

Early childhood transitioning to school – policy

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Read this document with the Enrolment and orientation of new children and their families in preschool guidelines.¹

1. Policy

All Northern Territory (NT) government schools will ensure they have effective early childhood transitioning processes in place to support children's movements prior to and from preschool.

Schools will develop, plan, document, implement and annually review their early childhood transitioning processes. The Early childhood transitioning to school package² and accompanying resources has been developed to support schools with this.

2. Purpose

The Department of Education (department) is committed to ensuring schools provide clear transitioning for children and their families prior to and from preschool. The department aims to:

- bridge the gap between families and schools and enhance family involvement and engagement in the curriculum and their children's learning
- ensure continuity of learning and support as children move from early childhood settings into preschool, Transition and the subsequent early years of schooling
- maintain established relationships with families and strengthen these during the preschool year and beyond.

Effective transitioning processes go beyond the steps taken to orientate children and their families at the start or end of a school year. The process of transitioning takes place over a prolonged period of time. It begins in the years prior to children commencing in preschool or transition, and continues after they have started compulsory schooling. It not only entails a geographical move, but also the transfer of information.

Successful transitioning processes assist children to become confident learners and families to actively engage with the preschool and school.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all NT Government schools that have responsibility for delivering an early childhood program or services.

It provides an overarching framework within which individual schools can develop and annually review their early childhood transitioning processes to successfully support children and families through this important period.

Schools that have existing transitioning plans and processes should review these to ensure they are consistent with the information provided in this policy and accompanying resources in the Early childhood transitioning to school package.

¹ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/early-childhood-education-and-care/preschool-specific-policy>

² <https://education.nt.gov.au/support-for-teachers/transitioning-package>

4. Roles and responsibilities

1.1. Early Years and Primary

Early Years and Primary is responsible for:

- reviewing the department's Early childhood transitioning to school policy in conjunction with the Early childhood transitioning to school package³ and accompanying resources to ensure it is reflective of current research, effective and consistent with any updates or amendments to related policies or legislation
- promoting and communicating the importance of early childhood transitioning across the early childhood sector including transition, preschool and prior-to-school settings.

1.2. Senior Directors Education

Senior Directors Education are responsible for:

- ensuring schools provide clear transitioning for children and their families prior to and from preschool
- ensuring principals adhere to the requirements of this policy and guidance provided in the Early childhood transitioning to school information package.

1.3. Principals

Principals are responsible for:

- ensuring that in consultation with the school community, the school develops, plans, documents, implements and annually reviews place-based early childhood transitioning processes to support children and their families prior to and from preschool
- facilitating regular collaboration of all early childhood teachers and educators, including FaFT, for the purpose of planning and implementing effective early childhood transitioning processes
- ensuring early childhood transitioning statements⁴ completed for each child in preschool and FaFT programs by the end of the school year.

1.4. Teachers and educators

Teachers and educators, including FaFT, are responsible for:

- contributing to the development of and implementing the school's place-based early childhood transitioning plan and processes
- encouraging family, community and external service providers engagement in the development and implementation of the school's early childhood transitioning plan and processes
- the completion of an early childhood transitioning statement for each child in their preschool or FaFT program by the completion of the school year to transfer knowledge about each child.

³ <https://education.nt.gov.au/support-for-teachers/transitioning-package>

⁴ <https://education.nt.gov.au/support-for-teachers/transitioning-package>

5. Definitions

Term	Definition
Families as First Teachers (FaFT)	Evidence-based, quality early learning and family support program for children from birth to three years of age. FaFT aims to improve the lifelong education, health and wellbeing outcomes for young children and their families.
Parent	A child's father, mother or any other person who has parental responsibility for that child, including a person who is regarded as a parent of the child under Aboriginal and Torres Strait customary law or tradition. The definition of a parent does not include a person standing in place of the parent on a temporary basis.
Preschool	A centre-based early childhood service that provides a quality preschool program to children in the year before they commence full time schooling and in very remote locations may include 3-year-old children, providing they are accompanied by their parent until they reach the age of 3 and half years.
Prior-to-school setting	A place or program a child may attend prior to entering preschool such as home, FaFT, long day care or family day care. Some children may attend a combination of these settings.
School community	Includes principals, school staff, students, school councils, parents and community members with an interest in the efficient and successful operation of a school.
Transition	The first year of formal schooling, a planned, play-based learning and development program delivered by a school that assists in the development of children transitioning into Year 1.
Transitioning	The process and period of change for children and their families from one year level to the next. Particularly focusing on the periods prior to and post preschool.

