

newsletter

 Responsive environments
Edition 2017

Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of the Supporting successful transitions newsletter for 2017. This edition focuses on responsive environments — one of the five action areas described in the *Supporting successful transitions: School decision-making tool*.



Transitioning to school is a time when there is both continuity and change for children and families. Responsive environments in early childhood and school settings are important to support continuity of learning for children during this major transition.

The school environment is often the first insight children have of what Prep will be like. As children process this new learning environment they begin to develop concepts about how they feel in the space, what they can see and what they can do. They begin to make connections between the similarities and differences to their prior learning environments (for example, home and kindy).

In this edition of the newsletter, both Darling Downs South West region and Metropolitan region have shared stories about how teachers and educators in early years settings are collaborating with children and families, ensuring their environments are responsive to children.

You will also find a resource developed through the *Age-appropriate pedagogies program* for reflection on the form, function and aesthetics of early years learning spaces and the possibilities that exist for enacting age appropriate pedagogies.

These resources complement other statewide materials and school-specific transition documents provided in your schools' transition folder. With this newsletter, all five of the action areas in the *School decision-making tool* have been explored in depth. I trust that you will continue to draw on these resources to reflect on and enhance your transition programs and strategies.

Dr Mary Lincoln
Director
Early Learning Pathways



Successful transitions



The Advancing Education: An action plan for education in Queensland, acknowledges that the learning disposition of children needs to include problem solving, critical and creative thinking and

innovation for the roles that they will take on in the future.

Digital technologies and increasing globalisation has resulted in children entering school with very different early experiences to previous generations. These twenty-first century learners need classrooms that build knowledge, skills, general capabilities and learning dispositions for a new and exciting future.

Every environment offers learning opportunities for children in the early years. This goes beyond the classroom to include home, kindy, playgrounds, sporting grounds, libraries and more. With this in mind, the *Supporting successful transitions: School decision-making tool* outlines a vision for Queensland's early years environments, where children are actively engaged in flexible, inclusive and responsive environments that support transition to school and continuity of learning and development.

As principals, you play a vital role in shaping your school environment — what your school looks, sounds and feels like. Working in partnership with children, families and local early childhood services ensures that your school's environment is responsive to the school's unique context. Providing responsive environments in Queensland schools supports the

development of children's positive learning dispositions in the early years, including:

- Children who are enthusiastic about their learning, initiating and engaging in their own learning.
- Children who are curious, asking questions, exploring and problem solving.
- Children who are focussed on a goal, showing commitment and persistence to reach that goal.

Principals also play an important role in leading transition to school strategies. The *Supporting successful transitions: School decision-making tool* is a statewide framework for schools to reflect and implement transition to school strategies.

The Early Learning Pathways team, under the leadership of Dr Mary Lincoln, has produced regular newsletters about each of the action areas in the *School decision-making tool*. These newsletters have provided depth to the key areas in children's transitions, and this edition on *Responsive Environments* completes all five action areas.

I strongly urge you to continue to prioritise your work in supporting successful transitions to school for all children. Contact your regional ECEC Director, your Transition Officer or your Partnership and Innovation Officer who are available to support you. I also encourage you to access the full range of resources on the [Successful transitions web pages](#) which include video vignettes of effective approaches to transitions.

Dr Jim Watterston
Director-General
Department of Education and Training



Supporting successful transitions: *School decision-making tool*

The **principles** and **action areas** identified in the *Supporting successful transitions: School decision-making tool* complement the areas for action identified in the *Advancing education: An action plan for education in Queensland*. The tool also details the intended **outcomes** to be achieved for students and families as a result of engagement with the principles and action areas.

Action area: Responsive environments

The *Supporting successful transitions: School decision-making tool* is a framework for both action and reflection. Each action area described in this document has a number of reflective questions and descriptors (pages 6 and 7). These further explain the intent and scope of the action area, supporting school decision-making.

Below are the reflective questions and descriptors found on page 6 of the *Supporting successful transitions: School decision-making tool* for the action area — responsive environments. Principals can keep these reflective questions and descriptors in mind as responsive environments are explored throughout this newsletter.



Action area	Reflective questions	Descriptors
Responsive environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In what ways do the structural and procedural decisions I make support transitions? Have I planned specific entry-to-school procedures that meet the needs of individuals and groups of children? How do I use my knowledge of children to inform the decisions I make about school and classroom environments? How do my learning spaces and resources support the learning preferences of young children? How do social, temporal and physical environments reflect evidence-based beliefs about children's learning? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using familiar resources supports children's feelings of confidence and success. Using information gathered from conversations with parents enables schools to plan to cater for identified needs and interests of individual students when creating indoor and outdoor spaces. Providing a balance of indoor and outdoor experiences supports all domains of learning. Blocks of uninterrupted time provide for deeper engagement in learning. Spaces that mirror aspects of prior-to-school settings build confidence.



Get in touch

For questions about this newsletter contact the Early Learning Pathways team: Transitions@det.qld.gov.au

More support

Regional Transition Officers and Partnerships and Innovation Officers are available to support schools with their transition planning. Find the contact details for appointed officers in your region via this page on OnePortal: <https://oneportal.deta.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/forschools/Pages/Transitiontoschoolsupportcontacts.aspx>

Access online information and a range of resources, including video vignettes, via the *Successful transitions* web pages www.qld.gov.au/transitiontoschool