

EFFECTIVE SUPPORTS FOR TRANSITION TO PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM GUIDE



Developed by Deborah Llewellyn for Plan International Australia and supported by Australian Aid.

Published by Plan International Australia, 2012.



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COVER: Poov, now aged 10, has a hearing impairment and learnt to sign when he was four. With support from his family, friends and teachers in India, he was ready to succeed in school. Poov loves to go to school and play cricket with his friends.

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SECTION A ABOUT THE MANUAL



Right: A Plan-supported primary school in Guatemala promotes: quality education; non-violence; education for girls; and a safe environment for children.



MATERIALS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This early childhood care and development (ECCD) toolkit was written by Deborah Llewellyn and edited by Jessica Raschke for Plan International Australia, with the support of Australian Aid.

The author developed some of the formative ideas for the toolkit during 15 years of fieldwork with several Plan International and Save the Children country offices. Credits are provided

where applicable. This manual was produced to support the development of transition to primary strategies in Uganda and Indonesia, the primary field sites for the Community Led Action for Children (CLAC) pilots. From 2008 to 2011 the author worked with Katie Ramsay and Nicole Rodger from Plan International Australia to further develop and extensively field test the evidence-based strategies found in this toolkit.

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The photos found in this Guide were sourced from Plan International's Media Bank and Plan International Australia's photo archives from a range of photographers including Deborah Llewellyn and Nicole Rodger. Photos have also been supplied by CBM Australia.



DEFINING SOME KEY TERMS

Preschool/ECCD centre

The term ‘preschool’ and ‘ECCD centre’ are used interchangeably throughout this guide. It is also recognised that different terminology is used in different local or country contexts. The important thing about quality early learning programs (ELPs) as articulated in this guide are that children benefit from an organised, group learning experience in the year or two before primary school. A quality program incorporates a range of activities to draw on children’s interests and developmental stages. Further explanations are below.

preschool: also known as pre-primary class or kindergarten, is often associated with formal programs hosted/co-located at the primary school. One preconception might be that children ‘learn’ their alphabet and numbers in the preschool, and that learning is conducted at desks or tables with teacher and blackboard as the prominent learning tools. In preschools that are co-located with a primary school, the teacher might be required to achieve a credential, and, in most cases, is a qualified primary school teacher with a relevant teaching qualification. Formal preschools are more likely



A young girl who graduated from a Plan-supported ECCD Centre in Uganda is supported by her Grade 1 teacher.

to charge fees and require uniforms, which brings up equity issues.

ECCD centre: this is often associated with non-formal learning programs organised and managed by the community. These centres might receive assistance from a service provider such as a non-government organisation (NGO) or church. One preconception is that these programs are play-based, with songs, games and stories dominating the curriculum, with little academic learning (alphabet and numbers). ECCD centres are usually facilitated by a community

member who has at least a Year 8 education, but rarely a university degree or official teaching certificate. The CLAC program envisions a future where quality of learning is improved in both formal settings (ie preschool) and non-formal settings (ie ECCD centres) to include an array of stimulating activities and materials that produce measured growth in four development areas and enable children to begin school ready to succeed. Teacher training will be directed to knowledge and skills required to ensure development and learning in young children, aged

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from four to six. ‘Preschools’ and ‘ECCD centres’ can work as a team to provide the same quality of learning and care to every child. In this way, those children who live in remote areas or cannot afford fees often charged at preschools can achieve equitable early learning opportunities. Better and more appreciative collaboration between the community and primary school will occur.

Teachers/caregivers

The terms ‘teacher’ and ‘caregiver’ are used interchangeably throughout this guide. However, it is important to acknowledge that there can be differences (real or perceived)

between teachers and caregivers that might relate to things like qualifications, remuneration, workplace and teaching and learning techniques used. How young children learn should determine how teachers of young children teach. The word ‘teach’ implies telling or giving information. But the correct way to teach young children is not to lecture or verbally instruct them. Early childhood teachers are therefore more like guides or facilitators and are often referred to as caregivers, rather than teachers.

Teacher: sometimes the difference between a teacher and a caregiver in an early childhood setting is

that the teacher is working within a government system (ie formal preschools co-located with primary schools) and is paid by government. A teacher might be focused on children learning their alphabet and numbers and have a more formal classroom set up (tables and chairs).

Caregiver: a caregiver tends to be a community member, paid an honorarium, who works in a non-formal/community managed ECCD centre. Research has shown that, with training and support, community members can become highly effective caregivers. A good caregiver will prepare the environment so that it provides stimulating and challenging

materials and activities for children. Effective caregivers watch closely to see what children understand and pose more challenges to push their thinking further.

Ultimately it should not matter whether a person working with young children is called a ‘teacher’ or ‘caregiver.’ The CLAC approach aims to improve the skills of people working with children so that the quality of learning and teaching helps children to develop holistically in four domains (social and emotional, language, cognitive, and physical) so they are ready to succeed in school.

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CURRICULUM SYNOPSIS

Plan International Australia's early childhood approach takes on the ambitious task of proving that 100 per cent of disadvantaged children of relevant age in a targeted high-poverty community can achieve child wellbeing indicators and school success through effective early childhood supports.

The transition from preschool to primary school is a critical passage in a child's life. It is a time when children from high-poverty communities are especially at risk. Given the link between early achievement and later outcomes, difficulties during the transition from preschool to primary school can set the stage for long-term academic problems and school failure. For many years, the attempted solution has been to improve the 'school readiness' of the child. However, we have learned that the critical factors for school success do not lie wholly within the child. This guide emerged to help understand and address a broader spectrum of factors that influence the successful transition to primary school and influence children to stay in primary school and learn. These factors are discussed in this guide. A variety of options and strategies are proposed to achieve the following:

- child's readiness to succeed in school;
- family's readiness to support learning in the home;



A school for inclusive education in India supports children with and without disabilities to learn together.

- positive home and school relations;
- primary school adaptations to address needs of children; and
- community safety nets to supplement family and school

efforts (eg out-of-school enrichment and tutoring programs, health and nutrition supports, parenting education, child protection, and community outreach for children with disabilities).

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Right: A boy in Timor Leste is prepared for school in a Plan-supported playgroup.



WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR TRANSITION PROGRAMS?

Since 2007, Plan International Australia has worked with a number of Plan International country offices in Africa and Asia to develop a holistic system of early childhood supports that address the needs and potential of children living in high-poverty communities. An important component is enabling a group of families in the community to develop the knowledge, skills and commitment to model effective care and stimulation for their own children, and promote improvements for children in the broader community (using CLAC). These families play a key role in managing quality early childhood learning centres that complement and support the family to promote learning, while reinforcing social and citizenship values that are important to the community. The CLAC program aims for 100 per cent of children in targeted communities to be ready to succeed in primary school.

School readiness, however, is not enough to ensure school success. In many developing countries, nearly half the children who enrol in primary school drop out or repeat Grade 1. It is important to understand the needs of children in the early years of primary and the barriers and resources that exist in families, communities and schools to meet those needs.



In the Philippines, Plan is supporting alternative learning systems for indigenous Mangyan children who have had limited access to basic education and support for transition to school.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN IN THE EARLY YEARS OF PRIMARY AND THE BARRIERS AND RESOURCES THAT EXIST IN FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOLS TO MEET THOSE NEEDS.



‘Transition to primary’ is the terminology applied to understand and address the special support needs of children in the first three years of primary school. Transition initiatives deliberately link early childhood and early primary schooling experiences and develop partnerships between families and teachers. The community

plays an important role, providing a safety net of services to ensure education equality for girls, children with disabilities, children from high-poverty families, and those who might be neglected or abused. With effective school- and community-based initiatives in place, children and families are ready for school.

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Equally important, schools are ready for children and recognise parents' critical role in children's learning.

The transition to school is not a point-in-time event, but an experience that starts well before and extends far beyond the first day of school. Educational transition is defined as the process of change that children make from one place or phase of education to another over time. Changes in relationships, teaching styles, environments, space, time, contexts for learning and learning itself combine at moments of transition. They can make intense and accelerated demands on children.

Transition programs should be based on a philosophy that: children's adjustment to school is easier when children are familiar with the situation; parents are informed about the new school and are engaged in children's learning; and teachers have an interest in children's development, value their previous experiences, and are willing to accommodate diversity.

The transition to school is a major life change for children and their families. With this in mind, effective transition approaches need to take families into account. The perspectives of children, families and teachers provide vital information for understanding the



Children in Cambodia participate in a campaign to promote school enrolments.

EDUCATIONAL TRANSITION IS DEFINED AS THE PROCESS OF CHANGE THAT CHILDREN MAKE FROM ONE PLACE OR PHASE OF EDUCATION TO ANOTHER OVER TIME.

issues and for getting started with an effective program approach.

The transition from preschool to primary school is a critical passage in a child's life at a time when children from high-poverty communities are especially at risk. Research findings suggest that children's experiences during the transition to school time can have long-term impacts on their

ability to cope with change. We now know that difficulties experienced during the transition to school can persist throughout school life. But, most importantly, we know that a successful start to school is linked to future positive school outcomes, both academically and socially.

As stated in the curriculum synopsis, for many years, the attempted solution

has been to improve the 'school readiness' of the child. However, we have learned that the critical factors for school success do not lie wholly within the child. The transition to primary field emerged to understand and address a broader spectrum of factors that influence successful transitions to primary school, and which also influence children to stay in primary school and learn.

Researchers from the Starting School project in New South Wales in Australia concluded that starting school is not just an experience for the individual child. "Rather it is a community experience, involving a wide range of people. In addition to the child, the family and the community in which the family lives are involved. Educators in prior-to-school settings have an important role to play, and all school staff – not just the kindergarten teacher – are crucial to the effectiveness of the transition experience. In other words, starting school is a community issue and a community responsibility. When communities work together and when children realise that they have the support of groups within their respective communities, starting school can be a positive and exciting experience." (Dockett and Perry 2001)

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RESILIENCE: WHY DO SOME CHILDREN COPE BETTER WITH TRANSITIONS?



Right: Children in the Philippines carry tree saplings to denuded areas, which they are helping to replant. Activities like this make school more enjoyable for children.



RESILIENCE: WHY DO SOME CHILDREN COPE BETTER WITH TRANSITIONS?

The real challenge of transition programs is not simply to ease entry into primary school, but to develop competencies and learning achievements that enable children to persist in primary school. Before planning transition initiatives, it is important to consider why some children cope well with life stressors such as a transition, while others find them more difficult. In developing transition approaches, it is important to think about the ways in which each initiative can strengthen children's resilience.

