

Te hautū i te awa whiria o ako Supporting pathways to lifelong learning for children in English-medium schools

Resources and research by

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Build a shared understanding between early learning services and schools

Exterior of Ilam school

Amy Sugrue, Teacher, Ilam School

We invited the Early Learning Services from our local area to our school. We started to build a relationship with them and find out what experiences they were having in their early learning centres as their children were transitioning to school. But we also were able to then find out from them what they needed from us and what we could do then to support them.

Amanda Evans, Curriculum Lead, Annabel's Educare New Brighton

It's important for schools to connect with early learning centres because it builds like a bridge between one setting to the other. And what can happen sometimes is there's underneath that bridge there's a breakdown in communication. So I feel for ECE and primary schools that having that connection and that relationship provides stability for whānau and for tamariki as they transition over.

Images of children inside a centre

Rachel Ryan, Head Teacher, Kidsfirst Kindertartens Nuffield

So at kindergarten, we know our children, our tamariki and our whānau really, really well. So that means that we are able to pass on to schools successful strategies for working with the individual so that when they move on to kura and school, there's already that familiarity and that consistency.

Nicola Gaskell, Teacher, Kaiapoi Borough School

As part of our research into the enrolment pack, we went around some early childhood centres. And the teacher from the early childhood centre was asking what academic skills the child needed to start school. We spoke with some colleagues from Kaiapoi North School, and decided that we should do a bit more work on building a shared understanding with our local early childhood centres about children transitioning to school. So we took some of these learnings to our kāhui ako. And at our initial hui with local new entrant teachers and early childhood teachers, we asked the early childhood teachers to list what they thought a new entrant teacher expected of a child on transition. And we asked the new entrant teachers to list what they did expect or hoped for, of a new entrant child on transition. So the two lists weren't worlds apart, but we could certainly see that there was some further work to be done on building a shared understanding between the primary schools and the early childhood centres.

Nicole Cunningham, Team Leader, Rāwhiti School

It's important to consider the viewpoints of the early years services when we're looking at the transition of our children into our kura. Especially because they have the experience with those children.

Kylie O'Keeffe, Teacher, Rāwhiti School

And just sort of not piggybacking on the back of it, but just joining in that and getting their expertise and their knowledge to help us form a connection with those whānau and those children. Yeah.

Nicole Cunningham, Team Leader, Rāwhiti School

I think what we were really impressed about with our meeting with the early years services, is they just didn't want to know the superficial things that happened at school, they were really interested in finding out about our school's cultural narrative and how we use tikanga and our expectations around that, that they wanted to dig deeper with us

Images of children in a centre

Kylie O'Keeffe, Teacher, Rāwhiti School

And almost a shared understanding, like a shared understanding around mindfulness, if we're using mindfulness and in both settings, what that looks like and what words we use and how we can be the same. So it's not going to be a big change.

Nicole Cunningham, Team Leader, Rāwhiti School

Looking at the children progressing through and having things that are similar in both settings.

Rachel Ryan, Head Teacher, Kidsfirst Kindertemps Nuffield

Building relationships is really critical to tamariki. Having smooth transitions between kindergarten and school reduces anxiety, it supports family, it supports tamariki. The more we know about each other, the best we can support each other.

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