



Outcomes & Indicators of a Positive Start to School

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December 2009

Acknowledgements

This report would not have been possible without the support of two research assistants, Caroline Scott and Karin Barty. We thank them for their enthusiasm for the project and the many hours they spent searching the literature. The Early Childhood Education Research Team would also like to acknowledge the parents, primary school teachers, school principals, early childhood professionals and other support staff who were willing to provide their views on what they considered to be a successful transition to school. A very special thank you to the kindergarten teachers who, at the time, were very busy writing Transition Learning and Development Statements yet somehow put time aside to answer our questions. Finally, we would like to acknowledge the support and collegueship provided by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, especially Pippa Procter, Gina Suntesic and Karen Weston. This has been an interesting and stimulating project for us all.

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December, 2009*

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Introduction

Starting school is a significant milestone in the lives of children and their families and much has been written relating to children being ready for school and the skills and knowledge needed to make a successful transition. The focus to date has been on whether a child is 'ready' for school from a skill-based perspective. However, there is a call to rethink definitions of school readiness to encompass dispositions, experience and social and emotional aspects.

The new *Transition: A Positive Start to School* initiative launched by the Victorian Government emphasises the importance of promoting continuity of learning through the transition to school process, and has moved away from traditional concepts of school readiness. It outlines an approach that focuses on the process to support children, their families and educators to ensure a positive start to school.

Transition processes have been studied and 'best practice' described in relation to transition however, missing from the research and literature is exactly what a positive start to school looks like for children, families and educators. The literature which considers national and international peer-reviewed articles on transition to school, also notes a lack of research 'that evaluates the effects of different transition policies, processes and activities for all children, but especially for culturally and linguistically diverse and Indigenous children, children from disadvantaged backgrounds and children with disabilities' (CEIEC, 2008 p.58). This project begins to address this by acknowledging the underdevelopment of the related research, proposing a new starting point (outside of the school readiness literature) from which to consider what a positive start to school looks like for children, families and educators.

The view taken in this project is based on an ecological model of transition to school where positive transition outcomes for children depend on the relationships formed between key players in their transition rather than focusing on the attainment of a specific set of skills (CEIEC, 2008). Policies, processes and activities should create space for children and families to be fully involved. Research findings suggest the importance of program continuity and catering for individual learning strengths – it is not just a case of a child being ready for school but school being ready for the child.

Background

The *Transition: A Positive Start to School* initiative was launched for implementation in August 2009, and is directly linked to the *Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development* (2008) goal of 'by

the time Victorian children start school they will be ready to learn at school and schools will be ready for them'. The *Transition: A Positive Start to School* initiative aims to provide a consistent and inclusive approach for all those involved in the transition process. Development of the initiative, involved 30 pilot sites across Victoria, representing a range of communities, trialling newly developed or extending existing transition approaches to distinguish the effects of differing transition processes and activities; followed by an evaluation of the pilot program, which informed the overall development of the initiative. Supporting resource materials have been developed to guide professionals in the early childhood and school sectors through this new approach. A key component of the *Transition: A Positive Start to School* initiative is the introduction of a Transition Learning and Development Statement – a tool to support the consistent transfer of information about a child's learning and development to families and schools. This report is the first stage of a broader evaluation of the initiative, which will inform future refinements and improvements and may be applicable to other policy developments.

Purpose

The aim of this research is to identify the outcomes of a positive transition to school for children, their families and educators, and to establish indicators and corresponding measures for these outcomes. The outcomes should reflect the intended impact of participating in transition activities or processes. Therefore, specific skills related to concepts of school readiness will not be included.

This report develops a list of 15 outcomes of a positive start to school for children, families and educators, and a list of indicators that measure these outcomes. The report also identifies gaps in the availability of appropriate tools to measure some indicators, proposing recommendations to resolve these gaps including, the further refinement and validation of identified indicators, and areas where more research is warranted.

Methodology

Literature Review

The Literature Review conducted for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) which considered national and international peer-reviewed articles on transition to school (CEIEC, 2008), noted a lack of research 'that evaluates the effects of different transition policies, processes and activities for all children, but especially for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and Indigenous children, children from disadvantaged backgrounds and children with disabilities' (p.58). A key feature of this project was to engage the voice of 'others' (vulnerable, socially and economically disadvantaged, under represented etc) in the research process.

The complete literature review is provided at Appendix C.

Participants

Feedback was sought from a selection of the Transition Pilot sites representing metro, rural and regional Victoria along with the Catholic Education Office and regional DEECD staff (see Appendix A). Connections were made with early childhood and community networks enabling researchers access to practitioners, allied health organisations, and parent groups working and living in these locations. There was a need to be sensitive to the different groups within communities (i.e. CALD, Indigenous, refugee, low SES, high SES). Representative groups were also invited to work in partnership with the researchers to open lines of dialogue between ethnic communities and the research team. This is reflected in the outcomes and indicators that have been developed ensuring that they are reflective of all children, families and educators.

Data Collection

Data was collected through interviews, focus groups, email correspondence and telephone conversations depending on which were most convenient for the service/organisation and personnel involved. Participants were asked:

1. What does a positive start to school look like for a) children, b) parents/families and c) educators?
2. How can these outcomes be measured?

Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (Victorian Framework)

Alongside the related literature and data collected from the field, the outcomes for children were also informed by the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (Victorian Framework) which describes the key knowledge and skills children need to acquire during their first eight years and provides guidance for families and others in how to encourage their development. The Victorian Framework identifies children's learning and development from birth to eight years in the context of five key outcomes:

1. Children have a strong sense of identity (**Identity**)
2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world (**Community**)
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing (**Wellbeing**)
4. Children are confident and involved learners (**Learning**)
5. Children are effective communicators (**Communication**)

The *Transition: A Positive Start to School* initiative, is recognised as a key element of the Victorian Framework however, the Victorian Framework outcomes are focused on learning and development skills, whereas this project seeks to identify the outcomes of a positive start to school process therefore, reference to specific skill readiness is not included.

Outcomes

A number of outcomes have been identified; representative of the literature and feedback from those involved in transition processes. The final selection of 15 outcomes was guided by principles that the outcomes are:

- across the key outcome domains of children, families and educators;
- realistic and manageable;
- easily understood;
- sensitive to the diversity of the population; and
- can be readily and regularly measured.

The outcomes and indicators were informed by the following:

- detailed examination of the literature review compiled to inform the development of the *Transition: A Positive Start to School* initiative;
- Transition Pilot – Final Reports;
- Evaluation of Transition: A Positive Start to School Pilots (Melbourne University);
- other research material as outlined in the annotated Bibliography;
- detailed analysis of possible data sources for benchmarking / measurement tools;
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (Victorian Framework);
- interviews, focus groups and informal discussions with service providers, support groups, families and DEECD program staff (See Appendix A);
- discussions with representative community organisations (See Appendix A);
- validation of the indicators against international indicator frameworks considerate of the child in the context of their family, community and the environment within which they are living, learning and developing; and
- learnings from the Best Start initiative.

Indicators

The indicators have been taken directly from the literature and aligned with the selected outcomes. In total there are 22 indicators for children, families and educators. These indicators have also been checked against indicators used by the 30 Transition Pilot sites and also the data collected from teachers (both early childhood and primary), families and representatives from other organisations who were invited to participate in this research project. A strong correlation was found between all data sources.

Measures

It must be recognised that tools to measure outcomes and indicators of a positive start to school are underdeveloped or non-existent at this stage, however, relevant measures have been selected from a range of 'valid' measurement tools that do exist and these have been adapted for the purposes of this project. Suggested measurement tools include sections of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) and survey items in the DEECD Parent Opinion Survey (See Appendix B). Also included are proposals for the development of an Early Childhood Educator Survey and Prep Teacher Survey (see Recommendations for more detail).

Tables

The findings of this project have been formatted into three tables that represent the outcomes of a positive start to school for children, families and educators. Alongside each set of outcomes are related indicators and measures. Cross referencing of outcomes and indicators against previously listed data sources acted as a verification process. Once the outcomes and indicators were in place, the search for ways each indicator could be measured began.

The following model outlines the set up of each table:

- Table 1: Outcomes and indicators of a positive start to school for **children**
- Table 2: Outcomes and indicators of a positive start to school for **families**
- Table 3: Outcomes and indicators of a positive start to school for **educators**



Each section of the model aimed to answer the following questions for children, families and educators:

- **Outcomes**
What is the outcome of a positive start to school?
- **Indicators**
What does the outcome 'look like'?
What 'happens' to know the outcome is met?
- **Measures**
How is that outcome &/or indicator measured?
How would 'evaluators' use this measure/tool?

Note: Reference to 'evaluators' is made in recognition of this project being the first stage of a broader evaluation of the *Transition: A Positive Start to School* initiative scheduled for 2010.

Outcomes of a Positive Start to School

The outcomes identified aim to provide a coherent description of what a positive start to school process looks like for children, families and educators. There was a need to be sensitive to the diverse nature of many Victorian families and communities (i.e. CALD, Indigenous, refugee, low SES, high SES) and this is reflected in the outcomes and indicators that have been developed ensuring that they are authentic, flexible and responsive to each family and child's individual situation. Detailed below are the findings of the report.

For Children

Outcomes of a positive start to school focus on children feeling safe, secure and supported within the school environment, exhibiting an emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency, and displaying confident self-identities. Another outcome is children feeling a sense of belonging to the school community, and understanding reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active participation within the school community.

Children displaying dispositions for learning (as opposed learning and development skills) such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and flexibility, along with exhibiting a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating, and the continuity or strengthening of these dispositions, are considered an outcome of a positive start to school.

Children transferring and adapting what they have learnt from one context and resourcing their own learning through connection with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials is another identified.

It is interesting to note that, of all the primary school teachers who took part in this research project, only one emphasised the importance of skill ability i.e. fine motor development, while others saw a positive start to school centre around a child's social and emotional development rather than skill acquisition and knowledge. Learning dispositions such as curiosity, persistence, the confidence to 'have a go' and resilience were highly valued by primary school teachers and early childhood professionals alike.

For Families

The literature is very clear that outcomes of a positive start to school are about being engaged in collaborative, respectful and responsive relationships with all those involved with the care and education of their child. Examples of this could involve: key information documents being available in community languages and time being set aside where more sensitive information can be shared in a respectful way, the use of interpreters if required and the involvement of other organisations to facilitate the transition experience aiding families in the process i.e. KECFO Koori Early Childhood Field Officer, Noah's Ark.

Families interviewed for this project spoke of the importance for them to receive ongoing communications about what was happening at school and to feel part of the school community. Having information and being able to ask questions and have them answered assisted the parents in feeling comfortable leaving their child at school.

For Educators

Similar to outcomes of a positive start to school for families; for educators outcomes centre around collaborative, respectful and responsive relationships with all those involved with the care and education of children. Educators need to feel prepared and confident that they have the necessary information and support in order to plan appropriately for the children. Feeling prepared can also include having a sound knowledge of the goals of the early childhood setting from which the child is transitioning. As one early childhood professional stated;

'I feel that a positive start for educators is to do the ground work first before the children arrive. By this I mean collecting information from any possible source, reading reports and transition statements, specialist reports, observing children at the transition sessions. But mostly I feel educators must find the time to research the backgrounds of the children coming to school so a positive start can happen.'

Table 1: Outcomes and Indicators of a Positive Start to School for Children

Who? For Children		
What? <i>What is the outcome of a positive start to school?</i>	<i>What does this outcome 'look like'? What 'happens' to know the outcome is met?</i>	How? <i>How is that outcome &/or indicator measured? How would 'evaluators' use this measure/tool?</i>
Outcomes	Indicators	Measures
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children feel safe, secure and supported within the school environment 2. Children display social and emotional resilience within the school environment 3. Children feel a sense of belonging to the school community 4. Children experience continuity of learning 5. Children have a positive relationship with the educators and other children 6. Children feel positive about themselves as learners 7. Children display dispositions for learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children separate easily from parent / caregiver ▪ Children attend and participate in school ▪ Children demonstrate knowledge of environment, including school routines, key staff and their roles ▪ Children have and make friends ▪ Children seek out assistance when needed ▪ Children ask questions and contribute to classroom discussions ▪ Children explore and try new things ▪ Children confidently communicate with educators and peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Prep Teacher Opinion Survey – Child Participates in Classroom Activities (Refer to recommendations) ▪ % of children with low attendance (defined as fewer than 75%) ▪ DEECD Parent Opinion Survey – Student Motivation questions (See Appendix B) ▪ DEECD Parent Opinion Survey – Connectedness to Peers questions (See Appendix B) ▪ South Australian Reflect Tool / Leuven Involvement Scale for Young Children (See Appendix B) (Refer to Recommendations – this may inform questions for the proposed Prep Teacher Opinion Survey) ▪ Measures from AEDI – Social / Emotional Development, Language & Cognitive Skills, Physical Wellbeing Sections – e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Able to play with various children? ○ Seems to be unhappy, sad or depressed? (See Appendix B)

