

Ballina River Street Children's Transition to School Policy

Starting school is a significant milestone in the life of any child and family. Our Service (BRSCC) supports continuity of learning and transitions for each child by sharing relevant information, clarifying responsibilities and by developing strategies that support a positive transition to school. (National Quality Standard 6.3)

We are committed to engage children, families, professionals, educators and community members in the transition to school process to ensure the implementation of this policy is meaningful, supportive and reflective of best practice. Transition is viewed as a collaborative and dynamic process occurring over time ensuring a sense of belonging in all environments. (Transition to School: Position Statement, 2011)

**Ready families + Ready early childhood services + Ready communities + Ready schools =
Ready children**

(Kagan & Rigby, 2003)

National Quality Standard (NQS)

Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships		
6.1	Supportive relationships with families	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role
6.1.1	Engagement with the service	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in their service and contribute to service decisions
6.1.2	Parent views are respected	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
6.1.3	Families are supported	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.
6.2	Collaborative partnerships	Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.

PURPOSE

Effective transition practices have, as their base, a commitment to building secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships. One outcome of such relationships is that all participants regard themselves, and other participants, as valued members of the school community. (Dockett & Perry, 2001)

Our Service(BRSCC) aims to liaise with local schools to develop a smooth and comprehensive transition to school for all children. We will support children and families by strengthening the development and delivery of transition programs and provide a shared understanding between our Service(BRSCC) and local primary schools about what is important for children and their families during the transition to school process.

We believe it is vital to enhance children's social and emotional development to ensure a successful transition to school. By developing these skills, abilities and promoting their creativity and individuality, we promote children's ability to become confident and successful learners.

SCOPE

This policy applies to teachers, educators, staff, management and visitors of BRSCC.

IMPLEMENTATION

Children are challenged with several transitional changes during early childhood. This includes orientating children into early childhood, transitioning between routines and rooms, and then transitioning into primary school. Children respond in different ways to transitions - some with confidence and others with hesitation. Children's confidence will be enhanced when changes happen gradually and when time is prioritised to support these transitions with sensitivity, planning and preparation.

This first experience children have of school has a great impact on their progress and future schooling (Margetts, K. 2007). For many children the change of setting and sense of moving on acts as a stimulus for development but if they find this change too abrupt there is a risk that the child will regress (Bennett, J 2007). Transition to school should be prepared for in an understanding, calm, organised and knowledgeable manner. We acknowledge the critical role we as Teachers and Educators have in providing an educational environment that supports children's wellbeing, promotes equity and celebrates diversity. Our transition to school program is developed in collaboration with all stakeholders and ensures children are active participants in their transition to school.

For children attending school the following year, our 'Transition to School Program' provides additional activities and experiences to help prepare them for a smooth transition to a primary school environment. This program refers to daily-programmed activities and experiences that are implemented throughout the year, encouraging the developmental skills that are optimal for children to retain before commencing school.

Transition to School Program

As Early Childhood Teachers and Educators who are instrumental in influencing children's learning patterns for later life, it is our responsibility to set them on a course that will inspire investigation, exploration, problem solving, questioning, discovery and challenges.

To ensure the transition to school is a positive experience for children and families, we will implement a range of activities and experiences that may include, but is not limited to:

- Family information sessions
- Visits from Primary school teachers and/or Principals
- Exchanging information about a child's individual strengths and needs
- Networking with Early Childhood Teachers, Primary school teachers and Principals

- Developing children's talking and listening skills, conversation turn taking and waiting
- Alphabet and number recognition
- Shapes and colour recognition
- Social and emotional enhancement
- Pre-writing development
- Name writing and recognition
- Concentrating on the task at hand
- Determination when faced with complications
- Responding positively to new situations
- Taking responsibility for their own behaviour
- Developing the communication skills necessary for group or individual play
- Developing positive feelings about themselves and others
- Experiencing a sense of self-satisfaction resulting from achievement.
- Experiencing eating from lunch boxes, as we educate children about different foods eaten at recess and lunch and to open different foods containers and packets.

Preparing Children as they transition to School

There are many unique differences in the school environment which children should become familiar with as they prepare to transition to school. This includes:

- Having one teacher for the majority of the day
- Toileting without supervision
- Wearing uniforms
- Transport
- Sitting at a desk
- Responsibility of own belongings
- Listening to instructions
- Specific focused lessons
- A school bell or siren indicating set breaks
- Negotiating a large playground
- Homework- home reading
- The canteen or tuck shop
- Before and After School Care

Management will:

- Establish methods across our Service(BRSCC) to ensure there is continuity of learning when children transition to school.

- Advocate for 'Ready' by ensuring schools are ready for our children to transition into their environment.
- Discuss expectations with families for their child as they prepare to transition to school.
- Work in partnership with families to ensure children's transition to school is positive, informed and enhances individual development.
- Be aware of critical cut off dates with various Education Departments to accommodate children with a disability or developmental delay into new educational settings and share this information with families.
- Support and advocate for enhanced transition programs for children with a disability or developmental delay with feeder primary schools.
- Be flexible and ensure transition programs are tailored to the specific needs of all children in our Service(BRSCC).

