plan (where relevant) and timely application for relevant support services.

For children in schools, the *Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment* provides guidelines for Victorian schools and case managers from Child Protection and CSOs. A key process for which schools have accountability is the setting up of a Student Support Group (SSG) for every child in care to identify and provide additional support for the child to be successful at school.

The SSG consists of the parent, guardian or caregiver of the child along with:

- the DHHS Protective Services case manager
- a teacher or year level coordinator
- the principal or nominee to act as chairperson
- the school's Student Welfare Coordinator
- where appropriate, the child or young person.

Schools must develop an Individualised Education Program (IEP) for each child or young person living in care. This plan should be developed by the Student Support Group. The IEP should be reviewed regularly to ensure its relevance for the child or young person.



The DHHS protective services case manager (who has the legal responsibility for the child), the child's CSO case manager, and the child's carer should be informed of the transition to school process. At a minimum, a meeting should be set up with these people so that the child's interests and concerns can be discussed between all parties.

Children in OoHC may face additional challenges during their transition to school due to their life circumstances. The following strategies support effective transition to school for children in OoHC:

- When a child is entering the first year of formal schooling, case managers should work with relevant services, ECEC professionals and the carer to complete a Transition Statement
- If a child in OoHC has not attended an ECEC service, the case manager should contact the enrolling school as early as possible to work with the school in developing a transition plan that is tailored to the requirements of the child




- Additional information should be provided by a child's care team to the school the child is transitioning to, as required on a case-by-case basis, to ensure that a child's school and teachers are as prepared as possible to provide optimal learning, developmental and emotional support
- If transition to school occurs while a child is in OoHC, the child's care team should work closely with the school and the child's carers to ensure that all practical arrangements are in place for the commencement of the school year. This includes all enrolment processes, purchase of uniforms and stationery, and timely applications for any additional supports the child may require and be eligible to receive.⁷⁸

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA

Traumatic events are generally placed in two categories—Type I (simple trauma) or Type II (complex trauma).⁷⁹ Type I traumatic events occur once, and are generally sudden and unexpected, for example, experiencing a natural disaster or car accident, while Type II traumatic events occur over a prolonged period of time and involve repeated and chronic exposure to the traumatic stimuli, such as child abuse, neglect and family violence.⁸⁰ This prolonged exposure to trauma, resulting in toxic stress, can disrupt children's brain development and thus children's cognitive, social and emotional development. Even after the stressful or traumatic situation has passed, children's brains and bodies continue to react as if the stress is continuing.⁸¹ Having an awareness of accumulative harm and intergenerational trauma⁸² is important for professionals in understanding a child's and family's circumstances.


When working with children who have experienced trauma, it is important to implement strength-based approaches that re-conceptualise challenging behaviours as protective mechanisms that keep children safe when exposed to threats. Developing strong attachment relationships with the child and having clear rules, routines and predictability in early childhood programs or schools assist in nurturing feelings of trust and safety in children.

Taking a trauma-informed approach to practice by building a child's self-confidence, resilience and emotional regulation, can support positive transition experiences. A trauma-informed approach could be described as a framework for human service delivery that is based on knowledge and understanding of how trauma affects people's lives and their service needs.⁸³ 

REFUGEE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Refugee children and families are likely to have had exposure to trauma which could include experience of physical violence, conflict, terrorism, natural disasters, sexual and gender-based violence, child labour, exploitation and human trafficking. It is important for professionals to understand the context from which refugees might come, including the three stages of the refugee experience: pre-flight, flight to safety and resettlement.⁸⁴ Each of these stages pose unique challenges for refugee children and families and perpetuate trauma, uncertainty, instability and change in their lives.

Some of the effective practices for children affected by conflict are also relevant for children affected by trauma. In addition, it is important to consider the unique cultural and linguistic characteristics of refugee children and families. For example, play-based therapies should be culturally sensitive and appropriate for children's language skills, and professionals should remain sensitive to actions that could trigger feelings of being unsafe—for example, loud noises such as school bells.

Refugee children face multiple transitions, and in many cases, this includes a transition from an English Language School or Centre to a mainstream school. Strengthening support structures for each transition, over time, is important. Translation and interpreters can support the communication with children and families. 

3.13 TRANSITION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES NOT PARTICIPATING IN ECEC SERVICES

In some communities, there are children and families who do not access ECEC services or transition to school programs. This can be for a variety of reasons, including chronic health issues, recent arrival in the local area, cost of services, lack of availability, lack of transport, unstable housing or homelessness, or being easily intimidated or put off by the perceived attitudes of staff or other parents.⁸⁵ Engaging with children and families who do not participate in an ECEC service prior to starting at school is a challenge for many services, schools and transition programs. To ensure successful outcomes, it is important to tailor transition to school programs for families who have not been in contact with ECEC services.

It is important to acknowledge that even though some Victorian children might not be attending ECEC services, many families are providing rich home-learning environments and opportunities for their children, and might also be accessing other programs or services such as occasional child care or playgroups (supported or parent-led).

It is essential to work in close collaboration with a broad range of other support services already involved with the children and family, especially those that have already gained their trust and confidence of the family. This helps families and children benefit from all services offered prior to school.

Connections between schools and families who have not engaged with ECEC services are developed through good communication and trusting and respectful relationships. Schools have a valuable role in linking families to relevant services and in developing processes and programs to support those children and families that have not attended ECEC services. This process relies on families feeling welcome and wanting to be involved in the transition to school experience with their child.

School staff can complete a Transition Statement for a child in partnership with the family. Completing this section of the Transition Statement with the family

can help schools identify transition approaches that can be improved to support children and their families.

Many of the strategies and approaches noted in the other sections of this Kit remain relevant for connecting with families who do not readily access ECEC services. Ensuring that families can easily access information about local transition programs and opportunities to participate is central to their engagement.



Some strategies to consider when communicating and planning support for children and families not engaged in ECEC services include:

- understanding what the barriers to participation in ECEC services are, so as to reduce or remove them
- involving maternal and child health (MCH) and other local support, health and welfare agencies as collaborators in the design and development of transition programs and processes

- making information easily accessible and relevant, focusing on the importance of early learning to children's future and why families should consider being involved in transition to school programs
- making services and information in the wider community more visible and explaining how these services can help
- making services more accessible by investigating what helps families engage. For example, being flexible with communication timetables to allow for working family demands and transport.
- VEYLDF practice guide: Equity and diversity
- VEYLDF practice guide: High expectations for every child
- Children of school age attending a kindergarten program and the school exemption process
- Resources to support families in their conversations with educators
- Program for Students with Disabilities and Student Support Groups
- Disability Standards for Education
- Health management plans for children with additional health needs
- Supporting English as an Additional Language at transition to school
- Support for children from language backgrounds other than English in schools, Multicultural Education Aides and Regional EAL Program Officers
- Support for refugee students and new arrivals
- Interpreting and translating services for government schools
- VEYLDF Wellbeing Guide
- PROTECT Child Safe Standards
- Parenting programs for children and families experiencing vulnerability
- Professional learning on poverty, trauma and cultural diversity
- Programs to support integrated service models
- State Schools Relief fund and other supports for families
- Supporting the education of children in out-of-home care
- Child protection issues, and information sharing responsibilities
- Trauma informed approaches.









Further information and resources

More information and resources on the following are available on the online appendix at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/transitiontoschool:>

- The Charter of Human Rights and simplified version of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Practical advice to help families prepare for the transition to school
- Exploring diversity and developing intercultural understanding
- Strength-based approach to writing Transition Statements
- Supporting and assessing children's language development
- Wellbeing, social and emotional learning, and mental health
- Respectful relationships education
- Working with children exhibiting challenging behaviours
- Koorie education professional development calendar and resources
- Protocols for Koorie Education in Victorian Primary and Secondary Schools
- Victoria's Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan 2016–2026.
- Koorie Preschool Assistants, Koorie Engagement Support Officers and Koorie Education Coordinators
- Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups



NOTES: SECTION 3

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74. Ibid.
75. Ellenbogen, S, Klein, B & Wekerle, C 2014, 'Early childhood education as a resilience intervention for maltreated children', *Early child development and care*, 184(9–10), pp. 1364–1377.
76. The Victorian Auditor General's Report (VAGO) on Education Transitions, 2015.
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79. Wright, T 2014, 'Too scared to learn: teaching your children who have experienced trauma', *YC: Young Children*, vol. 69, no. 5, pp. 88–93 and Australian Childhood Foundation 2010, *Making space for learning: trauma informed practice in schools*, Melbourne.
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82. Intergenerational trauma is another type of trauma. See Judy Atkinson's research with indigenous Australian communities.
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4 CONTINUITY OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

IN THIS SECTION

4.1 Learning and development outcomes for children

- Early Years Learning and Development Outcomes
- The Victorian Curriculum Foundation – Level 10 (F–10)

4.2 Applicable practice principles

4.3 Practice principle: Integrated teaching and learning approaches

- Play-based and inquiry-based learning

4.4 Practice principle: Assessment for learning and development

Further information and resources



Throughout this document, this icon indicates **additional resources are available** within online appendix at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/transitiontoschool>

The concept of 'continuity' for children has two parts. Firstly, it refers to the consistency of children's experience across diverse education and care settings as they grow up (including learning expectations, curricula, and learning environments). Secondly, it refers to the coordination of services and agencies affecting children at any given point in time.⁸⁶ Both are important for children; however, this section focuses on the first part. The second part is discussed in section 2.4 and section 3.

Children's learning typically builds on their previous knowledge and experience, as they practice and master new skills, concepts and techniques. For this reason, consistency between the settings and environments in which children learn is important.⁸⁷

“ While children are certainly resilient and adaptable, their experiences of transitions and change are likely to be more favourable when there is as much consistency and continuity between settings as possible.⁸⁸ ”

Evidence suggests that the transition from early childhood settings to school is often characterised by a lack of continuity across relationships, pedagogy, curriculum, resources and support.⁸⁹ This is particularly challenging for children and families experiencing vulnerability and children with a disability or developmental delay. Although some discontinuity is inevitable, successful transitions have much to do with how children, families, services, schools and communities interact to support each other, how prepared they are and how successfully they cope with and adapt to the changes.⁹⁰

Many children entering school will be eager to experience what they might perceive as 'school' activities, such as formally reading, writing, and working with numbers and mathematical ideas in a classroom setting. Some children might have already experienced these activities at home and within early childhood settings. It is important to consider opportunities to continue to challenge and extend learning with appropriate pedagogical practice as children transition into school.

The Victorian and Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) learning and development outcomes and the Victorian Curriculum F–10 set out the learning and development goals for all Victorian children. Developing an understanding of these outcomes and goals enables educators

and teachers to plan for children's learning and development, giving consideration to where they have come from and where they are heading next as they progress in their education.



Some strategies to support continuity include:

- providing opportunities for children to visit the school and outside school hours care (OSHC) service to orient themselves with educators, classes, buildings and amenities
- arranging reciprocal visits between educators from school and kindergarten to observe each other's curriculum and pedagogy, and allowing time to discuss strategies and practices that can be incorporated across settings to support continuity
- providing familiar play-based learning spaces in the school and OSHC service (for example, book corner with some of the same books, actively encouraging children's imagination and dramatic play) and sharing some materials and equipment across sites
- developing social storyboards using photographs of the school
- provide opportunities for the child to express their thoughts, feelings and concerns to ensure the child's voice is incorporated into these transition strategies
- providing opportunities for families to connect with other families at the school
- drawing on the VEYLDF and the first three levels of the Victorian Curriculum F–10 in order to reflect on the learning and development that has occurred and plan for next steps.

4.1 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

Research over the past few decades has revealed how the human brain is biologically primed for learning from birth. The early childhood period of children's lives has a profound impact on their learning and development for the long term. From birth to eight years, children's developing brains undergo rapid change. This is when children have the greatest opportunities to develop neural pathways for learning and are also most vulnerable to negative experiences.

Research underscores the imperative for comprehensive and integrated systems that support children's learning and development, health and wellbeing in partnership with families. Emphasis is placed on continuity of learning for young children as they move between various settings in the early years, including home, early childhood education and care (ECEC) services and school. An informed understanding of the science of early learning and development guides adults on what children need to thrive and the systems that best support this.⁹¹

EARLY YEARS LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

The VEYLDF identifies five learning and development outcomes for young children from birth to eight years:

- Children have a strong sense of identity (identity)
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world (community)
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing (wellbeing)
- Children are confident and involved learners (learning)
- Children are effective communicators (communication).⁹²



The VEYLDF provides early childhood professionals with evidence-based concepts to advance learning and development. From birth, children learn and demonstrate knowledge, skills and understandings in different ways and at different points in time. The rate of children's individual progress is not always the same, nor is progress always easy or straightforward. For some children and families, maintaining and improving learning and development involves considerable struggle and much perseverance. Therefore, different kinds of support and engagement are required.


The five outcomes provide a common language to support collaborative approaches between professionals and with children and families to build continuity across early years settings and programs for children from birth to eight years.

Drawing on their professional knowledge and their ongoing assessment of children's learning, the Transition Statement provides the opportunity for early childhood educators to reflect on children's progress towards each of the learning and development outcomes, and identify strategies that will support teachers in school and outside school hours care to continue that progress.

THE VICTORIAN CURRICULUM FOUNDATION – LEVEL 10 (F–10)

Together, the VEYLDF and the Victorian Curriculum F–10 articulate the knowledge and skills all children and young people should develop for success in work and life.

The Victorian Curriculum F–10 incorporates the Australian Curriculum and reflects Victorian priorities and standards. Victorian government and Catholic schools are required to use the Victorian Curriculum F–10. Independent schools may use the Victorian Curriculum F–10 as a model and resource for the effective implementation of the Australian Curriculum.

