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## TRANSITION TO SCHOOL POLICY

### QUALITY AREA 6: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

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#### National Quality Standard (NQS)

Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships		
6.1	<b>Supportive relationships with families</b>	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role
6.1.1	<b>Engagement with the service</b>	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in their service and contribute to service decisions
6.1.2	<b>Parent views are respected</b>	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	<b>Families are supported</b>	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.
6.2	<b>Collaborative partnerships</b>	Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.

Starting school is a significant milestone in the life of any child and family. Woden Early Childhood Centre (WECC) 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 formal schooling (National Quality Standard 6.3)

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)

## Introduction

Children are challenged with several transitional changes during early childhood. These include orientating children into an early childhood setting, 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.

At WECC we acknowledge the critical role we as educators have in providing an education 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 involves daily programmed activities and experiences that are implemented throughout the year, encouraging the developmental skills that children should ideally require before commencing school.

## Scope

This policy applies to staff, management and visitors of the Service.

## Goals – What are we aiming to do?

WECC will, where appropriate, liaise with local schools to develop a smooth and comprehensive transition to school programs. WECC will work in collaboration with families to support the individual strengths and needs of each child and provide a high-quality program to help children experience the transition to formal school as smoothly as possible

## Strategies – How will it be done?

Starting school is a major transition for young children. When children know what to expect they are much more likely to feel confident and happy about starting school.

The Enrolment Form will include a Transition to School section where parents can give permission for the Nominated Supervisor, Director or Early Childhood Teacher to liaise with the school of their choice.

WECC assists children to develop skills considered useful for engaging positively in the school environment, such as:

- concentrating on the task at hand
- persevering when faced with difficulties
- responding positively to new situations
- taking some responsibility for their behaviours that impinge on others in the group
- 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

The Nominated Supervisor, Director, Educational Leader and Early Childhood Teacher will:

- establish systems across WECC to ensure there is continuity of learning when children transition to school
- discuss expectations with families for their child as they prepare to transition to school
- work in partnership with families to ensure children' transition to school is positive, informed and enhances individual development
- be flexible and ensure the transition program is tailored to the specific needs of all children in the Service

Educators will:

- encourage children to start thinking and talking about school by exploring various elements of the school experience (e.g. uniforms, eating packed lunches, talking to older children about school and how a school environment is different)
- talk with children about starting school, respecting any concerns and communicating these to families
- communicate with families to ensure WECC is meeting the individual strengths and needs of the children and their families
- ensure children are active participants in their transition to school
- 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 environment to the school environment. The program requires both parent and educator to give support to the child. This collaboration will ensure the best possible climate for this transition
- consider the individual rest or sleep needs of children in the months leading up to the transition 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 a rest or sleep
- focus on school readiness in all areas of development throughout the day. Children will be encouraged to extend their knowledge via their interests and educators will assist children to challenge their skills regularly
- regularly discuss children's development and readiness for school with families
- facilitate each child's development as a capable learner through open-ended learning experiences
- be flexible and responsive to the needs of children and families
- be supported to access professional development opportunities to ensure current knowledge and practice regarding transition to school is employed within WECC
- through discussions with families, promote the importance of school preparation through school visits, orientation days and meeting the Kindergarten teachers
- 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 30 April in the year they start kindergarten. All children in the ACT must have started school by their sixth birthday

#### AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY (ACT)

- Children must have turned 5 by 30<sup>th</sup> April to begin the school year. It is compulsory for children to start school from six years of age.

#### ACT Government

- [https://www.education.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/1028543/20172701-Starting-School-Guide-For-Parents-2017-Web.pdf](https://www.education.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1028543/20172701-Starting-School-Guide-For-Parents-2017-Web.pdf)
- [http://www.education.act.gov.au/school\\_education/enrolling\\_in\\_an\\_act\\_public\\_school/about\\_our\\_schools](http://www.education.act.gov.au/school_education/enrolling_in_an_act_public_school/about_our_schools)

### *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 educators opinions 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 checklists for 'readiness' for school; rather, each child's transition should be unique, secure and respectful and in be in collaboration with families, educators, community and other professionals (Dockett & Perry, 2013).

We believe that early childhood educators 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 with the child over time. However, prior to speaking with families about their personal views, educators will discuss their thoughts with the Room Leader and the Nominated Supervisor or Director about the child's individual strengths and needs and any recommendation about beginning school will be communicated with families during a scheduled meeting. Our staff will adhere to confidentiality at all times.

## Evaluation

Educators recognise the importance of a positive transition to school in a child's life. Educators support children and families to make the transition process positive and informative by liaising with local schools and the wider community.

## Related policies/documents

- *Family participation and communication*
- *Interactions with children, families and staff*

## Statutory legislation and considerations

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

## Sources and references

- Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Guide to the National Quality Standard (3) ACECQA
- ECA Code of Ethics
- NSW Department of Community Services – School Readiness  
– [http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/docswe/assets/main/documents/school\\_readiness.pdf](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/docswe/assets/main/documents/school_readiness.pdf)
- ACT Public Schools – <http://www.det.act.gov.au/canberra-public-schools>
- Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth – School Readiness – various school readiness papers  
– [www.aracy.org.au](http://www.aracy.org.au)
- <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/parent-resources/transition-school>
- [http://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccch/CPR\\_Vol14No3\\_PS\\_SchIRead.pdf](http://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccch/CPR_Vol14No3_PS_SchIRead.pdf)

## Authorisation

*John Rothwell*  
President  
2017-18 WECC Management Committee