

Inner West Council
Education & Care Services

Transition to School Program

A play-based curriculum
for 3-5 year olds



INNER WEST

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The Early Years Learning Framework draws on conclusive international evidence that early childhood is a vital period in children's learning and development.

It has a specific emphasis on play-based learning and recognises the importance of communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy) and social and emotional development.

This document has been put together to communicate how Inner West Council's Education and Care Services use a play-based curriculum to support children's transition to school.

This document highlights:

- The importance of play in children's learning
- How educators use play to enhance children's outcomes
- The role of educators in supporting the transition to school
- What families can do to support children



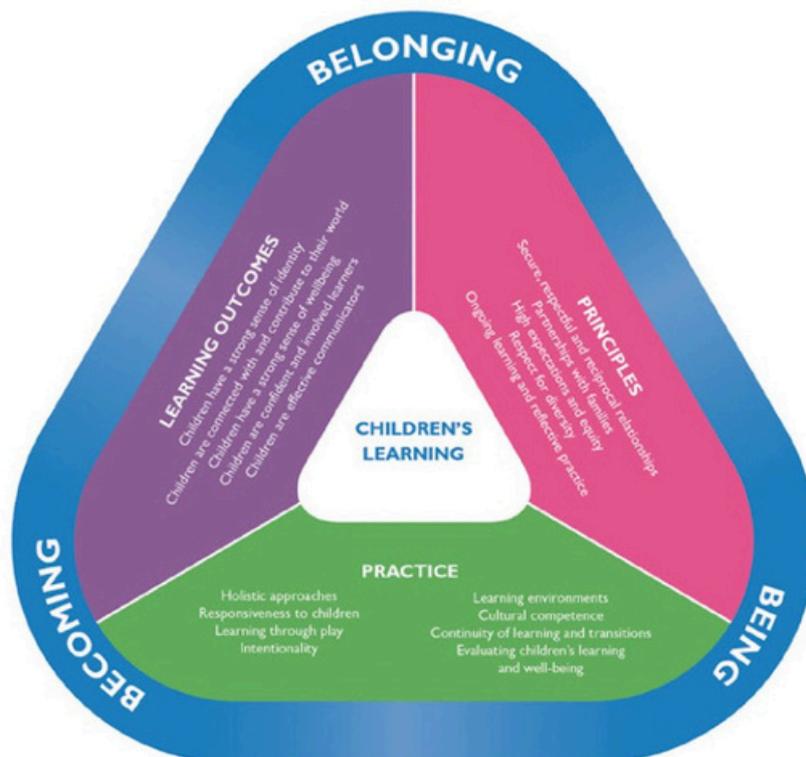
The Early Years Learning Framework

VISION: For all children to experience play-based learning that is engaging and builds success for life.

(Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations [DEEWR], 2009)

The Australian Early Years Learning Framework is designed to extend and enrich children’s learning from birth to five and through the transition to school.

Educators develop relationships with children and engage them in a curriculum that is rich and relevant to children’s skills and interests, recognising the importance of transitions and embedding continuity of learning as a key principle.



Play-based learning:

A context for learning through which children organise and make sense of their social worlds, as they engage actively with people, objects, and representations.

Educators draw on a rich repertoire of pedagogical practices to promote children's learning, such as:

- Adopting holistic approaches
- Being responsive to children
- Planning and implementing learning through play
- Intentional teaching
- Creating physical and social learning environments that have a positive impact on children's learning
- Valuing the cultural and social contexts of children and their families
- Providing for continuity in experiences and enabling children to have successful transition
- Assessing and monitoring children's learning to inform provision and to support children in achieving learning outcomes

School success is enhanced through play

Research has demonstrated that young children learn differently from older children and adults. It is essential that early childhood programs do not simply attempt to teach children the same material with the same methods that are now used in K-12.

Studies show that highly structured, scripted, primarily teacher-directed instruction is not as effective in promoting young children's academic success. Child initiated activities are key components of high-quality programs.



