# letter to families

This year, there may be an increase in requests from families for their child to repeat a year of four-year-old kindergarten because of interruptions due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Early childhood services can use this template to communicate with families in their community to help build confidence in transition to school for the 2021 prep cohort.

## SCHOOLs will be READY FOR children commencing PREP in 2021

Dear Families,

As a result of the disruptions caused by coronavirus (COVID-19) this year, we know that some parents may be feeling unsure about their child starting school in 2021. I am writing to let you know that our local schools are ready to welcome your child in 2021 and we are committed to working with you, your child and the school to support your child make a positive start to school in 2021.

People often talk about children being ‘ready’ for kindergarten or ‘ready’ for school, but it is more important that kindergartens and schools are ‘ready’ to support children and families. ‘Ready’ schools provide learning environments that are flexible, adaptable and responsive to the needs of individual children.

Some of the most important elements of helping children start school relate to their wellbeing and building confidence that starting school will be a positive experience for them.

Children’s social and emotional learning, including self-regulation and ability to interact positively with others, is foundational to their ability to adapt to different settings and environments, particularly in their transition to school. A successful transition to school has much to do with how children, families, services, schools, and communities work together to support each other and how successfully they cope with and adapt to changes.

No matter what experiences children have had in their kindergarten year, they will have developed a range of skills and abilities that form the basis for further learning. All schools welcome and support children at different stages in their growth.

Schools are working to make sure they are ready for children who may have a greater diversity of needs next year. Schools’ Term 1 programs will be modified to accommodate children who may not have been able to attend four-year-old kindergarten on-site as planned this year.

Like our service, schools support children at different stages of their learning and development, and work closely with families to achieve the best possible outcomes for their child. Parents should be confident that our local schools can meet your child at their point of learning and developmental need.

Our local primary schools are doing lots of things to support transition to school programs. Some of these things include:

***insert what local schools have advised you they are doing to prepare for transition to school***, for example:

* virtual school and classroom tours
* ‘meet the principal’ video
* ‘meet the prep team’ video conferences
* kindergarten and prep teacher meetings
* training Year 5 students to be Prep buddies
* First time prep family network
* information booklet for new families etc.]

If you have not yet enrolled your child in school for 2021, I encourage you to look into the options available and to do so as soon as possible. Enrolment confirmation will allow the school to further plan for the individual needs of your child. The Department of Education and Training provides a lot of useful information about starting school here <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/choose-enrol-school.aspx>.

Once you have enrolled your child, I encourage you to talk to the staff at your child’s primary school about their program and how it will look in 2020/2021. We will also work together with the Prep teachers to share information about your child’s learning and how this can continue to be supported as they transition into school.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to your kindergarten teacher and work together, to plan for a positive transition experience for your child. We look forward to watching all our four-year-old kindergarten children make a positive start to school in 2021.

Sincerely

[PLEASE INSERT CONTACT NAME AT YOUR SERVICE]