

# Transition Guidelines

Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities

January  
2014

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## Transition *Guidelines*

*Children  
Birth to 8 years  
with Disability or  
Additional Needs*

Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities  
Office of Non-Government Schools and Services



Government  
of South Australia



## Foreword

Every child, including children with disability or additional needs, is entitled to the best possible start in life. The South Australian Government has committed to provide *Every Chance for Every Child*.

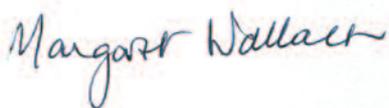
Those involved in early childhood development recognise that a better start includes quality care and education services. For families, this can be especially critical in times of 'transition' when a child moves from one environment to another as they progress through care and schooling services, particularly in the important early years of development.

The Government's 2008 inquiry into transition practices across early childhood services found that children with disability or additional needs and their families experienced variation and inconsistencies when they moved from one service to another or between programs.

These Transition Guidelines were developed as a response to that concern, with a view to ensuring families and service providers are informed and work consistently together in the best interests of every child.

They have since been reviewed and updated in 2014 to ensure information remains current. Families, care providers, teachers and consultants are encouraged to continue working together in partnership, particularly during those sensitive times of transition. In doing so, care and education services can better assist families and ensure all children, irrespective of ability, achieve their potential.

These guidelines are commended to you to support families and children to experience smoother transitions in partnership with their care providers and teachers.



**Margaret Wallace**

CHAIRPERSON

Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities



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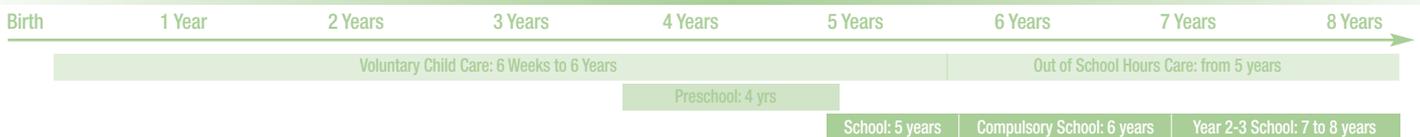
# 1

## Purpose of the Guidelines

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- These guidelines aim to assist children with disability or additional needs and their families' transition through early childhood care and education.
- These guidelines are concerned with improving the consistency and quality of transition practices for children with disability or additional needs from birth to 8 years of age.

### Early Childhood: Birth to 8 Years



# 2

## What is Transition?

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- Transition occurs when children move from one environment to another or their circumstances change resulting in changes to relationships, behaviours, routines, roles and expectations.
- Transition is a process that assists children and their families to move from one environment, program, service or circumstance to the next and requires substantial preparation, planning and support to facilitate smooth change.
- Transitions for children with disability or additional needs can occur in the following circumstances:
  - Home to child care
  - Home to preschool
  - Home to school (least frequent)
  - Child care to preschool
  - Child care to school
  - Child care to child care
  - Preschool to school
  - Preschool to preschool
  - School to Out of School Hours Care
  - School to school
  - Within care
  - Within school
  - Between programs
  - Within services
  - When moving to South Australia.

### Early Childhood: Birth to 8 Years



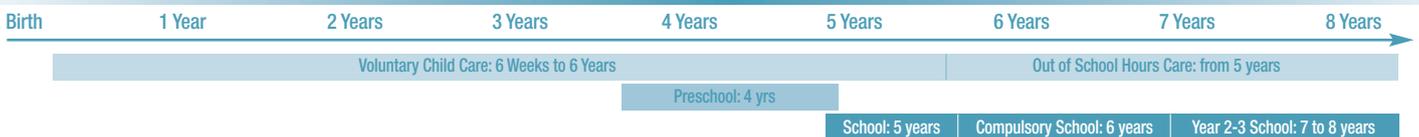
# 3

## Quality Early Childhood Transition Practices

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- Quality early childhood transitions require care and education providers to be committed to work with children’s families, their consultants and one another.
- Transition planning for children with disability or additional needs should begin early.
- Transition practice should be guided by clearly defined responsibilities of participants, clearly defined processes and timelines for actions. This information should be recorded and be available to all participants across care and education environments.
- Transition programs should be tailored to the specific needs of the individual child and their family.