Every competency important to school success is enhanced through play

Tepperman, J. (2007). Play in the Early Years: Key to School Success

Benefits of a play-based curriculum



Within play, children are engaged in things they're interested in so they have a natural motivation to learn and engage in the experience.

Within play, children develop concepts, language, and skills together as they are integrated in the context of meaningful and playful experiences.

Within play, children are more likely to retain skills and concepts they have learned in meaningful contexts.

Tepperman, J. (2007). *Play in the Early Years: Key to School Success*

How our centres support the transition to school

Transition to school begins at birth and is integrated into our curriculum in many ways.

Each centre delivers a unique program relevant to their children and the context and philosophy of their service, including centres implementing a multi-age approach.

All centres:

- Plan experiences to support children's development, specific to their needs and interests
- Support a literacy-rich environment
- Incorporate fine motor experiences and games
- Create and review goals for children each year
- Write a mid-year summary of children's progress
- Complete a Transition to School Statement

Your centre may also implement:

- Excursions to a nearby school
- Lunch box days
- School uniform dress ups and dramatic play
- Books and discussions about school

Transition to School Statement

The Transition to School Statement is completed by your child’s early childhood educator and sent to their new school or family. It:

- Passes information between families, early childhood educators and teachers to assist schools in better understanding a child and how best to support their transition to school.
- Provides a snapshot of a child’s personality, strengths, perspectives, and preferred ways of learning.
- Gives children a voice in the process of meeting new people in the school environment.
- Helps link the Early Years Learning Framework to the Early Stage 1 syllabus.

TRANSITION TO SCHOOL STATEMENT

My name: _____

The statement will give a bit about the and how I learn, so that you have a strong start to school.

The name of the early childhood service: _____

The address of the service: _____

Is this child Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?
 Yes No Both

Is this child supported by another service or specialist program relating to their learning or development? If yes, please attach it to this form.
 Yes No

Does this child have an IED (part)? If yes, please attach it to this form.
 Yes No

The Transition to School Statement gives a snapshot of this child's strengths, perspectives, and personality.

It links to the Early Years Learning Framework to the Early Stage 1 syllabus in kindergarten so that teachers can better understand each child's learning, development, and background.

To help shape your responses, or to request the information provided by E.C.S services, go to our '05 Guide.

How do you know when a child is ready for school?

Children can commence school at the beginning of the school year if they turn 5 on, or before, 31 July. Children MUST commence school by their 6th birthday.

- Is the child interested in school, wanting to go to school, or have friends that go to school?
- Do they have a good disposition for learning, do they explore and ask questions, can they sit for periods of time?
- Can they interact socially, converse with adults, and follow directions?
- Do they have fine motor skills to dress/undress, open food packaging, use a pencil, attend to toileting?
- Can the child cope with transitions and minimal supervision, understand rules, and take turns?

When a child starts school is an individual decision. Parents and carers may wish to discuss this with the preschool teacher, doctor or local primary school. Teachers are trained to work with children regardless of their age or level of development.

Centre for Community Child Health, 2005, School Readiness fact sheet.
NSW Department of Education, 2021, Starting School.

Learning Outcomes

From the Early Years Learning Framework

Working in partnership with families, educators use the Learning Outcomes to guide their planning for children's learning. As children build on these areas, they are simultaneously building on skills for school and life.

The Early Years Learning Framework outlines five Learning Outcomes:

1. Children have a strong sense of identity
2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
4. Children are confident and involved learners
5. Children are effective communicators

The following "Play links to Kindergarten Syllabus" outlines the key learning that is taking place as children explore and engage with the world around them.