Resilience is a collection of qualities that support adaptation and the capacity for normal development under difficult conditions. Factors that influence outcomes and help children cope with stressors, such as a transition, include:

- sense of self-worth and self-esteem;
- social competence;
- communication skills;
- self-efficacy (confidence to know what and how to do something);
- autonomy (capacity to take action to do something that is needed without being told to do so); and
- optimism.



A young girl attends class in a Plan-supported primary school in Burkina Faso.

Factors that involve family, school and the community that help children cope are caring relationships, high expectations, and opportunities to participate. Building resilience in children, their families and teachers can contribute to an effective transition. In terms of educational transitions, the optimism generated

from a caring relationship with a parent, teacher and other community adults can promote a sense of self-worth and support the development of self-esteem, self-efficacy, autonomy and optimism, which are all critical features of resilience (EFA Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO 2006).

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WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION PROGRAMS?



Right: A young girl in Guinea enjoys mathematics in a Plan-supported school. Support for the development of early maths and literacy skills in preschool is important to help children meet the academic expectations of school.



WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION PROGRAMS?

Effective programs begin with an examination of assumptions. They are explicit and transparent in describing the assumptions that form the strategy. In other words, effective programs begin with logical thinking to form an approach. This thinking examines the complexities of the problem, not just the implementation ‘nuts and bolts’, and makes clear the assumptions that form the basis for the model. These assumptions should be examined at the planning, implementation and evaluation levels.

Successful transition programs also have a theoretical underpinning. While much of the transition research focuses on the nuts and bolts of effective programs, some research studies have focused on the important ideas that shape action. The Starting School project identified two significant ideas that have emerged from research. Firstly, a transition is a community experience that involves a wide range of people. Secondly, effective programs focus on relationships. These ideas take on meaning when exploring the evolution in thinking about what is required for children living in the most difficult and challenging circumstances to enter school on time, so they are ready to succeed



Inclusive primary schools enable all children to learn, socialise and participate together, like these children in India.

and have the capacity and supports to continue through to completion.

Initially educators thought the transition problem was caused by a child’s lack of academic and social school readiness. This spurred the development of community-based, quality ELPs. Even when children achieved development and learning milestones, it became apparent that the problem couldn’t be solved solely through early learning centres. The parents and home environment are significant contributors to a child’s learning and attitude toward education. So the focus began to include parenting education strategies

to improve the home learning environment and parental support.

The gap between primary school and family expectations was another area that had to be addressed to create positive relations and consistency between home and school expectations. A school’s role would have to involve more than improving home school communications and orientation day events. Also, a bigger problem existed where schools were not equipped to handle the diversity of learners that evolved from the *Education for All* movement. When children could not succeed in the traditional environment, it became

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A boy in India has received support to attend primary school, despite having cerebral palsy. Support for transitions to primary school is particularly important for children with disabilities because of the physical and attitudinal barriers they face.

A TRANSITION IS NOT THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SET OF DISCRETE ACTIVITIES BUT THE BUILDING OF RELATIONSHIPS IN THE COMMUNITY THAT CREATE A SAFETY NET FOR CHILDREN'S SUCCESS.

apparent that the primary school culture would have to change. Teachers must be willing to adapt new methods to achieve equitable education for girls, children from high-poverty families and ethnic minorities, and children with disabilities. They must focus on their own accountability for children's learning.

Once all of these changes were taken into account, there still remains a significant role for the broader community. Issues such as wellness, child nutrition and child protection are essential for learning. With this in mind, agencies that supply these services could and should take on a proactive role in paving the way to primary school success. Finally, we

need to reach an expanded view of the community's role. This involves the social responsibility to work collaboratively to provide for children whose home environments cannot meet all of their needs. In short, if the parent cannot read, are there community tutors to help children with homework? If there is no safe

place to play, is there a community playground with adult supervision? If children in the community are denied the opportunity to attend school, are neglected or abused, then other adults must advocate for these children. All of these efforts provide returns through reduced juvenile delinquency, reduced poverty and improved community development structures and practices. All aspects require meaningful and positive relationships. A transition is not the construction of a set of discrete activities but the building of relationships in the community that create a safety net for children's success.

Another body of research on effective transition practices found that effective programs adapt to the social and cultural context. Researchers and practitioners must avoid imposing expectations on development that stem from their own values, rather than those of the community they are working with. However, if development work is done well, it can introduce practices that encourage positive change and meaningful activities for women and children. Transition research traditions should incorporate cultural perspectives, not just those from the fields of education and psychology.

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SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION PROGRAMS INCORPORATE EVIDENCED-BASED BEST PRACTICES

There is a growing body of literature about the early childhood transition from preschool to primary school. 'Best practice' features of transition to primary programs are listed below:

a) Proactive – act early to create a stress-free bridge

Conduct discussions with primary children and dropouts about their experiences in school. Organise visits to preschool by Grade 1 students and visits to primary school by preschool students. Facilitate mentoring by children at primary school. Provide opportunities for children to become familiar with teachers, classrooms and academic routines before they start primary school. Take action in primary schools to create more appreciative, welcoming environments.

b) Support social and emotional wellbeing, the foundation for learning

Provide preschool and primary experiences that enable children to build friendships, develop a sense of belonging, acquire skills to adapt, develop social competency (ability to read cues from teachers and friends); as well as problem-solving skills and resilience.



A girl with a visual impairment attends primary school in India. Catering to the needs of the most marginalised and excluded children enables creative, flexible and inclusive learning environments that will benefit all children.

'BEST PRACTICE' FEATURES OF TRANSITION TO PRIMARY PROGRAMS INCLUDE: ESTABLISH MEETINGS FOR TEACHERS TO SHARE IDEAS ABOUT HOW PARENTS WITH LOW LEVELS OF EDUCATION CAN SUPPORT LEARNING AT HOME; CONDUCT DISCUSSIONS WITH PRIMARY CHILDREN AND DROPOUTS ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES IN SCHOOL.

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c) Keep open lines of communication

Provide opportunities for dialogue with children, families and teachers to talk about expectations. Prioritise times for teachers to listen to parents and learn about children's lives and prior skills. Establish meetings for teachers to share ideas about how parents with low levels of education can support learning at home. Create events that build familiarity and friendships among groups of different social and political strata around issues of children's learning.

d) Ensure curriculum continuity between preschool and lower grades of primary school

Preschool and primary teachers should meet and discuss what children are learning in preschool and Grade 1, as well as expectations and methodologies. They should visit each other's classrooms at least once. It will not benefit children for preschool teachers to adapt rigid teacher methods often found in primary school as a way to prepare children for what's ahead. Instead, transition programs should take the opportunity

to influence more welcoming, caring environments in the primary school. Primary teachers should adopt some of the positive learning features of early learning centres.

e) Evaluate children's skills in maths and literacy at induction and provide academic support to develop academic foundations and prevent 'fade out'¹

Typically teachers with large classrooms and didactic teaching styles focus more on what is taught than what is learned. Children might pass through several grades with little awareness of their academic strengths and weaknesses. Schools with automatic promotions remove responsibility from the teacher to identify gaps in literacy and maths, and work intensively to build needed skills. Children's skills and needs must be constantly monitored. Mentoring and tutoring programs at school and in the community are necessary for children living in poverty to develop academic foundations for success in school.

f) Evaluate both processes and outcomes related to transition issues

Develop programs and monitor progress based on issues at child, family, community and school levels that hamper transition to and success in primary school. Focus groups with children (school-going and dropouts), parents, community leaders, and school personnel are required to identify problem areas to be addressed. Action research and case studies, including most significant change stories, are beneficial to understand and track the complex changes required, such as a teacher's willingness to adapt to children's diversity rather than expecting children to adapt and change according to school culture.

Monitoring tools for classrooms and children's clubs are needed to document adult-child interactions that are critical to the development of children's wellbeing, resilience and academic achievements. These are included in the appendices. Measurable indicators expressed as outputs and outcomes give direction for resources and activities.



Girls in the Philippines enjoy expressing themselves through art. Children are motivated to come to school when there are opportunities for them to be creative and attractive learning materials are available.

¹ 'Fade out' refers to the rapid performance fade out for children whose preschool experience did not build a solid academic foundation with understanding of concepts, not just rote memorisation.

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Right: Children dance to their teacher's singing at a school in Cambodia.



GETTING CHILDREN READY FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL

Comprehensive transition programs generally include three key components: getting children ready for school; getting schools ready for children; and engaging family and community support for primary school success.

This section provides important background reading before designing a program. Based on experiences in the field, issues are presented and discussed. Strategies and actions are also presented for consideration.

A 'Transition practices checklist' that suggests activities for family and school connections, child and school connections, peer connections and community connections can also be found in the appendices. This can be used as a tool to plan strategies and actions in your program.

The transition field is relatively new and field experiences that are well documented and shared add to the growing body of knowledge.

Issues

School readiness implies far more than children's academic abilities (eg literacy and maths) and behaviour regulation (eg taking turns, sitting quietly). Quality ELPs include several other key dimensions that promote



Children play an outdoor game at a preschool in Laos. Socialising and learning through play are important for school readiness.

confidence, health, friendships, and interest in learning that carries children far beyond Grade 1. Quality preschool programs support all areas of development (physical, social and emotional, language, and cognitive) and emphasise learning through play. Quality preschools understand that health, nutrition, clean water and sanitation are integral to learning programs. Each area of development contributes to and is dependent upon other areas of development. Preschool programs with a holistic development focus provide a stronger basis for school and life success than those characterised by passive compliance and rote learning. Overall, development provides a

necessary foundation to fulfill school requirements. All children in a Grade 1 cohort should have access to quality preschool readiness programs. Providing for some and not all might create greater inequalities in Grade 1 than those that previously existed.

School readiness is not just a child issue; it is also a family issue. It incorporates the family's readiness and confidence to provide learning support and advocacy. Certain kinds of parenting education that change practices in the home are needed for a child to develop and learn effectively, while also motivating community-led action for child development, learning and protection. It is critical to

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build the confidence of families with low education and economic status to interact with formal institutions on their children's behalf. Parents with no prior schooling experiences might fear the teacher and worry that school practices are counter to family culture and values.