Table 2: Outcomes and Indicators of a Positive Start to School for Families

Who? For Families		
What? <i>What is the outcome of a positive start to school?</i>	<i>What does this outcome 'look like'?</i> <i>What 'happens' to know the outcome is met?</i>	How? <i>How is that outcome &/or indicator measured?</i> <i>How would 'evaluators' use this measure/tool?</i>
Outcomes	Indicators	Measures
8. Families have access to information related to transition to school tailored to suit the family 9. Families are involved with the school 10. Families are partners in their child's learning 11. Relationships between families and the school are reciprocal and responsive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Families pass on information about their child / culture ▪ Families receive information about their child ▪ Schools have communicated with all families &/or caregivers of school starters prior to school commencing ▪ Families engage with other school families ▪ Families participate in school activities ▪ Educators have built positive relationships with the children and families (they know the families and children) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ % of children with Part 1 of the Transition Learning and Development Statement complete (suggest a comment box is added so notes can be made about the quality of information provided in the statement) (See Appendix B) ▪ % of families receiving information about the school prior to school commencing ▪ % of families attending orientation sessions and parent teacher interviews when offered ▪ DEECD Parent Opinion Survey – Approachability questions. (See Appendix B) ▪ DEECD Parent Opinion Survey – Parent Input questions. (See Appendix B)

Table 3: Outcomes and Indicators of a Positive Start to School for Educators

Who? For Educators		
What? <i>What is the outcome of a positive start to school?</i>	<i>What does this outcome 'look like'? What 'happens' to know the outcome is met?</i>	How? <i>How is that outcome &/or indicator measured? How would 'evaluators' use this measure/tool?</i>
Outcomes	Indicators	Measures
<p>12. Educators provide continuity of learning for children</p> <p>13. Educators are prepared, and confident that they can plan appropriately for the children starting school</p> <p>14. Educators view families as partners in their child's learning and provide opportunities for family involvement</p> <p>15. Relationships between early childhood educators and school educators are reciprocal and responsive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information about children's learning and development is provided upon entry to school ▪ Educators have knowledge of individual children's requirements and have tailored transition activities to these requirements ▪ Educators have a respectful relationship with families and carers where knowledge about the children is actively sought and shared ▪ Schools have communicated with all families &/or caregivers of school starters before school starts ▪ Local Transition Networks are established and developed ▪ Early childhood and school educators continue to liaise after children have started school ▪ School and early childhood educators have a respectful relationship with each other where knowledge about the children and practice is shared ▪ Educators support families to build their confidence in managing the transition to school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ % of children transitioning from funded kindergarten programs to school with Part 2 of the Transition Learning and Development Statement completed (plus information about any additional needs) (See Appendix B) ▪ % of children transitioning from an early years service (non-funded kindergarten program) to school with informal / formal transition information. * See footnote. ▪ Proposed Prep Teacher Opinion Survey – Survey item measure: I have been provided with and used sufficient information to inform my curriculum planning process. (Refer to Recommendations) ▪ Proposed Early Childhood Educator Survey – Survey item: The information about a child's learning and development which was passed onto the school is valued and used. (Refer to Recommendations) ▪ Development of agreed Transition plans through the Local Transition Networks ▪ % of educators participating in Local Early Childhood Educators / School Educators Transition Networks

Who? For Educators		
What? <i>What is the outcome of a positive start to school?</i>	<i>What does this outcome 'look like'?</i> <i>What 'happens' to know the outcome is met?</i>	How? <i>How is that outcome &/or indicator measured?</i> <i>How would 'evaluators' use this measure/tool?</i>
Outcomes	Indicators	Measures
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ % of early childhood and school educators involved in reciprocal visits ▪ Number of joint professional learning and development sessions attended (early childhood and school educators) ▪ DEECD Parent Opinion Survey – Approachability and Parent Input questions (See Appendix B)

- Informal / formal transition information developed by the early years professional relating to the child’s learning and development in the early years setting. This type of information could apply to children with diverse needs, those from CALD or ATSI backgrounds, and in general any child not attending a funded kindergarten program. A formal example is the “Starting School: A Guide for Students with an Autism Spectrum Disorder” (Catholic Education Office).

Recommendations

What has become very clear through this research project is the lack of appropriate standardised measures for indicators of a positive start to school for children, families and educators. As we move outside of the 'readiness' concept, measures are few and far between due to the nature of what is being measured. The measures required are generally more qualitative in nature, reflecting things such as support and maintenance of dispositions for learning, experience of the process, and social and emotional characteristics. Therefore, the recommendations reflect the necessity for further work in developing a more robust approach to measure effectiveness of the transition to school process.

Below are the specific recommendations, resultant from this project and the rationale for each. Additional suggestions that are outside the scope of this project, but relevant for the future development of the *Transition: A Positive Start to School* initiative, are also provided for consideration.

Recommendation 1: Develop a Prep Teacher Opinion Survey (PTOS) and an Early Childhood Teacher Opinion Survey (ECTOS).

The development and validation of a Prep Teacher Opinion Survey (PTOS) and Early Childhood Teacher Opinion Survey (ECTOS) that mirrors, as closely as possible, the existing or a revamped DEECD Parent Opinion Survey (POS) would address the gap of no existing, consolidated tool to measure the effectiveness of a positive start to school process.

Recommendation 2: Refine the Parent Opinion Survey (POS).

The *Student Motivation, Connectedness to Peers, Approachability and Parent Input* sections of the POS provide significant quantitative information for a number of outcomes and indicators (Refer to Tables pp. 12 – 15). NB. It is recommended that complete subsections of the POS be used rather than using isolated questions from the survey to ensure the measure is robust.

Focused research is warranted, and required, on the development of the PTOS and ECTOS and refinement of the POS to ensure these measurement tools:

- have sound psychometric properties (high internal consistency, inter-rater reliability and construct and convergent validity)
- are easily and quickly completed by the target groups
- are designed to be completed by the target groups in Term 1 the year children start school

For example, the *Transitions* section of the POS is currently general and could refer to any child in any year level. More specific questions targeted for children starting Prep would provide more significant information on the effectiveness of the transition from the early childhood service/family into the school.

In relation to the recommendations, the field of psychology may be best placed for the development of these measures of aspects that relate to social and emotional development. What needs to be considered is the time, or lack of it, available for staff in primary schools and early childhood education and care settings to have the opportunity to collect important data to measure a positive start to school. As an example, refer to the Emotionality, Activity, Sociability (EAS) Temperament Surveys for Parents and Teachers developed by Buss and Plomin (1984) (Appendix D). Use of the Leuven Involvement Scale for Young Children, to which we did not have access, and the South Australian Reflect Tool to inform these surveys could be beneficial. (See Appendix B).

It should also be noted that while most statements in the surveys would be applicable to all target groups there would be specific questions for each target group. For example “Reciprocal visits between early childhood educators and school educators” would be on the PTOS and ECTOS but not the POS. This can provide cross correlation of parent and educator perspectives.

Recommendation 3: Develop a Child Opinion Survey (COS)

Consideration should be given to the development of a Child Opinion Survey (COS). Direct feedback from school starters on their participation in school, their demonstrated knowledge of the environment, including school routines, key staff and their roles, whether they have or can make friends, and believe they can communicate effectively with teachers and peers for example would provide further, direct child perceptions of their transition into school. Research (Dockett & Perry, 2003; 2005) has begun to value the inclusion of the voices of children as they are seen as competent in sharing their views in relation to starting school. They add another layer of information about what they themselves have experienced and how positive the transition has been for them. At present there is nothing that captures the children’s opinions and perceptions which we consider an important aspect that is missing from the research project.

Further Suggestions

The establishment and development of Local Transition Networks; comprised of early childhood educators, school staff, ancillary health and specialist service staff, and families, is an aspect that warrants further attention when considering positive transitions to school. It was clear from the responses from the field and Transition Pilot sites that reciprocal and responsive relationships between families and educators was a primary outcome of a positive start to school. Effective network groups not only enabled these relationships to be developed, but also provided a mechanism for the measurement of the effectiveness of these relationships (Refer to Tables pp. 12 – 15). It would be important to research the direct impact these networks have on outcomes in order to add support to the anecdotal evidence. This supports the finding of the Pilot Evaluation Study.

Another consideration is the interplay between the Practice Principles and a positive start to school for children, families and educators. Research could focus on how the Practice Principles (collaborative, effective and reflective) influence practice which in turn impacts on meeting the outcomes and indicators of a positive start to school for children and families.

Overall, what is important is that measures are authentic involving those most involved and knowledgeable – children, families and educators. They will need to be reasonably easy to administer, reliable, valid and time efficient for the outcomes that are to be measured.

Appendix A

Participant List

This table lists those who were invited to participate in this research project.

Organisation	Participant Group
Aboriginal Affairs Victoria	CEO
Carranballac College	Teachers
Catholic Education Office	Team Leader, Behaviour Support/Interventions – Student Services
City of Knox Kindergartens	Kindergarten Teachers
City of Knox	Early Years & School Transition Project Officer
City of Knox	Teachers
Coburns Primary School	Teachers
Dallas Kindergarten	Kindergarten Teacher
Dallas Primary School	Teachers & Leadership Staff
Early Learning Centre @ Rosewall	Parents
Early Learning Centre @ Rosewall	Kindergarten teacher
Early Learning & Family Centre @ Apollo	Parents
Early Learning & Family Centre @ Apollo	Kindergarten teacher
ECMS	All Early Childhood Services Staff
Fairy Hills Kindergarten, Darebin	Kindergarten Teachers
Footscray Primary School	Teachers
The Dorothy Carlton Kindergarten, Sunshine	Kindergarten Teachers
Geelong Kindergarten Association	Kindergarten teachers
Hastings Pilot	Best Start Facilitator
Heathdale Christian College	Kindergarten Teacher & Primary

	Teachers
Kingsway Preschool	Kindergarten Teachers
Maribyrnong ASD Pilot	CEO
Melton Primary School	Parents
Melton Primary School	Teachers
Melton West Preschool	Kindergarten Teachers
Melton West Preschool	Parents
St Albans Heights Primary School	Teachers
St Albans Primary School	Teachers
Sunbury Heights Primary School	Teachers
Sunshine Heights Primary School	Teachers
Thomas Chirnside Primary School	Teachers
Try Kindergarten, Melton South	Kindergarten Teachers
Uniting Church Preschool	Kindergarten Teachers
VICSEG	CEO
Wahroonga Kindergarten, Broadmeadows	Kindergarten Teachers
Werribee Kindergarten Teachers	Kindergarten Teachers
Western Suburbs Indigenous Gathering Place	Parents
Wonga Park Primary School	Teachers

The following Sites became focus areas for the research where direct contact was established:

Region	Organisation & Name of Pilot
North	Dallas Primary School, Anglicare Victoria Hume-Moreland
East	Knox City Council Transition Pilot Name: Strengthening Links : Supporting Transition to School
South	Mornington Peninsula Shire Transition Pilot Name: Transition: a positive start to school Hastings Transition Pilot

West	City of Brimbank
Catholic	Catholic Education office Transition Pilot Name: An approach to successful transition ...
Rural	Baw Baw Shire Council Transition Pilot Name: Transition: a positive start to school Baw Baw Pilot Project
Regional	City of Greater Geelong Council Transition Pilot Name: City of Greater Geelong Early Years Transition Project

- NB: Data from all 30 Pilot Sites were collected and analysed to inform the research project.

Appendix B

Measures

The way the measures have been determined for this research was to go outside the school readiness literature and search for more 'authentic' ways to measure the indicators. The measures described here include the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI), the Leuven Involvement Scale for Young Children (LIS-YC), the Reflect Tool, Transition Learning and Development Statements and the DEECD Parent Opinion Survey.

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) is a measure of how young children are developing in different communities around Australia. Teachers from schools around Australia complete a checklist for every child in their class, based on their knowledge and observations. The checklist includes more than 100 questions across five areas of early childhood development:

- Physical health and wellbeing
- Social competence
- Emotional maturity
- Language and cognitive skills
- Communication skills and general knowledge

Leuven Involvement Scale for Young Children (LIS-YC) was developed by Professor Ferre Laevers and measures children's involvement. The scale consists of two components: a list of signals and the levels of involvement in a five point scale. It is believed that an involved child concentrates his/her attention on a specific focus, wants to continue the activity and to persist and is not easily distracted. One of the most predominant characteristics of involvement is motivation. As Bertram & Pascal (date unknown) state 'an involved child is fascinated and is totally absorbed in the activity, the time passes quickly for the child. The involved child is extremely alert and sensitive to relevant stimuli, releases an immense amount of energy and experiences a wonderful feeling of satisfaction. The source of this satisfaction is an inbuilt desire for the child to gain a better understanding of reality' (p.2).

Reflect Tool - Reflect and Evaluate for Learning: an Early Childhood Tool

This tool focuses on examining the factors that contribute to the long terms benefits of early childhood provision. The tool is informed by the aspects that contribute to quality early outcomes with information collected regarding children's dispositions, cognitive, social emotional/wellbeing, family staff relations,

climate/sense of purpose/environment. The five areas that are measured by this tool are designed to overlap with the intention that they provide a holistic view of the child and their family.

www.earlyyears.sa.edu.au/files/links/Reflect.pdf

Transition Learning and Development Statements have the objective of supporting the transfer of consistent information between early years settings. The information written by the early childhood professional is organised under the outcomes of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework and summarises the strengths of a child's learning and development on school entry, identifying their individual approaches to learning and indicates how the child could be further supported in their learning. Parents are invited to add their own comments on the Statements.

The DEECD Parent Opinion Survey is an anonymous survey conducted annually on randomly selected families/parents by schools (based on 15% of student population or 40 families). The opinions of parents are an important indicator of how well schools are meeting the needs of students. Each year a group of randomly selected parents is asked to respond to a brief questionnaire about aspects of their child's education, school and expectations of transitions. The responses form part of a larger report that is distributed to schools that includes the opinions of students, staff and parents.

