



Guidance to support the effective management of transitions from early learning and care (ELC) settings to primary school





June 2021

Introduction

This document provides advice for primary school leaders and teachers in supporting the transition of pupils into primary education. It also considers the transition of pupils from class to class, including special class settings, within the primary school. Effective transitions promote continuity in pupils' learning by ensuring there is coherence and consistency across learning environments. Schools are encouraged to create structures to enable collaboration with parents/ guardians, teachers, support staff, and any other relevant professionals, to support effective transitions.

Early Learning and Care (ELC) to Primary Education

School leaders can support the child's effective transition into primary school by:








-  Organising information sessions to familiarise the pupils and parents / guardians with the primary school environment in line with COVID-19 procedures (for example, virtual meetings with class teachers, a pre-recorded video tour of the school/classroom)
-  Providing advice and sharing resources with parents/ guardians to help them support their child at this time
-  Contacting feeder ELC settings to discuss children's early learning experiences
-  Supporting effective communication between ELC settings, primary schools and external professional agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Network Disability Teams, Primary Care Services, special educational needs organisers (SENs) and visiting teachers.

Gaeltacht Schools/ Scoileanna Gaeltachta

Use Guidelines for Gaeltacht Primary Schools: Strengthening connections between primary schools and early learning and care settings: a co-operative approach to promote the use of Irish.

Bain úsáid as Treoir do Bhunscoileanna Gaeltachta: Naisc a threisiú idir bunscoileanna agus suíomhanna luathfhoghlama agus cúraim: cur chuige comhoibríoch chun úsáid na Gaeilge a chur chun cinn.

Before the pupils come to school, junior infant teachers and special class teachers can:

-  Explore the possibility of engaging with the child and their parent/guardian together online to find out about the child's play preferences, learning dispositions, strengths, interests and needs
-  Talk to practitioners in feeder ELC settings to gather information about pupils' strengths, interests and needs to build on previous learning experiences
-  Create an attractive, stimulating and playful learning environment that supports the pupils' play and builds on their previous learning experiences and interests
-  Familiarise themselves with the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) profile and supports that were in place in the ELC setting for individual pupils
-  Collaborate with the local SENO through the school leadership team to ensure that necessary supports for individual pupils, such as assistive technology, will be available
-  Read the pupils' *Mo Scéal* documents from the ELC setting, where available
-  Familiarise themselves with the relevant transition supports mentioned in the resources box overleaf.

Parental engagement

Schools can encourage parents/guardians to:



Talk to their child about his/her expectations and feelings about starting school



Help their child to develop their understanding and feelings about school, using role-play for example



Read books with their child and look at online videos and resources together to prepare the child for school. A list of useful resources for parents is provided below



Celebrate the transition to primary school by involving children in practical preparations for going to school, for example preparing their schoolbag and lunch box.

Pupils with English as an Additional Language



The *Primary Language Curriculum / Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile* encourages teachers to embrace the multilingual classroom and foster increased learning and awareness about languages for all pupils.



Use of apps that translate key words and phrases into the relevant home languages of newcomer pupils and their families can support communication and ease pupils' transition into primary school.



Learning songs and rhymes in the home languages of the pupils and including books written in their first language in the classroom library can help support transitions by celebrating, promoting and valuing the pupils' home languages and fostering appreciation of diversity.

Pupils at risk of educational disadvantage



Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) teachers in DEIS schools can support transitions by working with parents and ELC settings to help the child move to the next stage of their learning.



Classroom teachers should work closely with HSCL teachers to ensure that pupils at most risk of educational disadvantage reach their potential in education in terms of school attendance and learning.

Transitions within Primary Education



Teachers should get to know where each child is in their learning across the curriculum, including their strengths, interests and needs, through:

- Talking with the previous class teacher, special education teachers and special needs assistants where possible
- Drawing on conversations, observations, questions posed by children, and tasks and activities
- Reviewing monthly progress records from the previous year
- Liaising with parents/guardians.



The transition from senior infants to first class (the short infant day to the full day) can be challenging for some. Schools should take account of this in the types of learning experiences planned for pupils, especially in the initial weeks of September.



For pupils who are receiving adapted education provision due to being at very high risk to COVID-19, schools should support relationships and interaction with peers and prepare for the transition back to school, when appropriate.



While COVID-19 has impacted on the learning of all pupils this year, it is expected that all pupils will progress to the next grade in the new school year, except in exceptional educational circumstances, as per Circular 32/03. Schools should continue to use the NEPS *Continuum of Support* to provide support to those with the greatest level of need at classroom support, school support and school support plus stages.

Guidance and Resources

Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth: Let's Get Ready
NEPS: Guidance / podcast for parents Supporting the wellbeing of pupils with SEN
NCSE: Starting school booklet and video
Department of Education Inspectorate Insights: Quality in Education – Transitions webinars

NCCA: Mo Scéal beginning school 2021 resources

Flying Start: information for parents

The National Parents Council:

Supports for parents

Information Leaflets

Videos (multilingual)