Family poverty adversely affects children's health, intellectual capabilities, academic achievement and behaviour. Too often parents underestimate their ability through everyday conversations and activities to support their young children's enthusiasm for learning, their language development and their sense of self. Yet these are the very capacities that have the greatest significance in enabling

children to thrive at school and break the cycle of poverty.

The assumption that programs focusing on socio-economic development automatically enhance children's wellbeing has been overturned. Increased food production does not automatically translate into better-fed children. And better-fed children do not automatically become better developed cognitively, emotionally or linguistically (Arnold et al 2006).

Changing family economics will not translate to child benefits (nutrition and schooling) without the necessary knowledge and commitment to child development. Parenting education is an important component in school readiness programs.



Quality preschools understand that a daily routine that includes good sanitation and hygiene practices are an integral part of ELPs that support school readiness for children in Vietnam.

HOW ECCD CAREGIVERS CAN SUPPORT SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO PRIMARY

- ✓ Provide for a wide range of interests and abilities beyond the child's chronological age (challenges).
- ✓ Design experiences to stimulate all areas of development – physical, social and emotional, cognitive, and language.
- ✓ Plan activities that are responsive to the child's interests, culture and linguistic background.
- ✓ Provide an environment where children can learn through active exploration and interaction with concrete materials, adults and other children.
- ✓ Organise an environment for children to select activities from a variety of choices.
- ✓ Organise the day so that children work individually or in small informal groups for much of the day.
- ✓ Provide many opportunities for children to see how spoken and written languages are related.
- ✓ Get to know the Grade 1 and 2 teachers.
- ✓ Schedule a visit to primary school for the ECCD children.
- ✓ Discuss activities to expect at the new school to help children feel comfortable and confident.
- ✓ Plan to talk to primary school teacher about each child's progress.
- ✓ Provide parents with information about the new school and registration.
- ✓ Encourage parents to attend an orientation meeting at the school.
- ✓ Organise community forums on transition to primary school.
- ✓ Work with the primary school to implement a plan for transition.

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Effective ECCD caregivers who support the successful transition to primary school provide many opportunities for children to see how spoken and written languages are related, like this caregiver in Plan's Uganda CLAC project.

Preschool preparation and parenting education might resolve many aspects of school readiness, but it is the community's responsibility to ensure that children's rights to equitable and quality services are realised. Children need support to overcome the stress of moving into a new and different setting. Children are often eager to demonstrate that they are big kids going to big school when sometimes they can still feel anxious about what school might be like. Distance from home and other safety hazards along the way, including bullying by older pupils, swollen rivers, or even wild animals, can impede school readiness. School readiness requires community action to supervise the

environments surrounding school, and to establish the expectation that schools must be responsive to the community context. After all, schools do belong to the people.

Suggested activities

a) Enrol children in quality preschools

Develop a network of community- and school-based preschools that enable 100 per cent of children to enter school on time, ready to achieve. Be aware of gender bias in the community that might prevent girls' enrolment. Identify all children with disabilities and enrol them in the ELP

or identify other sources appropriate to the needs of the child. Identify and monitor characteristics of quality preschools that predict school success. Promote accommodations to ensure equitable education opportunities and outcomes. Ensure that teachers are trained to provide effective emotional and instructional support to meet the needs of diverse children in the classroom. Monitor teacher practices to ensure that bias does not exist.

b) Implement monthly parenting discussions

No one knows a child better and has more at stake in their success than their family. Parents are the most likely facilitators of a child's overall development. When armed with knowledge and commitment to apply effective new practices, they can support their child to reach developmental milestones. Overall development provides a foundation for school success. There are strong links between home care and school results that can be strengthened through a parenting strategy. Parenting groups are a good place to promote dialogue about education equality (disability inclusion, gender equality, and children with language and cultural differences).

c) Conduct activities to help children become familiar with primary school

Ask children what they are looking forward to and what they fear. Engage Grade 1 students to visit preschool and talk to children about what to expect. Enable preschool students to visit the primary school and meet the teacher.

d) Engage primary school personnel in community outreach to enrol children on time

Share expectations between the primary school and the community. Directly address issues about school fees, notebooks, uniforms, children with disabilities, and whether bias exists in relation to girls' enrolment. Plan strategies to ensure that these are not obstacles to school entry. Plan a school welcoming and orientation day.

e) Take action for child protection

Survey and eliminate hazards associated with walking to and from school. Identify child neglect and abuse cases in the community, and a strategy for intervening to ensure that the children participate in both the early learning program and the primary school.

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GETTING PRIMARY SCHOOLS READY FOR CHILDREN

Issues

When children start school they move from a play-based environment to a more formal learning environment. There are many more people and relationships for children to navigate and the physical surroundings are often quite different. Transition programs need to recognise the nature of these differences and build in experiences and understandings to accommodate them. Some policy attention has been given to promoting that primary schools carry forward some of the pedagogical strengths of early childhood education (attention to the wellbeing of the child, active and experiential learning, confidence in children's learning strategies, avoidance of grading and ranking). The two systems must work together to create a shared view of what children need to learn and how.

Children benefit when primary and preschool teachers communicate about the child's needs and the classroom experiences that are offered in the two settings, and when they discuss the transition needs of individual children. They should visit each other's classrooms. When preschool teachers visit Grade 1 they are often amazed at what children have achieved in their



Ensuring the physical environment of primary schools meets the needs of children is vital. For example, boys and girls need access to separate toilets.

HOW IS THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT DIFFERENT FROM THE PRIOR-TO-SCHOOL SETTING?

- Academic expectations of school.
- The physical environment of school.
- Communication strategies between teachers and families.
- Social environments at school.
- Philosophical underpinnings of teaching and learning.

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A primary school teacher in Laos helps a Grade 1 student with her numbers. Positive and supportive teacher-child interactions are important for good learning outcomes.

prior-to-school years. They are also often concerned about the change in structure and formality their students will be expected to meet in Grade 1. Primary teachers in schools are keen to meet their new students, but they also realise that getting to know a new class of children and their families is a big task.

A primary school's readiness to effectively reach and teach children living in poverty is affected by the availability and quality of teachers. Most important, however, is the

teacher's positive responsiveness to the individual child, as well as local needs and circumstances. The readiness characteristics of schools are influenced by the actions of families and communities, as well as the economic, social and political conditions of the broader community. Schools contribute to readiness when they provide: strong school leadership; support and training for teacher effectiveness; welcoming, engaging atmospheres for children; equitable standards; effective curricula; and respect for cultural diversity, disability inclusion and equality. Being ready for children includes being ready and responsive to families and communities.

Changes will be required for schools to effectively teach children of poverty. Transition programs can help to usher in these changes. "It is accurate to say that one goal of transition programming is to help children deal with the shock of teacher-centred instruction in primary school. At the same time, another key transition goal is to bring child-centred developmentally appropriate practice from preschool up into grades one and two. Transition programming can be a Trojan horse when we work with teachers on changing practice to ease children's transition, because

HOW PRIMARY TEACHERS CAN SUPPORT SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO PRIMARY

- ✓ Work with ECCD teacher; respect each other's professional roles.
- ✓ Invite preschool children to visit Grade 1; send Grade 1 students to the ECCD centre to tell children what they can expect.
- ✓ Involve Grade 1 children to make a book about going to school that they will give to the children when they visit the ECCD centre.
- ✓ Conduct joint preschool or Grade 1 screenings.
- ✓ Invite parents to school for welcoming and orientation.
- ✓ Have a personal conversation with each parent before school begins; listen to them talk about their child.
- ✓ Begin Grade 1 with similar activities to those found in the ECCD centre so children can begin school with confidence.
- ✓ Design experiences to stimulate learning in all areas – physical, social, emotional and intellectual.
- ✓ Provide for a wider range of abilities than chronological age suggests.
- ✓ Provide an environment where children can learn through active exploration and interaction with concrete materials, adults, and other children.
- ✓ Plan activities that are responsive to child's interests, culture and language.
- ✓ Read and tell stories that deal with range of child's emotions and discuss.

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in the process we help teachers think in a child-centred fashion. When a teacher plans transition activities s/he must focus on the children, what their tasks are (learning school culture, learning fundamental skills), what the children bring to their tasks, what the children's developmental abilities and modes of learning are, and finally what the teacher can do to build on that" (O'Gara, personal communication 2007).

Factors affecting school's readiness to adapt to diverse children's needs

School practices that influence which children are included and excluded

These include location, accessibility, and admission practices. While school policies might prohibit fees, parents fear being charged hidden fees. Parents assume that notebooks and pencils will be paid for. When children cannot afford a uniform, they might avoid school to avoid humiliation.

Children with disabilities are often 'invisible'. Many children with disabilities could participate in the school program if accommodations were made and help was provided by the community to aid attendance.

Classroom and school conditions, especially overcrowding

Often participation in preschool results in 100 per cent enrolment of the class at the proper intake age. Through the preschool, parents are informed about the legal entry age. They feel proud of their child's learning in preschool and perceive the child as ready for school. This puts an added burden on the formal system that expects no more than 80 per cent of a cohort to enrol. Grade 1 classrooms are also overcrowded due to late enrollers and repeaters. Children are crowded together on benches in rooms that might lack light and ventilation. They are expected to sit for long hours, copying from smeared blackboards, chanting rote recitation, or waiting for a teacher who is not there.

Overcrowding also results in split shifts. In comparison to preschool experiences, children might feel disheartened, disappointed and bored. Children who need the most time at school are given less, and those that come in the afternoon might be less able to learn due to fatigue and an overstretched teacher. Teachers might be informed about group work and interactive games, but feel that it is physically impossible with the



A young boy reads Braille at school in India.

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES ARE OFTEN 'INVISIBLE'. MANY CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES COULD PARTICIPATE IN THE SCHOOL PROGRAM IF ACCOMMODATIONS WERE MADE AND HELP WAS PROVIDED BY THE COMMUNITY TO AID ATTENDANCE.

numbers of children. Many teachers do not know the child's name or personal details about the child's life.

Schools in high-poverty areas typically look dismal. Walls are dirty and peeling; toilets are locked or filthy; play areas might provide beaten grounds for soccer, but lack play equipment or places that invite

informal, creative play and games. Thankfully leadership in some areas points out the need for a beautiful and ordered school environment. These schools paint the blackboards yearly and enlist local artists to make murals for the walls. Beds of groundcover and plants that don't need much water add greenery and colour. Trees are planted; children or a classroom

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might even own a tree for special care. One school enlisted students from an architecture school to design and build play equipment from local materials (bamboo). The children and families helped and talked about caring for the equipment. Children consistently cite dirty and inadequate numbers of toilets as a reason for dropping out. New innovations in pit toilets exist to change this situation.