Teachers/Educators will:

- Incorporate transition to school into the daily program by encouraging children to think and talk about school by exploring various elements of primary school. (This may include uniforms, recess and lunch times, canteens and play grounds, talking about school and how a school environment is different.)
- Talk with children about starting school, respecting any concerns and communicating these to families.
- Ensure children are active participants in their transition to school.
- Communicate with families to ensure we meet the individual strengths and needs of all children and families.
- Consider family priorities and any concerns about the transition process. Each family's cultural and linguistic needs will be respected, along with family diversity.
- Develop a program to ensure a smooth transition for children from the education and care(Preschool) environment to the school environment. The program requires both parent and early childhood teacher and educator support for the child. This cooperation will ensure the best possible environment for children's transition.
- Contemplate the individual rest or sleep needs of children in the months leading up to the transitioning to school and whether a reduction in sleep times may prepare some children for the longer school day routine. Children will continue to have rest periods and quiet activities during the day. Beds will be available for any child who requires rest or sleep.
- Discuss children's development, strengths and competencies for transition to school with families.
- Support each family's decision about when to send children to school, acknowledging the NSW Department of Education and Training's policy that "children must turn five by July 31 in the year they start Kindergarten. All children in NSW must start school by their 6th birthday".
- Develop an information package for families about transition to school. This will include information about how to support their child/children and what to expect with the transition process. This package

will be reviewed annually to meet the needs of the families and to integrate efficient information from local schools.

- Be supported to access and attend professional development opportunities to ensure current knowledge and practice regarding transition to school.
- Facilitate relationships and networking with local schools to support children and families with the transition process and to open lines of communication. The importance of school preparation through school visits, orientation days and meeting the Kindergarten teachers will be regularly promoted.
- Facilitate each child's development as a capable learner through open ended learning experiences.
- Effectively evaluate our Service's(BRSCC) transition program.
- Be flexible and responsive to the needs of children and families.
- Take into account contextual aspects of community, and of individual families and children within that community.

(Adapted from *Transitions to School: Perceptions, Expectations and Experiences* by Sue Dockett and Bob Perry.)

Transition to School Statement- NSW Department of Education (DoE)

The NSW Transition to School Statement (Department of Education) is a practical and simple tool designed to enable information to be shared between families, early childhood services and schools.

The Statement is completed by the child's early childhood Teacher in cooperation with the family. The Statement is communicated to the child's intended school where it provides the school and teachers with information they can use in planning and preparing for the child's arrival and transition into the new learning environment.

Use of the statement is optional. Our Service(BRSCC), in collaboration with the family will make the decision about whether to prepare a statement, and the family will choose whether to make it available to the child's intended school and teacher.

When a child is not ready to transition to school

We understand that all children are unique and achieve milestones in their own time. Families have expectations about what they think their child should be able to do. They may ask the early Childhood Teacher their opinion on specific skills such as pre-writing skills, numbers, social and emotional development etc. We need to be mindful that current research does not recommend creating check lists for 'readiness' for school rather, each child's transition should be unique, secure and respectful and be in collaboration with families, educators, community and other professionals. (Dockett & Perry, 2013)

We believe that Early Childhood Teachers have professional insight to assist families in making the decision about a child's transition to school as they have developed trusting and supportive relationships over time. However, prior to speaking with families about their personal views, Early Childhood Teachers will discuss their thoughts with management about the child's individual strengths and needs and any recommendation about beginning school will be communicated with families during a scheduled meeting. Our Teachers, Educators and staff will adhere to confidentiality at all times.

NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW)

- Children can begin compulsory Kindergarten at the beginning of the school year if they turn 5 on or before 31st July in that year. All children must be enrolled in school by the time they turn 6.

- **Transition to School**

NSW Public Schools –

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/going-to-a-public-school/our-public-schools/primary-schools/starting-school>

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/preschool/starting-school>

<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/what-we-offer/regulation-and-accreditation/early-childhood-education-care/funding/funding-projects/transition-to-school>

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Source -

- **A Policy Brief about Rethinking School Readiness- The Royal Children’s Hospital Melbourne**
- **Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).**
- **Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth – School Readiness –Various school readiness papers –**
<https://www.aracy.org.au>
- **Connections – A resource for early childhood educators about children’s wellbeing**
- **Continuity of Learning- A resource to support effective transition to school and school age care. Research Institute for Professional Practice, Learning and Education Charles Sturt University. 2011**
- **ECA Code of Ethics**
- **Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2015.**
- **Guide to the National Quality Standard**
- **National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program Newsletter No.70 – Transitions: Moving in, moving up and moving on**
- **NSW Education Standards Authority**
<http://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/parents/parentguide/transitioning-to-school>
- **NSW Government – Department of Education and Community Services**
<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/what-we-offer/regulation-and-accreditation/early-childhood-education-care/funding/funding-projects/transition-to-school>
- **Sharing our Journey: School Readiness. Rachel Mielekamp**
- **Transition to School Resource**
<http://www.transitiontoschoolresource.org.au/tts-content/considering-when-to-start-school>
- **Transitions to school: Perceptions, expectation, experiences. Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2007)**
- **Transition to School: Position Statement (Educational Transitions and Change (ETC) Research Group, 2011)**
- **Revised National Quality Standard**
- **Childcare Centre Desktop Policies – www.childcarecentredesktop.com.au**