### Early Childhood: Birth to 8 Years



## Quality Early Childhood Transition Practices

*continued*

- Transitions are most successful when:
  - there is an understanding that transition is a sensitive time for children and their families and that families value smooth transitions
  - families have a primary role and are actively involved in decision making
  - there is a partnership between families, care providers, teachers, directors, principals and consultants
  - there is respect for different cultural backgrounds and belief systems
  - a nominated lead person (who may be a family member or from a disability organisation, agency or the care and schooling sectors) takes responsibility for coordinating the transition in a collaborative manner
  - effective communication and strong interpersonal relationships are developed
  - information about children’s needs is shared openly, with respect for privacy and confidentiality protocols
  - there is flexibility in response to unforeseen circumstances
  - additional time for meetings and visits is available if required
  - transition planning is recorded and shared with all of the people involved
  - continuity of the curriculum is considered
  - the child’s future transitions are considered.

## Choices For Care And Education

These Transition Guidelines apply to all care and education environments.

### Child Care

- centres
- Family Day Care
- in-home services
- before and after school

### Preschool

- Government\*
- Catholic
- Independent

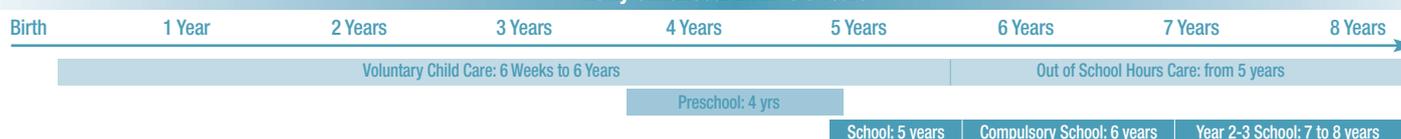
### School

- Government\*
- Catholic
- Independent

\*Note:

In South Australia the Government preschools and schools are administered by the Department for Education and Child Development (DECD).

### Early Childhood: Birth to 8 Years



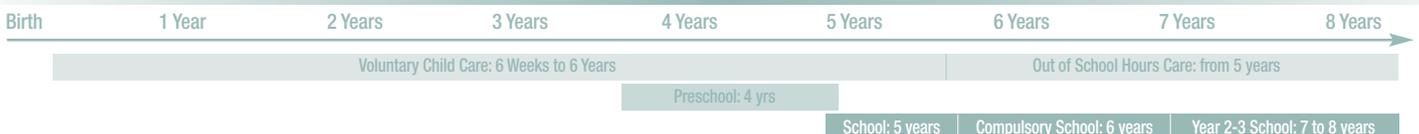
# 4

## How Families can Support their Children's Transitions

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- Early childhood intervention for children with disability or additional needs benefits their development and learning.
- When your child is ready to move to a new program, care or educational setting, start planning for transition as early as possible.
- If your child is already in a care or education setting, the care provider, director or principal may assist you with these initial steps:
  - Contact care providers, directors or principals to discuss your child's needs and the services they have available.
  - Ask questions of the care providers, directors or principals about their services, and how they include children with disability or additional needs.
  - Arrange to visit the services that seem most suitable for your child and family's circumstances.

### Early Childhood: Birth to 8 Years



## How Families can Support their Children's Transitions

*continued*

- Decide where you would like your child to attend (this may be subject to suitability, availability, and eligibility).
- Make application for enrolment of your child with the care provider, preschool or school and complete the paperwork.
- Provide as much information as possible about your child's additional needs. Gather together assessments and reports that might be helpful to explain your child's needs to care providers and teachers. Share your hopes and aspirations for your child.
- If your child has particular health or personal care needs, you may be asked to provide specific information about their requirements at the time of enrolment.
- If you receive services from other agencies outside of the care and education sectors you may find it helpful to involve them in your child's transition planning.