Teacher skills and commitment

Children in the lower grades require highly trained and skilled teachers

to ensure that children enjoy school and gain a strong foundation in basic competencies. However, those with the lowest qualifications and lowest pay are usually assigned to the youngest children. Teachers are untrained to teach children at multiple levels. Those with preschool experience are easier for the teacher to cope with. They are said to have a 'halo effect'. They have acquired basic academic and school-going behaviours. In some cases teachers favour these children and ignore those who lack readiness skills. In other cases teachers push aside

those with readiness until others catch up. Specialised training in early childhood development is required so that teachers know a variety of teaching methods for helping children of multiple levels to acquire academic competencies.

Of all transition activities, the most important is influencing teachers to adopt child-centred approaches associated with high achievement. Current approaches have not resulted in substantial changes in practice or improved learning. One transition program supports volunteer teachers who want to become pedagogical leaders. In practitioner study groups, teachers will ask and investigate questions about teaching and learning, identify and test out potential solutions to problems in their own classrooms, and review and refine approaches. Transition programs have offered workshops and resource materials, and have engaged teachers in action research or the development of teacher magazines to generate greater skills and commitment for student outcomes. Transition programs have helped teachers organise workshops for parents that build more constructive home and school relations. Transition programs help the teacher feel supported and appreciated.

Child protection concerns

Plan International has promoted a 'Learn Without Fear' campaign. Children identify fear of teachers' punitive punishment as a reason for absence and dropout. Teachers have long believed that fear and pain is required for learning. On the other hand, the psychology of learning tells us that fear and stress can cause physiological reactions that block learning.

Children learn best from caring teachers. They gain skills for living from instructive discipline techniques that engage them in making and keeping rules. Many countries have banned corporal punishment, but children and teachers report that the practice has not stopped. Another area of critical concern is the sexual abuse of young girls at school or on the way to school. Even though there are fewer incidents, parents still state their concerns as a reason to keep girls home from school.

Language and cultural mismatch between home and school

Language of instruction affects participation and school success. To enable children to become fully competent in the language of instruction, they should begin



Children take part in community learning in Hue Xay, Laos.

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learning through their mother tongue at an early age, while gradually stimulating second language acquisition until it has been completely mastered at the early primary school level. This approach is based on international evidence that shows that second language acquisition is more successful if a first language is mastered. The use of local languages contributes to the improved quality of learning for young children and stimulates the supporting role of ethnic minority parents (who often lack knowledge in the dominant language) in their children's learning. This transition process will connect preschools with communities and make them more welcoming environments for families who support and monitor children's learning while ensuring competence in second language acquisition.

Primary school government policies vary regarding the use of mother tongue in the first two years of primary school. There are some advantages to children and families when instruction is conducted in mother tongue. Children who learn in mother tongue for six or eight years perform better in terms of test scores and self-esteem. Once a child can read and write in mother tongue, skills are transferable to other languages.

In addition, teachers forced to use unfamiliar official language might be more able to use teacher-centred, rote and didactic approaches. When local languages are used in the first year or two of primary, it makes parents feel there is respect for children's cultural competencies and prior learning. They simply feel more comfortable with the teacher and are able to make sense of what the child is doing in school.

However, there are justifiable reasons why public policy might support teaching in official language from school entry. For example, a school might serve children with several ethnic languages; teachers might not be available who speak the local language; reading materials in local language might be unavailable; parents might prefer teaching in official language, thinking it boosts the child's education; or the majority of children in the country enter primary school speaking the official language. Where official language is used in Grade 1, the early learning centre can help with the gradual introduction of the language so that it is familiar to children when they begin Grade 1. Communities and schools can help with this transition from mother tongue to the language of instruction through the provision

of teacher's assistants or volunteer parent assistants in the classroom.

Poor learning resources

Early childhood environments emphasise the use of hands-on materials because children learn through experience. Children are motivated to come to school when they interact with attractive learning toys, engaging storybooks, and colourful visual aids on the walls. Primary teachers are encouraged to make and use teaching aids, but posters for the wall are easily destroyed by wind, rain and dirt. Sparse, available learning materials such as a balance scale or graduated cups are used for demonstration, if at all, because teachers lack ample supplies for children to actually touch and use. Materials are so important to children's motivation and learning that they must be prioritised. Transition programs have successfully designed low-cost, durable learning games matched to grade level competencies. Families and children themselves can be involved in making games or storing them. Parents can sew a small bag from old cloth so that each child can have their own set of maths manipulatives, such as stones, bottle caps, seeds, buttons, seeds, and squares of coloured paper or cloth.

Poor recordkeeping on attendance and progress

Children need to come to school on time, every day. Frequent absences lead to lower achievement and drop out. Children in an overcrowded classroom might feel that the teacher does not know when they are present or absent. Poor recordkeeping about learning competencies and inadequate monitoring of student progress is unacceptable but common.

Suggested activities

Conduct census to identify all eligible children and conduct enrolment drives

Identify children with disabilities and discuss whether they can benefit from primary school. If not, what are some alternative strategies to provide them with appropriate stimulation and learning? Ensure that all girls are not only enrolled but attend over time.

Conduct reception and orientation days

Some transition programs recognise that parents and young children who live in poverty are intimidated and frightened to go to primary school. Conduct planning meetings with primary school personnel. Explain

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the fears of young children and make teachers more sensitive to these fears. Establish a 'Reception' or 'Welcoming Day', where all parents of Grade 1 and community preschool children receive a written invitation; in most cases it will be the first invitation in their life. The jubilant event brings positive prestige to the teachers and school, encourages the timely start of classes, and inspires an openness to try other transition strategies that might require more difficult changes from the teacher in terms of beliefs and practices.

Establish school mentoring programs

Consider the method used by Save the Children and Plan International in Bangladesh: the Reading Buddy and Mentoring approach aims to increase the habit of reading, develop a caring ethos in the school community, and increase children's school attendance and reading skills. Through Reading Buddy and Mentoring, children from lower primary classes are paired with older primary mentors. This buddy system helps support the younger child's emerging literacy skills while providing the older child with reading practice and a leadership opportunity. It offers needed support to first-generation learners who do

not have parents who are literate and can help with homework. Mentors are always children from a different family, not an older brother or sister. It helps the older child develop a sense of responsibility and leadership. It makes the younger child feel validated by the special attention from someone outside their family. If there are resources for libraries, each school is given a tin-trunk library where buddies borrow books once a week. A special committee headed by upper grade students is put in charge of books, not school personnel who might control through restriction. After collecting books, buddies arrange to meet during the week to read and study together. They return and exchange books in the following week, thus demonstrating a manageable model for running a school library.

Promote community outreach

These might include home visits, workshops for parents, and transforming the primary school into a community centre at night and on weekends.

Home visits: In some schools teachers visit parents in the home to meet the family before the beginning of school. They visit again later to



Children in Bangladesh have been supported to develop their maths and literacy skills through a reading buddy and mentoring approach.

AFTER COLLECTING BOOKS, BUDDIES ARRANGE TO MEET DURING THE WEEK TO READ AND STUDY TOGETHER. THEY RETURN AND EXCHANGE BOOKS IN THE FOLLOWING WEEK, THUS DEMONSTRATING A MANAGEABLE MODEL FOR RUNNING A SCHOOL LIBRARY.

discuss student progress and offer materials and ideas to support student learning. All families should have personal contact with the school before school starts that is low stress and designed for the teacher/school to listen to the parent.

Workshops for parents by teachers: an innovative program recently launched by Save the Children Bangladesh

developed a four-session workshop conducted for parents at the school by head teachers, School Management Committee (SMC) or Parent Teacher Association (PTA) heads, and teachers for parents at the school. Parents receive pictorial child development cards and spend two sessions learning how to assess and support holistic child development that contributes to school success. In the next two

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sessions they receive a list of grade level competencies and work with the teacher and parents to come up with ideas about how parents, even those who are illiterate, can help children achieve the grade-level competencies.

Community schools concept: in some areas of the world, medical and social services are coming to the school grounds. The schools are becoming community centres. Adults and adolescents use the classrooms after hours for parenting and literacy classes, agriculture extension or other vocational training. This has multiple benefits of creating familiarity and comfort with the school setting, while also building parent knowledge and social capital.

Conduct school beautification drives

Seek out public-private partnerships for the sponsorship of items that help develop skills (tree planting, mural painting, etc) or financial resources beyond the school's ability. Learn about and use innovations in pit toilets. Make sure that girls and boys have equal responsibility for maintaining the classrooms and grounds.

Recognise nutritious food and drinking water as essential fuels for child learning

School feeding programs can be problematic for many reasons (eg inconsistently provided, low-value nutrition that is given as a reward for learning rather than at the start of day) and fail to address the root of the problems in the home. Focus school nutrition programs on making sure that children are fed before they come to school, bring a snack from home, and are provided with safe water. Changing parent knowledge and practices to provide more nutritious foods at the right times is the priority concern. Home gardening and poultry projects that are established in the community can be beneficial. Find out about innovations to produce safe drinking water.

Promote inclusion strategies

Raise awareness and advocate with teachers and communities to create a learning environment that welcomes, nurtures and educates all children regardless of their gender, physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other characteristics.

Promote the rights of children with disabilities to reach their potential whether this is best catered for in a mainstream school or through special programs.

Make schools safe and welcoming to children with different types of disabilities by improving accessibility, including consideration of physical (ramps, toilets), attitudinal and policy or institutional barriers.

Provide training and resources to primary school teachers on using communication methods and teaching styles that support and facilitate inclusion.

Support the development of peer groups and clubs for children, including those with disabilities, to enable involvement in awareness raising and community activities.

Initiate voluntary teacher study circles to learn and test ideas

Of all transition activities, the most important is influencing teachers to adopt child-centred approaches associated with high achievement. Current school-sponsored approaches have not resulted in substantial changes in practice or improved

learning. Consider structuring learning opportunities for volunteer teachers who want to become pedagogical leaders. In practitioner study groups, teachers ask and investigate questions about teaching and learning, identify and test out potential solutions to problems in their own classrooms, and review and refine approaches. In turn, they will receive ongoing training from external experts in best practices for primary schools. When teacher study circles are in charge of developing a teacher resource magazine, this is a special incentive for attendance and the outcomes spread far beyond this small and motivated group of individuals.