6. Related legislation, policy, procedures and support resources

6.1 Legislation

- *Education and Care Services (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011*⁵, which adopts the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2011* in the NT.
- The *Schedule to the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic)*⁶ sets out the National Law.
 - Section 176 Compliance directions

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011⁷

- Regulation 168 Education and care services must have policies and procedures
- Regulation 170 Policies and procedures must be followed
- Regulation 171 Policies and procedures must be kept available

⁵ <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/EDUCATION-AND-CARE-SERVICES-NATIONAL-UNIFORM-LEGISLATION-ACT-2011>

⁶ <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/education-and-care-services-national-law-act-2010/013>

⁷ <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0653>

- Regulation 172 Notification of change to policies and procedures.

6.2 Department of Education policies and procedures

- Enrolment policy and associated guidelines⁸
- Student enrolment form and Supplementary preschool enrolment form⁹
- Students at Risk of Anaphylaxis guidelines¹⁰
- Administration of medications to students with notified medical conditions policy and procedures¹¹
- Pre-compulsory years of schooling: early years learning framework policy¹²
- Preschool specific policy - specifically the Enrolment and orientation of new children and their families in preschool guidelines.¹³

6.3 Early childhood transitioning to school support resources

- Early childhood transitioning to school – information overview¹⁴

Audience: Principals and school leadership

Purpose: To provide detailed information about early childhood transitioning in the NT

Other uses: Beneficial in the collaborative development of place-based early childhood transitioning plans with all stakeholders in working groups

- Early childhood transitioning to school - summary

Audience: Principals and school leadership

Purpose: To develop place-based early childhood transitioning plans

Other uses: Beneficial to identify areas of strength and proposed areas for growth by reflecting on transitioning from the views of the four key stakeholders

- Ready schools – information for schools

Ready families – information for families

Ready communities and Services – partnerships with communities

Ready children – preparing children for school

Audience: Principals and school leadership

Purpose: To gain deeper information and ideas for engagement with each of the four key stakeholder groups in early childhood transitioning.

⁸ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/student-enrolment/enrolment>

⁹ <https://nt.gov.au/learning/primary-and-secondary-students/enrol-your-child-at-school>

¹⁰ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/health-safety/anaphylaxis>

¹¹ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/health-safety/medications>

¹² <https://education.nt.gov.au/support-for-teachers/early-years-learning-framework>

¹³ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/early-childhood-education-and-care/preschool-specific-policy>

¹⁴ <https://education.nt.gov.au/support-for-teachers/transitioning-package>

Other uses: Beneficial for use in the collaborative development of place-based early childhood transitioning plans with all stakeholders in working groups.

Shows areas of alignment with other key documents such as the National Quality Standards, Early Years Learning Framework, NT Preschool Curriculum and the Australian Curriculum.

- Early childhood transitioning to school - school action plan

Audience: Principals and school leadership

Purpose: To develop place-based early childhood transitioning plans in collaboration with children, families and communities.

Other uses: Use to plan actions, timeframes and resources for place-based early childhood transitioning processes.

- Early childhood transitioning to school – child transitioning statement

Audience: Teachers and Families as First Teachers educators

Purpose: To ensure the transference of knowledge about a child from one educator to the next at the conclusion of the school year. This will provide support for each child through their transitioning process.

Other uses: Beneficial to assist in meeting the National Quality Standard documentation requirements for parents.

- Early childhood transitioning to school – child information form

Audience: Parents

Purpose: Allows a family the opportunity to provide knowledge about a child from their perspective to teachers and educators before commencement in the program.

Other uses: Beneficial for providing support to each child and family through their transitioning processes.

Acronyms	Full form
FaFT	Families as First Teachers
NT	Northern Territory

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Version	Date	Author	Changes made
1	April 2017	Early Childhood Programs	Creation of new policy for implementation.
2	January 2019	Early Childhood Policy and Programs	Titles of positions responsible changed to reflect 2018 realignment
3	July 2019	Early Childhood Policy and Programs	Review date updated to align with review of impact of policy and package required under Starting Early for a Better Future Strategic Plan
4	April 2022	Early Childhood Policy and Programs	Updated to new format and to align with position titles and responsibility changes in 2022 realignment
5	October 2022	Early Years and Primary	Administrative amendments to align roles and responsibilities to the structural alignment in effect from 1 July 2022, including NT Government template and minor formatting