Appendix C – Literature Review

Transition to School

According to research (Margetts, 2007; Smart et al. 2008) children's readiness, transition and initial adjustment to school is critical for the child's development, well being and progress throughout their school years. Much of the research highlights the importance of seamless transitions between early childhood services and schools however there is clear evidence that children vary in their 'readiness' for this transition, with marked differences visible in children's cognitive and social/emotional skills on school entry (Smart et al. 2008).

Dockett and Perry (2006) argue that being ready for school means different things to different people but refrain from formulating a picture of a good start to school because a child 'could well be ready for one school and not another ... people in different communities have different expectations of readiness' (p. 46). They stress that school readiness is not only about children; it is about families, schools and communities and promote the theme of 'working together' where they envisage the involvement of a range of stakeholders, the formation of positive relationships, mutual trust and reciprocal communication as a starting point for children having a good start at school. A community approach to children's transition to school is also advocated by Rous and Hallam (2006). They identify communication, cooperation, coordination and collaboration as part of the process of developing effective transition programs. Ongoing communications between educators in early childhood services and schools, the preparation of children for the transition, and the continuing involvement of families are essential components of a successful transition.

Increasingly, the importance of congruence between home, community, and school philosophies and experiences is being recognised. Successful transitions to school are more likely when such partnerships exist, ensuring a balance between continuity and new experiences (Ashton, Woodrow, Johnston, Wangmann & Singh, 2008). How easy or difficult children find the transition between early childhood services and school settings partly depends upon the degree of discontinuity they have to negotiate (Margetts, 2002). Discontinuities include changes in the physical environment of buildings, classrooms, a difference in curricula and teaching strategies, a difference in the number, gender and role of staff, a change to the peer group, and changes in the relationships between children and the adults responsible for their care and education. A number of studies suggest that children from ethnic and racial minority groups may find transition to school challenging because of mismatches between home and school language and culture (Bowman, 1999 cited in la Paro, Pianta & Cox, 2000; Pianta & Cox, 2002; Sauvau, 1998 cited in Yeboah, 2002).

It has been suggested (Margetts, 2007) that transition programs should be flexible, inclusive and responsive to the complexity of local communities and demonstrate respect for, and acceptance of cultural & linguistic diversity and the requirements of all stakeholders. A search of the literature (CEIEC, 2008) found there was ‘no substantial long-term evidence that any specific transition to school program was better than any other ...’ and that there were, instead, ‘a number of promising practices’ that could be identified as being of proven value. These promising practices were summarised and grouped according to children’s perspectives, families’ perspectives, and the perspectives of educators and have been used to inform the development of the Outcomes and Indicators of a Positive Start to School for this project.

Measuring Indicators

Much of the literature around measurement relates to school readiness. For example Puckett and Black (2008) give a clear picture of how the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework was established in the USA. States and local school districts developed their own readiness indicators, based on the framework. Puckett and Black (2008) suggested readiness indicators do the following: reflect reasonable expectations for the age of children; address growth, development and learning in all domains; represent truly essential skills, knowledge, etc.; are applicable across many populations of children; are clear and logical; and avoid teacher-centric expectations (abridged from Figure 8.1, page 230). What is clear from the American literature is that each state’s Department of Education has defined readiness and developed accompanying readiness indicators.

Missal and Hojnosi (2008) argue strongly that social competence is vital in school transition. They do not believe there is a suitable way of judging social competence, saying ‘researchers need to identify indicators of learning-related and peer-related social skills that can be reliably measured in preschool’ (p. 131). However other researchers believe there are measures for social competence. Brown, Odom and McConnell (2008) outline several systems of measurement: (i) observation, (ii) rating, e.g., the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS), the Ages and Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional (ASQ-SE), the Batelle Development Inventory (BDI), the Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL), the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment and the Early Screening Profile and some other emerging scales (see page 9), (iii) social problem solving e.g., WALLY (see pages 9-10), (iv) sociometric assessment (described as problematic), (v) friendship measures (page 11). Brown et al. (2008) argue for a multi-dimensional approach suggesting that several types of assessments (not only tests) could be used in combination, according to what is appropriate.

Brewer (2007) shows some reservation about readiness testing, and other forms of testing. Her view is that 'tests should never be used to ... make placement decisions about a child' (p. 231). Seefeldt and Wasik (2006) put a critical perspective on 'measuring' readiness for school proposing that 'rather than being worried about whether children are ready for school or whether an early learning program will prepare them for primary grades, parents and teachers worry that children will be labelled as not ready on the basis of capricious and inappropriate criteria' (p. 22). Seefeldt and Wasik (2006) evaluate checklists and rating scales, performance standards and benchmarks, and standardized tests, concluding that 'authentic assessment techniques are most useful'. They appear to take a negative view of indicators which are measurable, whilst acknowledging that assessment is necessary. Maley and Bond (2007) in presenting their findings on measurement with preschool children concluded that the non-standardised skills-based checklists used by many preschool teachers (e.g., Key Readiness Indicators of Readiness for Year One – KIRYO) seem ineffectual.

Bagnato (2007) also believes there are 'limitations of traditional assessments with young children'. He asks, 'How should we forecast and plan for kindergarten transition and early school success?' His answer, in summary, is 'detailed observations of the child's functional skills in the classroom, and information provided by those individuals that know the child best, their parents and teachers. Additionally, best practice is to conduct a comprehensive evaluation that incorporates the expertise of personnel from multiple disciplines where appropriate' (p. 246). Bagnato (2007) is not an advocate for formal assessment based on indicators, outcomes or measurement, but argues for authentic assessment especially for children experiencing difficulties.

In the text *School Readiness and the Transition to Kindergarten in the Era of Accountability* (Pianta et al., eds, 2007) several chapters have relevance for this review. The book, edited by academics from the field of psychology, mounts a massive case against rigid, formal criteria for entry into school and includes chapters on assessment problems created by poverty, ethnicity and cultural diversity. Chapter 2, *Reaching for the whole* (Kagan and Kauerz, 2007) begins with a review of what early childhood education has been like for the last hundred years or so and the trends and changes now taking over in the USA. It is noted that 'The educationalization of early care and education is evidenced by a research-driven focus on critical measurements of quality that have traditionally been associated with K-12 education' (p. 12). A particular focus has become school readiness and demonstrable outcomes. The authors give a critical evaluation of the paradigm shift in early childhood education – a shift from informal assessment to formal assessment. The critical evaluation covers the (in)appropriateness of

formal assessment for young children and ‘the nature of the testing instruments’ (p. 23). They conclude that ‘formal testing is of grave concern’ and, furthermore, propose a re-think of transition (p. 27).

Meisels (2007) presents an extended argument against high-stakes testing: practical problems of measurement; unintended consequences, differing opportunity to learn and variability and predictability are discussed (pp. 35-36). Meisel describes the Head Start NRS (comprising 5 subtests, including two language screeners, tests of vocabulary, letter-naming skills and early maths skills) as a failed experiment (pp. 37-38). Meisel takes the view that there are no easy answers to accountability in early years education and that policy makers and administrators need to understand this.

Blair, Knipe et al, (2007) pursue the idea that school readiness ‘is an abstraction without a single well-defined set of indicators that can be universally applied’ (p. 150). The authors’ interests lie in ‘executive function’ (a term in developmental neuroscience) and a child-centered approach to school readiness. They take the view that ‘children should be ready to benefit from education that promotes learning through discovery and through emerging autonomy and self-regulation skills’ (p. 158). Their emphasis is not on motor skills, language skills, etc., which are normally the focus of school readiness.

What is important to note with this body of literature coming from the USA is the observation that school readiness tests have had “very mixed success” in predicting school outcomes (Snow, 2007, p. 197).

Measurement tests were referred to in a number of early childhood education papers with an interest in readiness for school. The table below summarises how tests were regarded by researchers and others whom they consulted:

Name of test	Positive/negative reports	Reference
Bracken school readiness assessment	Viewed positively	Panter & Bracken 2009
ARS Academic rating scale	‘robust effect’ noted	Justice et al 2009
Preschool behavioral and emotional rating scale	Not yet refined	Epstein et al 2009
Who am I?	Valid test	De Lemos 2008
Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) (introduced/adapted 2003, based on Canadian EDI)	Not comprehensive	Sorin (2008) NB full text not available
EDI – Early Development Index	Overview	Guhn et al 2007
EDI – Early Development Index	Improvement needed	Li et al 2007
EDI – Early Development Index	Time and cost effective compared to other tests	Forget-Dubois et al 2007

EDI – Early Development Index	Validity proven	Guhn et al 2007
EDI – Early Development Index	Risks and benefits	Keating 2007
ECERS Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale		Winter et al 2007
DIAL Developmental indicators for the assessment of learning		Winter et al 2007
Current measures of school readiness	flawed	Layzer 2006
Current measures of school readiness	Adequacy in doubt	Snow 2006
Current measures of school readiness	Must take care	Denham 2006
Adjustment Scales for Preschool Intervention (ASPI)	Valid	Fantuzzo et al 2005
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT)	All tests (including this one) are imperfect	Rock 2005
Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS)	All tests (including this one) are imperfect	Rock 2005
Head Start tests	controversial	Raver & Zigler 2004

Appendix D

Emotionality, Activity, Sociability (EAS) Temperament Survey for Children: Parent Ratings

Parents please rate your child on each statement on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (not characteristic or typical of my child) to 5 (very characteristic or typical of my child).

	Not Typical				Very Typical
1. Tends to be shy.....	1	2	3	4	5
2. Cries easily.....	1	2	3	4	5
3. Likes to be with people.....	1	2	3	4	5
4. Is always on the go.....	1	2	3	4	5
5. Prefers to play with others rather than alone.....	1	2	3	4	5
6. Tends to be somewhat emotional.....	1	2	3	4	5
7. When he moves about, he usually moves slowly.....	1	2	3	4	5
8. Makes friends easily.....	1	2	3	4	5
9. Is off and running as soon as he wakes up in the morning..	1	2	3	4	5
10. Finds people more stimulating than anything else.....	1	2	3	4	5
11. Often fusses and cries.....	1	2	3	4	5
12. Is very sociable.....	1	2	3	4	5
13. Is very energetic.....	1	2	3	4	5
14. Takes a long time to warm up to strangers.....	1	2	3	4	5
15. Gets upset easily.....	1	2	3	4	5
16. Is something of a loner.....	1	2	3	4	5
17. Prefers quiet, inactive games to more active ones.....	1	2	3	4	5
18. When alone he feels isolated.....	1	2	3	4	5
19. Reacts intensely when upset.....	1	2	3	4	5
20. Is very friendly with strangers.....	1	2	3	4	5

Reprinted from Buss,A.H., & Plomin, R. (1984). *Temperament: Early developing personality traits*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

**Emotionality, Activity, Sociability (EAS)
Temperament Survey for Children: Teacher Ratings**

Teachers please rate the child on each statement on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (not characteristic or typical of my child) to 5 (very characteristic or typical of my child) and 6 (not observed).

	Not Typical		Very Typical			Not Observed
1. Tends to be shy.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Cries easily.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Likes to be with people.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Is always on the go.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Prefers to play with others rather than alone.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Tends to be somewhat emotional.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. When he moves about, he usually moves slowly.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Makes friends easily.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Is off and running as soon as he wakes up in the morning..	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Finds people more stimulating than anything else.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Often fusses and cries.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Is very sociable.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Is very energetic.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Takes a long time to warm up to strangers.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. Gets upset easily.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Is something of a loner.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Prefers quiet, inactive games to more active ones.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. When alone he feels isolated.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Reacts intensely when upset.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Is very friendly with strangers.....	1	2	3	4	5	6

Reprinted from Buss,A.H., & Plomin, R. (1984). Temperament: Early developing personality traits. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Appendix E

Annotated Bibliography

Ashton, J., Woodrow, C., Johnston, C., Wangmann, J. & Singh, L. (2008) Partnerships in Learning: Linking early childhood services, families and schools for optimal development *Australian Journal of Early Childhood* 33 (2): 10-16

Vygotsky believed that 'individual consciousness is built from outside through relations with others'. He argued that human higher mental functions are products of mediated activity and that the mediator uses a range of psychological tools and interpersonal communication to achieve understanding. In the early years parents, community members, early childhood and school educators are instrumental in mediating children's developing cognition. Increasingly, the importance of congruence between home, community, and school philosophies and experiences is being recognised. Successful transitions to school are more likely when such partnerships exist, ensuring a balance between continuity and new experiences. [Author abstract]

Astbury, B. (2009) *Evaluation of Transition: A Positive Start to School Pilots Melbourne: University of Melbourne Centre for Program Evaluation*

Bagnato, S. J. (2007). *Authentic Assessment for Early Childhood Intervention: Best Practices* New York: Guilford Press.

This book provides clear recommendations for authentic developmental assessment of children from infancy to age 6, including those with developmental delays and disabilities. It describes principles and strategies for collecting information about children's everyday activities in the home, preschool, and community, which provides a valid basis for intervention planning and progress monitoring. Throughout, the book emphasizes the importance of enlisting parents as partners with practitioners and teachers in observation and team-based decision making. Special features of this well-organized, accessible volume include recommendations for developmentally appropriate assessment tools and "Best-Practice Guidepoints" in each chapter that distil key professional standards and practices.

Bane, C., Hanley, B. & Hansen, K. (2006). *The Cri Assessment System, 3-5 year-olds: a Companion to Creating Child Centered Classrooms, 3-5 year-olds*. Washington, D.C: Children's Resources International.

Barbarin, O. A., Early, D., Clifford, R., Bryant, D., Frome, P., Burchinal, M., Howes, C. & Pianta, R. (2008) Parental Conceptions of school readiness: Relation to ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and children's skills. *Early Education & Development* 19(5): 671-701.