Facilitate workshops for teachers on positive discipline

Provide activity cards with scenarios that teachers face. On the back of each card describe a positive discipline technique for addressing the classroom or individual behaviour.

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ENGAGING FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR LEARNING

Issues

Effective transition programs recognise the critical role of the family and community in learning success for children living in poverty. Previously it was assumed that parents with low education had little potential to impact on children's learning. Families were 'involved' through work and construction projects at school. They were expected to contribute bricks not brains. 'Parent involvement' implied cooperating with a school's set agenda. SMCs were institutions developed to involve the community in school management. However, these rarely involve the poorest in the community and often reinforce the status quo and community power hierarchies. The new thrust is 'parent engagement' or, better yet, 'family engagement'. Parents living in poverty have the most at stake in children's wellbeing. They spend the most time with children. They have valuable resources and reasons to support their child's future success. 'Parent engagement' implies that parents take an active stance toward schooling and do not only wait for schools to ask them to be 'involved' on educators' terms.

Family empowerment is required to change the dynamics. It is important



Family and community members in Laos play an important role in children's school success, for example, through supporting school enrolment and attendance.

FAMILY EMPOWERMENT IS REQUIRED TO CHANGE THE DYNAMICS. IT IS IMPORTANT TO RECOGNISE THE ROLE OF THE EXTENDED FAMILY IN CHILD CARE AND EDUCATION.

to recognise the role of the extended family in child care and education. Family empowerment requires that families gain self-efficacy, which is the belief that one can successfully execute the behaviour required to produce a desired outcome. In terms of transitions, this means that families believe in their ability to

gain needed information, skills for themselves, and services for the child.

Resilience is linked to family empowerment in the same way it is linked to a child's capacity to weather transitions. These include self-confidence, self-esteem, social support networks, communication skills, mastery, and locus of control.

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For families to be empowered to support a child's transition to primary, they need to be:

- informed: have knowledge of what is expected of the child and themselves because knowledgeable families are more confident;
- competent: families have an array of skills to facilitate child development before, during and after a transition;

- using home as an educational resource: this means playing with their child in a way that helps them to learn as well as feel safe, competent, secure and loved. This also involves establishing a time and space for homework once a child starts primary school. Parents should also ask their child to tell them about their day at school and what was learned, and to show them the homework the child completed.



Parents in Uganda attend a parenting group meeting as part of Plan's CLAC project. Parenting groups discuss how they can support their children's transition to primary school.

While parents living in poverty and without education might feel unable to support their child's education, there is a lot they can do according to a research study that describes the family as 'The Smallest School' (Barton and Colery 2007). It points out factors that are within the control of parents at any income level: getting students out of bed and off to school, establishing rules in the home for how children spend their time, reading to children and talking to children. Parents need to understand how important these modest efforts are for improving children's academic performance. This means providing support to improve parenting skills for those who need it, teaching non-literate parents to read, and helping families obtain suitable reading material for their homes.

Some parenting programs linked to success in primary school emphasise the importance of understanding family contexts, creating shared understandings of schooling, and developing multiple, open-ended pathways for parent engagement. This is a partnership view of home-school connections that seeks to improve outcomes for children through developing parents' (and teachers') skills, creating deeper and reciprocal connections among

parents, teachers, and communities, and opening spaces for family involvement in policy making. In other words, this new conception of parent engagement strives to develop various aspects of 'family capital'. Capital is a set of valued resources that people acquire, accumulate and activate toward a purpose. Family capital has knowledge, social, cultural and political aspects. Human capital refers to training, skills and knowledge. The social capital focus is social connections, which often lead to understanding and using new cultural practices. Political capital increases access to school decision-making processes and advocacy roles.

The role of the community in children's school success must also be considered. Community leaders manage resources for community development and establish laws and guidelines to manage the resources and create community cohesion, protection and equality. Yet the community's greatest resource, its children, receive little attention. The greatest single investment for community development is to ensure that 100 per cent of children complete primary school. There are well-documented economic and social benefits associated with the completion of primary school.

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In focus groups conducted over four years in East Africa, parents identified issues that negatively influence children in the primary school years. Widespread concerns included:

- neighbours no longer correct children's misdeeds as compared to previous generations that viewed raising children as a community responsibility;
- truants luring school-going children away from school;
- video clubs exposing young children to violence and evil;
- family violence and divorce;
- rape of young girls by adult men;
- unsafe paths to school due to predators, weather and terrain;
- unsafe places to play and lack of positive out-of-school time activities and influences;
- attractiveness of child labour to increase family income; and
- inadequate numbers of teachers who are sincerely committed to children (problems cited included involvement in politics, alcoholism, sexual abuse, and not enough female teachers in remote areas).

Transition programs must engage community leaders in identifying and

addressing issues that are affecting the children and community progress.

Communities can contribute to children's success in school by structuring out-of-school time (OST). The need and desire for a supervised setting and a set of activities for children and young people during non-school hours has grown over the last few decades. Children get into trouble when they are bored and have nothing to do. Children and young people need trusting relationships to become productively engaged. Studies of children from high-poverty backgrounds increasingly emphasised the important role that early and continued exposure to enriched environments has on levels of academic achievement. The hours spent in enriched OST activities can be a critical determinant for student achievement. High-achieving students spend more OST in enrichment activities, hobbies, organised sports, volunteer activities and educational games such as computers. OST among students living in poverty is often unstructured, unsupervised and unproductive. Before and after school activities that provide children and young people with supervised activities designed to promote learning and positive development beyond the traditional school



Out of school time and support for children's homework ensures children are able to complete primary school successfully.

day are referred to as extended learning opportunities (ELOs).

Individually parents might not be able to afford books and games, but cooperatively they can provide materials and activities to stimulate young minds. They can organise help for homework and offer additional academic help to close the gap between the rich and poor. Community homes or the early

learning centre during after school time can become no-cost venues for children to gather for reading, tutoring, and to play games that reinforce maths and literacy skills while developing critical thinking skills. OST provides a child protection mechanism to also reach and support orphans and vulnerable children with improved care giving, child nutrition and health.

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OST can prevent risky behaviour and support positive youth development outcomes by providing special OST activities and programs for young people and by engaging them in service to young children, managing OST activities, tutoring programs and clubs for primary students. ELOs develop workforce skills in children in the following ways:

- Small group activities to develop teamwork and leadership.
- Opportunities to interact with mentors to learn about multiple fields of interest.
- Avenues to develop maths and literacy skills in context.
- Time, venues and individual attention that allow for thinking and advanced communication skills.
- Safe places to learn and play.

Productive links between formal school and the community can grow from OST programming.

Suggested activities

Build family empowerment

Conduct parenting groups specifically focused on parenting in the middle years (from ages six to 12 years). Parents have knowledge about



A group of Grade 1 students at a primary school in Cambodia read a book outside their classroom together.

raising children that they can share with one another. They can also learn new methods to support school achievement that include: reading to children, telling stories, singing songs, playing games, and

conversing regularly about day-to-day activities. Parenting groups that build human, social and political capital might have multiple benefits for parents who feel excluded from society and powerless as parents.

Community discussion and action

Engage leaders to bring children's issues forward for community-wide discussion. Discuss school- and community-based issues that affect children's transitions to and persistence in primary school.

School-based issues: Parents whose children make visible learning progress in preschool might be disappointed in low performance and expectations in primary school. Communities living in poverty have little contact with schools and the relationship that exists might be intimidating. However, they need not feel helpless. Parents and their community must become informed consumers with expectations about their own and primary school responsibilities. In small groups and community forums, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the primary school related to the goal of helping children to reach their learning potential. What are their aspirations for their children? Is the school meeting them? What needs to be done to improve the school? Parents who talk like this are collecting concrete data to influence change in the school. A positive way to move forward is for parents and students with interest in school improvement to form a

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school assistance group to work with the primary school on no-cost improvements that can be made.

Community-based issues: also discuss community issues that affect transition to primary. Discuss how children are spending OST time. Discuss what changes need to be made and how the community can work together. Consider community clubs for enriched play and learning. Reach agreement from the entire community that every child (girls, boys, those with disabilities) can have a designated amount of time every week to participate in a community activity that is designed for their

enjoyment, academic advancement and positive social development. Make sure that children who participate are safe from harm.

Children's clubs

Support the development of community clubs for more productive use of OST time. Community clubs can provide time with stimulating board games (to build literacy, maths and logical problem solving skills), and storybooks not typically found in the home. There should be time for group sports or theatre activities, as well as the opportunity to discuss, investigate

and act on community issues. Develop training programs for adolescents to manage the clubs. Develop tin-trunk libraries and low-cost learning games that can be stored in tin-trunks. Engage community members to make materials, manage the program, and ensure safety and child protection. Components of quality OST programs include: a clear mission; high expectations and positive social norms; fun, safe and healthy environment; supportive emotional climate; small groups; stable, trained personnel; appropriate content and pedagogy relative to children's needs; and activities that are interesting

and enjoyable, are integrated with the family and community partners, and have frequent assessment.

Support establishment of community watch groups

Set up community watch groups that monitor and improve health, protection and learning for children during the middle years (from ages six to 12 years). Stimulate positive practices of inclusion and citizenship among middle year children. This is important to the community's future. Take action against those who verbally or physically abuse children.

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Right: Benjamin lives in the Solomon Islands and uses a wheelchair to move around. He wants to go to school but has experienced many barriers to this. Promoting disability inclusion can help children like Benjamin reach their full potential.



PROMOTING INCLUSIVE TRANSITION PROGRAMS

Disability inclusion in transition to primary school programs is essential to ensure that all children are enabled to participate, learn and contribute according to their evolving capacities and to reach their full potential. Children with disabilities are often excluded from vital early learning activities that facilitate their transition into school. Children with disabilities might be hidden away by their families due to stigma and discrimination they experience in the community. Attitudes of the family, teachers and other children also contribute to children with disabilities being excluded from ELPs and later education. Women and girls with disabilities are more vulnerable as they have the 'double disadvantage' of discrimination based on gender and disability.

Disability along with child protection and gender are core issues to be integrated into transition to primary school programs in order to ensure that every child has the opportunity to learn in a safe and welcoming environment. Catering to the needs of the most marginalised and excluded children enables creative, flexible and inclusive learning environments that will benefit all children. Disability inclusive primary schools can also positively contribute to changing



Revathi, age 23, contracted polio when she was 18 months old. She received assistance for rehabilitation and was able to attend school thanks to support from her parents and teachers. Now she is a fully qualified teacher herself.

WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES ARE MORE VULNERABLE AS THEY HAVE THE 'DOUBLE DISADVANTAGE' OF DISCRIMINATION BASED ON GENDER AND DISABILITY.

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attitudes and beliefs in the value and capacity of children with disabilities among teachers, families, other children, the community and children with disabilities themselves.

Principles of disability inclusion:

Inclusion

Inclusive primary schools enable all children to learn and participate. These create a learning environment that is child centred, flexible and enables children to develop their unique capabilities in a way that fits their own style of learning.



Plan has supported a primary school in Tanzania with improved sanitation facilities. The school toilet that was constructed focused on equitable access through a design that considered gender and the specific needs of children with disabilities.

Implications for practice:

- Find and reach out to children with disabilities and their families in the community as they transition into primary school.
- Adapt activities and learning materials to include all children. Provide training and resources to primary school teachers on teaching styles that support and facilitate inclusion.
- Include children with disabilities in age-appropriate peer groups and activities, such as children's clubs.
- Teachers can role model inclusion to other teachers, children and parents in the way they communicate and interact with any child with a disability.

Participation

“Nothing about us without us.” People with disabilities participate in processes and are represented in community decision making related to transitioning to primary school. This participation could be parents with disabilities, parents of children with disabilities and children with disabilities themselves.

Implications for practice:

- Include parents with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities in community consultations, meetings and discussions.
- Build partnerships between people with disabilities and schools. Look for collaboration with the disability community, including disabled person's organisations (where they exist).
- People with disabilities can become role models in the school. Invite them to talk to the children and teachers.
- Support the development of peer groups and clubs for children, including those with disabilities, to enable involvement in community activities and awareness raising.
- Promote the rights of children with disabilities to reach their full potential, whether this is best catered for in a mainstream school or through special programs.

Accessibility

Work towards creating welcoming and barrier-free environments for children with disabilities to

access primary school. Barriers to access can be physical, attitudinal, economic or institutional.

Implications for practice:

- Identify the barriers that might exist for children with disabilities to access primary school, remembering that barriers are not just about the physical building, but include attitudes, poverty and policies.
- Raise awareness and advocate with parents, teachers and communities to create a learning environment that welcomes, nurtures and educates all children regardless of their gender, physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other characteristics.
- Make schools safe and welcoming through simple low-cost adaptations to any buildings or structures. Also consider how children with disabilities will travel to school and provide support for transport, where necessary.
- Review the way that information is communicated – written, verbal, visual. Provide training and resources to primary school teachers on using different types of communication methods.

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HOW TO DESIGN A TRANSITION PROGRAM



Right: Transition to primary programs can contribute to achieving *Education for All* goals and educational success for children like this boy in Ghana.



HOW TO DESIGN A TRANSITION PROGRAM

Now you are ready to design a transition program. Transition programs can be designed using a program logic model. Program logic models are a concise way to show how a program is designed and will make a difference for a program's participants and community. Program logic summarises the key elements of the program, reveals the rationale behind the approach, describes intended outcomes and how they can be measured, and shows the cause and effect relationships between your program and its intended outcomes (all of this information should fit on one piece of paper).

A program logic model is a framework for reflection and action. It asks and answers four basic questions:

- 1. Why?** (Thinking level or espoused level.) What is the problem? Why is an action needed? What do I hope to achieve and why? What is the change we want to see (child, family and community levels)? What does this mean for the way we think about the program? Our own work?
- 2. What?** (Design level.) What is the programming response that will bring this change? What programs, curriculum, training tools and structures are needed to bring the

change? Examine the materials that are designed. Will they lead to the change? See Section 5 for examples of transition activities.

- 3. How?** (Implementation level.) What are people actually doing on the ground? What is their understanding of the rationale for the program, the change we want to see, and the curriculum tools? How are they prepared and evaluated? Does the implementation structure enable the field staff to carry out the design and is the implementation compatible with the design and the goal?
- 4. How will you know?** (Measuring.) What kind of data is needed? How often? Who will collect it? How will the data feed into the reflection and action cycle? Is the program designed to enable changes based on knowledge? Is the program having an impact on the beneficiary? If not, at what level(s) do(es) the problem lie?

There are several advantages to developing a program logic model:

- a) Strategic planning**
The process forces you to identify your vision, the rationale behind the program, and how the program will work.



A 6 year old girl with her school work in Ethiopia.

b) Effective communications

Program logic models allow you to provide a snapshot of your program and intended outcomes to funders, staff, the media and colleagues. This shows that what you are doing is strategic, and that you have a plan for being accountable.

c) Evaluation planning

The program logic model provides the basic framework for monitoring and evaluation. It identifies the outcomes you are aiming for and puts these in measurable terms.

d) Continuous learning and improvement

The model provides a point of reference against which progress can be measured on an ongoing basis.

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Steps for developing a program logic model:

Program	Outcomes	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
Desired results	Indicators	Evaluation questions
Motivating conditions and causes	Performance measures	Data sources and methods
Strategies		Mechanisms for learning
Activities		Stakeholders
Resources		

This table shows how to format the logic model in a one-page document. A 'Transition to primary activity planning sheet' is provided in the appendices to assist with program planning and design.

Here are some recommended steps for developing the program logic model:

A. Describe the program

a) Desired results: In one or two sentences state the long-term goal for children.

b) Motivating conditions and causes: Why does the community need a transition program? What are the factors, issues and problems the transition program will try to improve or eliminate? What have we learned about the problem from community needs assessments and lessons learned about what works well in other programs?

c) Strategies: What are the methods and processes that will enable us to achieve the desired result? Strategies are higher-level categories than activities.

d) Activities: Individual services or interventions the program uses to implement the strategies. This describes what staff do on a day-to-day basis. At this level we can refer to work plans.

B. Identify the outcomes

e) Performance measures (these are also known as outputs): These are the measures of the products and services generated by program strategies and activities. Ask: What does the program generate? What levels of activities? What will measure the quality of the service? There are measures of effort (such as number of children served) and measures of effect (improved attitude toward school; improved school attendance).

f) Indicators: These require community-wide effort, not just the effort of the program. They include ultimate indicators (increased school completion) and interim indicators (improved scores in reading and maths). In deciding on the best indicators, ask: Is the result relevant? Is data available? Is the indicator quantitative or qualitative? Will it provide sufficient and convincing information?

C. Plan to evaluate and learn from data

a) Evaluation questions: What do we want to learn? Are the indicators moving and, if not, does that mean the transition program needs to be modified?

b) Data sources and methods: Sources: eg testing, local databases; Methods: eg surveys, focus groups, interviews.

c) Mechanisms for learning: What opportunities exist or need to be created to focus on and learn from monitoring and evaluation?

d) Stakeholders: Individuals who have a vested interest in the program. They need to know the answers to the evaluation questions and to be involved in learning from the data collected.

A transition to primary problem/solution analysis sheet is included as a resource in the appendices. This can be used to help identify and analyse priority issues/challenges, possible causes and suggested actions for addressing them within the program.

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MONITORING PROGRESS



Right: Transition to primary programs are an essential support to children like these in Burkina Faso, to ensure they enrol on time, stay in school and learn.



MONITORING PROGRESS

Transition to primary programs are an essential component of a holistic early childhood development model. The interventions provided for children aged from birth to five years are considered a success when the child enters school, with family support, ready to succeed. Transition programs recognise the ongoing support needs of young children as they proceed through the first two years of primary school. The nature of the problems children face and the solutions encompass the entire community. Transition programs can steer families and communities to look to the future and recognise children as the greatest resource for family survival and community development.

Transition programs should be based on an in-depth understanding of the needs of children and the problems and resources within the family, school and community that affect the successful transition to primary. The problems that exist are the baseline at which change is measured. Activities should be based on a clear vision for ready children, ready families, ready schools and ready communities. Measurable project objectives should be agreed, stated as outcomes (or change) that the project

wants to achieve. Indicators should be established to help keep track of progress. Transition programs might begin with one or two activities in each of the three key areas: school readiness, family and community readiness, and primary school readiness to support children's school success. Others might be added over time. The most important focal point for monitoring and evaluation is the changes found within the child due to the interventions. What is the point of funding teacher study groups if the classroom experiences of the children do not change? What is the point of funding children's clubs if the toys are destroyed and bullies within the group frighten children from attending?

Focus on outcomes. Action research and most significant change stories, can help clarify how and whether the inputs and outputs are contributing effectively and efficiently to the desired outcome at the child, family, school and community levels. We cannot say that children's clubs are contributing to academic achievement without careful attention to the content, materials and dynamics of the clubs. Without monitoring and research, we cannot say that parenting groups are effective

for helping children go to school with food in their stomachs and having a scheduled time each day for homework, play and chores.

Effective early childhood programs that include parenting, early learning centres and transition programs have the potential to not only change the individual outcomes of children but to transform society. Monitoring and evaluation helps us better understand how to bring positive changes. That is why monitoring and evaluation must be integrated in every activity and be conducted by the implementers and beneficiaries. If children who attended community preschools are noticeably different from others it helps make the point that children really learn well in environments that are active, experiential, collaborative, democratic and cognitive, with teachers who are kind and supportive, and where parents are involved. Invite the primary school to help track the progress of the ECCD children. This can become a powerful influence for change in primary education. Include opportunities for seminars and regular reviews of findings and implications in the overall design of monitoring and evaluation for the transition program.

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ILLUSTRATIVE OBJECTIVES AND INDICATORS:

ECCD program results framework (illustrative)

The transition program should be understood as a component of the early childhood strategy. It should be implemented in a way that links with and contributes to the other objectives.

