

Policy on Transition from Preschool to Primary School

Policy Statement.

At Links Childcare we are very conscious of the importance of support, guidance and sensitivity at the time when a child is transitioning from any level of education to another. This is no different for the child who is transitioning from preschool to primary school. This policy is informed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment's (NCCA) *Preschool to Primary Transition Initiative, Transition from Preschool to Primary School: Research Report 19 (O'Kane, 2016)*, *Starting Strong: Transitions from Early Childhood Education and Care to Primary Education*, OECD (2017) and *Early Years: An Inspector's Perspective on Practice and Policy*, Hislop (2018)

AIMS

At Links Childcare our aim is to support progression and continuity of experience as children move from our Crèches to the next step in their education, Primary School.

We aim to make this transition

1. a positive experience
2. as smooth as possible, by promoting certain dispositions, skills and knowledge, including a strong focus on oral language/communication, and the development of positive learning dispositions, including curiosity, independence and resilience
3. easier for the child by fostering a greater alignment between the curriculum of the preschool (inspired by Aistear) and the curriculum of the Primary School
4. pleasant for the child and his/her family by the development of trusting relationships between the preschool and the Primary School
5. meaningful and realistic for the child by involving his/her whole family as she/he moves from preschool to Primary School
6. positive experience for those children who may be experiencing disadvantage, children whose first language is not English, or children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)
7. an informed experience by ensuring the transfer of information on children's learning and development between the preschool and the Primary School

Procedures

Preparation for the move to primary school begins, at Links Childcare, as soon as a young child comes through our doors for the first time. It is important to remember that transformative transitions are not a one-off event, they are something that is prepared for over several months and even years. Every time the child develops another aspect of independence, sitting comfortably on a chair, using a spoon, holding a crayon, being confident enough to express an opinion, – he or she is getting ready for the next stage – getting ready to move on to Primary School.

In mid-May preceding children's entry into Primary School the following September, a more structured programme of preparation is initiated. This includes the children themselves, as they are the most important people in the process, personnel from the Primary schools, the parents and families of the child and the Educators at the Crèches.

During the month of February, a letter is sent to the Principals of the Primary Schools which will be attended by our children. (Appendix 1) This invites them or a Junior Infant teacher to visit the crèche to meet the children in their current setting. A date in late May is then arranged for the visit. Many of the Primary schools also arrange for the children to spend a little time at the Primary school around this time, and this is supported by the Educarer by discussion, role play etc.

The following is list of activities that may be used by individual crèches to support the transition:

- A visit to the school by the Educarer
- Children visiting the school
- Stories about going to school
- Use of a Transition Resource Box with school related items
- Role-play (at 'big school')
- Use of a HOPE TREE – where the leaves represent the hopes of both parents and children for their new school
- Room displays of photographs of the different schools with children attending below each one
- Dolls dressed in uniforms at the entrance to the crèche
- Display of picture maps showing where the schools are located

Feedback to Parents

Parents play an important role in the transition process and should be seen as collaborators, with respectful dialogue being all important. In pursuit of this aim a Parent-Educarer meeting is organised for every child moving to Primary School. With the use of a form (attached at Appendix 2) the parents are informed of their child's strengths, talents, relationships with others, skills and then any areas for development are outlined. Parents are encouraged to share the information they have received with the new teacher, particularly if the child needs any special support or has a specific need or circumstance.

Feedback from the Primary School

In the November following the children's entry to Primary School a form (see attached at appendix 3) is sent to the Primary School Junior Infant teachers asking for feedback on the settling in experience of the children from Links Childcare and asking for any recommendations to improve the transition process.

Review: Management and staff will monitor and review the effectiveness of this policy annually.



Child's Personal Details

First name:

Surname:

Date of birth:

Name of Crèche

Name of Educarer

Signature:

Curriculum Theme 1

Well-being	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely
Child has good relationships with other children in the setting				
Child enjoys participating in different kinds of play				
Child is confident				
Child has good gross motor skills				
Child has good fine motor skills				
Child is independent				
Child copes well with transitions				
Child is generally resilient and can keep going when things don't go as planned				
Child can manage his/her feelings well				
Child shows good judgement when taking risks				
Additional comments including areas the child enjoys				

The information above briefly describes the child's well-being. It focuses on the child's confidence and happiness.

Curriculum Theme 2

Identity and Belonging	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely
Child is developing a sense of his/her own identity				
Child has a strong sense of group identity with family and community				
Child has a strong sense of belonging to the group in the setting				
Child understands the different roles of people in the community				
Child helps make decisions on matters that impact on him/her				
Child has good social skills				
Child understands the rules and boundaries of acceptable behaviour				
Child is beginning to think about others and their feelings and views				
Child shows positive learning dispositions ¹				
Child sees himself/herself as a capable learner				
Additional comments including areas the child enjoys				

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The statements above **describe the child's sense of identity and belonging. They focus on the child's developing sense of self, family and community.**

Curriculum Theme 3

Communicating	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely
Child uses non-verbal skills to communicate				
Child speaks clearly				
Child listens well to others and responds appropriately				
Child recites nursery rhymes and songs				
Child responds to a variety of open-ended, 'I wonder why...' type questions				
Child enjoys exploring books				
Child recognises that print has meaning				
Additional comments including areas the child enjoys				

The statements above describe the child's communication skills. They focus on the child sharing his/her experiences and feelings with growing confidence and competence.

Curriculum Theme 4

Exploring and Thinking	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely
Child enjoys exploring the environment using his/hersenses				
Child has growing awareness of past and present in his/her own life, and in the people and places in the locality				
Child is aware of features, animals and plants in the locality				
Child uses mathematical ideas in everyday interactions				
Child enjoys counting and using numbers				
Child is developing a sense of shape and space				
Child enjoys solving problems with others				
Child is open to trying new things				
Child is beginning to develop his/her own ideas about why and how things happen				
Child is beginning to make connections between new learning and previous experiences				
Additional comments including areas the child enjoys				

The statements above **describe the child’s ability to explore and think. They focus on the child’s experiences and interest in the things, places and people in the locality.**



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St Paul's NS
Co Dublin

Appendix 2

Dear,

As you may be aware, many of our Preschool children at Links Portmarnock have chosen St Paul's as their Primary school and we are already beginning to prepare them for this important step in their educational journey. We are conscious of the NCCA report (2016) by Dr Mary O'Kane which so convincingly argues for the links between Pre-school and Primary school and are anxious to offer any support to the children that you think might be appropriate to aid a smooth transition. If at any stage you felt that you could free up an Infant Teacher to visit the children in their current centre, we would be delighted to welcome him/her. Feel free to contact me if this is something you feel might be possible or of use. My email address is:

As always, our children are very excited at the prospect of a move to 'big school'! We hope you enjoy them as much as we do!

Yours sincerely

Education Manager



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Dear Junior Infant Teachers Appendix 3

The following children from Links Childcare began last September in your school

1.
2.
3.

We would very much appreciate if you would return this form to info@linkschildcare.ie

Child's Name	Settled easily	Settled with some difficulty	Has not settled well yet
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Comments:

If you have any recommendations for how better we could prepare the children for Primary School, we would be delighted to hear them.

Thank you