This study analyzed the school readiness beliefs of parents of 452 children from public pre-kindergarten and the relations of these beliefs to socioeconomic status and children's readiness skills. Parents conceived readiness largely in terms of the ability to name objects, letters, or numbers, but few included inferential skills. Readiness beliefs were related not to socioeconomic status but to ethnicity. Readiness beliefs about the importance of independence, social competence, nominal knowledge, and inferential skills were related in expected ways to children's skills. Practice or Policy: Infrequent inclusion of inferential skills among parents' readiness beliefs may not bode well for children. Informational programs for parents about the critical role of higher order cognitive skills and ways to promote them are needed. [Abstract from Author]

Bierman, K. L., Domitrovich, C.E., Nix, R., Gest, S.D., Welsh, J.A., Greenberg, M.T., Blair, C., Nelson, K.E. & Gill, S. (2008) Promoting academic and social-emotional school readiness: The Head Start REDI Program. *Child Development* 79(6): 1802 -1817.

Forty-four Head Start classrooms were randomly assigned to enriched intervention (Head Start REDI--Research-based, Developmentally Informed) or 'unusual practice' conditions. The intervention involved brief lessons, hands-on extension activities, and specific teaching strategies linked empirically with the promotion of: (a) social-emotional competencies and (b) language development and emergent literacy skills. Take-home materials were provided to parents to enhance skill development at home. Multi-method assessments of three hundred and fifty-six 4-year-old children tracked their progress over the course of the 1-year program. Results revealed significant differences favouring children in the enriched intervention classrooms on measures of vocabulary, emergent literacy, emotional understanding, social problem solving, social behaviour, and learning engagement. Implications are discussed for developmental models of school readiness and for early educational programs and policies. [Abstract from Author]

Blair, C., Knipe, H., Cummings, E., Baker, D.P., Gamson, D., Eslinger, P. & Thorne, S.L. (2007). A developmental neuroscience approach to the study of school readiness in Pianta, R.C., Cox, M.J. & Snow, K.J. *School Readiness and the Transition to Kindergarten in the Era of Accountability* Baltimore, USA: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. pp.149-174

A presentation of a conceptual framework for the exploration of children's development and school readiness using concepts in developmental neuroscience

Brewer, J. A. (2007). *Introduction to early childhood education: preschool through primary grades*. Boston: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.

This book is a thorough examination of day-to-day aspects of standards-based, developmentally appropriate teaching of young children. Using student-friendly, readable language, Jo Ann Brewer demonstrates how to integrate developmentally appropriate practice into the early childhood curriculum. The extensive coverage of curriculum, particularly early literacy and language, is a hallmark of this popular book. There is also a heavy focus on diversity, special needs students, and real-world experience from teachers currently in the classroom.

Brown, W.H, Odom, S.L. & McConnell, S.R. (2008). *Social competence of young children: risk, disability & intervention*, Baltimore: Brookes Publishing Co.

This volume helps readers: gain a deep and thorough foundation for understanding social competence, examine key influences on social development-family, culture, classroom and friendships, pinpoint strategies for social interaction interventions specific to different populations, understand the effects of autism, behavioural disorders, communication and language disorders, and severe disabilities on peer interactions and relationships, compare and contrast the efficacy of several well-known commercial programs. Several systems of measurement are outlined in this book: (i) observation, (ii) rating, e.g., the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS), the Ages and Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional (ASQ-SE), the Batelle Development Inventory (BDI), the Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL), the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment and the Early Screening Profile and some other emerging scales (see page 9), (iii) social problem solving e.g., WALLY (see pages 9-10), (iv) socio-metric assessment (described as problematic), (v) friendship measures (page 11). Odom et al. argue for a multi-dimensional approach: several types of assessments (not only tests) could be used in combination, according to what is appropriate.

Burchinal, M., Howes, C., Pianta, R., Bryant, D., Early, D., Clifford, R. & Barbarin, O. (2008). Predicting child outcomes at the end of kindergarten from the quality of pre-kindergarten teacher-child interactions and instruction. *Applied Developmental Science* 12(3): 140-153.

Publicly funded pre-kindergartens are programs that most states use to promote school readiness, especially of 4-year-old children at risk for academic problems due to poverty. Despite large public expenditures, these programs have not been widely evaluated. We examined 240 randomly selected pre-kindergarten programs in six states with mature programs that serve large numbers of children, and evaluated specific aspects of classroom quality and children's academic achievement in both the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten year for over 700 children. Results showed that, on average, pre-kindergarten teachers were moderately responsive and sensitive, but were less successful in engaging children in learning specific skills. Both sensitive and stimulating interactions with the teacher and the instructional quality aspects of the pre-kindergarten classroom predicted the acquisition of language, pre-academic, and social skills through the end of the kindergarten year. [Abstract from Author]

Buss, A.H. & Plomin, R. (1984) *Temperament: Early Developing Personality Traits*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

Parental Emotionality, Activity, Sociability (EAS) Temperament Survey for Children Ratings (Buss & Plomin, 1984) is designed to be completed by parents to assess temperament in children aged 1-9 years. The Survey contains 20 statements describing three dimensions of temperament: Emotionality, Activity, and Sociability. Shyness, which is not considered a temperament dimension but rather a derivative of Sociability is also assessed. Parents rate each statement on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not characteristic or typical of the child) to 5 (very characteristic or typical of the child) and 6 (not observed). The EAS has been found to offer a multidimensional assessment of a child's temperament, and has sound psychometric properties including high internal consistency, inter-rater reliability and construct validity (Karp, Serbin, Stack & Schwartzman, 2004; Saudino, McGuire, Reiss; Hetherington, & Plomin, 1995)

Carr, M. (2001) *Assessment in early childhood settings learning stories accessed from <http://nla.gov.au/anbd.bib-an42833826>*

The resource describes a way of assessment that stays close to the children's real experiences and provides an alternative to mechanistic and fragmented approaches. It shows how practitioners can assess what really matters: those learning dispositions (interest, involvement and perseverance for example) that provide a foundation for life-long learning.

Caspe, M., Lopez, M.E. & Wolos, C. (2006/2007) *Family involvement in elementary school children's education*. Harvard family Research Project no. 2 (Winter 06/07) Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Centre for Community Child Health and Telethon Institute for Child Health Research (n.d) *Australian Early Development Index: Checklist Questions*.

Centre for Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood (2008) *Transition: A Positive Start to School: Literature Review*. Melbourne: The University of Melbourne Centre for Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood.

Clark, M. M. (2005) *Understanding research in early education: the relevance for the future of lessons from the past*. New York: Routledge.

Chapters in this book examine a variety of different large and small-scale research reports and projects carried out in numerous early years settings. The author shows how to avoid common pitfalls in misinterpreting research findings, what questions should be asked in order to help inform students' own research projects, and how findings can be applied and used in the classroom or nursery to improve practice

Clay, M. (1993) *An Observation Survey of early Literacy Achievement*. Auckland: Heinemann Education.

A tool for the systematic observation of young children's responses to classroom reading and writing in the first years of school.

Cohen, J. (2005) *Helping young children succeed: strategies to promote early childhood social and emotional development*. Denver, Colorado: National Conference of State Legislatures.

This brief defines early childhood social-emotional development; describes what can happen when children face emotional and behavioral problems; and outlines what actions can be taken at the state level to support healthy social-emotional development in babies and young children. It also highlights state and community efforts to improve early childhood social and emotional development through promotion, prevention and treatment approaches.

Cohen, R. J. (2009). *Psychological testing and assessment: an introduction to tests and measurement*. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Corsaro, W. A. & Molinari, L. (2005). *I compagni: understanding children's transition from preschool to elementary school*. New York: Teacher College Press.

This ethnographic study: (1) Documents how young children in Italy are prepared, or primed, for the transition from preschool to elementary school; (2) Examines how the transition relates to academic and social development, including details about the children's school and peer cultures before, during, and after the transition; (3) Includes interviews with parents, teachers, and children, engaging anecdotes, and examples of children's art and literacy projects; and (4) Suggests different approaches that schools and communities can take to support children's and families' development and learning.

Cowan, P. A. (2005) *The Family Context of Parenting in Children's Adaptation to Elementary School*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

This book is a result of a longitudinal prevention study of 100 families begun the year before their first children entered kindergarten. Each family went through an assessment and then a subset was randomly chosen for group intervention. The children in both groups were then studied as they progressed through kindergarten and first grade to assess the quality of their adaptation to the school environment. The text focuses on how parent-child relationships are only one determinant of a child's academic competence, social competence, and behavior. Rather, these relationships must be understood in the context of the role they play within the family as a system. It also addresses the recent challenges to claims about the impact of parents on their children's development. The book sheds additional light on family influences within the larger social environment as a key determinant of the quality of children's adjustment to schooling

De Lemos, M. (2008). *Assessing development and readiness for school across different cultural and language groups*. *Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties* 13(2): 73-98.

This article provides information on a measure that was developed to assess children's level of development at preschool and entry to school level, as well as their readiness for formal schooling. This measure, 'Who Am I?', is based on early copying and writing skills and is designed to identify the broad stages of development that underlie children's readiness for more formal learning in a school situation. Although originally developed in Australia, it has now been used in studies in a number of different countries, including Canada, Hong Kong, India, and Sweden, and data from these studies provide some insight into the variations in development that are associated with different patterns of preschool provision and different ages of entry into an educational program. The results of these studies indicate

that 'Who Am I?' provides a valid measure of development across different language and cultural groups and can therefore be used as a tool to evaluate the effectiveness of different forms of early childhood provision, as well as children's readiness for more formal learning in a school situation. [Author abstract, ed]

Denham, S. A. (2006). Social-emotional competence as support for school readiness: What is it and how do we assess it? *Early Education & Development* 17(1): 57-89.

The overall issue of assessment during early childhood, and its relation to school readiness and other decisions, is currently widely debated. Expanding early childhood education and child care enrolments, better scientific knowledge about early childhood development, and decisions about public spending, necessitate careful consideration of which assessment tools to use, as well as why and when to use them. More specifically, the disconnection between the importance of social and emotional domains of development, and their status within educational programming and assessment, has long been lamented. The last several years have, however, witnessed a blossoming of attention to these areas during early childhood, as crucial for both concurrent and later well-being and mental health, as well as learning and academic success. Teachers view children's "readiness to learn" and "teachability" as marked by positive emotional expressiveness, enthusiasm, and ability to regulate emotions and behaviours. Based on these assertions, Denham suggests a battery of preschool social-emotional outcome measures, tapping several constructs central to emotional and social competence theory, specifically emotional expression, emotion regulation, emotion knowledge, social problem solving, and positive and negative social behaviour.

Dever, M. T. & Falconer, R.C. (2009). Foundations and change in early childhood education in Scheiwe, K. & Willekens, H. *Child care and preschool development in Europe: Institutional perspectives*. Hampshire: Macmillan.

Countries across Europe differ radically in their approach to childcare and two different approaches compete with each other: one focuses on facilitating women's paid work and involvement in the workforce, the other focuses on the educational needs of young children. In this book the differences of approach across Europe are explored from comparative, historical and institutional perspectives. The historical development of child care systems is shown to be fundamental to the forms they take today, and vital in determining how reform can occur. Early childhood education is a key subject in terms of pedagogical concerns, but the development of childcare or preschool institutions has hardly ever been investigated using the approach used in this book. Focusing on an analysis of factors helping or hindering the development of preschool institutions in different countries, and on comparing path dependencies, and events that disrupt these accepted norms, this book sets out key policymaking issues in this field.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2008) *Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development* Victoria: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2009) *Transition: A Positive Start to School* Victoria: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2009) *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: A Draft for Trial and Validation* Victoria: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Dockett, S. & Perry, B. (2001) *Starting School: Effective Transitions* *Early Childhood Research and Practice* Fall 3 (2).

This paper focuses on effective transition-to-school programs. Using a framework of 10 guidelines developed through the Starting School Research Project, it provides examples of effective strategies and transition programs. In this context, the nature of some current transition programs is questioned, and the curriculum of transition is problematized. In particular, issues are raised around who has input into such programs and who decides on appropriate curriculum.

Dockett, S & Perry, B. (2002) Who's Ready for what? Young Children Starting School
Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood 3(1): 69-87

Dockett, S & Perry, B. (2003) Children's Views and Children's Voices in Starting School
Australian Journal of Early Childhood 28(1): 12-17

Dockett, S. (2004) 'Everyone was really happy to see me!' The importance of friendships in the return to school of children with chronic illness. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood* 29(1): 27-32.

One of the features of the Starting School Research Project has been the study of multiple experiences of the transition to school. An ecological model of transition highlights the significance of context and the ways in which context influences experiences and is influenced by the participants in these experiences. Understanding context is one of the keys to understanding successful transitions. This article considers the contexts and experiences of children with chronic illness as they start or return to school, with particular focus on the importance of children's friendships. [Author abstract, ed]

Dockett, S & Perry, B. (2005) 'You Need to Know How to Play Safe': Children's Experiences of Starting School *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood* 6(1): 4-18

Dockett, S. & Perry, B. (2006) Starting School: A Handbook for Early Childhood Educators.
Castle Hill: Pademelon Press.

This book emphasises the importance of relationships and of people working together to help make the transition to school positive. It highlights the importance of the transition to school and introduces the *Guidelines for Effective Transition to School Program* developed by the University of Western Australia. The book provides information on planning effective transition programs specifically in relation to the people and the processes involved in the programs

Dockett, S. & Perry, B. (2006) Our Family is Starting School, Baulkman Hills: Pademelon Press.