The Victorian Curriculum F–10 is structured as a continuum across levels of learning achievement, not years of schooling. This enables the development of targeted learning programs for all students, where the curriculum is used to plan in relation to the actual learning level of each student rather than their assumed level of learning based on age. 

Each curriculum area includes content descriptions explaining what is to be taught and achievement standards describing what students can understand and do.⁹³

The achievement standards in the Victorian Curriculum F–10 reflect the emphasis within the broad stages of schooling, including the Foundation stage (Years F–2). The focus in this stage is on the five curriculum areas of English, Mathematics, The Arts, Health and Physical Education, and Personal and Social Capability. However, in the early years of schooling, schools may choose to structure teaching and learning programs around the five outcomes of the VEYLDF.

More information about using the VEYLDF and the Victorian Curriculum F–10 to support continuity of learning is provided in section 6.2. This includes copies of the VEYLDF illustrative maps to the Victorian Curriculum F–2. A link to the illustrative maps is also given under 'Further information and resources' at the end of this section.



4.2 APPLICABLE PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

Although the VEYLDF practice principles are interrelated, and each is relevant in some way when thinking about the key components of effective transition, for the purposes of this document, focus is given to the practice principles that are most applicable to each section.




The VEYLDF practice principles that are most applicable to continuity of learning and development are:

- Integrated teaching and learning approaches
- Assessment for learning and development.

Read on to learn about how these practice principles can guide early childhood professionals in supporting continuity of learning and development during transitions.

4.3 PRACTICE PRINCIPLE: INTEGRATED TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES

The VEYLDF recognises that play is central to the concept of integrated teaching and learning approaches for children birth to eight years. 



Play is essential to stimulate and integrate a wide range of children's intellectual, physical, social and creative abilities. Effective early childhood practices use integrated teaching and learning approaches to support sustained and shared interactions with children.

Learning occurs in many different contexts and social environments when children watch others, talk with others and participate in routines and everyday experiences. Children also learn on their own, and this learning can be stimulated and extended by the involvement of responsive adults. An integrated teaching and learning approach is an active process founded on learning relationships with children. This involves attunement to children, active engagement (by and with children), sustained shared thinking and conversations, and intentional teaching.

Combined or integrated child-directed play and learning, guided play and learning, and adult-led learning are effective in advancing children's knowledge.⁹⁴

PLAY-BASED AND INQUIRY- BASED LEARNING

Play is integral to the academic environment because it is essential for the cognitive, physical, social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people. Play develops dispositions for learning such as curiosity, resilience and self-motivation.

Play can take many forms and can be described in various ways. For example, in the early years of school, terms such as inquiry-based learning, dramatic inquiry, discovery learning and active learning are used to describe pedagogical approaches that are similar to guided play⁹⁵ in early childhood settings.

A growing body of research shows that in early childhood and the early years of school, children learn more deeply and perform better when they have the opportunity to engage in 'authentic

learning.' For example, inquiry-based learning (also called discovery learning or project learning) in school provides the opportunity for effective learning when it is well planned and guided. Evidence suggests that the collaboration involved in inquiry-based learning has benefits for all children's social-emotional development, particularly those children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage.⁹⁶

Incorporating play-based approaches to learning supports transition to school by helping children to adjust to their new school setting,⁹⁷ as well as enhancing their learning behaviours and problem-solving skills.⁹⁸ Research indicates that too much focus on more formal learning, at the expense of play, could have later implications for the social and emotional development of children and adolescents.

4.4 PRACTICE PRINCIPLE: ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The VEYLDF recognises that assessment of children's knowledge, understandings, skills and capabilities is an essential ingredient of planning for and promoting new learning and development. Assessment is designed to discover what children know, understand, and can do. This is particularly relevant as children transition to school, when early childhood professionals work together and with families to determine best 'next steps' in promoting a child's learning and development. 📖

Early childhood professionals choose assessment instruments and techniques to create a holistic picture of each child's knowledge, understandings, skills and capabilities. They are thoughtful, deliberate and purposeful in the way they use this information to discuss with families and shape their responses to children.⁹⁹

Early childhood professionals assess children in ways that:

- are authentic and responsive to how all children can best demonstrate their learning and development
- are receptive to and include children's views of their learning
- include information from a wide range of sources to help them assess and plan effectively
- reveal each child's specific strengths and capabilities and any gaps in achievement that could benefit from additional early intervention
- include the perspectives, knowledge, experiences and expectations of families
- provide families with information and ideas to support the child's learning at home and in other services
- value the culturally specific knowledge about children and their identity, wellbeing, learning and development that is embedded in communities
- are transparent, giving all adults close to the child access to best 'next steps' in promoting a child's learning and development.¹⁰⁰

The Early Years Planning Cycle (as shown in Figure 3) outlines the process that early childhood professionals use, in partnership with families and other professionals, to collect, analyse, plan, act, and reflect on evidence of learning and development.¹⁰¹

FIGURE 3

Early Years of Planning Cycle

Reflection occurs at every step in the Early Years Planning Cycle.



The EYPC is adapted from the Educators Guide to EYLF (2010)

NOTES: SECTION 4

A wide range of tools are used by different professionals for particular assessment purposes. It is important for ECEC educators and school teachers to understand the assessment techniques and tools used in each other's settings, as well as those used by other early childhood professionals. These can provide critical information to support effective transitions and continuity for the child, and can inform the development of the Transition Statement. **Some of these assessments and tools are described in more detail in section 6.**



Further information and resources

More information and resources on the following are available on the online appendix at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/transitiontoschool>:

- The Victorian Curriculum F–10
- Linking the VEYLDF and the Victorian Curriculum F–10 – VEYLDF illustrative maps
- Supporting continuity of learning and development
- VEYLDF practice guide: Integrated teaching and learning approaches
- VEYLDF practice guide: Assessment for learning and development.

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92. Ibid., p. 17.
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5 TRANSITION PLANNING AND EVALUATION

IN THIS SECTION

5.1 Applicable practice principles

5.2 Practice principle: Reflective practice

- The Early Years Planning Cycle

5.3 Planning transition programs

- Action plans
- Transition timelines
- Identified promising practices for transition planning in Victoria

5.4 Localised transition planning

- Planning within a network or community
- Transition networks
- Why are networks important?
- How do transition networks function?

5.5 How to develop a sustainable transition program

5.6 Evaluating transition programs and approaches

- Questions to ask when evaluating programs and approaches
- Overview of the Outcomes and Indicators research
- How to involve children in evaluating programs

Further information and resources




Throughout this document, this icon indicates **additional resources are available** within online appendix at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/transitiontoschool>

5.1 APPLICABLE PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

Previous sections of this Kit describe the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) practice principles and approaches that support effective transitions for children and families. Along with reflective practice (discussed below), these form the starting point for transition planning and evaluation.

5.2 PRACTICE PRINCIPLE: REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

The VEYLDF recognises that reflecting on and critically evaluating practice is a core part of all early childhood professionals'¹⁰² work. It is at the heart of maintaining a learning culture in a service, setting or network and is linked with continuous improvement. 



Effective practice is strengthened when early childhood professionals:

- reflect with children and families as collaborators to create more inclusive environments to advance each child's learning and development
- embrace professional learning and skill development that aligns with priorities for setting, service or network improvement
- collaborate with professionals in other disciplines to provide, receive and consider multiple perspectives, encouraging every person's contribution
- review and evaluate to inform ongoing improvement
- challenge and change some practices to incorporate new understandings.¹⁰³

THE EARLY YEARS

PLANNING CYCLE

Applying the early years planning cycle can increase early childhood professionals' awareness of bias and inequities and support them to uphold the rights of all children to become successful learners. This process could validate existing practices or challenge and drive improvements to less effective practices. It can help individuals and teams to identify the 'next steps' in improvement. Positive aspects of practice and skills can be identified, transferred or extended to improve other contexts.

Early childhood professionals:

- gather information, including the views and perspectives of each child, and use it to inform, review and enrich decision-making
- reflect with children and families as collaborators to create more inclusive environments to advance each child's learning and development
- collaborate with professionals in other disciplines to provide, receive and consider multiple perspectives, encouraging every person's contribution
- review and evaluate to inform ongoing improvement
- challenge and change some practices to incorporate new understandings into practice.¹⁰⁴

FIGURE 4

Early Years of Planning cycle

Reflection occurs at every step in the Early Years Planning Cycle.



The EYPC is adapted from the Educators Guide to EYLF (2010)

5.3 PLANNING TRANSITION PROGRAMS

Early childhood professionals, teams and networks can use the practice principles and the Early Years Planning Cycle to regularly collect evidence, question, plan, act and review their transition to school approaches and programs, and consider where they have made considerable positive differences to children and families during the transition process.



The following strategies and steps should be considered when planning a local transition program:

- establish a local network or revise an existing one
- identify a key person to lead transition planning within each early childhood education and care (ECEC) service and school
- set up a communication system within the network (this might include regular meetings, emails, and so on)
- assess local needs for transition to school
- agree on goals for the transition program
- generate program ideas by working out what activities will meet the requirements of local children, families and early childhood professionals
- identify timelines
- pinpoint local issues and jointly find solutions
- adapt timelines where necessary
- implement the program
- monitor program activities and timelines and engagement of children, families and early childhood educators
- evaluate and revise the program.

ACTION PLANS

Action plans can be a useful tool to support individuals and services or settings to achieve their goals and aspirations in planning transition programs and activities. Action plans direct our focus and attention and assist us to remain on track. They do this by assigning responsibility for specific steps, with timelines, to make progress in the direction of identified goals and priorities. Participants in the Supporting Reciprocal Visits project¹⁰⁵ (outlined in section 2.4) developed Transition Action Plans to support their ongoing efforts to improve transition to school experiences for children and families.



When developing an action plan, it is important to:

- decide who will be involved in developing the action plan from the start. Involving all key stakeholders at all stages of the planning process means they are more likely to have ownership of the plan and be motivated and committed to implement it
- choose action steps that are realistic and manageable, given the resources and supports available
- be specific about the action steps. This means being clear and explicit about who will do what, where, when and how
- continue to build on what is working well, including using identified strengths, as well as considering any additional strategies or action steps that might be required
- think about potential barriers that might get in the way of implementing the plan ahead of time, and consider coming up with a contingency plan to address them should they arise
- set regular times to reflect and evaluate the implementation of the transition action plan. This will help to stay on track
- conduct ongoing evaluation of the action plan. This allows for highlighting and celebrating success, which builds confidence and maintains momentum and commitment
- conduct ongoing reviews of the plan. This also allows any adjustments that might be necessary to be made, and to identify new priorities to work towards in the future. The Early Years Planning Cycle provides a useful model for this process.

TRANSITION TIMELINES

Transition planning and evaluation is an ongoing process that occurs throughout the year, and timelines will be different depending on the local context. However, the following should be considered as a minimum:

Key activity	Timeline
Options for, and evaluations of, transition program activities and events discussed between local ECEC services, Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services and schools, with added effort to formatively evaluate transition to school processes and activities at the beginning, middle and end of the year	Ongoing
School enrolment commences (families lodge enrolment form with school)	From May
Transition planning commences for children with a disability or developmental delay— including convening a Program Support Group and writing an early Transition Learning and Development Statement (the Transition Statement —see section 3.7)	June/July
Transition planning commences—children and their families participate in their local transition program. Note: Activities and events are designed differently to accommodate local contexts, but sometimes start as early as July	July onwards
Early childhood educator commences processes to complete Transition Statement, including engaging families and children	October
Early childhood educator collates final information with families to forward information to school and if applicable, the OSHC service. (This process may involve face-to-face meetings, or similar alternative, with families and the prep teacher.)	November
Final copy of Transition Statement forwarded to family, prep teacher and OSHC contact (where appropriate)	
Prep teacher reviews information* in Transition Statement, and uses it to inform curriculum planning. Where appropriate, prep teacher meets with families and/or early childhood educator to discuss Transition Statement and identify additional transition program activities that might be required. If applicable, the OSHC educators should also be involved at this point	November onwards
Prep teacher uses Transition Statements to plan the curriculum, use the information to help establish warm, welcoming environments, and as a conversation starter with new children and families	February/March
Additional on-entry prep assessments of learning commence.	February/March onwards

** Where the prep teacher(s) have not been confirmed for the following year, the school should refer the information onto the most appropriate member of the team, who will pass the information onto the foundation/prep teacher when confirmed.*

IDENTIFIED PROMISING PRACTICES FOR TRANSITION PLANNING IN VICTORIA

Promising practices are defined as strategies, programs, approaches or techniques designed to support positive transitions for children, families and educators, which are typically based on educator-focused wisdom and research but are often not yet empirically 'validated' through systematic research and evaluation.

In many communities across Victoria, there is much good work being done to ensure that starting school is a positive experience for all involved.

Although local contexts should always be considered, and there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach, approaches that have worked in one location might also work in another, provided they are adapted to suit local conditions. Statewide consistency is important for some elements, such as information sharing using the Transition Statement.

Establishing a transition network and working together in local partnerships is a good way to tailor promising practices to suit local circumstances. In many instances, children from one ECEC service might be transitioning to several different schools in a local area. Participating in local networks makes it easier for early childhood educators to engage and collaborate with teachers across multiple schools.

The 2008–09 trial of transition to school promising practices revealed a diverse number of transition approaches in Victorian communities. These promising practices (outlined below) emerged from a small-scale evaluation of the pilots, and as such, should be taken as good ideas that could be included in transition to school programs if they suit local community conditions.