Review

Date Reviewed	Modifications	Next Policy Review Date
January 2017	Changes made to policy format and Updated references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard	August 2018

DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES– 3-5 Years

Child's Name:

Age:

Date:

Educator Name:

DEVELOPMENTAL AREA	OBSERVED	LINK TO EYLF & NQS	COMMENTS
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Dresses and undresses with little help <input type="checkbox"/> Hops, jumps and runs with ease <input type="checkbox"/> Climbs steps with alternating feet <input type="checkbox"/> Gallops and skips by leading with one foot <input type="checkbox"/> Transfers weight forward to throw ball <input type="checkbox"/> Attempts to catch ball with hands <input type="checkbox"/> Climbs playground equipment with increasing agility <input type="checkbox"/> Holds crayon/pencil etc. between thumb and first two fingers <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits hand preference <input type="checkbox"/> Imitates variety of shapes in drawing, e.g. circles <input type="checkbox"/> Independently cuts paper with scissors <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet themselves <input type="checkbox"/> Feeds self with minimum spills <input type="checkbox"/> Dresses/undresses with minimal assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Walks and runs more smoothly <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoys learning simple rhythm and movement routines <input type="checkbox"/> Develops ability to toilet train at night 	<p>EYLF Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing - Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing. E.g. "Promote continuity of children's personal health and hygiene by sharing ownership of routines and schedules with children, families and the community." (p.32)</p> <p>NQS: Areas 1, 2, 3, 5, 6</p>	
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoys playing with other children <input type="checkbox"/> May have a particular friend <input type="checkbox"/> Shares, smiles and cooperates with peers <input type="checkbox"/> Jointly manipulates objects with one or two other peers <input type="checkbox"/> Develops independence and social skills they will use for learning and getting on with others at preschool and school 	<p>EYLF Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity - Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect. E.g." express a wide range of emotions, thoughts and views constructively." (p.24)</p> <p>NQS: Areas 1, 5, 6</p>	

Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Understands when someone is hurt and comforts them <input type="checkbox"/> Attains gender stability (sure she/he is a girl/boy) <input type="checkbox"/> May show stronger preference for same-sex playmates <input type="checkbox"/> May enforce gender-role norms with peers <input type="checkbox"/> May show bouts of aggression with peers <input type="checkbox"/> Likes to give and receive affection from parents <input type="checkbox"/> May praise themselves and be boastful 	<p>EYLF Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world - Children respond to diversity with respect. E.g. “plan experiences and provide resources that broaden children’s perspectives and encourage appreciation of diversity.” (p.27)</p> <p>NQS: Areas 1, 2, 5, 6</p>
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Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Understands opposites (e.g. big/little) and positional words (middle, end) <input type="checkbox"/> Uses objects and materials to build or construct things, e.g. block tower, puzzle, clay, sand and water <input type="checkbox"/> Builds tower eight to ten blocks <input type="checkbox"/> Answers simple questions <input type="checkbox"/> Counts five to ten things <input type="checkbox"/> Has a longer attention span <input type="checkbox"/> Talks to self during play - to help guide what he/she does <input type="checkbox"/> Follows simple instructions <input type="checkbox"/> Follows simple rules and enjoys helping <input type="checkbox"/> May write some numbers and letters <input type="checkbox"/> Engages in dramatic play, taking on pretend character roles <input type="checkbox"/> Recalls events correctly <input type="checkbox"/> Counts by rote, having memorised numbers <input type="checkbox"/> Touches objects to count - starting to understand relationship between numbers and objects <input type="checkbox"/> Can recount a recent story <input type="checkbox"/> Copies letters and may write some unprompted <input type="checkbox"/> Can match and name some colours 	<p>EYLF Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators - Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media. E.g. “use language and engage in play to imagine and create roles, scripts, and ideas.” (p.42)</p> <p>NQS: Areas 1, 5</p>
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Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Speaks in sentences and use many different words <input type="checkbox"/> Answers simple questions <input type="checkbox"/> Asks many questions <input type="checkbox"/> Tells stories <input type="checkbox"/> Talks constantly <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoys talking and may like to experiment with new words <input type="checkbox"/> Uses adult forms of speech <input type="checkbox"/> Takes part in conversations <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoys jokes, rhymes and stories 	<p>EYLF Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators - Children use information and communication technologies to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking. E.g. “Provide children with access to a range of technologies.”</p>
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Will assert self with words

(p.44)

NQS: Areas 1, 5, 6, 7

Seek advice if

- Is not understood by others
- Has a speech fluency problem or stammering
- Is not playing with other children
- Is not able to have a conversation
- Is not able to go to the toilet or wash him/herself

NQS: Areas 1,5,6,7