This book is designed to support and inform the families of children starting school. It details what families can do to support their child's transition to school, including what to look for in a school, school readiness, strategies for communicating with the school and becoming engaged in transition programs.

Dockett, S. and B. Perry (2007). Transitions to school: perceptions, expectations, experiences.
Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.

This book delivers a comprehensive coverage of local and overseas research on transition to school. The transition to school is an important and topical issue in both educational and political arenas. Educationally, the transition to school is linked to later academic and social success. Politically, the issue of children's preparedness for school and the ability of schools and school systems to support their youngest students have become a focus of attempts to promote equality of educational opportunity and educational outcomes. The authors examine the complex range of issues that relate to positive transitions to school, focusing on the perceptions, expectations and experiences of all involved. It draws on the ongoing findings of the Australian Starting School Research Project and presents these

in a comprehensive way. The book also compares and contrasts these findings with those of other researchers in Australia, USA, Europe and Asia.

Dockett, S. & Perry, B. (2009). Readiness for school: a relational construct. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood* 34(1): 20-26.

The notion of readiness and what it means to be ready for school dominates much of the popular discussion, as well as the research base, about transition to school. Readiness means different things for different people, yet almost always there is a perception that readiness for school involves some assessment of the characteristics of individual children against some set of standard expectations or desirable attributes. The article explores three aspects of readiness: notions of children's readiness; schools' readiness for children; and family and community supports that underpin readiness. Recognition of the importance of each of these aspects supports the conclusion that a focus only on the characteristics of individual children provides, at best, a narrow and limited conceptualisation of readiness and one that can act against children's best interests. [Author abstract]

Epstein, M. H., Synhorst, L.L., Cress, C.J. & Allen, E.A. (2009) Development and standardization of a test to measure the emotional and behavioral strengths of preschool children. *Journal of Emotional & Behavioral Disorders* 17(1): 29-37.

The purpose of this study was to document the development and standardization of the Preschool Behavioural and Emotional Rating Scale and to examine its factor structure, internal consistency, and criterion validity. Data from a nationally representative sample (N = 1,471) of preschool children with and without disabilities were collected. An exploratory factor analysis identified four factors: Emotional Regulation, School Readiness, Social Confidence, and Family Involvement. The subscales and total instrument appear remarkably stable and consistent (.838 to .983). Age differences across 3-, 4-, and 5-year olds were small in magnitude, although girls were rated as possessing significantly more strengths than boys. Preschool children with disabilities were seen as having less emotional and behavioural strength than their peers without disabilities. The limitations and future research needs are discussed. [Author Abstract]

Fabian, H. & Dunlop, A. W. (eds) (2007) *Informing transitions in the early years: research, policy and practice* New York: Open University Press

This book explores early transitions from a variety of international perspectives. Each chapter is informed by rigorous research and makes recommendations on how education professionals can better understand and support transitions in the early years. Contributors examine issues such as: Parental involvement in the transition to school Children's voices on the transition to primary school The construction of identity in the early years Readers will be able to draw support, guidance and inspiration from the different writers to scaffold their own thinking and development in relation to children's transitions. Ample opportunities are offered for readers to gain confidence and competence in dealing with the range of people involved in transitions, and to the benefit of everyone, not least the children, whose 'transitions capital' will grow.

Fantuzzo, J.W., Sutton-Smith, B., Coolahan, K., Manz, P., Canning, S. & Debnom, D. (1995) Assessment of preschool play interaction behaviours in young low income children: Penn Interactive Peer Play Scale (PIPPS) *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 10: 105-120.

A study developed and validated the Penn Interactive Peer Play Scale (PIPPS), a teacher-rating instrument of the interactive play behaviors of preschool children. Thirty-eight teachers completed the measure on 312 African American children enrolled in Head Start. Exploratory factor analysis revealed three reliable underlying dimensions: play interaction, play disruption, and play disconnection.

Fantuzzo, J.W, Bulotsky-Shearer, R., Fusco, R.A. & McWayne, C. (2005) An investigation of preschool classroom behavioral adjustment problems and social-emotional school readiness competencies. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 20(3): 259-275.

The study examined the unique relationship between multiple dimensions of classroom behavioural adjustment problems and salient social, emotional competencies for urban Head Start children. These relationships were investigated using a hierarchical model that controlled for the variance in social-emotional outcomes attributed to age, gender, and verbal ability. Classroom behavioural adjustment problems were assessed early in the year by the Adjustment Scales for Preschool Intervention (ASPI) across multiple, routine preschool classroom situations. Outcomes assessed at the end of the year included emotion regulation, peer play in the home and neighbourhood context, and approaches to learning. Socially negative behaviour in the classroom predicted emotional liability, maladaptive learning behaviours, and disruptive social play in the home at the end of the year. Withdrawn behaviour uniquely predicted lower affective engagement in the classroom and disconnection from peers in the home context. Findings provide predictive validity for the ASPI. Implications for policy, practice and future research are discussed.

Forget-Dubois, N., Lemelin, J.P., Boivin, M., Dionne, G., Seguin, J.R., Vitaro, F. & Tremblay, R.E (2007). Predicting early school achievement with the EDI: A longitudinal population based study. *Early Education & Development* 18(3): 405-426.

School readiness tests are significant predictors of early school achievement. Measuring school readiness on a large scale would be necessary for the implementation of intervention programs at the community level. However, assessment of school readiness is costly and time consuming. This study assesses the predictive value of a school readiness measure, the Early Development Instrument (EDI), which relies on kindergarten teachers' ratings of children's well-being and social, emotional, and cognitive development. We also compared the predictive value of the EDI with that of a direct school readiness test and a battery of cognitive tests. Data were collected when the children were in kindergarten and a year later, as part of Quebec's Longitudinal Study of Child Development. We found that the EDI alone explained 36% of the variance in school achievement. The complete battery of measures explained 50% of the variance in early school achievement. Two of the EDI domains (Physical Health and Well-Being and Language and Cognitive Development) contributed uniquely to the prediction of school achievement over and above the cognitive assessments and direct school readiness test. The social and emotional domains of the EDI were at best marginal predictors of school achievement. In spite of this limitation, we conclude that the EDI predicts early school achievement as accurately as measures that take more time and resources to administer. [Abstract from Author]

Fyke. L.B (2007) Essential kindergarten assessments: for reading, writing, and math. New York: Scholastic.

A toolkit for assessing kindergarten students' progress in language arts and maths which includes evaluation sheets and a month-by-month learning-expectations grid detailing kindergarten learning objectives. Support materials include record-keeping forms to keep assessment data organized and send-home learning activities to reinforce targeted skills.

Giallo, R., Baschuk, M. & Matthews, J. (2007) Pilot evaluation of the Ausparenting In Schools Transition To Primary School Parent Program accessed from <http://www.parentingrc.org.au/staging/files/13022007120249AusPRep07.pdf>

The aim was to find out whether the program was helpful to families in managing their children's transition. In particular to know whether attending the program decreased parents' worry and concern about their child's transition and increased their knowledge and confidence in managing the transition process.

Giallo, R., Kienhuis, M., Treyvaud, K. & Matthers, J. (2008) A Psychometric Evaluation of the Parent Self-efficacy in Managing the Transition to School Scale *Australian Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology* vol 8 pp. 36-48

The psychometric properties of the Parent Self-efficacy in Managing the Transition to School Scale (PSMTSS) were investigated with a sample of 763 mothers whose children were starting primary school in Australia. Exploratory factor analysis identified two factors, Efficacy and Worry, accounting for 56.6% of the total variance in parent self-efficacy scores. These factors were demonstrated to have excellent internal consistency. Convergent validity of the PSMTSS was established using the Parenting Sense of Competence Scale (PSOC) as a criterion measure. Finally, preliminary analyses reveal a significant relationship between parent self-efficacy to manage the transition to school and children's school adjustment outcomes. Implications for future school transition and parental self-efficacy research are discussed.

Godfrey, C. (2006) *Responses to an early childhood educational intervention with disadvantaged families: an exploratory study* Footscray: Victoria University.

This thesis reports an investigation of the implementation of the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) program in a regional city in Victoria, Australia. Here, for the first time, this intensive, graduated, two-year program was delivered to a group of Australian-born families experiencing trans-generational poverty and educational disadvantage. The administering agency trained para-professionals from the community who undertook fortnightly home visits to instruct parents in a standard curriculum designed to enhance the learning readiness of their children. Parents, in turn, delivered the program in daily sessions to their children aged four and five. Formal psychological testing demonstrated clear gains for children in terms of their early school skills and socioemotional development, although results in the areas of general cognitive development, school readiness, and academic self-esteem were inconclusive. Process evaluation found that HIPPY was relevant and feasible in this population and highlighted several key aspects of program implementation. Findings are discussed in the light of international literature in the early intervention area, and implications for future practice and research are drawn out. [Author abstract]

Gronlund, G. & James, M. (2005) *Focused observations: how to observe children for assessment and curriculum planning*. St. Paul: Redleaf Press.

"Focused Observations is designed to help you learn to observe children and document their development in a systematic, purposeful way that gives you a complete picture of each child's progress and supports your curriculum planning. Becoming more skilled at making observation and documentation intentional and routine in your classroom improves your effectiveness with each child, saves you time, and creates a wealth of information for parents." "Ideal for pre-service or practicing teachers, Focused Observations contains discussion questions, observation practice exercises, and reflection assignments and is perfect for use with Focused Portfolios and Focused Early Learning. A trainer's video is also available for use in college coursework, staff development sessions, in-service workshops, and staff meetings."- Book Jacket.

Guhn, M., Gadermann, A. & Zumbo, B.D. (2007) Does the EDI measure school readiness in the same way across different groups of children? *Early Education & Development* 18(3): 453-472.

The present study investigates whether the Early Development Instrument (Offord & Janus, 1999) measures school readiness similarly across different groups of children. We employ ordinal logistic regression to investigate differential item functioning, a method of examining measurement bias. For 40,000 children, our analysis compares groups according to gender, English-as-a-second-language (ESL) status, and Aboriginal status. Our results indicate no systematic measurement differences

regarding Aboriginal status and gender, except for 1 item on which boys are more likely than girls to be rated as physically aggressive by Kindergarten teachers. In contrast, ESL children systematically receive lower ratings on items of the language and communication domains, Åías expected by definition of ESL status, but not within the physical, social, and emotional domains. We discuss how our results fit with child development research and the purpose of the Early Development Instrument, thus supporting its validity. [Author Abstract]

Guhn, M., Janus, M. & Hertzman, C. (2007) *The Early Development Instrument: Translating school readiness assessment into community actions and policy planning. Early Education & Development* 18(3): 369-374.

This invited special issue of *Early Education and Development* presents research related to the Early Development Instrument (EDI; Janus & Offord, 2007), a community tool to assess children's school readiness at a population level. In this editorial introduction, we first sketch out recent trends in school readiness research that call for a contextual and whole-child assessment of school readiness. Then we provide an overview of the EDI, including a discussion of its purpose and development, as well as its large-scale international use as a community tool to monitor children's developmental outcomes at population levels. Finally, we introduce the special issue's articles, all of which present research findings from ongoing community research projects that employ the EDI to assess children's school readiness. These articles are grouped into the following thematic themes: (a) individual-level validity of the EDI, (b) school and neighborhood effects and population-level validity of the EDI, and (c) program implementation and evaluation using the EDI.

Gullo, D. F. (2005) *Understanding assessment and evaluation in early childhood education. New York: Teachers College Press.*

This book is intended to help early childhood practitioners develop the essential understanding they require for appropriate use of assessment and evaluation information and to illuminate many of the issues involved in formal and informal assessment and evaluation.

Hay, I. & Fielding-Barnsley, R. (2009) *Competencies that underpin children's transition into early literacy. Australian Journal of Language and Literacy* 32(2): 148-162.

Understanding the competencies that underpin children's transition into early literacy is the main aim of this paper which explores four elements: (i) children's language development; (ii) their alphabetical knowledge as an indicator of initial reading; (iii) their in-class behaviour; and (iv) their socio-economic status (SES). Two studies are reported. The first is based on a cohort of end of preschool Queensland children from low SES communities (n=157) and their expressive and receptive language development and their level of in-class behaviour using the Rowe and Rowe Behavioural Rating Inventory (1997). The second study is a significant extension of the first, involving a cross section of SES school children starting Year 1 (n=457) and a more detailed measure of in-class behaviour using the SWAN Rating Scale for Attention. The pattern of results demonstrated an inter-relationship between children's language levels, in-class behaviour, and initial reading development and the impact SES has on these factors. The implications for literacy practice and theory are discussed. [Author abstract]

Hill, S. (2006) *Developing early literacy: assessment and teaching. Prahran, Vic: Eleanor Curtin Publishing.*

Jacobs, G. & Crowley, K. (2007) *Play, projects, and preschool standards: nurturing children's sense of wonder and joy in learning* Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press

James, A. (2006) *Kindergarten success: everything you need to know to help your child learn. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.*

This book shows parents how to enrich their children's classroom learning and take an active role in their kindergartners' educations. It includes information on methods and checklists to assess children's progress; and the developmental and social changes expected of kindergarteners as well as information on how to determine readiness to move up to the first grade.

Jones, C. (2004). 'I didn't want to appear to be a pushy parent': using portfolios as a communication bridge between the early childhood centre and school. Proceedings of the Continuity and Change: Educational Transitions International Conference, Sydney, 27-28 November 2003.