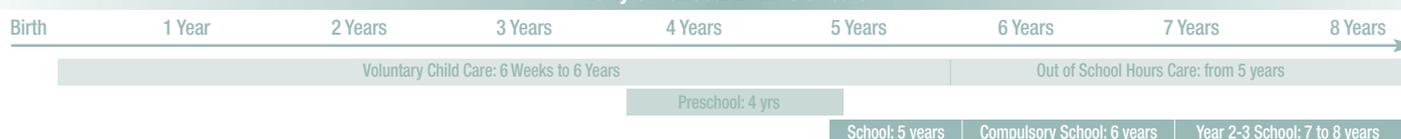
### Begin Planning Early

- It's never too early to begin planning.
- Contact carers as soon as you decide to use formal child care services.
- Contact preschool services at least six months prior to your child starting preschool or earlier.
- All South Australian children are entitled to begin full-time preschool at DECD preschools from Term One.
- For most families, if your child turns four before May 1, they will start preschool on the first day of Term One in that year. If your child turns four on or after May 1, they will start preschool on the first day of Term One the following year. If your child turns five before May 1, they will start school on the first day of Term One in that year. If your child turns five on or after May 1, they will start school on the first day of Term One the following year. This *Same First Day* policy will mean that all children will have four terms of preschool and four terms of reception. Some non-government schools have different enrolment policies. Talk to your local Preschool Director or Principal to determine how this will work for your child.
- Children under the Guardianship of the Minister and Aboriginal children are able to begin preschool at three years of age and remain until they are six years old.
- Some children with disability may be able to start preschool early. Discuss this with the Preschool Director.
- Plan for your child's transition to school when they begin preschool or earlier.
- Begin planning transition to a new class at least one term prior.

### Health and Personal Care Requirements

If needed, Health Care Plans and Personal Care Support Plans should be developed before children start in their new care and education environments.

#### Early Childhood: Birth to 8 Years



# 5

## The Process of Transition

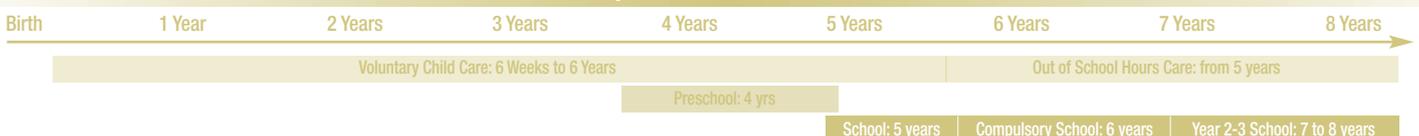
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- When children move from one environment to another many of the transition processes are similar. The length of the transition period may vary according to the needs of individual children.

Whether children are beginning formal care, preschool or school or changing circumstances such as moving rooms, changing care providers, classrooms, schools or specific programs—some of the following actions are likely to occur.

- Persons in leadership positions or their delegates:
  - Liaise with the following people as needed: parent/guardians, directors and principals, direct care providers and teachers, inclusion support facilitators, special education advisers and consultants from disability and health agencies.
  - With parent/guardian permission, gather and share information about children’s strengths and additional needs.
  - Accept enrolment forms and record the details of children’s additional needs.

### Early Childhood: Birth to 8 Years



## The Process of Transition

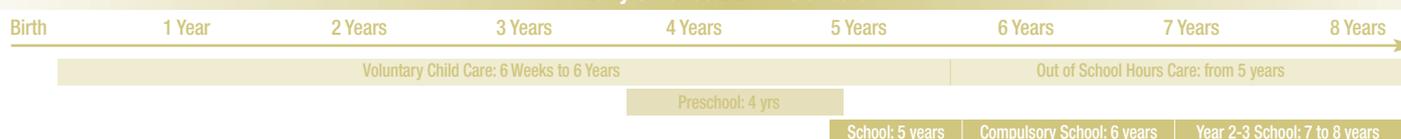
*continued*

- Persons in leadership positions or their delegates:
  - Ensure Health Support Plans and Personal Care Support Plans are developed, if needed.
  - Coordinate transition meetings.
  - Arrange for physical modifications, specialised equipment and staff training, as required.
  - Apply for additional resources, if required.
- Persons involved in direct care or educational provisions:
  - May visit children in their current environment.
  - May accompany children on visits to their new environment.
  - Gather and share information about children’s strengths and additional needs and record the details.
  - Participate in meetings.
  - Participate in training as required.
  - Assist children to adjust to their new environment during transition.
  - Undertake detailed observations of children’s activities to assist in the development of children’s individual education plans.