Some of the practices, including buddy programs, family involvement and reciprocal visits for educators, have since been more thoroughly tested and shown to have significant benefits in supporting a positive transition to school for children, families and educators.¹⁰⁶ In addition, the Supporting Reciprocal Visits Project (**outlined in section 2.4**) combined two promising practices (reciprocal visits for educators and joint professional learning), and showed significant benefits for children and families as they transition into school and for ongoing professional partnerships.



A description of each practice is provided in the table below, with information about how the combined practices might be useful in different services. 

Practice idea	How it works	Why it works
Reciprocal visits – for children	Children attending ECEC services visit the primary school before school starts (for example, in Term 4). Prep students might also go back to visit ECEC services. Visits might occur on multiple occasions and involve different types of activities.	Children who are familiar with the school environment, expectations, rules, people, and so on, prior to commencing school, are less likely to be anxious and will adjust more quickly to it. Prep students may gain a sense of self-confidence from attending ECEC services.
Reciprocal visits – for educators	Early childhood educators, prep teachers and OSHC educators visit each others' environment to participate in meetings, joint teaching, transition planning, and so on.	Ongoing communication between educators improves professional relationships and contributes to curriculum or pedagogical refinements, better supporting continuity of learning and transition. Teachers also get to know each child before they start school.
Transition Statements and meetings	Written information about a child's learning and development is jointly prepared by early childhood educators, families and the child and is passed on to the prep teacher and, if applicable, OSHC educators.	Provides an opportunity for educators, families and children to talk and engage in meaningful conversations about transition requirements and expectations. Helps prep teachers plan appropriate support incorporating the child's and families' perspectives.
Joint professional learning	Training, information sessions or more formal professional learning between ECEC services and schools (including OSHC).	Helps to build trust, understanding and mutual respect between ECEC services and schools. It is also an opportunity to learn more about successful transition and education practices.
Local transition networks	A diverse collection of individuals and agencies who share a common interest in improving school transition and outcomes for children and families generally.	Builds the capacity of local communities to design and deliver locally responsive transition to school programs. Enhances linkages between sectors and agencies and promotes service collaboration for the benefit of children and families.



Practice idea	How it works	Why it works
Buddy programs	The use of peer-to-peer support strategies for children (and sometimes families) to assist transition to school.	Children worry about losing their friendship groups when they move to school. Having a buddy might improve adjustment to school and educational engagement. Views were mixed as to whether the 'buddy' should be similar in age (for example, prep/grade 1) or older (for example, grade 5/6 student).
Family involvement	Broad-based, tailored strategies designed to encourage families to become more actively involved in the ECEC services or school community (for example, information sessions, open days, reading programs, social events).	Increased involvement of families in services is linked to longer-term improvements in the social, emotional, physical and academic development of children.
Learning programs responsive to children	Often referred to as 'play-based learning', it is widely used in ECEC services and increasingly in schools. This pedagogical practice has been found in research to be most suitable for children aged from birth to eight years (discussed further in section 4.3) .	Enhances continuity of learning experience between ECEC services and schools, which helps to smooth the transition for children.
Social storyboards	Social storyboards are documents that visually depict the nature and processes involved in transitioning to school in a way that is meaningful to the individual; for example, photos of their prep teacher, school environment, the OSHC program (if applicable), how to get ready in the morning.	Helps to prepare children for school and relieves their anxiety. Often used for children with autistic spectrum disorders, or children who have not been to an ECEC service who might be more likely to experience difficulties with the change from home to school environment.
Community-level transition timetable	An integrated plan describing common sequences of activities (often organised by school terms) designed to support transition, including common orientation weeks, community events.	Promotes awareness in the community of the importance of early learning and development, and school transition. Assists local agencies to coordinate and align services for the benefit of children and families.


5.4 LOCALISED TRANSITION PLANNING

Throughout Victoria, no two communities are ever the same. Communities are formed for a variety of reasons, but in most cases, it is because people have something in common. It could be where they live, the language they speak, or their cultural background or geography that distinguishes them from other communities.



Planning for local communities must be based on a strong knowledge base about what really matters for children and their families during the transition period, including their beliefs and values. An assessment of local area needs can inform transition planning to ensure that the range and capacity of activities offered are appropriate and accessible for all children and families.

Ultimately, any assessment of local needs should focus on the children and families making the transition to school. There are many resources available to develop a better understanding of local areas. The Ecological Model discussed in section 1.5 of this document provides a useful reference for considering the local area and other influences, with children and families at the centre. Resources such as Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) profiles of local government areas can also help ECEC services and schools understand how services can be changed to improve the experiences for children and families.

The AEDC is discussed further in section 6.1. 

Each community will have its own characteristics and views about what will work best for them, and it is important that these are considered when designing transition activities or processes. Some families might not feel connected to any one particular community. This could also be true for those families who move from one location to another. Processes and programs developed to meet local needs might need to be tailored for families.

Communities play a valuable role in transition to school because they provide support to families who, in turn, support children. Engaging communities in the importance of transition to school can:

- facilitate timely access to services and support for children and families
- strengthen and highlight the profile of children's issues in a local context
- assist the communication of key messages across all sections of the community

- assist the provision of resources to support transition activities that are most effective for children and their families
- encourage families from a range of backgrounds to feel welcome and able to participate in their children's learning and development.

PLANNING WITHIN A NETWORK OR COMMUNITY

Collaborative professional partnerships rely on practices that encourage openness, welcome new ideas and encourage fresh perspectives. The profile of families, schools, OSHC and the community changes from year to year, as do the needs within each community. Therefore, it is important to continually understand and reflect on the demographics of each community over time.



Some strategies to support transition to school planning by building supportive community relationships and effective collaborations between ECEC services, families, schools, OSHC services and communities include:

- being welcoming and inclusive to all, celebrating diversity and developing culturally appropriate practices
- having family fun days that bring the community together, where informal links can be encouraged and built upon
- listening to children and families about what aspects of the community can be improved to support children's learning and development
- identifying leaders or change champions who can support and develop cohesion within the community
- identifying a shared vision to work towards
- building a collaborative atmosphere to work together to achieve the vision
- recognising, using and sharing the skills, input, knowledge and expertise of all participating community members
- offering support with venues for network meetings, family support groups, and so on
- creating a locally relevant and evidence-based shared action plan that identifies how community members will work towards achieving their vision
- finding ways to communicate the key messages and action plan to the broader community so that the community knows what is happening and how to get involved
- recognising the special effort of individuals who make a positive contribution to the community's transition to school experiences
- taking time to review and evaluate
- celebrating achievements together.

More information on developing relationships with children, families and professionals is provided in section 2.

TRANSITION NETWORKS

A transition network is a professional group of people with an interest in improving transition experiences and outcomes for children and their families in a particular geographical area. There are many transition networks across Victoria, informal or formal, with or without designated resources. Those who participate in transition to school networks are usually from:

- ECEC services (such as long day care, family day care or kindergartens)
- Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) services
- maternal and child health services
- child and family service professionals
- private practitioners, such as in allied health
- local council officers with a focus on early childhood
- OSHC educators
- school staff.

Networks foster mutual understanding on the characteristics and requirements of local children and families. In developing common approaches to transition, networks support early childhood educators, prep teachers and other professionals to share ideas, issues and promising practices.

WHY ARE NETWORKS IMPORTANT?

Networks have a range of important functions and provide opportunities for:

- strengthening formal and informal community partnerships
- deepening knowledge about practice.
- practical support and problem-solving
- developing local agreements and resources, thereby reducing workloads on individual services
- communicating individual child and family requirements
- developing leadership skills and fostering change champions
- critical reflection and review of practice and service delivery.

Communities aspire to provide ongoing support and resources to promote children's positive engagement in school. They also aspire to provide the support, resources, services and living conditions that promote the wellbeing of children and families. Communities with strong social networks and access to resources to support children and families are well positioned to promote positive transitions to school.

HOW DO TRANSITION NETWORKS FUNCTION?

There is no single formula for a successful transition network, but maintaining regular communication, often through face-to-face meetings about key issues, is critical.



When establishing or reviewing a network, it is useful to:

- identify a key person who has organisational or leadership responsibilities in relation to developing, maintaining and improving transition networks
- uncover understandings and beliefs between early childhood professionals and school staff about programs in ECEC services and in schools
- identify perceptions about transition to school in order to air any difference in views and develop common understandings
- allocate time to develop partnerships and build trust—regular meetings and contact with educators from all services facilitate the establishment of common ideals about roles in transition
- establish common approaches, philosophies, processes and programs for transition planning based on priorities for the community
- plan a professional development calendar that includes all educators and other professionals
- develop a process to encourage families to enrol their child into their chosen school during certain periods to assist in school planning.

Transition networks improve communication, provide opportunities to identify constructive solutions to issues, as well as develop new approaches to work together.

5.5 HOW TO DEVELOP A SUSTAINABLE TRANSITION PROGRAM

In simple terms, sustainability refers to the capacity of a transition program to continue to deliver its desired outcomes to children, families and early childhood educators and professionals.

Although sustainability is a common concern among transition networks and partnerships, many innovations, even effective ones, finish shortly after the initial funding runs out. This is often because those involved in the planning at the start have not actively planned for sustainability.



The lessons learnt from an evaluation of 30 transition programs provide some insights into various ways of enhancing the sustainability of transition programs.¹⁰⁷ 

Some suggested strategies include:

- building community support for the local approach or program, often achieved by developing and maintaining a diverse and effective range of networks and partnerships
- developing a clear concept or model detailing what the project is doing, why and to what effect
- identifying strong champions of the project and effective leadership
- building on existing initiatives and identifying organisations that could support project activities into the future
- diversifying the funding base (that is, not relying on a single source of funding)
- providing training and professional development opportunities for early childhood professionals
- regularly monitoring and evaluating the program
- sharing and promoting the knowledge gained.




5.6 EVALUATING TRANSITION PROGRAMS AND APPROACHES

It is important for early childhood educators, OSHC educators, prep teachers and other professionals in networks to develop strategies to engage in ongoing reflection, review and improvement of their transition programs. Even in the early stages of designing a transition program, it is important to think about how the program might be evaluated. Some possible ideas are outlined in the table below.

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN EVALUATING PROGRAMS AND APPROACHES

Design questions	Suggestions
What is the main question?	A 'how?', 'who?', 'what?', 'where?' or 'when?' type question.
What is the purpose of the evaluation?	This will link to the main question, but might be influenced by local priorities and audiences.
Who is the evaluation for?	Is it for the transition network, or an individual service, or funding body?
Who could be involved?	For example, children, families, early childhood educators, school staff or early childhood professionals.
What kind of evaluation will be helpful?	Will it provide feedback on a proposed program, one that is underway, or a completed program cycle?
What will the evaluation measure?	For example, effectiveness of program components, impact of the program on participants or stakeholders.
How will information/data be collected?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaires • Focus groups • Telephone surveys • Interviews.

OVERVIEW OF THE OUTCOMES AND INDICATORS RESEARCH

In 2011, the Department commissioned research to identify the outcomes, indicators and measures to understand the various necessary components of a positive transition to school for children, their families and educators. 



The report outlines a list of 15 outcomes of a positive start to school for children, families and educators, and a list of indicators that measure these outcomes. These outcomes and indicators are valuable considerations as professionals in ECEC services and schools reflect on and evaluate the overall impact of transition to school programs for children, families and educators.

For children:

1. Children feel safe, secure and supported within the school environment
2. Children display social and emotional resilience within the school environment
3. Children feel a sense of belonging to the school community
4. Children experience continuity of learning
5. Children have a positive relationship with the educators and other children
6. Children feel positive about themselves as learners
7. Children display dispositions for learning.

For families:

8. Families have access to information related to transition to school, tailored to suit the family
9. Families are involved with the school
10. Families are partners in their child's learning
11. Relationships between families and the school are reciprocal and responsive.

For educators:

12. Educators provide continuity of learning for children
13. Educators are prepared, and confident that they can plan appropriately for the children starting school
14. Educators view families as partners in their child's learning and provide opportunities for family involvement
15. Relationships between early childhood educators and school educators are reciprocal and responsive.

HOW TO INVOLVE CHILDREN IN EVALUATING PROGRAMS

The information collected from listening to children can prompt early childhood educators, OSHC educators and prep teachers to think about how transition to school programs, routines and activities can be improved.

Where information is collected from a child, there should be a clear process of consent/assent so that children understand that they have a choice in whether or not they participate in the evaluation. Formal evaluations will require parental/guardian consent.

Where a child's views are to be incorporated into the evaluation, their exact words, or as close as possible, should be used. Children see things in different ways to adults. It is important to value their views equally, as they can be clear about what is important to them. They might have thought about things that adults have not.

It is useful if adults do not assume that they know everything a child is thinking about—this shows children they are respected for who they are and what they believe.

Suggested ways for seeking children's views are outlined in section 2.2.




Further information and resources

More information and resources on the following are available on the online appendix at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/transitiontoschool>:


- VEYLDF practice guide: Reflective practice
- Supporting Reciprocal Visits project report and resources
- Promising practices in transition to school
- Australian Early Development Census
- Outcomes, indicators and measures of a positive transition to school.