The author has been working on a Ministry-funded Early Childhood Learning and Assessment Exemplar (ECLAE) Project between 2001 and 2003. The purpose of the ECLAE project has been to collect and develop exemplars of early childhood assessments that reflect the principles of Te Whariki, the New Zealand Early Childhood Curriculum. The data for the paper comes from an interview by the author for a Pathways into school Exemplar File. As a parent of a new entrant child, the author discusses the sharing of the child's early childhood portfolio with his new entrant teacher. Although the author wanted to share the child's portfolio with the teacher there was a reluctance to be viewed as 'a pushy parent'. At the same time, although the teacher liked to see the children's portfolios she didn't want to put families 'on the spot' by asking for this in case the families didn't want to share them. This uncertainty surrounding perceived expectations between home and school is discussed along with the ways in which the sharing of the portfolio can be useful for both the teachers and the families. [Author abstract]

Justice, L. M., Bowles, R.P., Pence-Turnbull, K.L. & Skibbe, L.E (2009). School readiness among children with varying histories of language difficulties. *Developmental Psychology* 45(2): 460-476.

This study tested the hypotheses that (a) persistent language difficulties during childhood would predict lower school readiness and (b) language difficulties present just prior to school entry would predict lower school readiness beyond any effects of persistence. The study involved examining indicators of school readiness collected at kindergarten for children exhibiting various histories of language ability based on language measures collected at 15, 24, 36, and 54 months by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's Early Child Care Research Network. Children (N = 1,064) were classified according to whether they exhibited expressive or receptive language difficulties at each time point measured. The relation between persistence and timing of these difficulties to each kindergarten outcome was studied through a common factor approach for categorical outcomes. Persistence of language difficulties was not generally related to kindergarten outcomes. However, a robust effect was found for timing of language difficulties: Children who exhibited language difficulties at 54 months exhibited significantly depressed performance on measures of school readiness. Findings are discussed in terms of current policy and research concerning kindergarten readiness for children exhibiting risk. [Abstract from Author]

Kagan, S. L. & Kauerz, K. (2007) Reaching for the whole: Integration and alignment in early education policy in Pianta, R.C., Cox, M.J. & Snow, K.L. *School Readiness and the Transition to Kindergarten in the Era of Accountability*. Baltimore, USA: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

A discussion of the need for the shift in early childhood services from care to education to be accompanied by a subsequent change in accountability measures and the revision of educational policies

Keating, D. P. (2007) Formative evaluation of the Early Development Instrument: Progress and prospects *Early Education & Development* 18(3): 561-570.

This article is a commentary for the special issue on the Early Development Instrument (EDI), a community tool to assess children's school readiness and developmental outcomes at a group level. The EDI is administered by kindergarten teachers, who assess their kindergarten students on 5 developmental domains: physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communication skills and general knowledge. In this commentary, the author critically integrates research findings from projects that used the EDI to assess children's development at a community or population level, as presented in the research articles of this special issue. In addition, the EDI is situated in the school readiness literature, and forthcoming research directions and challenges that will largely determine the risk-benefit ratio of the EDI are discussed in regard to the following 3 topics: the advantages and limitations of using teacher judgment for the EDI, the establishment of the EDI's reliability and validity at a group (community, population) level, the EDI's effectiveness for intervention and program evaluation and measurement.

La Paro, K., Pianta, R. & Cox, M. (2000) Kindergarten Teachers' Reported Use of Kindergarten to First Grade Transition Practices *The Elementary School Journal* 101 (1) 63-78

Using a national sample of 3,595 public school kindergarten teachers and an additional 176 kindergarten teachers in private schools, information was obtained about teachers' practices related to the transition of children into first grade. Over half of public and private school teachers reported using some form of first-grade transition practice. More teachers in private schools reported using first-grade transition practices than teachers in public schools. The most frequently reported first-grade transition practice was meeting with first-grade teachers to discuss curriculum. More teachers reported using transition practices that focused on teacher or child activities rather than transition practices that involved parents. Findings were similar across metropolitan status of the school, district levels of poverty, and minority representation in the schools. As district poverty and minority representation increased in the public school sample, fewer teachers reported using transition practices. Findings are discussed in terms of an ecological perspective on children's school transitions.

Laevers, F. (1994) *The Leuven Involvement Scale for Young Children: Manual and Video Belgium: Centre for Experiential Education*

The Leuven Involvement Scale for Young Children (LIS-YC) is a process-orientated monitoring system, which provides professionals with a tool for quality assessment of educational settings. It looks at how 'involved' the children are in their work and at their 'emotional wellbeing', allowing professionals to identify children who may need extra support in the classroom.

Laevers, F., Bogaerts, M., & Moons, J. (1997) *Experiential Education at Work: A setting with 5 year olds: Video and Manual Belgium: Centre for Experiential Education*

This video and manual outlines the Adult Style Observation Schedule (ASOS) which is a tool for measuring three aspects of teacher style in the classroom; stimulation, sensitivity and giving autonomy.

Lara-Cinisomo, S., Fuligni, A., Ritchie, S., Howes, C. & Karoly, L. (2008) Getting ready for school: An examination of early childhood educators' belief systems. *Early Childhood Education Journal* 35(4): 343-349.

This study examines early childhood educators' beliefs about what children need prior to before entering kindergarten. Focus group interviews were conducted with early childhood educators from three learning settings: public center-based programs, private center-based programs, and family child care centers. Qualitative methods were used to analyze the data. Across program types, educators said that three levels should be addressed to help prepare a child for school: child, home, and teacher. The child must be physically and emotionally ready to engage with others and participate in learning opportunities, acquire basic skills, such as letter recognition, and have reasoning skills that enable the

child to problem-solve. At the home level, emotionally preparing the child for the transition and creating a home environment that promotes learning were reported as key to getting children for school. Teacher relationships with parents also emerged as important school readiness factor. Differences across program types are discussed. [Abstract from Author]

Layzer, J. I. & Goodson, B.D (2006). The "quality" of early care and educational settings; Definitional and measurement issues. *Evaluation Review* 30(5): 556-576.

There is a widespread belief that high-quality early care and education can improve children's school readiness. However, debate continues about the essential elements of a high-quality experience, about whether quality means the same things across different types of care settings, about how to measure quality, and about the level of quality that might make a meaningful difference in outcomes for children. Are the aspects of the child care environment that researchers measure the ones that are most strongly related to children's development? This article argues that the ways in which researchers currently measure early care environments are flawed and that the conclusions drawn about the relationship between these measures and outcomes for children are frequently incorrect or overstated. The article addresses four questions: How is the quality of the child care environment commonly defined and measured? Do the most commonly used measures capture the child's experience? Do they work well across all settings? Are researchers drawing the correct conclusions from studies that relate the child care environment to child outcomes? Finally, the article discusses some possible directions for future research.

Li, J., D'Angiulli, A. & Kendall, G.E (2007) The Early Development Index and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. *Early Years: Journal of International Research & Development* 27(3): 221-235.

The Early Development Index (EDI) is a teacher-completed checklist, intended to be a population-level tool to measure children's readiness for school and to alert communities to potential developmental problems in children. In response to the increasing popularity of the EDI, this paper provides a critical and timely evaluation and identifies the areas for improvement and modifications. The paper aims: (1) to identify the limitations of the EDI as a universal screening tool, particularly with regard to children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD); (2) to alert readers to the potential negative implications of the current EDI for communities and society, and (3) to recommend ways for improvement so that the EDI will become a valid and culturally appropriate screening tool for monitoring early development in CALD children. The ultimate aim is to help build an education system and a society that can respect cultural and individual differences. [Abstract from Author]

Maeroff, G. I. (2006). *Building blocks: making children successful in the early years of school.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Maeroff takes a hard look at early learning and the primary grades of schooling. *Building Blocks* offers a concrete and groundbreaking strategy for improving early education. Filled with colorful descriptions and anecdotes from Maeroff's visits to schools around the country, *Building Blocks* creates a rich portrait of education in America, ranging from math lessons imported from Singapore in Massachusetts to serious but joyful kindergartens in California. He speaks of the need for schools to prepare for the burgeoning enrollment of youngsters from immigrant families and for all children to acquire the habits and dispositions that will make them committed and productive students.

Maley, C. R. & Bond, T.G. (2007) Measuring up for big school: a role for cognitive development. AARE 2007 International education research conference. Fremantle: papers collection.

For over 30 years, contention has surrounded the issue of preschool children's readiness for formal schooling. A Piagetian view is that the presence and use of particular operatory structures indicative of

the concrete operational stage of cognitive development are necessary for a child to achieve successful learning outcomes in the new formal education environment of primary school. In any case, the nonstandardised skills-based checklists utilised by many preschool teachers to infer children's levels of readiness for year one seem ineffectual as the debate regarding children's school readiness persists. This paper reports on the findings from a research project in which forty-two preschool children were administered a Piagetian conservation of number task as outlined in the work of Piaget and Szeminska The child's conception of number (1941/1952) using the Genevan mÈthode clinique. Participants were also routinely assessed by their teachers using the preschool's Key Indicators of Readiness for Year One (KIRYO) Checklist and, in addition, then judged qualitatively on their preschool and early year one performance by the respective teachers. Children's performances on each of the above-mentioned indicators were scored quantitatively using detailed performance criteria derived explicitly from each item's source. Rasch analysis using the Partial Credit Model indicated that success on the conservation task was more closely aligned with children's success in year one than was mastery of the KIRYO Checklist indicators. The implications for professional discussion and decision making, as well as insights for teachers of early childhood sectors are canvassed. [Author abstract]

Margetts, K. (2002) Transition to school- complexity and diversity *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 10 (2): 103-114

This study examined factors influencing the adjustment of children to the first year of school at four elementary schools in Australia. Statistically significant associations with children's adjustment were found for several factors, including personal and background factors, transition activities conducted by schools, children's preschool and early school experiences, and the absence or presence of a friend. Findings pose implications for promoting student adjustment to school. (Author/KB)

Margetts, K. (2007) Preparing Children for School- benefits and privileges *Australian Journal of Early Childhood* 32 (2): 43-50

The importance of carefully planned transition programs for children commencing school has been advocated in the literature. These programs should be based on sound principles of transition and reflect the voices of parents, preschool and school staff, and children. A variety of practices exist, and children's participation in transition programs also varies. This article reports a study about the participation of children and their parents in different transition activities, differences in this participation by child gender and family demographics, and the relationship between participation in different numbers of these activities and children's adjustment to the first year of school. The children were drawn from 12 preparatory classes (year before Year 1) across four government primary schools in Melbourne. Results indicate significant benefits of participation in high numbers of transition activities for teacher-rated social and academic competence for children. Children's adjustment to school also appeared to differ for particular cohorts of the population. The challenge is to take these findings and translate them into the public good to maximise benefits to all children rather than those already experiencing sociocultural privilege. [Author abstract, ed]

Margetts, K. (2009) Early transition and adjustment and children's adjustment after six years of schooling. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 17(3): 309-324.

Researchers have made convincing arguments for the benefits of a smooth transition to school. The passage through this significant social change may have a lasting influence on children's progress. For example, social, emotional and academic difficulties in the early years of schooling have been shown to persist through school and into adolescence. This paper reports a longitudinal study undertaken in Melbourne, Australia, which explored the relationship between children's early school adjustment and their development after six years of primary schooling (end of Grade 5), using the same social, behavioural and academic measures. The influence of children's adjustment in the early weeks of schooling on adjustment at the end of Grade 5 after allowing for a range of personal characteristics,

family demographics and school factors is also reported. Adjustment in Grade 5 was predicted by family socioeconomic status as determined by government financial support for families and attendance at before-school-hours care in the early weeks of schooling, and some early measures of adjustment.

Marthenis, K. (2006) *School readiness and the preschool teacher in Singapore: an interpretivist study*. Crawley WA: University of Western Australia

Understanding of school readiness and its influence on teaching practices is integral to promoting children's adjustment to school. International research has expressed concern about the rapid and often unanticipated changes children face in a compressed period of time when they begin school. Countries like Singapore have a growing concern with the 'unpreparedness' of children who have attended preschool programs and requiring learning support for their varying degrees of ability upon entry to formal schooling. In Singapore, preschool education is provided in childcare centres and - kindergartens for children below the age of seven years. Since the quality of preschool provision depends greatly on the preschool teachers and the training received by them, the aim of the study reported in this thesis was to gain an understanding of Singapore preschool teachers' perspectives on school readiness of five to six- year-old children prior to commencing formal schooling. Furthermore, there are only a few studies that have considered the preschool teachers' perspectives on school readiness and no local studies that have investigated the preschool teachers' perspectives in Singapore. The study that is reported in this thesis is one contribution to this call. Its particular concern is that the current understanding of school readiness and strategies employed in promoting children's readiness for school are not necessarily the best ones to ensure a smooth transition for preschool children to formal schooling. This interpretivist study adopted a collective case study approach and conducted semi-structured indepth interviews to gather data from a purposive sample of twelve preschool staff from childcare centres and kindergartens. Guiding questions were developed from the central research question and the Miles and Huberman framework for qualitative data analysis was used to analyse the gathered data. The research findings yielded three major themes: the importance of preschool teacher's understanding of school readiness; the importance of reciprocal home-school relationship; and the importance of continuity from preschool to primary school. Further analysis of data within these themes resulted in the emergence of eight theoretical propositions. These propositions led to a variety of implications. First, there are implications for the four bodies of theoretical literature identified as the central concepts of this study: concept of readiness; dimensions of school readiness; transition to school; and parental support. The second is implications for further research. This is followed by implications for future practice listed as a series of eight recommendations, and implications for policy makers. [Author abstract]

Mashburn, A. J. & Pianta, R.C. (2006) *Social relationships and school readiness*. *Early Education & Development* 17(1): 151-176.