## Ideas on How to Achieve Successful Transition

- Begin planning for children’s transition early.
- Determine the suitability of a care or education environment by asking questions and sharing hopes and aspirations for children.
- Share as much information about children as possible.
- Support children to visit their new environment several times. This may be with their parent/guardians or a support person from care, preschool or school.
- Visit the new environment at different times so children can experience different activities and circumstances.
- Explore the outside play space so children can become familiar with all the things in the environment and its boundaries.
- Collect photographs of the new environment so children can look at these at home and become accustomed to the change.

### Early Childhood: Birth to 8 Years



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## Who Supports Transition?

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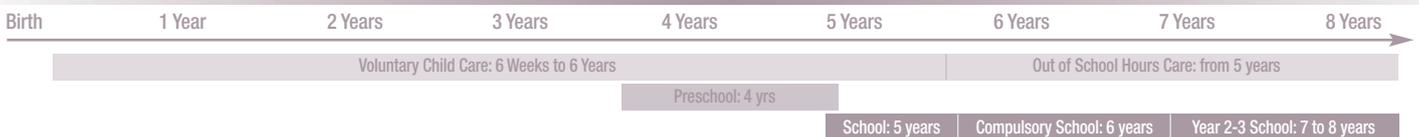
When children with disability or additional needs start at child care, preschool or school in South Australia, their transition may be supported by a range of professionals.

The first contact for families is usually the child care director, Family Day Care customer support officer<sup>1</sup>, preschool director or school principal. These staff will initially help with children and families' needs.

Other people who may become involved are disability and health consultants, inclusion support facilitators and special education advisers of the three education sectors. The following information provides an overview of the role of these consulting professionals in working with families and with one another to support children's transitions.

<sup>1</sup> See Glossary of Terms for an explanation of the term customer support officer.

### Early Childhood: Birth to 8 Years



## Who Supports Transition?

*continued*

### • Disability and Health Consultants

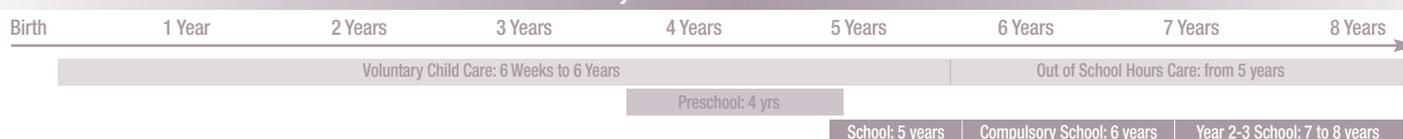
Families may receive services from disability and/or health consultants. Their advice helps with planning for children's learning needs at child care, preschool and school.

Consultants liaise with families, inclusion support facilitators, care providers, preschool and school staff on an ongoing basis to provide advice about children's disabilities, developmental strategies, therapies, curriculum adaptation, health and personal care, modifications to the physical environment, equipment, adaptive technologies and the need for future assessments.

Disability and health consultants support transitions by:

- Providing general information to families about the care and education services available.
- Supporting families to make informed choices about the care and education service they feel will best meet the needs of their child.
- Providing general information to families about the additional supports that may be available.
- Providing any supporting documentation that is required by families and their care and education services.
- Participating in care planning or Negotiated Education Planning meetings to provide information about children's developmental needs and recommendations for program planning.
- Providing information about their role and the support that is available to staff, which may include advice and training.
- Providing support to address any concerns about the transition process.