NOTES: SECTION 5

- 102.** The term early childhood professionals in this document includes, but is not limited to, maternal and child health nurses, all early childhood practitioners who work directly with children in early childhood education and care settings (educators), school teachers, family support workers, preschool field officers, inclusion support facilitators, student support service officers, primary school nurses, primary welfare officers, Early Childhood Intervention workers, play therapists, health professionals and teachers working in hospitals, and education officers in cultural organisations.
- 103.** Department of Education and Training 2016, Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: For all children from birth to eight years, Department of Education and Training, Melbourne, p. 8.
- 104.** Ibid., p. 8.
- 105.** Semann, A, Madden, L, Fleet, A & De Gioia, K 2015, Transition: A Positive Start To School. Supporting Reciprocal Visits, report prepared for the Victorian Department of Education and Training.
- 106.** Smith, K, Kotsanas, C, Farrelly, A & Alexander, K 2010, Research into Practices to Support a Positive Start to School, University of Melbourne.
- 107.** Astbury, B., 2009, Evaluation of Transitions: A Positive Start to School Pilots, Centre for Program Evaluation, The University of Melbourne.

A close-up photograph of two children's faces. The child on the left is a young girl with dark, curly hair, looking slightly to the right. The child on the right is a young boy with dark hair, looking towards the camera. A bright red diagonal band cuts across the image from the bottom left towards the top right, partially obscuring the children's faces. The background is blurred, showing hints of blue and white.

*“ It is useful if adults do
not assume that they
know everything a child is
thinking about—this shows
children they are respected
for who they are and what
they believe. ”*



6 TOOLS TO SUPPORT EFFECTIVE TRANSITION

IN THIS SECTION

6.1 Assessments of learning and development

- Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) assessments
- Gifted and talented children
- Children with disability or developmental delay
- Maternal and Child Health (MCH) assessments
- Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) assessments
- 'On Entry' to school assessments
- Other assessments that can assist with transition planning

6.2 Curriculum planning tools

- Illustrative maps from the VEYLDF to the Victorian Curriculum F–10

6.3 The Transition Statement

- What is the purpose of the Transition Statement?
- What information is included in the Transition Statement?
- How is the Transition Statement used?
- Who is the Transition Statement for?
- Who writes the Transition Statement and how?
- Working in partnership with families when writing Transition Statements
 - The Insight Assessment Platform
 - Privacy and information sharing
 - Disposing of information

Further information and resources



Throughout this document, this icon indicates **additional resources are available** within online appendix at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/transitiontoschool>

6.1 ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Children's learning, development, health and wellbeing is assessed and documented in various ways during the period from birth to eight years by a range of early childhood and other professionals.

Children's learning, development, health and wellbeing is assessed and documented in various ways during the period from birth to eight years by a range of early childhood and other professionals. Together these assessments can provide a holistic view of children, including their interests, abilities, learning dispositions, as well as any developmental or other vulnerabilities they may be experiencing. Early childhood educators and families can draw on these when writing Transition Statements, in order to provide schools and OSHC services with the best possible information to support and plan for continuity of learning and development during the transition to school and beyond. The Transition Statement can be used as a tool to complement further assessments of learning that may be undertaken with children during their first weeks and years at school.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE (ECEC) ASSESSMENTS

ECEC educators collect, analyse, plan, act and reflect on evidence of children's learning and development against the VEYLDF outcomes throughout each year for children attending the ECEC service. Assessment tools used typically include observation techniques such as running records, anecdotal records, checklists, rating scales and event and time sampling, as well as work sampling and conversational questioning.

GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN

There are numerous characteristics that can signal to a professional that a young child might be gifted. Section 3.11 offers guidance to support transition to school for children who are gifted and talented, and the online resource Making a Difference for Young Gifted and Talented Children provides additional information regarding appropriate assessment tools.



CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY OR DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY

Early Abilities Based Learning and Education Support (Early ABLES) is an online assessment-for-learning tool to help educators create and provide a more tailored learning experience for children aged two to five years with disabilities or developmental delay.




The Early ABLES tool can help educators to:

- assess the child's progress in learning
- develop appropriate learning goals in collaboration with families and other professionals involved in the education and care of the child
- develop and further refine personalised learning plans with proven teaching and learning strategies
- monitor progress along a likely pathway of learning
- better support the development of the individual child's learning program through using the Early Years Planning Cycle
- improve transition processes through consistent information sharing across services and schools.

Early ABLES is discussed further in section 3.7.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH (MCH) ASSESSMENTS

MCH assessments are critical in initiating referral to additional services and early identification of developmental delays. Sharing this information between professionals, with the involvement of families, is vital in establishing learning and development plans, and these should be communicated early in transition processes so that children do not miss out on essential additional supports.

MCH key age and stage visits are encouraged for children at two, four and eight weeks; four, eight, 12 and 18 months; and two and three-and-a-half years. There is also a home visit in the first week. In these visits, MCH nurses evaluate children's health and development, including growth, physical movements, behaviour, play, and interactions with family members and their peers. The three-and-a-half-year check can be undertaken later, such as at age four or five, and is a valuable assessment prior to the child starting school. There might also be additional checks, such as a physical exam, hearing or eye screenings or play observation. 

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

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

EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION (ECI) ASSESSMENTS


No one specialist intervention assessment is used by ECI professionals. Rather, an early childhood professional will use one, or a suite, of tools they believe appropriate to assess the child. As a general rule, authentic assessments will take a family-centred approach and identify the family's priorities and any concerns as well as child development and functioning.

These assessments recognise that families are key decision makers and must be given the information they require so they are able to make well-informed decisions. The planning process is directed by the family, identifying their priorities and requirements for services. Over time, as the child's and family's requirements change, the level and type of involvement and participation by ECI professionals should change accordingly.

'ON ENTRY' TO SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS

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

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

The English Online Interview and the Mathematics Online Interview are assessments used in government schools to provide the prep teacher with comprehensive information about the child's understanding of literacy and numeracy and inform the curriculum planning for each child. Both tools can be used to monitor the child's progress throughout the first three years of school. 

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

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

OTHER ASSESSMENTS THAT CAN ASSIST WITH TRANSITION PLANNING

A range of population-level assessments can help services better understand and respond to local issues.

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is completed every three years by prep teachers based on their knowledge of the children in their class between May and July. Questions are answered

about children's physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and communication skills, cognitive skills and general knowledge.

The AEDC is a population measure rather than an individual assessment. The AEDC helps communities understand their local children and enables comparison nationally and in other communities.

This comparison helps ensure appropriate services and resources are available and accessible to support children and families.

6.2 CURRICULUM PLANNING TOOLS

The assessments described in section 6.1 can provide important information for curriculum planning before, during and beyond the transition to school. The VEYLDF provides further guidance for building on the learning and development that has occurred for children prior to making the transition to school.

ILLUSTRATIVE MAPS FROM THE VEYLDF TO THE VICTORIAN CURRICULUM F-10

The VEYLDF features a set of illustrative maps, which are designed for both early childhood education and care professionals and teachers in the early years of school to inform curriculum planning and pedagogy with young children.


The illustrative maps link the five outcomes in the VEYLDF with the first three levels of the Victorian Curriculum F-10 in order to:

- strengthen continuity of learning across the early years
- enable professionals to see and describe how foundational learning and development from birth supports and connects to a continuum of learning and teaching
- enable early childhood professionals to plan experiences and opportunities that advance children's learning.

The illustrative maps are especially useful when writing and using Transition Statements. For ECEC educators, reflecting on children's learning using the illustrative maps makes it easier to write descriptors of learning and development that reflect the child's progress in a way that is relevant and meaningful for prep teachers, and to articulate intentional teaching strategies that support continuity for children. For prep teachers and OSHC educators, the illustrative maps help to better understand and build on the learning and development that has already occurred prior to children starting school, and to contextualise the information provided in the Transition Statement.

Section 6.3 has more information about the Transition Statement.

The following version of the illustrative maps provide each key component of learning set out on its own page. These maps are easy to navigate and use in daily practice.

The illustrative maps provided are also available in an interactive format online. 

VEYLDF Learning and Development Outcome

Children are effective communicators

These are the **key components of learning** for this Outcome:

- Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.
- Children engage with a range of texts and get meaning from these texts.
- Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media.
- Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work.
- Children use information and communication technologies to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking.

Introduction to the Learning and Development Outcome	
	<p>Children communicate from birth. Most children are innately social, creative and motivated to exchange ideas, thoughts, questions and feelings. They begin by using gestures, movement, visual and non-verbal cues, sounds, language and assisted communication to engage in the world and form relationships. Fundamental to this development is the understanding of how symbols and pattern systems work, and how they can be used to engage others. From birth, intentional communication is strengthened and broadened. Children learn to take turns in communication exchanges through their relationships with responsive adults, exploring sound and movement patterns, singing songs, reading stories, playing games and recording their thoughts and ideas.</p>
	<p>Children's wellbeing, identity, sense of agency and capacity to make friends is connected to the development of communication skills, and strongly linked to their capacity to express feelings and thoughts, and to be understood. From birth, children's first gestures and actions are the beginning of communicative competence. In the very early years spoken language emerges in response to role models around the child. Adults who spend time in one-to-one communication with very young children, verbalising and conversing with the child, with multiple back and forth exchanges, make significant contributions to the expansion of children's vocabulary development.</p>
	<p>Children are effective communicators. Their communication and self-expression take many forms including sharing stories and symbols from their own culture, re-enacting well-known stories and using creative arts, such as drawing, painting and sculpture, drama, dance, movement and music to communicate with others. They create and explore imaginary worlds through dramatic play and through artworks. They build a large vocabulary and are able to express ideas verbally and use a wide range of media. They recognise the function and value of visual elements and use them to symbolise meaning, for example using colour in painting to express emotions. Young children begin to explore written communication by scribbling, drawing and producing approximations of writing. They use digital technologies and multimedia resources to communicate, play and learn. They create and display their own information in a way that suits different audiences and purposes.</p>
	<p>Victorian families and the communities in which children live are diverse. Maintenance of first language is important for children's identity, wellbeing, communication and learning. Children can successfully learn English (or another language) as an additional language through exposure to the language, explicit modelling and language teaching, and appropriate time to acquire the new language. Children benefit when early childhood professionals have knowledge about the acquisition and application of an additional language and how this can vary. It is especially important for early childhood professionals to be knowledgeable about the ways children learn additional languages. This includes awareness of the stages of acquisition and recognition that children differ in their rate of acquisition and application of language. In school settings, children have opportunities to learn a range of languages. For some children this may be an opportunity to continue their first language, and for others the opportunity to learn a new language.</p>
	<p>Children use symbols in exploration and play to represent and make meaning. They become aware of the relationships between oral and visual representations, and recognise patterns and relationships. They learn to recognise how sounds are represented alphabetically and identify some letter sounds, symbols, characters and signs. As children continue to build their skills in reading printed text from left to right and top to bottom (in English-language households), they use information in context from pictures and other sources to assist in making meaning. As they progress through this stage, children begin to self-correct when reading aloud and distinguish between texts that represent real and imaginary experiences.</p>
	<p>As children learn and develop access to print-rich environments, and contact with adults who model and respond to children's oral and written messages, continue to strengthen the progression of learning. Children increasingly use conventional speech and writing, and simple punctuation. Over time, children learn to use and create simple texts about familiar topics and choose the content, form and vocabulary within their writing. As their skills advance, they accurately spell words that are frequently used and make use of known spelling patterns to make plausible attempts at spelling unfamiliar words.</p>

VEYLDF	Victorian Curriculum: Levels F–2
Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes	
<p>This is evident, for example, when children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage in enjoyable reciprocal interactions using verbal and non-verbal language respond verbally and non-verbally to what they see, hear, touch, feel and taste use language and representations from play, music and art to share and project meaning contribute their ideas and experiences in play and small and large group discussion attend and give cultural cues that they are listening to and understanding what is said to them are independent communicators who initiate Standard Australian English and home language conversations, and demonstrate the ability to meet the listener's needs interact with others to explore ideas and concepts, clarify and challenge thinking, negotiate and share new understandings convey and construct messages with purpose and confidence, building on literacies of home and/or family and the broader community exchange ideas, feelings and understandings using language and representations in play demonstrate an increasing understanding of measurement and number using vocabulary to describe size, length, volume, capacity and names of numbers express ideas and feelings and understand and respect the perspectives of others use language to communicate thinking about quantities to describe attributes of objects and collections, and to explain mathematical ideas show increasing knowledge, understanding and skill in conveying meaning. 	<p>This develops, for example, when students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to and respond orally to texts and to the communication of others in informal and structured classroom situations using interaction skills, including listening, while others speak. English: Literacy (F) VCELY174 Engage in conversations and discussions, using active listening, showing interest, and contributing ideas, information and questions, taking turns and recognising the contributions of others. English: Literacy (L1) VCELY210 Identify, reproduce and experiment with rhythmic, sound and word patterns in poems, chants, rhymes and songs. English: Literature (L2) VCILT243 Understand that spoken, visual and written forms of language are different modes of communication with different features and their use varies according to the audience, purpose, context and cultural background. English: Language (L2) VCELA234 Experiment with different materials and techniques to make artworks. Visual Arts: Visual Arts Practices (F) VCAVA018 Use simple technical and expressive skills when presenting dance that communicates ideas to an audience. Dance: Present and Perform (F) VCADAP019 Respond to dance, expressing what they enjoy, and where and why people dance. Dance: Respond and Interpret (L1–L2) VCADAR024 Represent data with objects and drawings where one object or drawing represents one data value. Describe the displays. Mathematics: Statistics and Probability (L1) VCMSP102 Listen to others' ideas, and recognise that others may see things differently. Personal and Social Capability: Social Awareness and Management (L1–L2) VCPSCSO012 Understand that there are different ways of asking for information, making offers and giving commands. English: Language (L1) VCELA200 Explore different ways of expressing emotions, including verbal, visual, body language and facial expressions. English: Language (L1) VCELA201 Sing and play instruments to create and practice chants, songs and rhymes including those used by cultural groups in the local community. Music: Music Practices (F) VCAMUM018 Describe ways of making and keeping friends, including how actions and words can help or hurt others, and the effects of modifying their behaviour. Personal and Social Capability: Social Awareness and Management (L1–L2) VCPSCSO013

