



Supporting children with additional needs transition in and out of primary school

<https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/health-and-community/enewsletter/supporting-children-additional-needs-transition-and-out-primary>

When a child has [additional needs](#) and has a condition or disability that requires extra [support](#), school transition becomes much more complex and requires detailed preparation. As what constitutes additional needs can vary greatly, for example, children may have a physical disability, developmental disability (e.g. autism), medical condition (e.g. diabetes), mental health issue (e.g. anxiety), etc., specific preparation and intervention strategies can differ greatly depending on the individual context. However, there are many common areas and processes that can help support different children with additional needs and their families to manage school transition.

Information sharing in transition planning

Supporting children with additional needs transition in an out of primary school involves creating a [transition plan](#), which details the specific strengths and needs of the child and ideally begins at the beginning of the year before transition. Health and community professionals can play an important role in working with families, early childhood services and schools in sharing important information (e.g. assessments, support strategies, strengths, needs or any other relevant information) that can inform the transition plan and process.

A [transition statement](#) provides the written tool for collecting and sharing information about a student between professionals and families that includes the student's profile of abilities and strengths, additional needs that require support, a summary of previous assessments, reports and other relevant documentation, and the student's current learning profile. Some families will need support with the information gathering process in creating the transition statement and plan.

It is also important to note that different education sectors (State, Catholic and Independent) can have different enrolment and transition procedures, as well as different submission dates for funding applications or enrolments.

How health and community professionals can support families of children with additional needs

- Assisting parents and carers to plan for transition well in advance (e.g. 12 months prior to transition) and establish links with their child's school early
- Helping families understand the impact of transition on the student, parents/carers, siblings, peers and teachers
- Providing the student and parents/carers with sufficient information to make an informed choice about future education settings (including specialist settings)
- Playing a key role in communication and engagement with the early childhood service, primary school and/or secondary school and in the transition planning process and funding applications
- Acknowledging, utilising and communicating the child's strengths, motivation, positive self-esteem

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and sense of belonging in the new environment

- Communicating with schools and families regarding specific resources that might be needed (e.g. transport, building access, equipment medical or personal care support, etc.) or suitable support interventions (e.g. [Social Stories](#))
- Providing education staff professional development on supporting students with additional needs (e.g. autism, ADHD, anxiety, physical disabilities, etc.)
- Helping families and children prepare and get familiar with the school and their processes (e.g. assisting setting up structured school visits)
- Supporting families with developing and practising new routines and adjustment (e.g. supporting families dealing with anxiety around their child gaining more independence)
- Promoting [self-care strategies](#) for families and education staff.

Another support for children and families in the transition process and beyond is the [Student Support Group](#) or [Program Support Group](#). The group consists of parents, carers or advocates, relevant school representatives, early childhood educator (if appropriate), health and community professionals and the child (where appropriate). The group is required to meet regularly and ensures there is a coordinated effort to support the child's adjustment and to plan, implement, monitor, review, evaluate and adjust your child's individual learning plan and the support strategies.

Resources

[Getting ready for school: A guide for parents of a child with disability](#)

[Transitioning from primary to secondary school: Students with additional needs](#)

[Transitions for children with a disability or developmental delay](#)

[Tips for families supporting children with additional needs school transition](#)

[Enrolling and starting primary school: Children with a disability](#)

[Starting primary school: Children with ASD](#)

[Starting secondary school: Children with ASD](#)

[Transition to secondary school: Students with ASD](#)

[Victorian Deaf Institute: Transition to primary school](#)