### Early Childhood: Birth to 8 Years



## Who Supports Transition?

*continued*

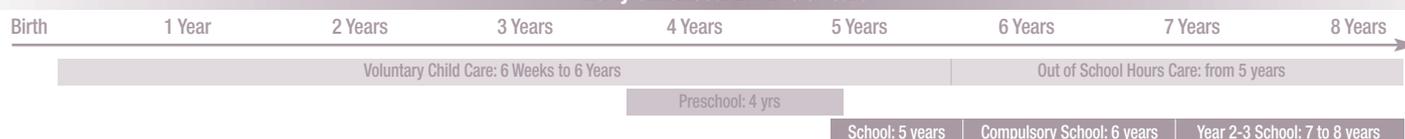
### • Inclusion Support Agencies

Inclusion Support Agencies support child care services to include children with disability or additional needs in their care service. In South Australia there are two Inclusion Support Agencies—Inclusive Directions and Novita Children’s Services. The state is divided into five regions. Inclusive Directions provides services to four regions, North East Adelaide and Hills; South West Adelaide and Kangaroo Island; Riverland and Mount Gambier. Novita Children’s Services provides services to the North West Country, Flinders Ranges and Yorke Peninsula region. The staff members who work directly with care providers are called inclusion support facilitators.

Inclusion support facilitators support transitions by:

- Providing consultation and support concerning the needs of children.
- Assisting child care staff with program planning and training as needed.
- Facilitating liaison between child care staff and parent/guardians, disability and health consultants, preschool staff and school staff.
- Facilitating the process to obtain additional resources, if required.

#### Early Childhood: Birth to 8 Years



## Who Supports Transition?

*continued*

### • Special education advisers<sup>2</sup>

Preschools and schools are supported by special education advisers to include children with disability and additional needs. The title of these advisers varies across the Department for Education and Child Development, Catholic Education SA and the Association of Independent Schools of SA. Their roles may also be different but each sector agrees with the principles of supporting transition for children with disability or additional needs.

Special education advisers support transitions by:

- Consulting with preschool staff when children begin at preschool.
- Sharing information between relevant people involved, with respect to privacy and confidentiality protocols.
- Facilitating the process to obtain additional resources, if required.
- Discussing with families the needs of their child and the schooling options they are considering.
- Ensuring a lead person (who may be a family member or from a disability organisation, agency or the care and schooling sectors) is allocated to support the transition of children with significant additional needs, who will continue to require ongoing support in the schooling sector.

<sup>2</sup> See Glossary of Terms for an explanation of the term special education advisers.

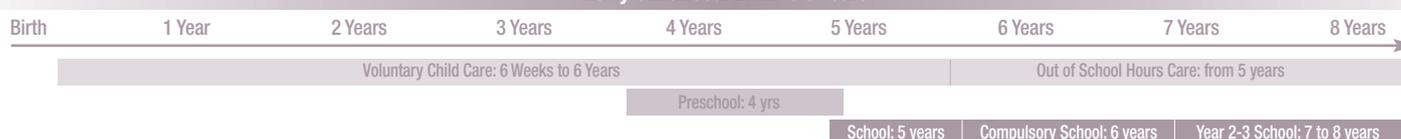
## Where to Get Help

- Contact your local child care provider, preschool or school.
- Ask your disability or health consultant for assistance.
- Speak with other families to learn from their experiences.

## Special Placements

- Children with significant disability and additional needs may be eligible for placement in a special setting.
- Each sector has its own processes and criteria for enrolment in these settings. An assessment and verification may be required.
- Contact a special education adviser at Department for Education and Child Development, Catholic Education SA or the Association of Independent Schools of SA for information about special placements.

### Early Childhood: Birth to 8 Years



## Useful References

### Policies and Guidelines

Department of Education and Children's Services (2006) *Students with Disabilities Policy*. Department of Education and Children's Services: Adelaide.  
<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/StudentswithDisabilitie-1.pdf>

Department for Education and Child Development (2013) *Preschool Enrolment Policy*. Department for Education and Child Development: Adelaide.  
<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/PreschoolEnrolmentPolicy.pdf>

Department for Education and Child Development (2013) *Inclusive Practice in Family Day Care*. Department for Education and Child Development: Adelaide.  
<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/InclusivePractices.pdf>

Catholic Education SA (2010) *Students with Disabilities Policy*. Catholic Education SA: Adelaide.  
[http://online.cesane.adl.catholic.edu.au/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-16375/Students+with+Disabilities+Policy+16\\_12\\_2010.pdf](http://online.cesane.adl.catholic.edu.au/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-16375/Students+with+Disabilities+Policy+16_12_2010.pdf)

Catholic Education SA (2010) *Enrolment and Support Process for Students with Disabilities*. Catholic Education SA: Adelaide.  
<http://online.cesane.adl.catholic.edu.au/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-16370/Special+Ed+ESP+Flowchart.pdf>

