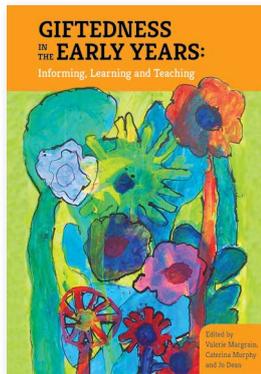


Transition Support for gifted children: from early childhood education to School

Early years education with gifted children - Quality practices series



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This brochure connects to chapter 9 of Margrain, V., Murphy, C., & Dean, J. (2015). *Giftedness in the early years: Informing, learning & teaching*. Wellington, New Zealand: NZCER Press.



Curriculum Connections

“Young children experience transitions from home to service, from service to service, and from service to school. They need as much consistency and continuity of experience as possible in order to develop confidence and trust to explore and to establish a secure foundation of remembered and anticipated people, places, things and experiences” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p.46).

“The early childhood curriculum provides a foundation for children to become confident and competent and, during the school years, to be able to build on their previous learning” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p.93).

“The transition from early childhood education to school is supported when the school:

- fosters a child’s relationship with teachers and other children and affirms their identity;
- builds on the learning experiences that the child brings with them;
- considers the child’s whole experience of school;
- is welcoming of family and whānau.

This new stage in children’s learning builds upon and makes connections with early childhood learning and experiences” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p.41).

References

Ministry of Education. (1996). *Te whāriki. He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa. Early childhood curriculum*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media Ltd.

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A Positive Case Study of Transition

(adapted from Margrain, 2005)

Andrew had demonstrated his skills as an early reader soon after starting kindergarten at the age of 3 years, 7 months when he picked up a disc in the office, read the label and asked the administrator “What are you going to do with this March back-up disc?” This was when Andrew’s key teacher first realised he could read and had an interest in computers. She talked with the family and found out more about his skills, strengths and interests and used these to support Andrew’s learning while at the kindergarten.

A few months before Andrew was due to start school, with his parent’s permission, the teacher contacted the new entrant teacher at the school he was going to attend and organised a time to talk about Andrew and his transition to school. This meant that valuable information was able to be shared between the teachers. The new entrant teacher also chose to visit Andrew at the kindergarten, seeing him in an environment in which he was comfortable and to start building a relationship with him. The school teacher maintained contact with the kindergarten teacher and Andrew’s family over the following months, ringing when she was unsure or required further information. Andrew’s teacher was better able to respond to his individual strengths, skills, interests and needs because she knew about him and had a relationship with him, his family and previous teachers through the development of a collaborative, working relationship.

The importance of transition

Transition is a process of moving from one setting to another, often including a change of status and culture (Fabian, 2007). Transition from early childhood education settings to compulsory schooling is a time of significant change which can be both positive and challenging for all children. Just as no two children who are gifted are the same, transition to school experiences will not be the same for any two children.

Research-informed Strategies to Support Transition to School (Peters, 2010)

Key recommendations:

- Work with the child
- Work with the family
- Share information.

Key strategies include:

- connecting with funds of knowledge that children bring to school;
- culturally responsive teaching;
- diverse assessment practices;
- making links between children's learning in ECE and school;
- fostering positive children's relationships and friendships;
- considering children's whole experience of school;
- providing rich, open-ended opportunities for play and learning;
- understanding the impact of rules and the way these can support belonging but can also constrain children's behaviour and create anxiety;
- providing information and familiarisation activities for children and families;
- learning about children and their families; and
- developing home-school partnerships.

These strategies can be supported with:

- release time
- small class sizes
- a flexible curriculum
- training and professional development.

Outcomes of Unsupportive Transition Experiences (Margrain, 2003)

In a study of transition experiences of early readers, major difficulties with school were reported by 24 out of 41 families who had a child able to read before they started school. Some of these families described the transition experience as 'traumatic.' Parents reported over and over that their children were frustrated and bored, and also that their children were:

- "frequently depressed and unhappy"
- "bored, unhappy, miserable."
- "negative and baffled ('why are they always telling me things I already know?')"
- "kept back by other children"

References:

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- Margrain, V. (2003). *Already reading in early childhood: Issues of identification, accommodation and collaboration*. Occasional Paper Number 15. Wellington, New Zealand: Institute for Early Childhood Studies, Victoria University of Wellington.
- Margrain, V. G. (2005). *Precocious readers: Case studies of social support, spontaneous learning and self-regulation in the early years*. Unpublished PhD thesis: Victoria University of Wellington.
- Peters, S. (2010). *Literature review: Transition from early childhood education to school*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education. Retrieval from http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/78825/Literature-Review-Transition-from-ECE-to-School.pdf

Iti noa ana, he pito mata.

"With care, a small kumara will produce a harvest."

Acknowledgements:



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