VEYLDF	<div> <div>←</div> <div>→</div> </div> Victorian Curriculum: Levels F–2
Children engage with a range of texts and get meaning from these texts	
<p>This is evident, for example, when children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listen and respond to sounds and patterns in speech, stories and rhymes in context • view and listen to printed, visual and multimedia texts and respond with relevant gestures, actions, comments and/or questions • sing chant rhymes, jingles and songs • take on roles of literacy and numeracy users in their play • begin to understand key literacy and numeracy concepts and processes, such as the sounds of language, letter–sound relationships, concepts of print and the ways that texts are structured • explore texts from a range of different perspectives and begin to analyse the meanings • actively use, engage with and share the enjoyment of language and texts in a range of ways • recognise and engage with written and oral culturally constructed texts. 	<p>This develops, for example, when students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that a letter can represent more than one sound, and that a syllable must contain a vowel sound. English: Language (L1) VCELA183 • Understand that texts can take many forms, and that imaginative and informative texts have different purposes. English: Language (F) VCELA141 • Identify visual representations of characters' actions, reactions, speech and thought processes in narratives, and consider how these images add to or contradict or multiply the meaning of accompanying words. English: Language (L2) VCELA215 • Identify rhyming words, alliteration patterns, syllables and some sounds (phonemes) in spoken words. English: Language (F) VCELA168 • Explore sound and silence and ways of using their voices, movement and instruments to express ideas. Music: Explore and Express Ideas (F) VCAMUE017 • Present media artworks that communicate ideas. Media Arts: Present and Perform (F) VCAMAP019 • Share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts. English: Literature (F) VCELT171

VEYLDF	←————→	Victorian Curriculum: Levels F–2
Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media		
<p>This is evident, for example, when children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use language and engage in symbolic play to imagine and create roles, scripts and ideas • share the stories and symbols of their own cultures and re-enact well-known stories • use the creative arts, such as drawing, painting, sculpture, drama, dance, movement, music and story-telling, to express ideas and make meaning • experiment with ways of expressing ideas and meaning using a range of media • begin to use images and approximations of letters and words to convey meaning. 	<p>This develops, for example, when students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand concepts about print and screen, including how books, film and simple digital texts work, and know some features of print, including directionality. English: Language (F) VCELA142 • Recognise that sentences are key units for expressing ideas. English: Language (F) VCELA143 • Understand that punctuation is a feature of written text different from letters and recognise how capital letters are used for names, and that capital letters and full stops signal the beginning and end of sentences. English: Language (F) VCELA156 • Understand patterns of repetition and contrast in simple texts. English: Language (L1) VCELA189 • Create simple print or digital texts in the language and English, such as captions and labels, for the immediate learning environment. Non Roman Alphabet Languages: Communicating (F–L2) VCNRC009 • Rehearse and perform songs and instrumental music they have learnt and composed to communicate ideas to an audience. Music: Present and Perform (L1–L2) VCAMUP023 • Explore ideas, experiences, observations and imagination and express them through subject matter in visual artworks they create. Visual Arts: Explore and Express Ideas (L1–L2) VCAVAE021 • Understand that language varies when people take on different roles in social and classroom interactions and how the use of key interpersonal language resources varies depending on context. English: Language (L2) VCELA235 • Use media technologies to capture and edit images, sounds and text. Media Arts: Media Arts Practice (F) VCAMAM018 	

VEYLDF	<div> <div>←</div> <div>→</div> </div> <div>Victorian Curriculum: Levels F–2</div>
Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work	
<p>This is evident, for example, when children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use symbols in play to represent and make meaning • begin to make connections between, and see patterns in, their feelings, ideas, words and actions, and those of others • notice and predict the patterns of regular routines and the passing of time • develop an understanding that symbols are a powerful means of communication and that ideas, thoughts and concepts can be represented through them • begin to be aware of the relationships between oral, written and visual representations • begin to recognise patterns and relationships and the connections between them • begin to sort, categorise, order and compare collections and events and attributes of objects and materials in their social and natural worlds • listen and respond to sounds and patterns in speech, stories and rhyme • draw on memory of a sequence to complete a task • draw on their experiences in constructing meaning using symbols 	<p>This develops, for example, when students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine words that show reasons and words that show conclusions. Critical and Creative Thinking: Reasoning (F–L2) VCCCTR004 • Represent data and the location of places and their features by constructing tables, plans and labelled maps. Geography: Geographical Concepts and Skills (F–L2) VCGGC061 • Recreate texts imaginatively using drawing, writing, performance and digital forms of communication. English: Writing (L1) VCELT192 • Understand that some language in written texts is unlike everyday spoken language. English: Writing (F) VCELA155 • Retell familiar literary texts through performance, use of illustrations and images. English: Literature (F) VCELT159 • Create short texts to explore, record and report ideas and events using familiar words and beginning writing knowledge. English: Literacy (F) VCELY160

VEYLDF		←————→		Victorian Curriculum: Levels F–2	
Children use information and communication technologies to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking					
This is evident, for example, when children:			This develops, for example, when students:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify the uses of technologies in everyday life and use real or imaginary technologies as props in their play• use information and communication technologies to access images and information, explore diverse perspectives and make sense of their world• use information and communications technologies as tools for designing, drawing, editing, reflecting and composing• engage with technology for fun and to make meaning.			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow, describe and represent a sequence of steps and decisions (algorithms) needed to solve simple problems. Digital Technologies: Creating Digital Solutions (F–L2) VCDTCD017• Use media technologies to capture and edit images and sounds and text to tell stories. Media Arts: Media Arts Practices (L1–L2) VCAMAM022• Investigate number sequences, initially those increasing and decreasing by twos, threes, fives and ten from any starting point, then moving to other sequences. Mathematics: Number and Algebra (L2) VCMNA103• Recognise, model, represent and order numbers to at least 1000. Mathematics: Number and Algebra (L2) VCMNA104		

VEYLDF Learning and Development Outcome

Children are connected with and contribute to their world

These are the **key components of learning** for this Outcome:

- Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active civic participation.
- Children respond to diversity with respect.
- Children become aware of fairness.
- Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.

Introduction to the Learning and Development Outcome
<p>From birth, children learn to see themselves as individuals, accepting their uniqueness and the uniqueness of others. Children strive for connection and seek belonging – to people, country, place and communities that help them to learn about local ways of being. They learn about sharing common values, traditions and practices. As children experience settings beyond the home and kinship groups in which they live, their experiences, relationships and connections broaden. Across the period from birth to eight years, through the support of family and others, children learn more ways to connect and contribute. Contributing in social settings strengthens children’s sense of identity, wellbeing and belonging. Children’s wellbeing is linked closely to the wellbeing of their community.</p> <p>Children increasingly enjoy being in groups and contributing to family and social life from birth. Children who are strongly connected to their world participate in shared everyday routines, events and experiences, and use opportunities to contribute to decisions. They help and show concern for others, learn to respect those who are different from them and practise peaceful and inclusive ways of resolving conflicts. They come to understand fair play and how to make a contribution to a group. Children who are strongly connected establish friendships with other children. They test their responsibilities and rights – and those of others – in familiar settings, such as their family, playgroups, early childhood settings, classrooms and playgrounds, friendship groups and in communities.</p> <p>Children become aware of the impact of the local environment, both physical and social, on their lives. They learn ways to care for the environment and contribute to a sustainable future.</p> <p>Children are citizens with equal rights and are consulted meaningfully, with families and communities, about issues that affect them. Consulting with families and children in order to understand their cultural and everyday traditions and routines informs practice. Providing equitable opportunities for children with diverse capabilities and life circumstances supports engagement and connection, enabling them to contribute positively to their world.</p> <p>Some children require carefully constructed experiences to affirm their belonging and connection with the group and to facilitate their participation in local community experiences. Some may require explicit direction and support to help them to feel safe and to belong. Observing closely and taking cues from the child can show adults how best to help a child connect with and contribute effectively to their world.</p>

VEYLDF	Victorian Curriculum: Levels F–2
Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active civic participation	
<p>This is evident, for example, when children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> begin to recognise that they have a right to belong to many communities cooperate with others and negotiate roles and relationships in play episodes and group experiences take action to assist other children to participate in social groups broaden their understanding of the world in which they live express an opinion in matters that affect them build on their own social experiences to explore other ways of being participate in reciprocal relationships gradually learn to 'read' the behaviours of others and respond appropriately understand different ways of contributing through play and projects demonstrate a sense of belonging and comfort in their environments are playful and respond positively to others, reaching out for company and friendship contribute to democratic decision-making about matters that affect them. 	<p>This develops, for example, when students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify what is familiar and what is different in the ways culturally diverse individuals and families live. Intercultural Capability: Cultural Practices (F–L2) VCICCB001 Describe their experiences of intercultural encounters in which they have been involved. Intercultural Capability: Cultural Practices (F–L2) VCICCB002 Describe ways to include others to make them feel that they belong. Health and Physical Education: Personal, Social and Community Health (L1–L2) VCHPEP075 Identify personal strengths. Health and Physical Education: Personal, Social and Community Health (F) VCHPEP057 Identify a range of groups to which they, their family and members of their class belong. Personal and Social Capability: Social Awareness and Management (F) VCPSCSO004 Name and practise basic skills required to work collaboratively with peers. Personal and Social Capability: Social Awareness and Management (F) VCPSCSO006 Use appropriate language to describe what happens and how they feel when experiencing positive interactions or conflict. Personal and Social Capability: Social Awareness and Management (F) VCPSCSO007 Participate in play that promotes engagement with outdoor settings including aquatic and the natural environment. Health and Physical Education: Personal, Social and Community Health (F) VCHPEP063 Cooperate with others when participating in physical activities. Health and Physical Education: Movement and Physical Activity (F) VCHPEM068 Describe physical and social changes that occur as children grow older and discuss how family and community acknowledge these. Health and Physical Education: Personal, Social and Community Health (L1–L2) VCHPEP072 Create and present media artworks that communicate ideas and stories to an audience. Media Arts: Present and Perform (L1–L2) VCAMAP023

VEYLDF	←————→	Victorian Curriculum: Levels F–2
Children respond to diversity with respect		
<p>This is evident, for example, when children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • begin to show concern for others • explore the diversity of culture, heritage, background and tradition and that diversity presents opportunities for choices and new understandings • become aware of connections, similarities and differences between people • listen to others' ideas and respect different ways of being and doing • practise inclusive ways of achieving coexistence • notice and react in positive ways to similarities and differences among people. 	<p>This develops, for example, when students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and discuss cultural diversity in the school and/or community. Intercultural Capability: Cultural Diversity (F–L2) VCICCD003 • Imagine and explain what their responses might be if they were placed in a different cultural situation or setting. Intercultural Capability: Cultural Diversity (F–L2) VCICCD004 • Recognise differences and similarities between students' daily lives and perspectives of life during their parents' and grandparents' childhoods, including family traditions, leisure time and communications. History: Historical Knowledge (F–L2) VCHHK061 • Investigate the history of a significant person, building, site or part of the natural environment in the local community and what it reveals about the past. History: Historical Knowledge (F–L2) VCHHK063 • Recognise that the languages people use reflect their culture, such as who they are, where and how they live, and find examples of similarities and differences between the language being studied and their own ways of communicating. Non Roman Alphabet Languages: Understanding (F–L2) VCNRU017 • Respond to visual artworks and consider where and why people make visual artworks. Visual Arts: Respond and Interpret (F) VCACAR020 	

VEYLDF		←————→	Victorian Curriculum: Levels F–2
Children become aware of fairness			
<p>This is evident, for example, when children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• discover and explore some connections amongst people• become aware of ways in which people are included or excluded from physical and social environments• develop the ability to recognise unfairness and bias and the capacity to act with compassion and kindness• are empowered to make choices and problem-solve to meet their needs in particular contexts• begin to think critically about fair and unfair behaviour• begin to understand and evaluate ways in which texts construct identities and create stereotypes.	<p>This develops, for example, when students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore the meaning of right and wrong, good and bad, as concepts concerned with the outcomes of acts. Ethical Capability: Understanding Concepts (F–L2) VCECU001• Understand the use of vocabulary in familiar contexts related to everyday experiences, personal interests and topics taught at school. English: Language (F) VCELA167• Independently and with others create and organise ideas and information using information systems, and share these with known people in safe online environments. Digital Technologies: Data and Information (F–L2) VCDTDI016		

VEYLDF ←————→ Victorian Curriculum: Levels F–2	
Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment	
<p>This is evident, for example, when children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use play to investigate, project and explore new ideas • participate with others to solve problems and contribute to group outcomes • demonstrate an increasing knowledge of and respect for natural and constructed environments • explore, infer, predict and hypothesise in order to develop an increased understanding of the interdependence between land, people, plants and animals • show growing appreciation and care for natural and constructed environments • explore relationships with other living and non-living things and observe, notice and respond to change • develop an awareness of the impact of human activity on environments and the interdependence of living things. 	<p>This develops, for example, when students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore how materials can be physically changed or combined with other materials in a variety of ways for particular purposes. Science: Science Understanding (F–L2) VCSSU045 • Understand the definition of places as parts of the Earth's surface that have been given meaning by people, and how places can be defined at a variety of scales. Geography: Geographical Knowledge (F–L2) VCGGK064 • Describe natural, managed and constructed features of places, their location and how they change. Geography: Geographical Knowledge (F–L2) VCGGK068 • Identify how people create familiar designed solutions and consider sustainability to meet personal and local community needs. Design and Technologies: Technologies and Society (F–L2) VCDSTS013 • Describe how living things have a variety of external features and live in different places where their basic needs, including food, water and shelter, are met. Science: Science Understanding (F–L2) VCSSU042 • Observe and describe changes which occur in the sky and landscape; daily and seasonal changes affect everyday life. Science: Science Understanding (F–L2) VCSSU046 • Use informal measurements in the collection and recording of observations. Science: Science Inquiry Skills (F–L2) VCSIS052

VEYLDF Learning and Development Outcome

Children have a strong sense of identity

These are the **key components of learning** for this Outcome:

- Children feel safe, secure and supported
- Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency
- Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities
- Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect

Introduction to the Learning and Development Outcome

Identity is unique to each individual, and defines who people are, what shapes their interests and how they come to view the people and events around them. Some aspects of identity are permanent and others change throughout life. The foundational sense of who we are is profoundly important. Identity is aligned with belonging, the sense of feeling included and secure in the social settings (family, community, early childhood services and schools) that are part of everyday life.

