

ASD and starting primary school

Starting primary school is an important and exciting step for children and their families, but it can also be a difficult time for some. When children transition from their early childhood education and care (or ECEC) setting to their primary school, there are a number of changes and adjustments that they are faced with, including the physical environment of buildings and classrooms; differences in teaching strategies and curricula; differences in the number, gender and role of staff; changes in their peer group; and most significant of all, changes in their relationships with the adults responsible for their care and education.

Some of these changes are expected and welcomed by children. However, for successful transitions to occur, it's important that the transition process builds on the child and family's current experiences to help them to feel secure, confident and connected to people, places, events, routines and understandings.

Successful transition to primary school for a child with ASD requires careful planning, preparation and communication. Therefore, it's important for parents and educators to meet, talk, listen and gain an understanding of each other's knowledge, skills and perspective. An essential part of this process is for these key people in the child's life to build relationships, collaborate and develop a structured plan for the child's transition to primary school. By sharing knowledge and experience from different perspectives and working in partnership, it is more likely that a positive and focussed teaching and learning program will be put in place. It is also more likely that families will stay positively connected to the school.

It's important to remember that transition to school is a process, not a specific point in time. This process starts well before and extends well beyond the first day of school, and goes beyond traditional orientation programs that simply familiarise students and families with the school setting.

A face-to-face transition meeting is an important step in a planned approach to transition that provides a foundation for strong relationships between families, children and educators. During this face-to-face meeting, the members of the transition team will develop a shared understanding of the student by preparing a transition support plan. This information includes a summary of previous assessments and reports, which may include emotional, behavioural and learning profiles, information on the way in which the child's ASD symptoms currently present, and, if appropriate, comments from the child.

Privacy and the 'Autism Spectrum Disorder Transition to Primary School Transition Statement'

Parent/ School Consent Form

Consent:

The 'Autism Spectrum Disorder: Primary Transition Statement' (the Transition Statement) is a tool to ensure parents and professionals have a shared understanding of a student's symptoms of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), providing valuable information to support the continuity of a child's learning. Together with professionals from your child's ECEC or kindergarten and the new primary school, you will develop the Transition Statement. Your child also has an opportunity to provide input and shape their transition journey.

The Transition Statement gathers relevant information to build a shared understanding of your child's educational strengths and needs. The Transition Statement profiles your child's abilities, summarises their previous assessments and reports, and provides information on your child's current learning profile. The Transition Statement will include information on some or all of the following:

- Diagnosis
- Current ASD symptoms
- Cognitive profile- thinking and learning
- Health/ associated features
- A description of the child's current emotional and behavioural profile

Knowing this information about your child will enable your chosen primary school to:

- provide tailored support for your child
- effectively plan and prepare a successful transition to school
- be informed of your family's perspectives and concerns

Once collected your child's Transition Statement will be kept private, secure and safe from unauthorised access. It is the responsibility of the Primary School to ensure that the statement is stored securely and safely.

Access to view your child's Transition Statement will be granted only to professionals whose need to view the information is in line with the purpose of the statement- that is, to support your child's transition, learning and development. Professionals may include, but is not limited to:

- Key Learning Area (subject) teacher/s
- Homeroom Teacher/s
- Leadership staff
- Staff with wellbeing responsibilities
- Student Support Services Staff (including, but not limited to: psychologists, speech pathologists etc)

If you choose not to provide some or all of the information requested, or allow limited and appropriate information from the Transition Statement to be shared with relevant school staff and other education professionals working to support your child, it may affect the quality of support the school can offer. Should you have any concerns about the information being collected or shared you can contact your school directly to discuss. In exceptional circumstances it may be deemed beneficial that your child's primary school share the transition statement with external professionals (in addition to those listed above) to further support your child's learning, growth and development. If this is the case the primary school must seek your written consent and may not pass on any part of the statement without explicit consent.

At any time you are able to request access to the personal information that the school holds about you, your family or your child and/ or to request that it be corrected or removed. Should you wish to access, remove or modify any information please contact the school directly in the first instance.

Consent:

Do you consent to your child's Transition Statement being shared with professionals supporting your child during their time at _____ (school name) school? YES/ NO

Signature _____ of _____ Parent/ _____ Guardian:-

Print Name: _____ Date: ____/____/____

School Acknowledgement:

I acknowledge the responsibilities of the school in the use, storage and maintenance of this information appropriately.

Principal: _____

Print Name: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Autism Spectrum Disorder: Primary School Transition Statement

Date:

Student's personal details

Name: _____ DOB: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Family details:

Parents' names _____

Siblings: _____

Current Preschool contacts:

Name _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Other professionals involved:

Name _____

Organization _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name _____

Organization _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Transition Co-ordinator

Name _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Diagnostic and assessment information:

Diagnosis: _____

Diagnosed
by: _____ Date: _____

Cognitive assessment:

Date of assessment: _____
Results: _____

Communication assessment:

Date of assessment: _____
Results: _____

Adaptive skill development:

Date of assessment: _____
Results: _____

Other:

Date of assessment: _____
Results: _____

Current ASD symptoms

Social

communication:

Social

interaction:

Behaviour, interests and activities:

Health and associated features

Health:

Diet/ eating:

Sleep:

Fine and Gross Motor:

Sensory Disturbance:

Cognitive profile, thinking and learning

What are the child's strengths and weaknesses?

What are the child's particular areas of interest or talent that motivates him/her?

Is the child easily distracted?

How does the child cope with change?

Does the child persist with difficult tasks?

Can the child generalize skills and learning? (people, settings and equipment)

Transition plan checklist

| | Yes | No | Action |
|--|-----|----|--------|
| Transition coordinator identified | | | |
| Diagnostic and assessment reports | | | |
| Health and medical reports | | | |
| Professional Development for Teachers | | | |
| School familiarization and orientation | | | |
| Student snapshot developed | | | |
| ASD transition statement | | | |
| Specialist consultation | | | |
| Primary school consultation | | | |
| Methods of parent-school communication | | | |
| Plans to support student | | | |
| Plans to support family | | | |
| Plans to support teaching team | | | |
| Develop Individual Learning Plan | | | |
| Future Student Support Groups | | | |

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