

Preparing children living in care for school transition

Starting school is an exciting step for a child – however it comes with lots of changes including a new learning environment, rules and routines, new friendships, and new teachers.

Speak to your case manager and kinder teacher about working together to support a smooth transition for your child. It is important to support and include children in the transition to promote a positive experience for the child. This video provides some tips on how to prep a child for prep.

How to prepare

- Talk positively and confidently about starting and attending school.
- Speak with your child about the change and start preparing for the new routine early e.g: regular bed-times, putting on the uniform, eating different packed lunches and packing their bag. Have some screen-free time and encourage play. Having a good routine in place will make the transition and regular attendance easier.
- Visit the school with your child before they start so they're familiar with the classrooms, playground equipment, toilets, sick bay etc.
- Meet the teachers that may be working with your child and speak about them regularly.
- Read books together about starting school such as <u>Eli's first day of school</u> or <u>Jimmy's first day of school</u>. You can also ask the school for a social story to familiarise your child with what the school will look and feel like.
- Where possible, get involved in your child's school community e.g. orientation days or other social gatherings like school fetes, school assemblies and welcome barbecues.
- Involve your child in choosing their school bag, school uniform, lunch box etc. If you needs support with this, talk to your school about the <u>State Schools' Relief</u> and <u>Camps</u>, <u>Sports and Excursions Fund</u>.
- Check out these great resources for more support: <u>VACCA Starting School</u>, <u>Starting Blocks</u>, <u>Association for Children with a Disability</u>.

Key Timelines

Term 2 of Kinder

- Ask the kinder to hold a Program Support Group (PSG) meeting with you and other professionals involved to discuss your child's development and school readiness.
- •Speak to your case manager and kinder about enrolling your child into their designated neighbourhood school.
- •At enrolment, share with the school any additional support that your child has received at kinder, or will need at school including any developmental assessment or paediatrician involvement so that the school can prepare how best to support your child.
- •If your child has not attended kinder, or only attended some of the time, let the school know this at enrolment.

Term 3 of Kinder

- •The kinder begins developing the transition learning and development statement (TLDS) for the school. This will provide important information about your child, including their family, learning and development.
- Request another PSG meeting to discuss your child's learning and school transition. Invite a representative from the school to attend this meeting.
- •Discuss with the kinder and school what transition days will look like for your child. Plan to attend all available opportunities and request additional days as required.

Term 4 of Kinder

- •The kinder and school will organise a <u>Student Support Group (SSG)</u> meeting at the school with everyone who is relevant to your child's education.
- •The kinder finalises the TLDS and shares this with the school.
- •An Individual Learning Plan (ILP)² is developed by the kinder and school to support the transition process.
- •Transition days will be under way visit the school on multiple occasions, at different times of day, so your child becomes familiar with this new setting.
- •Discuss any additional needs of your child with the school and what funding or supports might be available.

Term 1 of School

- •The school will organise an SSG meeting with everyone who is relevant to your child's education
- •Encourage a regular routine at home to increase success with attendance at school.



Questions to ask and things to think about

Can we set up a transition meeting with the school and the kinder? Will the teacher go and visit my child at kinder? Have you received the transition learning and development statement (TLDS)? Would you like to discuss this further?

How many transition days are available? Is there flexibility for additional days?

My child is transitioning to school with a peer from kinder. Can they stay together? Who will be my child's teacher? Who will support them to understand the care system and the impact of trauma?

Can/will my child still learn through play in the classroom?

Who is the Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO), and what support can they provide?

How is Aboriginal history and culture embedded into the curriculum?

Does the school do an Acknowledgement of Country?

My child has allied health supports. Can I share their contact details? How can I tell you if my child is having a difficult day? Will you contact me if my child is not settling?

These things help my child feel safe and supported

This helps make the day a 'good day' for my child These are my child's strengths and interests

How can these be encouraged?

These strategies were used successfully at kinder to support my child's learning and participation

My child finds transitions to new environments tricky. Can I share with you how I support them? These are the triggers (if any) that may lead to distressed behaviours for my child

Are there any learning supports available? My child needs some support with

Can I be involved with the school with reading programs, sport, excursions and/or canteen?

Who can I advise if my child is absent?

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