

SECTOR CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

Supporting a Positive Transition to Preschool

Tip Sheet for Educators



The start of a new year is often a challenging time for educators and children, as new relationships are built, and children and families discover the new experiences of preschool. Please remember that your KU SCB Preschool Inclusion Consultant is here to support you, so please don't hesitate to contact us.

Below are some strategies that preschools can put in place to support successful transitions for children from home to preschool:

- ▶ **Invite families to have multiple orientation visits to preschool**

This is an opportunity for children (and their family) to feel more familiar with the preschool environment and start to build relationships with educators. It is also an opportunity for educators to get to know children and consider if there may be information or adaptations that can be made to the preschool environment or program to make the transition to preschool as positive as possible. Additional transition planning may be needed for children who may need additional support.

- ▶ **Share information and photos about your preschool**

Consider what information will reduce anxiety for families and children. You might share photos of the room(s), playground, and educators. It is helpful to share some information about what to bring to preschool each day as well as the routine/rhythm of your program. You can download and customise the 'I'm starting preschool' story which is available in a number of community languages, and you can add photos of your preschool's environments and team.

Download the 'I'm starting preschool' story here:

<https://kudisabilityinclusion.com.au/resources?showing=1&keywords=I%27m%20startin%20preschool>

- ▶ **Communicate actively with families about early days at preschool.**

To support the transition children from their family/carer in the morning, encourage families to tell you about matters of significance to their family. Let families know about your separation routines such as whether you encourage parents/carers to spend some time playing with their child, or whether you encourage children to say goodbye at the door to the preschool.

- ▶ **Offer a variety of ways to greet individual children based on preferences and comfort levels.**

For example, waving, thumbs up, a smile, using a key word sign or visual support, or saying "hi" or "hello". For some children, engaging on arrival, may not be an appropriate expectation. It may be helpful to communicate this varied approach to greeting to families.

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Continued...

- ▶ **Support family members to establish rituals for saying goodbye and reconnecting with their child if needed.**

Let the family know that it is important to say goodbye, even if the child becomes upset and communicate honestly when they will return (e.g. after lunch).

- ▶ **Encourage families to share a photo of their family**

Photographs can be a way of children feeling a connection with home.

- ▶ **Consider diverse cultural backgrounds, types of family, and other areas relating to inclusion**

Does your environment reflect the diverse range of children attending your preschool and community?

- ▶ **Some families may ask to bring a transitional object to preschool, consider this request in relation to your service's policies**

A transitional object can support children as they move from one attachment figure (their family) to another (the preschool educator).

- ▶ **Gather information about each child**

You may like to use or adapt the 'Getting to Know Your Child' form. This may be particularly useful where a child may have additional needs. Encourage families to let you know about any therapy or supports that the child may be having so you can work together.

Download 'Getting to Know your Child' here:

<https://kudisabilityinclusion.com.au/resources/getting-to-know-your-child>

- ▶ **Visual supports in the environment**

Consider having your preschool routine or rhythm of the day presented in a visual format so all children can see how the day progresses. New children leaving their family for the first time, or even older children who might be familiar with early childhood education, can benefit from knowing the routines and what to expect and when they will be leaving again.

Your KU Sector Capacity Building (SCB) Preschool Inclusion Consultant can work with you to create meaningful visual supports for your preschool.