From birth, relationships are at the foundation of children's construction of their identity: Who am I? Where do I fit in? How do others see me and relate to me? These questions are at the core of identity formation. In order to form a strong sense of self, children need to build secure relationships first within families and then with caring, attentive adults and other children in the places they spend time.

Secure attachments are critical for all children from birth and link to positive mental health outcomes. Attachment means having attentive, affectionate, consistent, available, attuned adults as a source of comfort and reassurance. When children from birth have positive experiences of relationship and place, they can develop a strong sense of security, identity and belonging. They can construct a positive image of themselves, and behave as secure, significant, respected individuals. As children build self-identity and a sense of belonging they reach out and communicate the need for comfort, assistance and companionship. As they show interest in others and experience being part of a group, they participate with others in play and other learning opportunities and develop friendships.

The acquisition and maintenance of first or home languages has a significant and continuing role in the construction of identity. This is supported when early childhood professionals respect children's cultures and languages. In Victoria the rich array of languages and cultures enable many opportunities for valuing and strengthening multilingual capabilities, respecting cultural diversity, supporting common values and building social cohesion.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, connections to Country, including through learning on Country in the natural world, support identity. Family and community are valuable sources of cultural knowledge and skills for all early childhood professionals in developing cultural competence.

Children who have a strong sense of identity feel comfortable within local, social and cultural practices important in their lives. Children feel safe and secure and experience close attachment and kinship with those close to them – parents, grandparents, family groups, caregivers and friends. Children are supported to act with self-confidence and autonomy while also recognising the interdependence of their social groups and their place as a valued member. They learn about reliance on others and about our ability to help and support others. Children are comfortable in the here and now of their lives and are able to grow and thrive because they feel they are secure and belong.

When children seek and accept new challenges they show autonomy and agency. From birth, the concept of agency is closely related to the development of a sense of identity. Dramatic play is important for exploring different identities and points of view, including the notion of belonging to global communities. Children should be supported to appreciate similarities and differences between individuals and groups, and to respect different perspectives.

As children learn and develop, they build further on their abilities to cooperate and work collaboratively, demonstrate initiative by asking questions and attempting new challenges. With encouragement, children plan their learning, reflect on their achievements, acknowledge the value of persistence, and enjoy their accomplishments and contributions. A strong sense of identity enables a child to be confident, and to recognise and accept that in any social setting there are consequences for their actions and behaviours. All children, with support, can develop a strong sense of self and learn how to interact with others with care, empathy and respect.

VEYLDF	←————→	Victorian Curriculum: Levels F–2
Children feel safe, secure and supported		
<p>This is evident, for example, when children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build secure attachment with one and then more familiar educators • use effective routines to help make predicted transitions smoothly • sense and respond to a feeling of belonging • communicate their needs for comfort and assistance • establish and maintain respectful, trusting relationships with other children and educators • openly express their feelings and ideas in their interactions with others • respond to ideas and suggestions from others • initiate interactions and conversations with trusted educators • confidently explore and engage with social and physical environments through relationships and play • initiate and join in play • explore aspects of identity through role-play. 	<p>This develops, for example, when students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a vocabulary and practise the expression of emotions to describe how they feel in different familiar situations. Personal and Social Capability: Self-Awareness and Management (F) VCPSCSE001 • Practise the skills required to include others and make friends with peers, teachers and other adults. Personal and Social Capability: Social Awareness and Management (F) VCPSCSO005 • Identify rules and fair play when creating and participating in physical activities. Health and Physical Education: Movement and Physical Activity (L1–L2) VCHPEM087 • Explore roles, characters and dramatic action in dramatic play, improvisation and process drama. Drama: Explore and Express Ideas (L1–L2) VCADRE021 • Explore ideas for characters and situations through dramatic play. Drama: Explore and Express Ideas (F) VCADRE017 • Explore ideas, experiences, observations and imagination to create visual artworks. Visual Arts: Explore and Express Ideas (F) VCAVAE017 	

VEYLDF ←————→ Victorian Curriculum: Levels F–2	
Children develop their emerging autonomy, interdependence, resilience and sense of agency	
<p>This is evident, for example, when children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate increasing awareness of the needs and rights of others • are open to new challenges and make new discoveries • increasingly cooperate and work collaboratively with others • take considered risks in their decision-making and cope with the unexpected • recognise their individual achievements and the achievements of others • demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation • approach new safe situations with confidence • begin to initiate negotiating and sharing behaviours • persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful. 	<p>This develops, for example, when students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the effects that personal feelings can have on how people behave in situations where ethical issues are involved. Ethical Capability: Decision Making and Actions (F–L2) VCECD003 • Explain how being prepared to try new things can help identify strategies when faced with unfamiliar or challenging situations. Personal and Social Capability: Self-Awareness and Management (L1–L2) VCPSCSE010 • Consider personal reactions to situations or problems and how these reactions may influence thinking. Critical and Creative Thinking: Questions and Possibilities (F–L2) VCCTQ002 • Create captions to images for individual presentations and participate in shared performances and imaginative activities using familiar words, phrases and language patterns. Non Roman Alphabet Languages: Communicating (F–L2) VCNRC007 • Use strategies to work in group situations when participating in physical activities. Health and Physical Education: Movement and Physical Activity (L1–L2) VCHPEM085 • Describe the people in their family and where they were born and raised and how they are related to each other and how their stories are communicated and shared. History: Historical Knowledge (F–L2) VCHHK058 • Make connections of people in Australia to other places in Australia and across the world. Geography: Geographical Knowledge (F–L2) VCGGK065

VEYLDF	←————→	Victorian Curriculum: Levels F–2
Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities		
<p>This is evident, for example, when children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feel recognised and respected for who they are • explore different identities and points of view in dramatic play • share aspects of their culture with other children and educators • use their home language to construct meaning • develop strong foundations in both the culture and language/s of their family and the broader community without compromising their cultural identities • develop their social and cultural heritage through engagement with Elders and community members • reach out and communicate for comfort, assistance and companionship • celebrate and share their contributions and achievements with others. 	<p>This develops, for example, when students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider reasons why some places are special and some places are important to people and how they can be looked after. Geography: Geographical Knowledge (F–L2) VCGGK069 • Identify weather and seasons and the ways in which different cultural groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, describe them. Geography: Geographical Knowledge (F–L2) VCGGK067 • Present drama that communicates ideas and stories. Drama: Present and Perform (F) VCADRP019 • Respond to drama, expressing what they enjoy and why. Drama: Respond and Interpret (F) VCADRR020 • Understand that English is one of many languages spoken in Australia and that different languages may be spoken by family, classmates and community. English: Language (F) VCELA164 • Create and display artworks to express ideas to an audience. Visual Arts: Present and Perform (L1–L2) VCAVAP023 	

VEYLDF	←————→	Victorian Curriculum: Levels F–2
Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect		
<p>This is evident, for example, when children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • show interest in other children and being part of a group • engage in and contribute to shared play experiences • express a wide range of emotions, thoughts and views constructively • empathise with and express concern for others • display awareness of and respect for others' perspectives • reflect on their actions and consider consequences for others. 	<p>This develops, for example, when students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe their own strengths and achievements and those of others, and identify how these contribute to personal identities. Health and Physical Education: Personal, Social and Community Health (L1–L2) VCHPE071 • Recognise that problems or challenges are a normal part of life and that there are actions that can be undertaken to manage problems. Personal and Social Capability: Self-Awareness and Management (F) VCPSCSE003 • Participate in shared imaginative activities and respond through singing, chanting, play-acting and movement. Non Roman Alphabet Languages: Communicating (F–L2) VCNRC006 • Identify and describe emotional responses people may experience in different situations. Health and Physical Education: Personal, Social and Community Health (F) VCHPEP061 • Understand that people use different systems of communication to cater to different needs and purposes and that many people may use sign systems to communicate with others. English: Language (L1) VCELA198 • Explore how language is used differently at home and school depending on the relationships between people. English: Language (F) VCELA165 • Acknowledge and describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Country/Place on which the school is located and why Country/Place is important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the ways in which they maintain special connections to particular Country/Place. Geography: Geographical Knowledge (F–L2) VCGGK066 • Respond to media artworks and consider where and why people make media artworks. Visual Arts: Respond and Interpret (F) VCACAR020 	

VEYLDF Learning and Development Outcome

Children are confident and involved learners

These are the **key components of learning** for this Outcome:

- Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity
- Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating
- Children transfer and adapt what they have learnt from one context to another
- Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials

Introduction to the Learning and Development Outcome

Children learn in the context of their families and communities. From birth to eight years children continue to establish learning dispositions and patterns of engagement with others that have a profound influence on their learning, behaviour, motivation and capacity for being confident and involved life-long learners. Responsive learning relationships with all children support them to learn successfully. They are encouraged to be curious and enthusiastic about their learning.

Children are active learners exploring the world through touch, sight, sound, taste, smell and movement. The child's brain develops rapidly through physical explorations and their active engagement with others who speak and respond to their interests. From birth, with the warmth and support of others around them, children experience and come to realise that learning is exploratory and it can be fun and rewarding. Periods of uninterrupted play give children time to invent, investigate and discover, using a rich variety of open-ended materials and resources. Time in the natural world builds confidence and supports discovery.

Young children begin to develop explanations for observed phenomena, and consider what they can learn from experiences. With encouragement, guidance, experience and learning, children further develop the capacity to reflect on their own thinking processes and approaches to learning. This is fundamental to maintaining positive learning and development trajectories.

Children who are confident and involved learners have positive dispositions toward learning, experience challenge and success in their learning and are able to contribute positively and effectively to other children's learning.

They are motivated and resourceful in approaching new learning or taking part in new challenges. They develop and use their imagination and curiosity as they build a 'tool kit' of skills and processes to support problem solving, hypothesising, experimenting, researching, and investigating activity. Metacognition begins to develop as young children begin to 'think aloud' and discuss learning in ways that help to deepen their knowledge of information and processes. They negotiate and set achievable goals, seek to understand and can predict outcomes. With encouragement children become comfortable with taking risks. They know that failure is a valuable part of learning, are able to learn from mistakes to enhance future success, and they become more skilled at seeking help when they need it.

The ability of very young children to understand what is said to them exceeds their ability to express themselves using language. Young children learn from watching and listening, and new skills and understanding can emerge as a result of demonstration and modelling by others.

Children's involvement in learning changes what they know, what they can do, what they value, and transforms their learning. When provided with many opportunities and a rich supply of natural and manufactured materials and tools, children create, build, sculpt, draw, paint and construct, and they enjoy taking part in sustained shared conversations focused on their interests.

When young children are supported to be relaxed and involved, they express wonder and interest in their environment. As they grow, so does their sense of inquiry and thirst for knowledge. From the earliest months of life, children learn critical patterns within events and routine care procedures. Supporting this learning by making sequences and procedures clear and predictable helps children to build their capacity and to function in the world.

Children grow in confidence as they learn task-procedures, exercise imagination and help to solve problems, and they learn to stay alert and involved.

As children learn and develop they expand their scientific thinking skills. When given opportunities to generate questions about situations and phenomena, make predictions, carry out systematic courses of action and evaluate results they build further on their skills and knowledge. From birth, children are highly engaged with their environment, and this is the basis for important concept development.

Children learn with their peers, sharing their feelings and thoughts about learning with others. They begin to understand that listening to the responses of others can help them understand and make new meaning of experiences. Children teach others and broaden their learning about the world through connecting with people, places, technologies and natural materials. They manipulate objects to investigate, assemble, invent and construct, and they use their own and others' feedback to revise and build on an idea.

Children benefit from many opportunities to generate and discuss ideas, make plans, exercise skills, brainstorm solutions to problems, reflect and give reasons for their choices. They investigate what products and systems can do, and how they work. Increasingly, they begin to use information and communication technologies to assist their thinking and to represent what they know and understand.