How play links to skills and the syllabus

Drawing and painting

- Fine motor strength and dexterity
- Concentration and focus
- Self-expression, creativity, and imagination
- Expressive and receptive language
- Sorting and problem sorting
- Knowledge of materials, colour, process
- Experimentation and exploration



Kindergarten syllabus links:
English, Science & Tech, Creative Arts, HSIE

Puzzles and games



- Attention to detail
- Perseverance and patience
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Shape discrimination, comparison, and contrast
- Planning and lateral thinking
- Hand-eye coordination
- Problem solving/trial and error

Kindergarten syllabus links:
English, Mathematics

Blocks and construction

- Length, measurement, comparison, estimation
- Shape discrimination, symmetry, and patterns
- Fine and gross motor skills
- Spatial awareness, balance, and gravity
- Problem solving, trial and error
- Imagination and creativity
- Social skills sharing space, resources and ideas



Kindergarten syllabus links:

English, Mathematics, Science & Technology, HSIE

Books and stories



- Attention to detail
- Perseverance and patience
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Shape discrimination, comparison, and contrast
- Planning and lateral thinking
- Hand-eye coordination
- Problem solving/trial and error

Kindergarten syllabus links:

English, Mathematics

Playdough and sandpit

- Fine and gross motor skills
- Sensory understanding
- An understanding of processes
- Creativity and lateral thinking
- Science and maths concepts
- Social and language skills

Kindergarten syllabus links:
English, Mathematics



Dramatic play



- Social engagement and social problem solving
- Language and literacy skills
- Belonging to a group
- Turn-taking
- Creativity and imagination
- Social expectations and responsibility
- Self-identity

Kindergarten syllabus links:
English, Creative Arts, HSIE

Outdoor play

- Physical development
- Confidence
- Balance and coordination
- Understanding risk
- Problem solving and social skills
- Environmental care and connection
- Language and creativity



Kindergarten syllabus links:

English, PDHPE, HSIE, Science & Technology

Cooking



- Science and maths concepts
- Language and literacy
- Teamwork and turn taking
- Following instructions and steps
- Healthy habits
- Responsibility, value, care

Kindergarten syllabus links:

English, Mathematics, HSIE, Science & Technology

Music and movement

- Music concepts
- Motor skills and coordination
- Integrate movement
- Aesthetic awareness
- Language and rhythm
- Belonging to a group and turn-taking
- Creativity and imagination

Kindergarten syllabus links:
English, Creative Arts, PDHPE



STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths)



- Critical thinking
- Creativity
- Problem solving
- Cooperation
- Trial and error
- Predicting and hypothesising
- Scientific language and concepts

Kindergarten syllabus links:
Science & Technology, HSIE,
Mathematics, English

Gardening

- Responsibility & patience
- Nutrition
- Sensory integration
- Custodianship
- Impact on living things
- Understanding of interdependence between land, people, plants, and animals



Kindergarten syllabus links:

HSIE, PDHPE, Science and Technology, English

Routines



- Independence
- Sequencing skills
- Hygiene
- Healthy habits
- Social responsibility
- Cultural awareness and respect
- Language

Kindergarten syllabus links:

PDHPE, English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, HSIE

Preparing for school, at home

- Start to get your child into regular sleep routines. Children need to be in bed at a reasonable time to wake up refreshed. Televisions or technology (e.g. computers or tablets) should not be in the child's room if possible.
- Establish packing away routines and encourage your child to help with simple tasks to develop responsibility.
- Label your child's belongings for school. Set a pattern that expensive toys and treasured items are not taken to school.
- Help your child learn to dress themselves in their uniform and if using laces to tie up their shoes.
- Ensure your child can go to the toilet unassisted and teach them how to ask the teacher should they need to use the toilet during class time.
- Practise walking or travelling to school. Transport for NSW has useful guides for parents. This includes information on student bus travel and resources such as Safety Town.
- Have your child help you pack their nut-free lunch. Ask your child to bring home any uneaten lunch so you can gauge the amount of food that is acceptable.

Relax: If you are stressed, your child may sense this and worry.

Other Tips

Read

Visit the library and borrow books about children going to school.

Download stories your child may like to read and read them on a computer or tablet.

Read to your child on a regular basis and model reading to them whenever possible to develop a love of reading, books and learning.

Stay Positive

Reframe your questions about school, preschool and day care from, 'What did you do today?' to more open-ended questions such as 'Tell me the best thing you did at school today' or 'What is one thing you learnt today?'

Segment the time at school and ask 'What did you do during the morning/after recess today?' This is a useful way of talking with your child about their day.