Definitions of school readiness tend to focus on social and academic competencies that children are presumed to need to start school ready to learn. However, a child-focused definition of school readiness is limited because it neither identifies processes that lead children to acquire these competencies, nor does it recognize children's dependence on opportunities within settings that support development of these competencies. The model of school readiness presented in this article broadly defines school readiness as a function of an organized system of interactions and transactions among people (children, teachers, parents, and other caregivers), settings (home, school, and child care), and institutions (communities, neighborhoods, and governments). We propose that the primary mechanisms through which children acquire readiness-related competencies are social relationships children form with peers, parents, and teachers. This perspective on school readiness, emphasizing the mediating role of relational processes, offers guidance for designing interventions to improve school readiness through strengthening relationships between parents and children, parents and teachers, and teachers and children. [Abstract from Author]

McAfee, O. & Leong, D. (2007) *Assessing and guiding young children's development and learning*. Boston, Mass: Pearson A & B.

This book shows assessment as a process teachers can use to improve teaching and ensure student learning. It incorporates current trends in assessment with examples and approaches being used in early childhood classrooms. The text includes guides for interpreting and using assessment information once it has been collected. The assessment strategies presented are compatible with all approaches to educating young children. The social, cultural, legal, and ethical context of assessment and its implications for teachers and teaching are realistically presented

McCartney, K. & Phillips, D. (2006) *Blackwell Handbook of Early Childhood Development* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing

McLachlan, C., Fler, M. & Edwards, S. (n.d) *Early childhood curriculum: planning, assessment and implementation*. Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

A self assessment and planning tool for curriculum and assessment

Meisels, S. J. (2007) *Accountability in early childhood: no easy answers* in Pianta R.C., Cox, M.J and Snow, K.J. *School Readiness and the Transition to Kindergarten in the Era of Accountability* Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Mindes, G. (2007) *Assessing young children*. Upper Saddle River, N.J: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Assessing Young Children addresses theory and provides illustrations of appropriate practice for prospective teachers, as well as discusses current trends for experienced teachers. It approaches assessment as an integral part of the teaching-learning process. Key components of the assessment system advocated include cultural sensitivity, parent collaboration and a vision of inclusionary practice in all early childhood environments-child care and school. This book reflects the knowledge base of early childhood and early childhood special education.

Missall, K. N. & Hojniski, R. L. (2008) *The critical nature of young children's emerging peer related social competence for transition to school* in Brown, W.H., Odom, S.L. McConnell, S.R. (Eds.), *Social competence of young children: Risk, disability, and intervention*. (pp. 117-137) Baltimore, MD: Paul H Brookes Publishing.

Mitchell, L. & the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (2008) *Assessment practices and aspects of curriculum in early childhood education results of the 2007 NZCER national survey for ECE services* from <http://www.nzcer.org.nz/pdfs/16544.pdf>

The survey reports the views of teachers/educators from education and care centres, kindergartens, playcentres, and home-based services, and from a small number of kohanga reo, along with the views of parents. This report explores assessment practices in early childhood education centres, including use of data, use of Kei Tua o te Pae and parental involvement. It also looks at resources, professional development, support for children with special educational needs, and relationships between early childhood centres, and between the sector and schools.

Moore, L. (2007). *Building waterfalls: a living and learning curriculum framework for adults and children (birth to school age)* Newmarket, Ql: Creche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland.

The *Building waterfalls* curriculum framework for adults and children (birth to school age) invites children and adults to take part in a journey – a journey that requires a commitment to potentials,

possibilities, aspirations and inspirations. Four 'currents of thought' underpin the framework: connecting, enlarging, listening and exploring. Within each current of thought are four shared understandings, 16 in total, that together guide every interaction, negotiation and collaboration that takes place in the early childhood service. Their purpose is to nurture in children strong qualities of character, and positive dispositions and capabilities towards life and learning.

Morrison, G. S. (2007) *Fundamentals of early childhood education* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall.

Mundy, J. (2005) *Jump into school: getting off to a good start to school - before school.* Glenorchy, Tas: Tasmanian Aboriginal Education Association.

Murdoch University (2005). *2006 PIPS manual : performance indicators in primary schools on entry baseline assessment.* Murdoch, W.A: School of Education, Murdoch University. PIPS (Performance Indicators in Primary Schools) On-Entry Baseline Assessment is administered by Murdoch University and offered to schools and systems in Australia. This Baseline Assessment of literacy and numeracy is one of a range of assessments developed by the Curriculum Evaluation and Management Centre (CEM) at the University of Durham, UK, under Director Professor Peter Tymms and his colleagues. This assessment can assist with assessing progress of students entering primary school.

Murray, E. & Harrison, L. (2004) *Adjusting to school: development and preliminary validation of a pictorial measure of school stress.* Proceedings of the Continuity and Change: Educational Transitions International Conference, Sydney, 27-28 November 2003.

This study describes the development of a new measure designed to assess the extent to which children perceive typical school events as emotionally stressful, and to describe the strategies children use to cope with these events. Results from the presentation of the Pictorial Measure of School Stress (PMSS) with a group of ten children are described. Reliability was examined by testing children over two assessment periods during the kindergarten year. Validity was examined by comparing PMSS results with teacher, child and parent-rated questionnaire measures of school adjustment. Responses to the PMSS indicated that certain school situations elicited different stress responses from children and that for some scenarios stress responses changed over time. Change was explained by childrens' increased familiarity with the school environment. Patterns of change over time were similar to changes in teacher- and parent-rated adjustment scores. [Author abstract, ed]

New Zealand Education Review Office (2008) *The quality of assessment in early childhood education* accessed at

<http://www.ero.govt.nz/Publications/pubs2008/qual-assmntecenov07.pdf>

This report presents the Education Review Office's findings on the quality of assessment in early childhood education. ERO found that the quality of assessment varied within each service and between services. In about two-thirds of early childhood services, policies and structures for assessment were working well, and assessment practices reflected the four principles of *Te Whāriki*. Factors that contributed to good quality assessment in an early childhood service related to the processes and support structures in the service, the shared understanding and practice of educators, and active and meaningful participation in assessment by children, parents, whānau and other educators. This evaluation has highlighted the need for high quality professional development and sufficient time to allow educators to fully understand the purpose of assessment processes and practices, and to use assessment information effectively in the planning and evaluation of programmes.

O'Donnell, K. & Mulligan, G. (2008) Parents' reports of the school readiness of young children from the National Household Education Surveys Program of 2007 from <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS113491>

This report presents data on the school readiness of children in the United States as reported by their parents. This report incorporates basic demographic information about the children, parent/guardian characteristics, and household characteristics. These data come from the School Readiness Survey (SR) of the 2007 National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES:2007). Topics addressed include the participation of young children in preschool or other types of centres-based care or education arrangements; parental plans for kindergarten enrolment and an assessment of what parents should do to prepare their children for kindergarten; children's developmental accomplishments and difficulties, including emerging literacy and numeracy; family activities with children in the home and outside of the home; and children's television-viewing habits

Panter, J. E. & Bracken, B.A (2009) Validity of the Bracken School Readiness Assessment for predicting first grade readiness. *Psychology in the Schools* 46(5): 397-409.

The Bracken School Readiness Assessment (BSRA) was administered to all kindergarten students enrolled in two rural elementary schools in the fall of 2004. Eight months later, the reading portion of the Metropolitan Readiness Tests, 6th Edition (MRT-6) was administered. Teachers were asked to indicate whether they had concerns about each student's readiness for first grade and whether students had been retained or referred for other assessment(s) or services. The BSRA was found to be a good predictor of children's readiness ratings, as well as their retention or referral for services. It also predicted performance on the MRT-6. This study partially validated the use of the BSRA as a screening measure to predict kindergarten performance and kindergarten teachers' ratings of first grade readiness. -© 2009 Wiley Periodicals, Inc. [Abstract from Authors]

Perry, B. (2006) *Transitions to school: perceptions, expectations and experiences*, Sydney: UNSW Press

This book presents comprehensive research from the Australian Starting School Research Project

Petriwskyj, A. (2005) Transition to school: early years teachers' roles. *Australian Research in Early Childhood Education* 12(2): 39-49.

During the past three decades, concepts of effective transition into primary school have moved on from 'readiness' of the child to the influence of multiple structural factors such as class grading, age of entry or the use of 'preparatory' classes. Recent literature considers the readiness of the school for the child, including the effect of changes in pedagogy in the early years of primary school on school success. This study in an early years classroom focuses on the process of developing teacher pedagogy to support transition into school of diverse learners, including socially marginalised and indigenous children who have little or no preschool education experience. The role of action research as a vehicle for changing pedagogy is explored, together with the role of external facilitation. [Author abstract]

Pianta, R. C. (2004) Going to kindergarten: transition models and practices. *Proceedings of the Continuity and Change: educational transitions International Conference, Sydney, 27-28 November 2003.*

This paper presents work conducted with colleagues of the author on the transition to kindergarten. Although the work is focused largely around principles that occur during the transition, they are very likely to be relevant to people's work throughout the age-span, especially in terms of the focus on linkages and connections. The paper focuses around two topics related to transition. What models and practices can be used to effectively link families, schools and children around transition to Kindergarten and, what role do classrooms and the quality of children's experiences in these classrooms play in determining their transition experiences, and in particular, their readiness for school? [Introduction, ed]

Pianta, R.C & Cox, M.J (2002) *Transition to Kindergarten*. Early Childhood Research and Policy Briefs 2 (2/ Winter) 1-4. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: National Center for Early Development and Learning, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Accessed from www.fpg.unc.edu/NCEDL/PDFs/TransFac.pdf

Pianta, R. C., Cox, M.J. & Snow, K.J (Eds) (2007) *School readiness and the transition to kindergarten in the era of accountability*. Baltimore, Md: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

Puckett, M. B. & Black, J.K (2008) *Meaningful assessments of the young child: celebrating development and learning*. Upper Saddle River, NJ : Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall.

"Based on the premise that curriculum, assessment , and teaching are inextricably intertwined, this text is designed to help prospective teachers of young children conduct informal and formal assessments and develop an assessment system that draws information from various sources. By doing so, complementary and comprehensive information is gathered to inform educators, learners, parents, and accountability requirements. The text helps students to develop the mindset that comprehensive, reliable, and valid assessment data pave the way for meaningful, relevant, and engaging learning opportunities for children." – Book Jacket.

Pugh, G. & Duffy, B. (2006). *Contemporary issues in the early years*. London: Paul Chapman.

Quach, J., Hiscock, H. Canterford, L. & Wake, M. (2009) *Outcomes of child sleep problems over the school-transition period: Australian population longitudinal study*. *Pediatrics* 123(5): 1287-1292.

Adequate sleep optimises children's learning and behaviour. However, the natural history and impact of sleep problems during school transition is unknown. To determine (1) the natural history of sleep problems over the 2-year period spanning school entry and (2) associations of children's health-related quality of life, language, behaviour, learning, and cognition at ages 6.5 to 7.5 years with (a) timing and (b) severity of sleep problems. Data were drawn from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children. Children were aged 4 to 5 years at wave 1 and 6 to 7 years at wave 2. Parent-reported predictors included (1) timing (none, persistent, resolved, incident) of moderate/severe sleep problems over the 2 waves and (2) severity (none, mild, moderate/severe) of sleep problems at wave 2. Outcomes included parent-reported health-related quality of life and language, parent- and teacher-reported behaviour, teacher-reported learning, and directly assessed nonverbal (matrix reasoning) and verbal (receptive vocabulary) cognition. Linear regression, adjusted for child age, gender, and social demographic variables, was used to quantify associations of outcomes with sleep-problem timing and severity. Sleep data were available at both waves for 4460 (89.5 percent) children, of whom 22.6 percent (17.0 percent mild, 5.7 percent moderate/severe) had sleep problems at wave 2. From wave 1, 2.9 percent persisted and 2.8 percent developed a moderate/severe problem, whereas 10.1 percent resolved. Compared with no sleep problems, persistent and incident sleep problems predicted poorest health-related quality of life, behaviour, language, and learning scores, whereas resolving problems showed intermediate outcomes. These outcomes also showed a dose-response relationship with severity at wave 2, with effect sizes for moderate/severe sleep problems ranging from η^2 0.25 to η^2 1.04 SDs. Cognitive outcomes were unaffected. Sleep problems during school transition are common and associated with poorer child outcomes. Randomised, controlled trials could determine if population-based sleep interventions can reduce the prevalence and impact of sleep problems. [Author abstract]

Raver, C. C. & Zigler, E.F. (2004). *Another step back? Assessing readiness in Head Start*. *Young Children* 59(1): 58-63.

This article focuses on the assessment of school readiness in Head Start programs in the U.S. Since their founding in 1965, the objective of Head Start programs has been to help children who live in poverty prepare for school. Over the last three and a half decades, Head Start programs have maintained a strong commitment to the provision of genuinely comprehensive services. The wide range of services has made it difficult for researchers to benchmark children's progress in the program. Recently Head Start programs have been subjected to various policy changes at the federal administrative and legislative levels. The U.S. President George W. Bush Administration introduced a new set of accountability measures that will be used to test Head Start children twice a year on language, literacy, and pre-math skills. 2003. The assessment system has been controversial. The measures were developed by Westat Inc. This fall, all four-year-old and five-year-old children in Head Start programs will be assessed.

Renfrew, C. (1997) *Renfrew Language Scales* Brackley U.K: Speechmark.