VEYLDF	←————→	Victorian Curriculum: Levels F–2
Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity		
<p>This is evident, for example, when children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • express wonder and interest in their environments • are curious and enthusiastic participants in their learning • use play to investigate, imagine and explore ideas • follow and extend their own interests with enthusiasm, energy and concentration • initiate and contribute to play experiences emerging from their own ideas • participate in a variety of rich and meaningful inquiry-based experiences • persevere and experience the satisfaction of achievement • persist even when they find a task difficult. 	<p>This develops, for example, when students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider ways to express and describe thinking activity, including the expression of feelings about learning, both to others and self. Critical and Creative Thinking: Meta-Cognition (F–L2) VCCCTM007 • Use imagination and experimentation to explore musical ideas using voice, movement, instruments and body percussion. Music: Explore and Express Ideas (L1–L2) VCAMUE021 • Create short imaginative and informative texts that show emerging use of appropriate text structure, sentence-level grammar, word choice, spelling, punctuation and appropriate multimodal elements. English: Literacy (L1) VCELY194 • Visualise, generate, and communicate design ideas through describing, drawing and modelling. Design and Technologies: Creating Designed Solutions (F–L2) VCDSCD019 • Organise answers to yes/no questions into simple data displays using objects and drawings. Mathematics: Statistics and Probability (F) VCMSP084 • Apply repetition in arithmetic operations, including multiplication as repeated addition and division as repeated subtraction. Mathematics: Number and Algebra (L2) VCMNA114 • Experiment with ideas and develop characters and settings through stories using images, sounds and text. Media Arts: Explore and Represent Ideas (L1–L2) VCAMAE021 	

VEYLDF		Victorian Curriculum: Levels F–2	
Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating			
<p>This is evident, for example, when children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apply a wide variety of thinking strategies to engage with situations and solve problems, and adapt these strategies to new situations • create and use representation to organise, record and communicate mathematical ideas and concepts • make predictions and generalisations about their daily activities, aspects of the natural world and environments, using patterns they generate or identify, and communicate these using mathematical language and symbols • explore their environment • manipulate objects and experiment with cause and effect, trial and error, and motion • contribute constructively to mathematical discussions and arguments • use reflective thinking to consider why things happen and what can be learnt from these experiences. 	<p>This develops, for example, when students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sort and classify familiar objects and explain the basis for these classifications, and copy, continue and create patterns with objects and drawings. Mathematics: Number and Algebra (F) VCMNA076 • Connect number names, numerals and quantities, including zero, initially up to 10 and then beyond. Mathematics: Number and Algebra (F) VCMNA070 • Use direct and indirect comparisons to decide which is longer, heavier or holds more, and explain reasoning in everyday language. Mathematics: Measurement and Geometry (F) VCMMG078 • Tell time to the half-hour. Mathematics: Measurement and Geometry (L1) VCMMG096 • Recognise the importance of repetition of a process in solving problems. Mathematics: Number and Algebra (L1) VCMNA094 • Recognise and interpret common uses of halves, quarters and eighths of shapes and collections. Mathematics: Number and Algebra (L2) VCMNA110 • Group, partition and rearrange collections up to 1000 in hundreds, tens and ones to facilitate more efficient counting. Mathematics: Number and Algebra (L2) VCMNA105 • Sort, describe and name familiar two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects in the environment. Mathematics: Measurement and Geometry (F) VCMMG081 • Investigate and describe number patterns formed by skip counting and patterns with objects. Mathematics: Number and Algebra (L1) VCMNA093 • Compare and order several shapes and objects based on length, area, volume and capacity using appropriate uniform informal units. Mathematics: Measurement and Geometry (L2) VCMMG115 • Respond to and pose questions, and make predictions about familiar objects and events. Science: Science Inquiry Skills (F–L2) VCSIS050 • Participate in guided investigations, including making observations using the senses, to explore and answer questions. Science: Science Inquiry Skills (F–L2) VCSIS051 • Explore needs or opportunities for designing, and the technologies needed to realise designed solutions. Design and Technologies: Creating Designed Solutions (F–L2) VCDSCD018 • Represent and communicate observations and ideas about changes in objects and events in a variety of ways. Science: Science Inquiry Skills (F–L2) VCSIS055 • Explore some learning strategies, including planning, repetition, rewording, memorisation and use of mnemonics. Critical and Creative Thinking: Meta-Cognition (F–L2) VCCCTM008 • Investigate ways to problem-solve, using egocentric and experiential language. Critical and Creative Thinking: Meta-Cognition (F–L2) VCCCTM009 		

VEYLDF	←————→	Victorian Curriculum: Levels F–2
Children transfer and adapt what they have learnt from one context to another		
<p>This is evident, for example, when children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage with and co-construct learning develop an ability to mirror, repeat and practise the actions of others, either immediately or later make connections between experiences, concepts and processes use the processes of play, reflection and investigation to problem-solve apply generalisations from one situation to another try out strategies that were effective to solve problems in one situation in a new context transfer knowledge from one setting to another. 	<p>This develops, for example, when students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify, describe and use different kinds of question stems to gather information and ideas. Critical and Creative Thinking: Questions and Possibilities (F–L2) VCCCTQ001 Make simple modifications to known ideas and routine solutions to generate some different ideas and possibilities. Critical and Creative Thinking: Questions and Possibilities (F–L2) VCCCTQ003 Identify their likes and dislikes, needs and wants, abilities and strengths. Personal and Social Capability: Self-Awareness and Management (F) VCPSCSE002 	

VEYLDF	←————→ Victorian Curriculum: Levels F–2
Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials	
<p>This is evident, for example, when children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage in learning relationships use their senses to explore natural and built environments experience the benefits and pleasures of shared learning exploration explore the purpose and function of a range of tools, media, sounds and graphics manipulate resources to investigate, take apart, assemble, invent and construct experiment with different technologies use information and communications technologies (ICT) to investigate and problem-solve explore ideas and theories using imagination, creativity and play use feedback from themselves and others to revise and build on an idea. 	<p>This develops, for example, when students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore how technologies use forces to create movement in designed solutions. Design and Technologies: Technologies Contexts (F–L2) VCDSTC014 Explore the characteristics and properties of materials and components that are used to create designed solutions. Design and Technologies: Technologies Contexts (F–L2) VCDSTC017 Construct texts using software including word processing programs. English: Literacy (F) VCELY163 Represent location of places and their features on maps and models, including a globe, and the location of the major geographical divisions of the world in relation to Australia. Geography: Geographical Knowledge (F–L2) VCGGK063 Respond to visual artworks by describing subject matter and ideas. Visual Arts: Respond and Interpret (L1–L2) VCAVAR024 Respond to media artworks by describing ideas, characters, settings and stories. Media Arts: Respond and Interpret (F) VCAMAR020

VEYLDF Learning and Development Outcome

Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

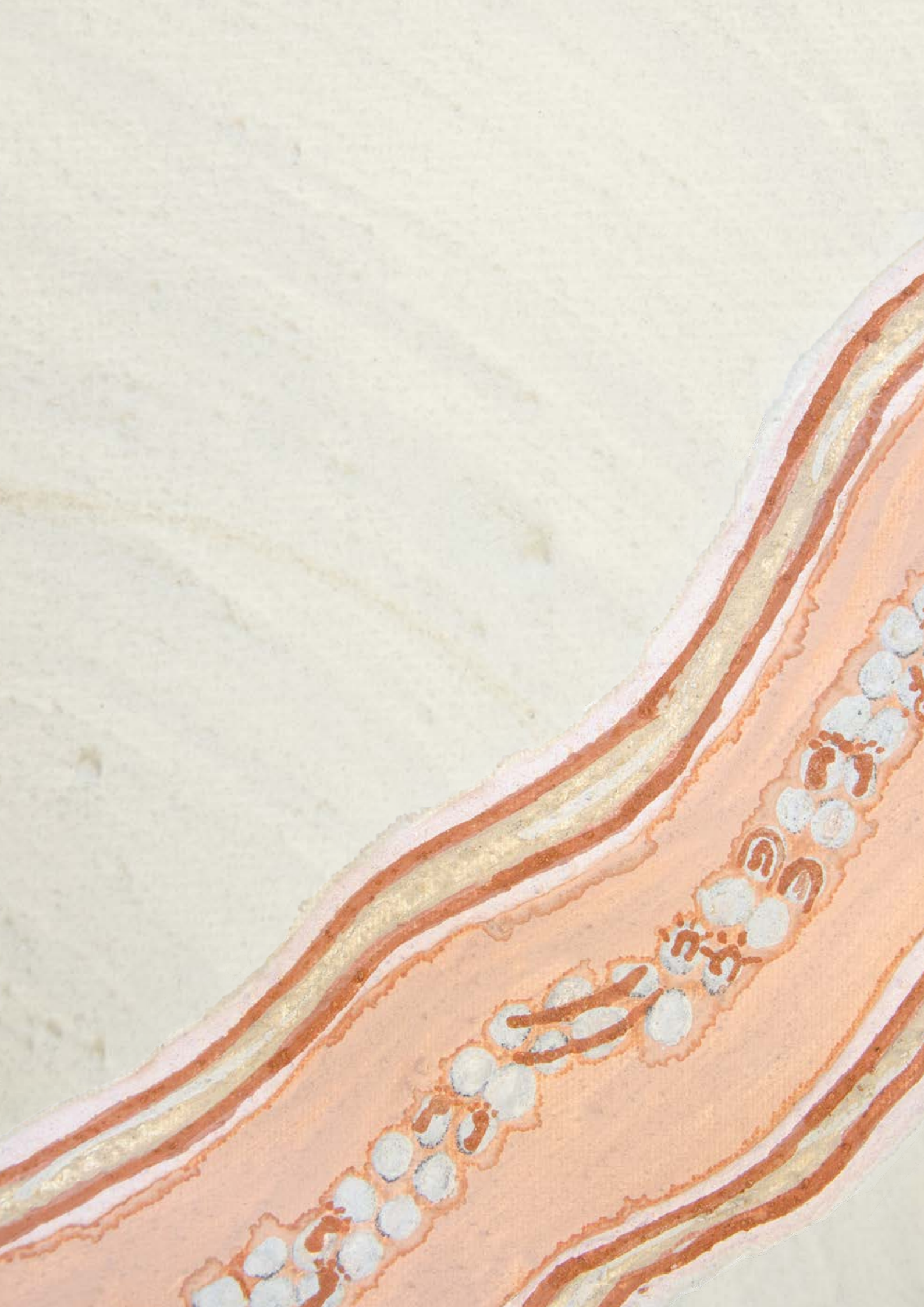
These are the **key components of learning** for this Outcome:

- Children become strong in their social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing
- Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing

Introduction to the Learning and Development Outcome	
<p>From birth and throughout early childhood, the foundations for physical, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing are laid. Wellbeing means having good mental and physical health, including attachment, positive affect and self-regulation. This means being able to manage emotions productively and build resilience and persistence, being adaptable and confident, and experiencing feelings of satisfaction and happiness.</p> <p>Early childhood professionals, individually and together, play a key role with families in promoting healthy life practices and children's sense of wellbeing.</p> <p>Children who have a strong sense of wellbeing develop a range of social skills and dispositions. They learn to be comfortable in the range of settings that are part of their lives. They are becoming capable of seeking and receiving assistance and of being alone and with others. Children learn how to express and manage their feelings and develop self-reliance. Children grow in their capacity to manage their wellbeing, and seek support from others around them to maintain a strong sense of physical, emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing. From birth, relationships that are warm and supportive assist children to express feelings such as joy, sadness, frustration and fear and to identify and accept their own and others' feelings. This supports the development of strong bonds and attachments. Learning to constructively resolve conflicts begins in infancy. Children are supported to express their views in line with their evolving capabilities. With support and guidance around naming and recognising the range of human emotions, children continue to learn and practise strategies that enable them to manage disappointments, anxiety, frustration and loss. With increasing physical mobility comes greater opportunity to explore and experience the world. Outdoor play promotes children's physical and cognitive development and their ability to assess risk.</p> <p>Children learn to manage and move their bodies in space in a range of environments and settings. They learn to maintain their own basic hygiene practices and they are able to contribute to and maintain basic health and safety practices.</p> <p>As children progress and mature, their social skills and resilience increase. They learn to manage emotions and impulses, cope with day-to-day stresses and to persevere and 'have a go' when faced with challenging learning situations. Children experience wellbeing as they develop a sense of achievement, and as they learn to be flexible and adapt to new environments and events.</p> <p>Maintaining physical health, including managing chronic health conditions, contributes to a sense of wellbeing. This includes a healthy diet and the exercise necessary for healthy living. Children are supported by adults to learn about and encounter a range of nutritious foods, as part of everyday food choices. They enjoy opportunities to grow, cultivate and prepare nutritious food. Children also gain a basic understanding of the aspects of an active lifestyle, including the positive experience of active outdoor play and physical exercise, and the avoidance of substances or products that are harmful to their health and wellbeing.</p> <p>From birth to eight years, children continually acquire, refine and consolidate their motor functions and skills and integrate their skills across domains.</p> <p>Dance, drama and musical experiences can combine stillness and movement, and children learn to create and perform simple rhythmic movement sequences. The learning and physical development of young children is evident through their movement patterns, from their physical dependence and reflex actions at birth through to their development of spatial awareness, and the ability to move around their environment confidently and safely. The growth of strong spatial awareness across the early years is also known to positively influence the development of children's mathematical capabilities.</p>	

VEYLDF ←————→ VEYLDL		Victorian Curriculum: Levels F–2
Children become strong in their social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing		
<p>This is evident, for example, when children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• demonstrate trust and confidence• remain accessible to others at times of distress, confusion and frustration• share humour, happiness and satisfaction• seek out and accept new challenges, make new discoveries, and celebrate their own efforts and achievements and those of others• increasingly cooperate and work collaboratively with others• enjoy moments of solitude• recognise their individual achievements• make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustrations and the unexpected• show an increasing capacity to understand, self-regulate and manage their emotions in ways that reflect the feelings and needs of others• experience and share personal successes in learning and initiate opportunities for new learning in their home languages or Standard Australian English• acknowledge and accept affirmation• assert their capabilities and independence while demonstrating increasing awareness of the needs and rights of others• recognise the contributions they make to shared projects and experiences.	<p>This develops, for example, when students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practise personal and social skills to interact with others. Health and Physical Education: Personal, Social and Community Health (F) VCHPEP060• Extend their vocabulary through which to recognise and describe emotions and when, how and with whom it is appropriate to share emotions. Personal and Social Capability: Self-Awareness and Management (L1–L2) VCPSCSE008• Use basic skills required for participation in group tasks and respond to simple questions about their contribution to group tasks. Personal and Social Capability: Social Awareness and Management (L1–L2) VCPSCSO014• Recognise that conflict occurs and distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate ways to deal with conflict. Personal and Social Capability: Social Awareness and Management (L1–L2) VCPSCSO015• Examine health messages and how they relate to health decisions and behaviours. Health and Physical Education: Personal, Social and Community Health (L1–L2) VCHPEP077• Identify actions that promote health, safety and wellbeing. Health and Physical Education: Personal, Social and Community Health (F) VCHPEP062	