- Speak positively about the change
- Acknowledge and discuss your child's concerns
- Involve your child as much as possible
- Pay a visit to the new school beforehand
- Help your child stay in touch with old friends

Useful resource links

NSW Government

Transition to school information for parents and carers.

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/ecec-resource-library/transition-to-school/information-for-parents-and-carers>

NSW Education Standards

Schooling guide for parents and carers.

<https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/parents/parent-guide/transitioning-to-school>

Raising Children

Starting primary school: preparing children.

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/school-learning/school-choosing-starting-moving/starting-school>

Starting Blocks

Transition to school resources.

<https://www.startingblocks.gov.au/other-resources/factsheets/transition-to-school/>

Skills developed by the end of Stage 1

Mathematics

In kindergarten, children:

- Count aloud to 30 and recognise numbers 0 to 20 and manipulate objects such as counters to help add and subtract numbers.
- Use the language of money in everyday situations, e.g., coins, notes, dollars.
- Count forwards by one to add and backwards by one to subtract.
- Name the days of the week n tell the time to the hour, e.g., four o'clock.
- Identify and name simple shapes e.g., circles, squares.
- Use position terms, e.g., between, behind, right, left.
- Recognise that halves are equal parts.

English

In kindergarten, children:

- Communicate appropriately and effectively within the classroom using agreed conventions, e.g., staying on topic, asking for and offering assistance.
- Give short talks and express ideas, e.g., tell news, describe a favourite toy, describe a science investigation.
- Develop reading and comprehension skills, e.g., simple sight words, most sounds of the alphabet, use picture clues to make predictions when reading.
- Recognise rhymes, syllables, and sounds (phonemes) in spoken words.
- Spell some common words accurately in their own writing.
- Write simple sentences/stories for known audiences such as for self, class, or parents.
- Understand that punctuation is a feature of written text; recognise capital letters and full stops signal the beginning and end of sentences.
- Develop basic skills of writing, pencil grip, good posture and handwriting movements to form lower-case and upper-case letters, e.g., a, A, b, B.

Science & Technology

In kindergarten, children:

- Record observations using drawings, simple digital recording methods, oral descriptions and/or simple visual representations.
- Recognise that plants and animals can be used for food, or materials (fibres) for clothing and shelter.
- Identify and describe how the properties of different materials suit their design purpose.
- Observe the effects of push and pull forces on familiar objects, for example changes in motion and changes in shape.
- Identify daily and seasonal changes that occur in our environment, such as day and night, and changes in the weather.
- Explore familiar digital devices, for example a computer, a device to take a digital image.
- Follow and design a sequence of steps (algorithms), for example following a procedure.

Human Society & Its Environment (HSIE)

In kindergarten, children:

- Tell stories of family, school and local events that are celebrated or observed at home.
- Talk about how families are similar or different, using stories and/or photographs and discuss holidays and special events in Australia and other countries.
- Listen to stories from other cultural backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
- Talk about the importance of the places they live in and belong to.
- Show care for their home, classroom, school and environment.

Creative Arts

In kindergarten, children:

- Make their own artworks about real and imagined experiences using materials such as paints, watercolours, sponges, crayons, brushes and sticks.
- Make simple 3D constructions with boxes and use playdough or clay to make models.
- Perform dance and drama with movement and expression.
- Sing, play and move to music, and experiment with sound.
- Copy the beat of music using clapping, tapping or percussion instruments.

Personal Health & Physical Education

In kindergarten, children:

- Identify personal strengths and qualities and how people grow and change.
- Practise interpersonal skills to interact positively with others.
- Demonstrate a variety of movement skills and movement sequences.
- Participate in play that promotes engagement with outdoor settings and the natural environment and describe how individuals help one another to stay healthy and safe.
- Practise interpersonal skills when participating in activities, for example assertiveness, persistence.

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This document was created by Inner West Council to be used by its Education and Care Services. It communicates the benefits of a play-based curriculum in supporting the transition to school.

Developed by Ellen Fitzgerald and adapted from Perdikaris, S. (2019) transition to school pedagogical guide, "Hands-on Preparation", Marrickville Council.

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