<p>Goal: Improved child wellbeing (from birth to eight years) in targeted high-poverty communities through effective and holistic early childhood supports</p> <p>Major outcomes/indicators</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in primary school on-time enrolment; completion of each grade; and enrolment in subsequent grades toward primary school completion. Changes in child wellbeing indicators (health/growth; development/learning; and protection/participation) for children aged five to eight years in targeted communities against the baseline. 			
<p>Outcome 1</p> <p>Parents take action to improve child wellbeing in home and community</p>	<p>Outcome 2</p> <p>All targeted children in targeted communities participate in quality ELPs in the year or two before primary school</p>	<p>Outcome 3</p> <p>All targeted Grade 1 and 2 students participate in school- and community-based activities that improve performance and retention in school</p>	<p>Outcome 4</p> <p>Formal and non-formal sectors work collaboratively to improve early childhood wellbeing outcomes (from birth to eight years)</p>

Transition to primary intermediate outcomes

3.1 # % targeted children (aged from six to nine years) completing Grade 1 and 2 and enrolling in next grade
3.2 # % targeted communities with effective transition to primary programs
3.3 # % targeted children (aged from six to nine years) participating in school-based activities that enable them to succeed in primary school
3.4 # % Grade 1 and 2 classrooms with quality scores for teacher-child interactions and instructional support (classroom monitoring tools)
3.5 # % targeted children (aged from six to nine years) participating in community clubs that provide academic and social/emotional support for school success (quality score)
3.6 # % teachers, parents and facilitators trained to support primary school transition
3.7 organisational capacity, materials and programs developed for transition to primary program

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Illustrative indicators

1. Increased parent/caregiver skills and actions to support effective child growth, development and protection.
2. Increased parent/caregiver awareness regarding education rights and family responsibilities.
3. Increased primary teacher awareness about school-related barriers to transition (eg bilingual education; fear of corporal punishment) and actions to reduce barriers.
4. Reception and orientation activities for families of new students offered.
5. Every child identified and enrolled in primary school at proper intake age.
6. Grade 1 and 2 environment is welcoming (eg colourful posters; more use of small groups; storytelling; music, etc).
7. Grade 1 and 2 students assigned older student ‘mentors’ or ‘buddies’ as learning guides.
8. Teachers provide effective instructional and emotional support (classroom monitoring instrument).
9. Teachers ensure classroom equality with girls, boys, disadvantaged children and children with disabilities receiving equal quality of attention and interactions from teacher, and equal access to learning materials and equal opportunities for classroom leadership (classroom monitoring instrument).
10. Lower primary students participate in community clubs with enrichment and tutoring activities, and safeguards for child protection.
11. Collaboration with health, nutrition and water partners to improve sanitation and health.

Case studies and impact research conducted to monitor progress and test assumptions.

Examples:

- Preschool student’s success in primary school compared to those who did not attend preschool.
- Impact of community out-of-school activities on social and emotional development, school behaviour, school participation, and school performance.
- How is the program contributing to gender equality? “Classrooms can be contexts where stereotypical gender differences are reinforced by teachers and peers even when official policies emphasise equal opportunities” (Vogler, Crivello and Woodhead 2008).
- What are the features of school life that give children satisfaction and advantage or dissatisfaction and difficulty when they begin primary school?
- To what extent does the kind of preschool provision affect the child’s settling in at school, and what type of preschool experiences or programs are related to disadvantages and difficulties?
- What factors appear to be important in influencing the success of transition to primary?
- Looking through an inclusion lens, what are the transition issues? How are they addressed? What progress has been made?
- What are the different views of parents, children and teachers regarding child protection issues and their effect on school transitions? What strategies were undertaken and to what effect?
- What were the assumptions and actions to ensure disability inclusion? What progress was made? What are the different perspectives about this progress? What needs to improve? How does disability inclusion contribute to understandings about the larger transition issues?

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CONCLUSION

A transition to school program is a set of planned activities or a process established collaboratively by a range of players that make starting school as successful as possible, while also providing ongoing supports for children to stay in school and learn. Transition to primary programs can contribute substantially to achieving *Education for All* goals and educational success for all children. The field of study is relatively new and requires investigation. There are no one-size-fits-all transition

programs, as all communities vary. The program should be developed according to the local context and carefully evaluated for impact. This guide is an attempt to inform planning by contributing relevant knowledge from several developed countries and highlighting the transition work underway in a number of developing countries. The work that each field program undertakes will contribute to best practices knowledge that should be shared and further developed in other regions throughout the world.

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Right: In the Philippines, culturally inappropriate education has resulted in low attendance and retention rates, poor learning outcomes and reading culture among indigenous Mangyan children. Plan is supporting these children by developing indigenous storybooks and story-centred teaching approaches that provide a meaningful early education experience appropriate for indigenous children.



1A – LOWER PRIMARY OBSERVATION FORM GUIDE SHEET

Teacher: _____
 Start time: _____
 Number of adults: _____

 Score: _____

Observer: _____
 End time: _____
 Number of children present: G B
 Number of children enrolled: G B

SCORING GUIDE:

Put a check mark next to activities and interactions observed. Make notes. Give overall score for each category as follows:

- 0 = unacceptable;
- 1 = few indicators observed;
- 2 = approximately ½ indicators observed, fairly well done but room for improvement;
- 3 = excellent, most indicators observed.
- Note categories not observed and do not attempt to score unless observed.
- Sum total and divide by categories scored.

Area to score	0	1	2	3	Notes (provide examples)
1. Attendance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% or more score 3 • 65–79% score 2 • 50–64% score 1 • Less than 50% score 0 					
2. Physical environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit on mats, not cement or dirt • If desks used adequate space between students and all have equitable seating • Blackboard clean and easy to read • Adequate natural lighting and ventilation • Colourful and attractive learning posters displayed • Children's work displayed • Clean – free of rubbish • Learning materials displayed • Adequate amount for children's use • Clean toilet available and used • Safe water for drinking 					

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Area to score	0	1	2	3	Notes (provide examples)
<p>3. Positive emotional climate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affectionate relations • Warm, calm voice • Social conversation • Smiling, laughter, enthusiasm • Encourages child-to-child cooperation • Provides comfort and assistance • Children seek support and guidance from teacher 					
<p>4. Promotes effective learners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows choice • Allows children to lead discussions • Gives children responsibilities • Encourages children to talk • Asks their ideas/opinions • Allows children to move around • Encourages creativity, curiosity, persistence • Girls and boys provided equal opportunity to participate and lead 					
<p>5. Classroom management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children know what to do • Follows routine/schedule • No unnecessary wait time • Materials ready and accessible • Positive and consistent discipline • Monitors and prevents negative behaviour • Uses subtle cues to redirect behaviour rather than embarrassing the child • Attention to the positive 					

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Area to score	0	1	2	3	Notes (provide examples)
<p>6. Instructional support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning objectives are clear to children • Encourages interest and involvement • Uses a variety of teaching methods • Hands-on opportunities • Uses high-level questions to promote reasoning • Girls and boys receive same quality feedback and opportunity to talk/lead • Back and forth exchanges • Asks follow-up questions • Asks children to explain thinking • Encourages and affirms • Choice when finished • Children with different abilities receive support to be successful 					
<p>7. Maths competencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Count numbers to 100 by 1s, 5s, 10s • Write numbers to 100 • Identify position of objects in sequence (eg fifth) • Describe attributes, compare and match sets of up to 10 objects • Complete patterns (eg big-little-big-__?) • Understand concepts of whole and half • Identify names of local currency and amount • Use drawings or objects to solve addition/subtraction problems up to 20 • Name and describe shapes • Recognise and compare attributes of length, weight, time, position • Solve maths puzzles 					

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Area to score	0	1	2	3	Notes (provide examples)
<p>9. Literacy competencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Tells own personal stories · Draws pictures about own experience · Writes/reads own stories · Listens to a story and explains meaning · Retells a story · Recognises letters, not rote · Writes letters correctly · Identifies sounds of letters · Notes initial and ending sounds · Notes syllables in words through clapping, games · Names rhyming words · Recognises common sight words · Reads words and sentences, not by rote · Follows oral directions · Speaks in complex sentences 					
<p>9. Outdoor play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Organised games · Free play to develop gross motor skills · Ropes and balls available · Adult supervision · Safe, rubbish-free area · Protected from harm · Children allowed to play games without gender restrictions 					

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Area to score	0	1	2	3	Notes (provide examples)
<p>10. Inclusion and equality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Children with disabilities in age group are known and attending if needs can be met · Language minority children assisted to understand · Extra academic and emotional support provided to those in need · Girls and boys participate and lead at same level · Girls and boys participate in activities that cross gender barriers 					

Deborah Llewellyn 2012

Follow-up consultation with teacher to discuss observations:

- Strengths observed
- Areas for improvement
- Additional comments or explanations provided by teacher

Facilitator signature and date: _____

Observer signature and date: _____

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1B – LOWER PRIMARY OBSERVATION FORM SCORING SHEET

Teacher: _____

Start time: _____

Number of adults: _____

Score: _____

Observer: _____

End time: _____

Number of children present: G BNumber of children enrolled: G B

SCORING GUIDE:

Put a check mark next to activities and interactions observed. Make notes. Give overall score for each category as follows:

- 0 = unacceptable;
- 1 = few indicators observed;
- 2 = approximately 1/2 indicators observed, fairly well done but room for improvement;
- 3 = excellent, most indicators observed.
- Note categories not observed and do not attempt to score unless observed.
- Sum total and divide by categories scored (10).

Area to score	0	1	2	3	Notes (write additional comments on back)
1. Attendance					
2. Physical environment					
3. Positive social emotional climate					
4. Promotes effective learners					
5. Classroom management					
6. Instructional support					
7. Maths competencies					
8. Literacy competencies					
9. Outdoor play					
10. Inclusion and equality					

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1B – LOWER PRIMARY OBSERVATION FORM SCORING SHEET **CONTINUED**

Follow-up consultation with teacher to discuss observations:

- Strengths noted
- Areas for improvement
- Additional comments or explanations provided by teacher

Facilitator signature and date:

Observer signature and date:

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2A – COMMUNITY CHILDREN’S CLUB MONITORING TOOL

Community: _____

Name of observer: _____

Start time: _____

Number of children registered: G B

Children with disabilities: _____

Score: _____

Date of observation: _____

End time: _____

Number of children present: G B

SCORING GUIDE:

Put a check mark next to activities and interactions observed. Make notes. Give overall score for each category as follows:

- 0 = unacceptable;
- 1 = few indicators observed;
- 2 = approximately ½ indicators observed, fairly well done but room for improvement;
- 3 = excellent, most indicators observed
- Note categories not observed and do not attempt to score unless observed.
- Sum total and divide by categories scored (10).