The Renfrew Language Scales consist of three tests to assess young children's speech and language; the Picture Action Test (RAPT) which is used to assess the age levels of the information content and the grammatical usage from short sentence answers to specified questions; The Bus Story Test used to assess the age level of consecutive speech used from information content, sentence length and grammatical usage in retelling a story and the Word Finding Vocabulary Test use to assess the extent to which pictures of objects, arranged in order of difficulty, can be named correctly.

Ritchie, S. & Willer, B.A. (2005) *Assessment of child progress: a guide to the NAEYC early childhood program standard and related accreditation criteria.* Washington, DC: NAEYC Accreditation.

Rock, D. A. & Stenner, A.J. (2005) *Assessment issues in the testing of children at school entry. Future of Children* 15(1): 15-34.

The authors introduce readers to the research documenting racial and ethnic gaps in school readiness. They describe the key tests, including the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS), and several intelligence tests, and describe how they have been administered to several important national samples of children. Next, the authors review the different estimates of the gaps and discuss how to interpret these differences. In interpreting test results, researchers use the statistical term "standard deviation" to compare scores across the tests. On average, the tests find a gap of about 1 standard deviation. The ECLS-K estimate is the lowest, about half a standard deviation. The PPVT estimate is the highest, sometimes more than 1 standard deviation. When researchers adjust those gaps statistically to take into account different outside factors that might affect children's test scores, such as family income or home environment, the gap narrows but does not disappear. Why such different estimates of the gap? The authors consider explanations such as differences in the samples, racial or ethnic bias in the tests, and whether the tests reflect different aspects of school "readiness," and conclude that none is likely to explain the varying estimates. Another possible explanation is the Spearman Hypothesis--that all tests are imperfect measures of a general ability construct, g; the more highly a given test correlates with g, the larger the gap will be. But the Spearman Hypothesis, too, leaves questions to be investigated. A gap of 1 standard deviation may not seem large, but the authors show clearly how it results in striking disparities in the performance of black and white students and why it should be of serious concern to policymakers.

Rous, B. S. & Hallam, R.A (2006) *Tools for transition in early childhood: a step-by-step guide for agencies, teachers & families.* Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing

For young children with and without disabilities, positive outcomes have been linked with smooth, effective transitions among early intervention programs, preschool programs, and public school

programs. With this how-to guide, professionals across early childhood programs will learn to work together to make these transitions happen. Co-authored by top experts Beth Rous and Rena Hallam, this book gives readers a step-by-step model that was field tested across the country and shaped by feedback from state and local agencies." "Case examples and sample forms in each chapter make the strategies easy to implement, and sample letters and more than 2 dozen photocopyable forms ensure that every phase of the planning process is easier. An essential guidebook for program directors, administrators, and all of their staff members, this book will help programs coordinate their services and plan successful transitions that support young children's school readiness. (BOOK JACKET).

Schmidt, P.R. (2005) *Readiness for school. Preparing educators to communicate and connect with families and communities* Greenwich: Information Age Publishing

This book is a vehicle to prepare teachers and principals to engage all families and communities in the education of their children, with the emphasis on communication in a diverse society. It responds to five questions that were generated in a focus group by eight concerned educators, researchers, and parents

Schulting, A.B., Malone, P.S. & Dodge, K.A. (2005) The effect of school based kindergarten transition policies and practices on child academic outcomes *Developmental Psychology* 21 (5): 491-511

This study examined the effect of school-based kindergarten transition policies and practices on child outcomes. The authors followed 17,212 children from 992 schools in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten sample (ECLS-K) across the kindergarten school year. Hierarchical linear modeling revealed that the number of school-based transition practices in the fall of kindergarten was associated with more positive academic achievement scores at the end of kindergarten, even controlling for family socioeconomic status (SES) and other demographic factors. This effect was stronger for low- and middle-SES children than high-SES children. For low-SES children, 7 transition practices were associated with a .21 standard deviation increase in predicted achievement scores beyond 0 practices. The effect of transition practices was partially mediated by an intervening effect on parent-initiated involvement in school during the kindergarten year. The findings support education policies to target kindergarten transition efforts to increase parent involvement in low-SES families.

Seefeldt, C. & Wasik, B.A (2006) *Early education: three-, four-, and five-year-olds go to school*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill-Prentice Hall.

The only text available that specifically addresses the kindergarten year and kindergarten readiness, it enables students to become highly skilled and effective teachers with three, four, and five year old children, their families, and the community. The goal of this comprehensive guide is to provide readers with the knowledge of how three, four, and five year olds behave and learn and to offer information about materials and activities that can be used in their professional careers, thus providing a solid foundation on which to develop teaching skills. Changes to the second edition include an expansion of coverage to include three-year olds, expansion of coverage of parent involvement and of diversity, and a new chapter on social studies.

Smart, D., Sanson, A., Baxter, J., Edwards, B. & Hayes, A. (2008) *Home to School Transitions for Financially Disadvantaged Children: Final Report*. Accessed from http://www.thsmithfamily.com.au/webdata/resources/files/HometoSchool_FullReportWEB.pdf

There is clear evidence that children vary in their 'readiness' for this transition, with marked differences visible in children's cognitive and social/emotional skills when they enter school. The importance of making a good transition into school is indicated by evidence that school readiness is predictive of later

outcomes: children who are less 'ready' are less likely to excel academically, are more likely to have behavioural and emotional problems, be retained in a grade and drop out of school

Snow, K. L. (2006). *Measuring school readiness: Conceptual and practical considerations. Early Education & Development* 17(1): 7-41.

Recent interest and investment in early childhood education as a means of promoting children's school readiness has prompted the need for clear definitions of school readiness. Traditionally school readiness has been viewed within a maturationist frame, based on a chronological set-point, which led to the emergence of readiness testing. Following a brief review of this literature, this article provides an overview of the conceptual and practical considerations that must be given to such a definition. Among conceptual concerns are the lack of agreement about the key components of school readiness and theoretical models to connect them. Also of concern is the need to consider multiple purposes of assessment, and the appropriate use of assessments. Practical considerations include the need to incorporate multiple stakeholders' views in a definition, the availability of adequate measurement tools and how resultant data can be used. The article closes with a discussion of possible future directions by laying out a series of assumptions about the nature of school readiness.

Snow, C. E. & Van Hemel, S.B. (2008) *Early childhood assessment: why, what, and how. Washington, D.C: National Academies Press.*

The assessment of young children's development and learning has recently taken on new importance. Private and government organizations are developing programs to enhance the school readiness of all young children, especially children from economically disadvantaged homes and communities and children with special needs. Well-planned and effective assessment can inform teaching and program improvement, and contribute to better outcomes for children. This book affirms that assessments can make crucial contributions to the improvement of children's well-being, but only if they are well designed, implemented effectively, developed in the context of systematic planning, and are interpreted and used appropriately. Otherwise, assessment of children and programs can have negative consequences for both. The value of assessments therefore requires fundamental attention to their purpose and the design of the larger systems in which they are used. This book addresses these issues by identifying the important outcomes for children from birth to age 5 and the quality and purposes of different techniques and instruments for developmental assessments.

Sorin, R. (2008) *Readiness for school: educators' perceptions and the Australian Early Development Index. Australian Research in Early Childhood Education* 15(2): 65-74.

The Canadian-based Early Development Index (EDI) defines school readiness within five developmental domains: physical health and wellbeing; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive skills' and communication skills and general knowledge. Based on other early development indices and trials within Canada, the EDI uses over one hundred indicators to determine whether a child is 'performing well', average or 'developmentally vulnerable'. From its introduction to Australia in 2003 and subsequent modifications for an Australian audience, the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) has been used in over 50 communities throughout Australia to collect data on school readiness for school, community and government use. However, the definition of school readiness is still a debate in schools, early childhood centres and homes nationwide. It is a question the author asked of early childhood educators in a region where the AEDI results were recently announced. Their responses went beyond the child skills articulated in the AEDI to include the child's social context and relationships as components of school readiness. [Author abstract]

Squires, J. (2007) *An activity-based approach to developing young children's social emotional competence. Baltimore, Md: Paul H. Brookes Publishing*

This is a ready-to-use system for identifying concerns and improving young children's social-emotional health. It contains a five-step intervention process called Activity-Based Intervention: Social Emotional (ABI:SE), the five steps being screening, assessment, goal development, intervention and evaluation.

Stagnitti, K. (2007) *Child-Initiated Pretend Play Assessment (CHIPPA) Manual and Kit* Melbourne: Co-Ordinates Publications.

This assessment tool enables educators to measure the spontaneous ability of children to organise their play and to pretend in play. It is suitable for children who are developmentally delayed, are at risk of learning problems, have a specific diagnosis such as Downs Syndrome, Autism Spectrum Disorder or Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder and is also suitable for children who have a physical disability and children who have been traumatized/neglected. (Information from publisher)

Waddell, A. T. & McBride, R.M (2008) *New research on early childhood education*. New York: Nova Science Publishers.

Early Childhood Education spans the human life from birth to age 8. Infants and toddlers experience life more holistically than any other age group. Social, emotional, cognitive, language, and physical lessons are not learned separately by very young children. Adults who are most helpful to young children interact in ways that understand that the child is learning from the whole experience, not just that part of the experience to which the adult gives attention. Early childhood education takes many forms depending on the theoretical and educational beliefs of the educator or parent. Other terms those are often used interchangeably with "early childhood education" are "early childhood learning", "early care" and "early education". Much of the first two years of life are spent in the creation of a child's first "sense of self" or the building of a first identity. Because this is a crucial part of children's makeup-how they first see themselves, how they think they should function, how they expect others to function in relation to them, early care must ensure that in addition to carefully selected and trained caregivers, links with family, home culture, and home language are a central part of program policy. If care becomes a substitute for, rather than a support of, family, children may develop a less-than-positive sense of who they are and where they come from because of their child care experience. This book presents the latest research in this vital field.

Weiss, H., Caspe, M. & Lopez, M.E (2006) *Family Involvement in Early Childhood Education*. Harvard family Research Project no. 1 (Spring 2006) Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Winter, S. M., Zurcher, R., Hernandez, A. & Zenong, Y. (2007) *The Early ON School Readiness Project: A preliminary report*. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education* 22(1): 55-68.

The Early ON School Readiness Project is an emerging community-based model aimed at promoting the school readiness of 3 to 5-year-old children in a metropolitan area with a predominantly Latino (Mexican-American) population. Using an ecological approach, the multi-component program seeks to enhance school readiness opportunities for children at various levels. Child care environmental quality was measured by administration of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (ECERS-R; Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 1998). To measure children's progress, the Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning-Third Edition (DIAL-3; Mardell-Czudnowski & Goldenberg, 1998) was administered in the fall and spring of two consecutive school years. A sample of children was screened to gain insight regarding the developmental status of children in the project compared to a matched sample of children not involved in the project. Preliminary findings show the progress of children in key developmental areas during the initial and second year of program implementation in selected child care centers. In the baseline year, standard scores of children at the comparison sites were unchanged from fall to spring in all of the developmental areas measured by the DIAL-3; scores at

the intervention sites, however, were higher at a statistically significant level for two subtests and the composite score. During the second year, all subtest scores and the composite scores were higher at the intervention sites in the spring as compared to the fall. Although additional research is needed, preliminary results suggest the emerging model shows promise for increasing children's developmental skills and abilities associated with school readiness. [Abstract from Author]

Wortham, S. C. (2008) *Assessment in early childhood education*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Merrill-Prentice Hall.

This revision is one of the most accessible, practical texts available on assessing young children from infancy through age 8. The book focuses on formal and informal assessment content, strategies, and examples; observation guidelines and strategies; how to use assessments for curriculum planning and for communicating with families; and the spectrum of current assessment issues. Key changes to this edition include more on infant and toddler observation, screening, and standardized testing; the impact of NCLB and Head Start National Reporting System on assessing children; more mini-case studies illustrating real assessment situations in programs and schools today; expanded information on working with children who are bilingual or limited English speakers, and expanded information on parent partnerships in Chapter 10.

Wright, R. J. (2009) *Multifaceted assessment for early childhood education*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

(Yet to be published) This book offers an integration of the latest assessment policies, and includes valuable information regarding young children with special needs and English Language Learners—topics that have rarely been touched upon in other textbooks. Focusing on practical applications of key concepts, this text provides a knowledge base of what every early childhood teacher should know about evaluating young children.

Yeboah, D.A. (2002) *Enhancing Transition from Early Childhood Phase to Primary Education: evidence from the research literature* *Early Years Journal of International Research and Development* 22 (1) 51-68

There are many levels in the educational continuum, and each time a child moves from one level to the other transition occurs. Transition from the early childhood phase to primary school is one of the major steps that each child has to take in the education continuum, and has been known to be traumatic for most children. There is also research evidence which contends that this transition to the first year of primary school is very important for the child's future physical, emotional and intellectual development. This article examines the literature on transition to school, and discusses its importance and the need to minimise its adverse effects by providing a smooth transition for the child. The article presents the factors which impact on successful transition from the early childhood phase to primary school (Author Abstract).

Young, M. E. & Richardson, L.M. (Eds.) (2007) *Early child development from measurement to action: a priority for growth and equity*. Washington, D.C: World Bank.

In an increasingly global world, the quality and competence of future populations hinge on the development of children born today. Nearly 220 million children in developing countries below age 5 are estimated to be at risk developmentally. Poverty, poor health and nutrition, and lack of stimulation have devastating and lifelong effects that are transmitted across generations. Early child development programs, which integrate nutrition, stimulation, and care, assure healthy development for children ages 0-7, especially those at risk. Investing in these programs may be the most important action the world can take to ensure its future vitality.