VEYLDF		←	→	Victorian Curriculum: Levels F–2
Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing				
<p>This is evident, for example, when children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• recognise and communicate their bodily needs (for example thirst, hunger, rest, comfort, physical activity)• are happy, healthy, safe and are connected to others• engage in increasingly complex sensory-motor skills and movement patterns• combine gross and fine motor movement and balance to achieve increasingly complex patterns of activity, including dance, creative movement and drama• use their sensory capabilities and dispositions with increasing integration, skill and purpose to explore and respond to their world• demonstrate spatial awareness and orient themselves, moving around and through their environments confidently and safely• manipulate equipment and manage tools with increasing competence and skill• respond through movement to traditional and contemporary music, dance and storytelling of their own and others' cultures• show an increasing awareness of healthy lifestyles and good nutrition• show increasing independence and competence in personal hygiene, care and safety for themselves and others• show enthusiasm for participating in physical play and negotiate play spaces to ensure the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others.	<p>This develops, for example, when students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore how food is selected and prepared for healthy eating. Design and Technologies: Technologies Contexts (F–L2) VCDSTC016• Respond to music, expressing what they enjoy and why. Music: Respond and Interpret (F) VCAMUR020• Name parts of the body and describe how their body is growing and changing. Health and Physical Education: Personal, Social and Community Health (F) VCHPEP058• Identify and describe how their body moves in relation to effort, space, time, objects and people. Health and Physical Education: Movement and Physical Activity (F) VCHPEM067• Discuss the body's reactions to participating in physical activities. Health and Physical Education: Movement and Physical Activity (L1–L2) VCHPEM083• Use fundamental locomotor and non-locomotor movements, body parts, bases and zones to explore safe movement possibilities and dance ideas. Dance: Explore and Express Ideas (F) VCADAE017• Construct and perform imaginative and original movement sequences in response to stimuli. Health and Physical Education: Movement and Physical Activity (L1–L2) VCHPEM081• Use choreographic devices to organise movement ideas and create dance sequences. Dance: Dance Practices (F) VCADAD018• Incorporate elements of effort, space, time, objects and people in performing simple movement sequences. Health and Physical Education: Movement and Physical Activity (L1–L2) VCHPEM084• Explore how regular physical activity keeps individuals healthy and well. Health and Physical Education: Movement and Physical Activity (F) VCHPEM066• Use trial and error to test solutions to movement challenges. Health and Physical Education: Movement and Physical Activity (F) VCHPEM069• Respond to dance, expressing what they enjoy and why. Dance: Respond and Interpret (F) VCADAR020• Explore ideas characters and settings in images, sounds and multi-modal texts. Media Arts: Explore and Represent Ideas (F) VCAMAE017			



6.3 THE TRANSITION STATEMENT

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE TRANSITION STATEMENT?

A child's Transition Statement summarises their abilities as they start school and identifies their individual approaches to learning. It also identifies potential teaching strategies. This information is shared to progress the child's learning alongside their interests and indicates how they can be supported to continue on their learning journey. It provides a tool for the consistent transfer of information irrespective of the setting they are transitioning from or to. It reflects the learning outcomes identified for children in the VEYLDF, as well as the first three levels of the Victorian Curriculum F–10.

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

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

WHAT INFORMATION IS INCLUDED IN THE TRANSITION STATEMENT?

The Transition Statement collates the following information:

- child, family and service details
- a description of the early years setting and specific information about the child and family

- a description of the child's abilities against each of the VEYLDF learning and development outcomes and the Victorian Curriculum, including intentional teaching strategies to support continuity of learning
- specific information to support an enhanced transition for a child with a disability or developmental delay
- input from the child to share their feelings and perspectives (in writing or as a drawing), with assistance from an adult they feel comfortable with
- input from the family about their hopes and goals for their child at school, information they require, their child's interests, how their child learns best, and anything else they would like the school to know.

HOW IS THE TRANSITION STATEMENT USED?


Transition Statements help prep teachers and OSHC educators to get a better understanding of the children coming into their classes and programs. Schools and OSHC services will use this information to:

- allocate children to classes or groups
- plan transition and class activities
- inform curriculum planning to build on children's prior learning and development
- plan and establish warm, welcoming environment for children and families
- actively support and accommodate individual requirements to ensure continuity of learning and development for each child is achieved.

It also helps families to understand, support, communicate about, and advocate for their child's learning as they transition to school.

The Transition Statement is one part of the process of transition. It is a vehicle for sharing information and facilitating communication between early childhood professionals, children and families, but does not replace partnerships and collaboration.

More information on the importance of relationships in transitions is provided in section 2.

The Transition Statement is available to complete on the Insight Assessment Platform, as well as electronically (in PDF or Word format) and in hard copy. To aid in the transfer and storage of the Transition Statement, it is recommended that the Transition Statement be completed through the Insight Assessment Platform. Where possible, any handwritten forms should be scanned and stored electronically. Educators should refer to the 'Transition to School: Guide to Information Sharing' for the most up-to-date advice on using the Transition Statement. 

WHO IS THE TRANSITION STATEMENT FOR?


Although the Transition Statement provides valuable information for children and their families, it is ultimately developed for children's prep teachers and OSHC educators (where applicable).

It is important to communicate with families early in the year that completing a Transition Statement to provide to the prep teacher is an important part of preparing for the transition to school. When educators communicate regularly and respectfully with families throughout the year about their child's learning and development, families are more likely to understand and feel comfortable about the information contained in the Transition Statement. An important part of this communication with families is to explain that the Transition Statement includes information on pedagogy and practice. This information may seem overly technical to some families, but is important to share in order to best support and build on their child's learning.

If families have any concerns about the information contained in the Transition Statement, early childhood educators should work collaboratively with them to ensure they understand the information and why it is important to share these valuable insights with the child's future school and teachers. Families can then make informed decisions about this information being forwarded on. As part of this process, it is critical that families understand not

only what is written, but also how the information will be used to support their child's learning and development at school.

If the decision regarding which school the child will attend has not yet been confirmed before the end of the kindergarten year, the family becomes responsible for forwarding the Transition Statement to the school and, if applicable, the OSHC program that the child will attend.

Educators should refer to the 'Transition to School: Guide to Information Sharing' for the most up-to-date advice. 

WHO WRITES THE TRANSITION STATEMENT AND HOW?

The Transition Statement is jointly developed by the family and early childhood educator, on behalf of the child. There might be several people contributing to the information included in the Transition Statement, but early childhood educators are best placed to coordinate the Transition Statement because they are the main point of contact and support for the child and the family during the period when the Transition Statement is prepared.






The strength-based approach to Transition Statements.

Understanding the strength-based approach is important for writing and using Transition Statements.

The strength-based approach supports professionals to consider and identify strategies that match and extend upon the child's abilities, skills and dispositions. In other words, the strength-based approach is about assisting people (educators, children and families) to build a picture of what a child's learning and development is currently, and consider the most appropriate strategies and actions to intentionally scaffold the child's learning. This is in contrast to a deficit approach, which can lead to a focus on what is considered to be 'wrong' with a child's learning and development or things a child cannot do. The deficit-based model fails to provide sufficient information about the child's abilities, interests and learning dispositions to inform strategies that will support a child's learning and development.

The resource 'Strength-based approach: A guide to writing Transition Learning and Development Statements' provides further advice and examples. 

The VEYLDF practice principle: 'Assessment for learning and development,' guides early childhood professionals¹⁰⁸ undertaking authentic assessments of children's learning and development to inform the Transition Statement.

See section 4.4 for more information.


WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH FAMILIES WHEN WRITING TRANSITION STATEMENTS

There are specific sections of the Transition Statement for children and families to complete. It is important for families to understand that, although completing 'The Family' section of the Transition Statement is very helpful to the receiving school, families have a choice whether or not to complete this section. If a family chooses not to complete 'The Family' section in the Transition Statement, the early childhood educator should still complete their relevant sections and give a copy to the family.


By working in partnership with families when developing Transition Statements, early childhood educators can:

- stay informed about family perspectives
- help resolve any issues or concerns
- 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 OSHC service.



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

THE INSIGHT ASSESSMENT PLATFORM

From mid-2017, the Transition Statement is available to complete online within the Insight Assessment Platform. 

The Transition Statement tool on the Insight Assessment Platform is referred to as the 'online TLDS'.

The Insight Assessment Platform aims to enable high-quality assessment and feedback that will inform teacher planning for the next steps in a student's learning, so that the child continues to make progress along the learning continuum. The inclusion of the Transition Statement on this platform will make it easier for educators to complete and share with schools to support effective transitions. The Transition Statement is then held within a child's profile on the Insight Assessment Platform, along with other assessments of learning that are undertaken at school.

ECEC services and schools will be provided with instructions for completing and accessing the online TLDS. These will be updated regularly to ensure they reflect the most up-to-date information

PRIVACY AND INFORMATION SHARING


ECEC services and schools must be reasonable and fair in their treatment of personal and health information, including child assessments, not only for the benefit of staff and children, but also to maintain the service's reputation.

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

There are laws that regulate the way ECEC services, schools and OSHC services can collect, use, retain, secure and dispose of personal and health information, such as child assessments.

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

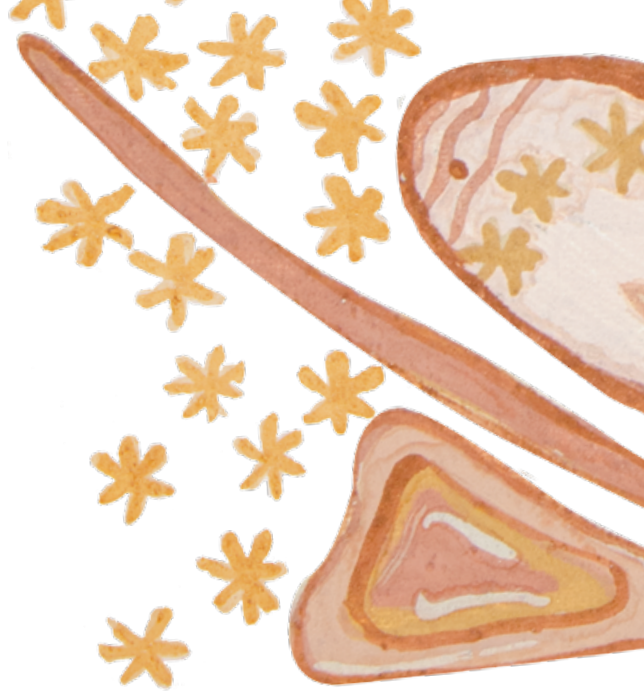
- the purpose of collecting the information
- to whom the information would normally be disclosed
- how individuals access information that the organisation holds about them
- any consequences for not providing some or all of the information requested.

Educators should refer to the 'Transition to School: Guide to Information Sharing' for the most up-to-date advice on privacy. 



When considering privacy issues, it is important for ECEC 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 could cause harm to the individual or others
- **Security:** Keep personal information secure and safe from unauthorised access.



DISPOSING OF INFORMATION

For the purposes of record retention and disposal, the Transition Statement is classified as a temporary record and is subject to the relevant retention and disposal schedules that apply by law in any given setting. These schedules vary depending on the setting type.

- ECEC services not administered by a Local Government are required to keep a copy of a child's assessment (including a Transition Statement) for a minimum of three years after a child's last attendance as a temporary record. This is in accordance with the National Regulations and the National Quality Standard
- ECEC services administered by a Local Government are required to keep a copy of a child's assessment (including a Transition Statement) for a minimum of seven years after a child's last attendance as a temporary record (PROS 09/05 Class 4.6.2)
- A school is required to keep a copy of a child's assessment (including a Transition Statement) for a minimum of two years as a temporary record (PROS 01/01 Class 3.3.2).

These time frames are in line with Retention and Disposal Authorities (RDAs) issued by the Public Records Office Victoria.

This advice applies to paper-based and electronic Transition Statements. After the required retention period, paper-based and electronic Transition Statements should be disposed of securely and safely in line with each organisation's procedures and processes. Paper-based Transition Statements should be shredded. Electronic Transition Statements should be permanently deleted.



Further information and resources

More information and resources on the following are available on the online appendix at

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/transitiontoschool:>

- Identifying gifted and talented children
- Early ABLES
- Maternal and child health assessments
- 'On Entry' to school assessments
- VEYLDF illustrative maps to the Victorian Curriculum F-2
- The Transition Statement

NOTES: SECTION 6

108. The term early childhood professionals in this document includes, but is not limited to, maternal and child health nurses, all early childhood practitioners who work directly with children in early childhood education and care settings (educators), school teachers, family support workers, preschool field officers, inclusion support facilitators, student support service officers, primary school nurses, primary welfare officers, Early Childhood Intervention workers, play therapists, health professionals and teachers working in hospitals, and education officers in cultural organisations.