Area to score	0	1	2	3	Notes (provide examples)
1. Attendance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 80% or more score 3 · 65–79% score 2 · 50–64% score 1 · Less than 50% score 0 					
2. Meeting place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Safe · Clean and free of rubbish · Learning materials in good condition · Safe drinking water available · Clean toilet available and used 					

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Area to score	0	1	2	3	Notes (provide examples)
<p>3. Positive emotional climate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Affectionate relations · Warm, calm voice · Social conversation · Smiling, laughter, enthusiasm · Encourages child-to-child cooperation · Provides comfort and assistance · Children seek support and guidance from facilitator 					
<p>4. Promotes effective learners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Allows choice · Allows children to lead discussions · Gives children responsibilities · Encourages children to talk · Asks their ideas/opinions · Allows children to move around · Encourages creativity, curiosity, persistence · Girls and boys provided equal opportunity to participate and lead · Children responsible for putting away own materials 					
<p>5. Facilitator skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Enjoys being with children · Exhibits enthusiasm · Interacts with each child · Talks in conversational tone · Listens to and understands child's feelings · Asks questions that require reasoning · Takes pleasure in children's successes · Provides support in time of need · Exercises control without being threatening 					

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Area to score	0	1	2	3	Notes (provide examples)
6. Routine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Greetings by name · Concern expressed for absentees · Opportunity to share personal news · Designated time for homework help · Designated time for free play · Free play choices include board games that promote maths, literacy and thinking skills, enrichment reading, or sports · Designated time to discuss an issue (ie health, safety, friendships, environment, community service) · Closing meeting held 					
7. Time management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Starts on time · Ends on time · No long wait periods · Children know routine · Routine followed · Materials ready and available 					
8. Sports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Organised games with rules · Free play also available · Ropes and balls available · Adult supervision · Safe, rubbish free area · Protected from harm · Children allowed to play games without gender restrictions 					

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Area to score	0	1	2	3	Notes (provide examples)
<p>9. Inclusion and equality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children with disabilities in age group are known and attending if needs can be met Language minority children assisted to understand Extra academic and emotional support provided to those in need Girls and boys participate and lead at same level Girls and boys participate in activities that cross gender barriers Activities are culturally appropriate 					
<p>10. Community engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community provides space Parents observe activities on rotating basis Parents manage activity Parents help to develop play and learn materials 					

Consultation with facilitator(s)

- Strengths observed
- Areas for improvement
- Facilitator’s comments or concerns

Facilitator signature and date: _____

Observer signature and date: _____

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2B – COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S CLUB SCORING SHEET

Community: _____	Date of observation: _____
Name of observer: _____	
Start time: _____	End time: _____
Number of children registered: <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> B	Number of children present: <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> B
Children with disabilities: _____	
Score: _____	

Use monitoring form guide for information on scoring each category

SCORING GUIDE:

Put a check mark next to activities and interactions observed. Make notes. Give overall score for each category as follows:

- 0 = unacceptable;
- 1 = few indicators observed;
- 2 = approximately ½ indicators observed, fairly well done but room for improvement;
- 3 = excellent, most indicators observed.
- Note categories not observed and do not attempt to score unless observed.
- Sum total and divide by categories scored (10).

Area to score	0	1	2	3	Notes (provide examples)
1. Attendance					
2. Meeting place					
3. Positive emotional climate					
4. Promotes effective learners					
5. Facilitator skills					
6. Routine					
7. Time management					
8. Sports					
9. Inclusion and equality					
10. Community engagement					

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Follow-up consultation with facilitator(s) to discuss observations:

- Strengths observed
- Areas for improvement
- Additional comments or explanations provided by facilitator

Facilitator signature and date: _____

Observer signature and date: _____

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3 – TRANSITION PRACTICES CHECKLIST²

Activities	Status
Family and school connections	
· Contact with family during first few days of primary school	
· Assessment of family needs	
· Periodic contact with family	
· Connecting family to community resources	
· Family participation in home learning activities	
· Family participation in the classroom and at school events	
· Regular family meetings at school	
· Family meetings about transition issues	
· Family and teacher information sharing about individual child	
· Newsletter/resource materials	
· Parent orientation after school starts	
Child-school connections	
· Preschool child connection with primary teacher	
· Preschool connection with primary school for special school functions	
· Preschool practice of primary school rituals	
· Primary school activities incorporated from preschool	
· Preschool teacher contact with former students	
· Primary school support staff visit the preschools	
· Primary school changes practices/adapts to meet needs of disadvantaged children – learning, language, physical barriers, emotional support, school supplies, uniforms	

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² Marcia E Kraft-Sayre and Robert Pianta (2000). *Enhancing the Transition to Primary Schools. Linking Children, Families and School. National Centre for Early Development and Learning, University of Virginia, US.*

Activities	Status
Peer connections	
· Peer connections/friendships exist within the class	
· Peer/friendship connections exist outside the school	
· Peer/friendship connections with non-classmate peers who will be in the Grade 1 class	
· Preschool peer/friendship connections with Grade 1 students	
· Group-based peer connections – sense of group and family among the children	
Community connections	
· Preschool/primary school collaboration about programs and classroom practices	
· Identifying and communicating curriculum/ community expectations about children	
· Inter-school connections about a specific child	
· Connections with community agencies, ie health, child protection	
· Community clubs for OST recreation, enrichment and homework help	

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4 – TRANSITION TO PRIMARY ACTIVITY PLANNING SHEET

Transition to primary outcomes/results ¹					Evaluation
All targeted Grade 1 and 2 students participate in school- and community-based activities that improve performance and retention in school					
Intermediate outcomes	Motivating conditions, challenges and causes ²	Strategies ³	Activities ⁴	Resources – financial, human, time	Evaluation – source, tools, definitions, units of measurement, methods and schedule
3.1 # % participating children (aged six to eight years) completing Grade 1 and 2 and enrolling in next grade					
3.2 # % targeted communities with transition to primary program					
3.3 # % children (aged six to nine years) participating in community- and school-based activities that enable them to succeed in primary school					
3.4 # % Grade 1 and 2 classrooms with quality scores for teacher-child interactions and instructional support (classroom monitoring tools)					

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¹ Desired results: In one or two sentences state the long-term goal for children.

² Motivating conditions and causes: Why does the community need a transition program? What are the factors, issues and problems the transition program will try to improve or eliminate? What have we learned about the problem from community needs assessments, and lessons learned about what works well in other programs?

³ Strategies: What are the methods and processes that will enable us to achieve the desired result? Strategies are the higher-level categories than activities.

⁴ Activities: Individual services or interventions the program uses to implement the strategies. This describes what staff do on a day-to-day basis. At this level, we can refer to work plans.

3.5 # % teachers, parents and facilitators trained to support primary school transition				
3.6 Organisational capacity, materials and programs developed for transition to primary program				

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5 – TRANSITION TO PRIMARY PROBLEM/SOLUTION ANALYSIS

Priority issues	Possible causes	Suggested actions	Baseline, monitoring and evaluation planning
Child readiness for school			

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Priority issues	Possible causes	Suggested actions	Baseline, monitoring and evaluation planning
School readiness for children			
Community readiness			

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6 – ECCD PROGRAM RESULTS FRAMEWORK (ILLUSTRATIVE)

Goal: Improved child wellbeing (from birth to eight years) in targeted high-poverty communities through effective and holistic early childhood supports

Major outcomes/indicators

1. Changes in primary school on-time enrolment; completion of each grade; and enrolment in subsequent grades toward primary school completion.
2. Changes in child wellbeing indicators (health/growth; development/learning; and protection/participation) for children aged five to eight years in targeted communities against the baseline.

Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4
Parents take action to improve child wellbeing in home and community	All targeted children in targeted communities participate in quality ELPs in the year or two before primary school	All targeted Grade 1 and 2 students participate in school- and community-based activities that improve performance and retention in school	Formal and non-formal sectors work collaboratively to improve early childhood wellbeing outcomes (from birth to eight years)

TRANSITION TO PRIMARY INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

3.1 # % targeted children (aged from six to nine years) completing Grade 1 and 2 and enrolling in next grade
3.2 # % targeted communities with effective transition to primary programs ¹
3.3 # % targeted children (aged from six to nine years) participating in school-based activities that enable them to succeed in primary school ²
3.4 # % Grade 1 and 2 classrooms with quality scores for teacher-child interactions and instructional support (classroom monitoring tools)
3.5 # % targeted children (aged from six to nine years) participating in community clubs that provide academic and social/emotional support for school success (quality score)
3.6 # % teachers, parents and facilitators trained to support primary school transition
3.7 organisational capacity, materials and programs developed for transition to primary program

¹ Community-based activities that enable school going and non-school going children to make friends and play together in safe, supervised settings, explore interesting topics to improve thinking skills, creativity, and citizenship, and consolidate basic skills in maths and literacy (eg board games/tin-trunk library), and receive homework help.

² School-based activities include reaching out and supporting disadvantaged children with initiatives to improve social, emotional and academic climate of primary school. Examples are buddy systems, welcoming days and children's clubs.

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AusAID:	The Australian Agency for International Development
CLAC:	Community Led Action for Children
ECCD:	Early Childhood Care and Development
ELO:	Extended Learning Opportunities
ELP:	Early Learning Programs
NGO:	Non-Government Organisation
OST:	Out of School Time
PTA:	Parent Teacher Association
SMC:	School Management Committee

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Community Led Action for Children (CLAC): an approach to ECCD that seeks to prove that 100% of disadvantaged children in a targeted high poverty community can achieve child wellbeing indicators and school success through effective and quality early childhood supports. The key components of CLAC are:

- A parenting program that improves knowledge and practical skills to improve child health, development, learning and protection through a process of appreciative enquiry that engages parents in discussion and action around child development.
- A low cost, high quality ELP that serves every child in the year or two before primary school to ensure school readiness.
- A transitions to primary school program with school and community based activities that enable children to enter school on time, stay in school and learn.
- Innovations in sector integration and improvements in government buy-in and support for ECCD.

Education for All: The *Education for All* movement is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, young people and adults. The movement is led by UNESCO, which partners with governments, development agencies, civil society and the private sector to achieve six *Education for All* goals by 2015.

fade out: refers to the rapid performance fade out for children whose preschool experience did not build a solid academic foundation with understanding of concepts, not just rote memorisation.

halo effect: terminology used to describe children in Grade 1 who previously attended some kind of preschool. Attending a low-quality preschool, for example, those that use rote teaching and learning approaches, means children can have basic academic and social attributes such as ability to stand in a line, sit still, and follow directions that cause teachers to perceive them as ‘smart’, but they lack attributes like initiative and independence, and skills like reasoning and problem solving.

maths manipulatives: objects that can be used to show something or figure out an answer, such as using two sticks and two shells to conclude that $2 + 2 = 4$.

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