South Australian Independent Schools Targeted Programs Authority Inc. (2006) *Students with Disabilities: Enrolment Guidelines for Independent Schools* [Association of Independent Schools SA: Adelaide].  
<http://www.ais.sa.edu.au/files/f/6516/Student%20with%20Disabilities%20-%20Enrolment%20Guidelines.pdf>

### Publications

Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities (2008) *Early Childhood Transition for Children with a Disability*. Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities: Adelaide.  
[http://www.macswd.sa.gov.au/files/links/TRANSITION\\_REPORT\\_4\\_8\\_08.pdf](http://www.macswd.sa.gov.au/files/links/TRANSITION_REPORT_4_8_08.pdf)

## Useful References

*continued*

### Websites

Association of Independent Schools of SA (AISSA) [www.ais.sa.edu.au](http://www.ais.sa.edu.au)

Autism SA [www.autismsa.org.au](http://www.autismsa.org.au)

CanDo4Kids [www.cando4kids.com.au](http://www.cando4kids.com.au)

Catholic Education SA (CESA) [www.cesa.catholic.edu.au](http://www.cesa.catholic.edu.au)

Child Health Education Support Service (chess) [www.chess.sa.edu.au](http://www.chess.sa.edu.au)

Childcare SA is an association of private child care providers.  
[www.childcaresa.com.au](http://www.childcaresa.com.au)

Community Children's Centres SA (CCCSA) is an association of  
community based child care providers.  
[www.communitychildrencentres.com.au](http://www.communitychildrencentres.com.au)

Cora Barclay Centre [www.corabarclay.com.au](http://www.corabarclay.com.au)

Department for Education and Child Development  
[www.decd.sa.gov.au](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au)

Disability Information and Resource Centre [www.dircsa.org.au](http://www.dircsa.org.au)

Disability SA [www.dcsi.sa.gov.au](http://www.dcsi.sa.gov.au) (Disability SA link)

Down Syndrome SA [www.downssa.asn.au](http://www.downssa.asn.au)

Family Day Care Australia [www.familydaycare.com.au](http://www.familydaycare.com.au)

Guide Dogs SA/NT [www.guidedogs.org.au](http://www.guidedogs.org.au)

Inclusive Directions [www.directions.org.au](http://www.directions.org.au)

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[www.macswd.sa.gov.au](http://www.macswd.sa.gov.au)

Novita Children's Services [www.novita.org.au](http://www.novita.org.au)

Raising Children Network provides advice for families on working  
with disability professionals amongst other advice and support for  
parent/guardians of children with a disability.  
[www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)

## Glossary of Terms

**Care providers** offer child care services which are centre based or in private homes.

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**Carers** are the persons who care for the children.

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### Child care

- **Formal child care** is regulated child care either away from the child's home or in the family's home. It includes before and/or after school care, long day care, Family Day Care, occasional care and in-home nanny services.
  - **Informal child care** is non-regulated care arranged by a child's parent/guardian, either in the child's home or elsewhere. It comprises care by (step) brothers or sisters, grandparents, other relatives (including a parent living elsewhere), or by unrelated people (e.g. friends, nannies, baby-sitters). It may be paid or unpaid. (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006).
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**Child Health Education Support Services (chess)** is a partnership between education, child care, health and disability services. Information, training, research findings and forms for planning health support are available through chess on their website.

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**Consultants** are persons who provide expert professional advice separately to the care and education sectors. (This may be on mobility, communication, equipment, social skills, health care etc.)

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## Glossary of Terms

*continued*

**Customer Support Officers** are employees of Family Day Care located at the Business and Customer Support Centre. Families seeking child care through Family Day Care or Respite Care Program (for children with disability) are asked to contact a customer support officer by telephone or email.

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**Early Childhood Intervention** aims to minimise the impact of disability and/or developmental delay on children's learning and should occur as early as possible.

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**Guardianship of the Minister** is a term used to describe the situation of children and young people who are unable to live with their birth parents and are under the guardianship of the Minister for Education and Child Development—their birth parents are not their legal guardians or carers. These children may be living in foster care, with relatives or community, group homes or in various forms of independent living.

