

SUPPORTING
SUCCESSFUL
TRANSITIONS

newsletter

Respect for diversity
Edition 2016

Welcome

Welcome to the second edition of the Supporting successful transitions newsletter for 2016. This edition focuses on respect for diversity – one of the five action areas described in the *Supporting successful transitions: School decision-making tool*.

I am proud to live in such a diverse state, made up of unique communities, families and children. Our state's diversity is multi-faceted; with Queensland characterised by linguistic, location, cultural, social, ability, economic and learning diversity.

We have asked a number of colleagues two questions, 'What does inclusion mean to you?' and 'What does respect for diversity mean to you?' It is thought-provoking to read the extraordinary range of perspectives.

For me, inclusion means ensuring all children and families feel they are welcomed and belong, and that their unique, individual capabilities and differences are valued and supported by their teacher and school.

In developing our transition practices we are working towards schools being supportive, engaging places for the whole community. A school community which respects diversity will have respectful relationships with children and their families.

In this edition of the newsletter, North Queensland region shares stories of how teachers are taking the time to know their community, families and children so that transition to school is scaffolded by children's experiences and strengths.

Sharyn Donald, Regional Director of South East region shares her thoughts on respecting diversity when considering transition to school. You will also find some tips in the mindful reflective conversation starter and an information sheet with policy and research.

These resources complement other statewide materials and school-specific transition documents provided in your school's transitions folder. I trust these resources will support you and your team when reflecting on respecting diversity in your school.

Dr Mary Lincoln
Director, Early Learning Pathways



Successful transitions



Today's children can look forward to a fundamentally different world, with advances in technology changing both their life and employment opportunities. Each of our regions play a vital role in preparing children for the twenty first century.

In the *Advancing Education: An action plan for education in Queensland*, the department has identified the importance of children becoming global citizens. Schools are supporting children to develop relationships that are based on tolerance and fairness. They are also preparing children to be culturally competent and to be able to connect both locally and globally.

Within the *Advancing Education Action Plan*, the importance of positive transitions to school has also been recognised as a critical outcome for children in the early years.

The *Supporting successful transitions: School decision-making tool* encourages principals and schools to get to know and respond to their community and the children transitioning into Prep. This knowledge empowers schools to build transition strategies with children's prior experiences and knowledge in mind. The tool also encourages principals to reflect on how they can respond to the needs of children and families from diverse backgrounds.

Each region has its own unique attributes contributing to the diversity of our communities, schools, children and their families. In the South East region nearly 70 per cent of schools are now participating in Early Years Neighbourhood Networks alongside local early childhood services and community partners. These networks are taking on the shared responsibility of ensuring all children within their neighbourhood, are safe, healthy and engaged in quality learning experiences.

I believe that we must work together to gain insight into our local communities and the pressures that our families face. In addition to developing crucial partnerships with parents, this involves engaging with local community representatives and groups, and working cooperatively with them in collaborative decision-making on matters pertaining to their children's education.

I encourage educational leaders to ensure the young person remains firmly at the centre of all you aspire to, and all that you do. For us in the South East region this means equal access to learning, regardless of geographic, socio-economic, or linguistic background, and ensuring all our young people, regardless of circumstance can experience a trajectory of success.

Sharyn Donald
South East Regional Director,
Department of Education and Training



Queensland
Government

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: Respect for diversity

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

Below are the reflective questions and descriptors found on page 6 of the tool for the action area – respect for diversity. Principals can keep these reflective questions and descriptors in mind as respect for diversity is explored throughout this newsletter.



Action area	Reflective questions	Descriptors
Respect for diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do I know about the children and families in my community? • Do we have the skills, knowledge and understandings to respond to the cultural and contextual needs of children, families and the community? • How can the school respond to the needs of children and families from diverse backgrounds? • How do we ensure equitable access to learning for all children? • What services already exist in the community? • How can I access or develop knowledge of the community? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every student has the opportunity to learn and succeed in a supportive and inclusive environment • A whole-school approach to student learning provides a continuum of support directed to different levels of student need • Families have differing values and beliefs about schooling • The languages, cultures, histories and identity of families are valued and respected, and are the basis for decision-making • Assumptions can lead to misunderstandings

Upcoming events

The next *Better Together Forum* will be held in the Central Queensland region at Hurrup Park, Mackay on Monday 17 October 2016. The Forum will bring together schools, early childhood services and local communities who support children's early learning, development and transition to school. To learn more about this Forum and register visit: <https://www.ivvy.com/event/BTCQ>

Get in touch

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

More support

Regional Transition 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>

For more information and resources on supporting successful transitions visit: www.qld.gov.au/transitiontoschool