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**Inclusion** refers to the effective participation of all children (including those with disability and/or developmental delay) in child care, preschools and schools. Inclusive programs accommodate the diverse needs of all children with targeted resources.

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**Inclusion Support Agencies** are part of the Commonwealth Government's Inclusion and Professional Support Program. Agencies aim to support child care services to include children with disability or additional needs in child care.

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## Glossary of Terms

*continued*

**Preschool** for children is recommended but not compulsory. Preschool is available from Government, Catholic and Independent providers. All children are entitled to access preschool for 15 hours per week for forty weeks a year in the year before full time schooling.

In Government and Catholic preschools, children turning four before May 1 can start preschool on the first day of Term One in that year. Children turning four on or after May 1 will start preschool on the first day of Term One the following year. Some Independent preschool providers will have multiple intakes over the course of a year.

### ***Early entry***

Children with additional needs may be able to start preschool two terms before they would normally start. Eligible children may commence for up to three hours per week in Term Three and increase to a maximum of six hours per week from Term Four.

Early entry is decided on a case by case basis if the preschool has the capacity within its current resources.

Aboriginal children or children under the Guardianship of the Minister may start at three years of age and may continue until they are six years of age.

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## Glossary of Terms

*continued*

**Special education advisers** are employed by the education sectors to support preschools and schools to include children with disability or additional needs. The name of these positions varies—

- Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) has *Disability Coordinators*
- Catholic Education SA has *Special Education Consultants*
- Association of Independent Schools of SA (AISSA) has *Educational Consultants*.

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**Transition** describes the sequential movement of children and their families across one service system after another over time. It also describes the movement of children and their families across multiple activities at the same time under different leadership and in different locations.

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### Verification

A DECD speech pathologist or psychologist will verify disability for Government preschools and schools according to DECD Disability Support Program criteria.

Catholic Special Education Consultants will verify disability for their respective schools, referring to professional reports. Children and students will be verified with disability in the independent education sector by their respective schools. AISSA Educational Consultants will work with schools to identify students eligible for inclusion in the *Australian Government's Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability*. AISSA will support schools with in school training. Independent schools, with support from AISSA Educational Consultants, will determine the level of educational need based on the adjustments necessary to support a student with disability as specified under the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) definition.

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## 9

## Documents Used to Record Information in Early Childhood Care and Education Services

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CHILD CARE	Purpose of the Document	Organisation
<i>Assisted Inclusion Readiness Plan (AIR Plan)</i>	A whole of service plan to assist staff members to provide a quality inclusive program and environment for all children. These plans are optional.	Inclusive Directions & Novita Children's Services
<i>Health Care Plan</i>	To guide staff members in dealing with special health concerns for particular children. Families provide a Health Care Plan from a treating health professional.	Child care services <sup>3</sup>
<i>Health Support Plan</i>	To record medically related health care needs requiring intervention. Staff members and families use Health Care Plans to develop Health Support Plans for child care.	Child care services <sup>3</sup>
<i>Personal Care Support Plan</i>	To guide staff members in dealing with the personal care needs of children including personal hygiene, continence care, eating and drinking, transfers and positioning and the use of therapeutic equipment. Health professionals may be consulted when developing individuals' plans.	Child care services <sup>3</sup>
<i>Service Support Plan</i>	To record the requirements of child care services to support children with additional needs.	Inclusive Directions & Novita Children's Services

<sup>3</sup> These documents are recommended by the Department for Education and Child Development but some child care services prefer to select their own planning documents.

## Documents Used to Record Information in Early Childhood Care and Education Services

*continued*

<b>PRESCHOOL</b>	<b>Purpose of the Document</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
<i>Health Care Plan</i>	To guide staff members in dealing with special health concerns for particular children. Families provide a Health Care Plan from a treating health professional.	DECD, Catholic Education SA and Independent
<i>Health Support Plan</i>	To record medically related health care needs requiring intervention. Staff members and families use Health Care Plans to develop Health Support Plans for preschool.	DECD, Catholic Education SA and Independent
<i>Individual Education Plan (IEP)</i>	To record the educational needs of children who are under the Guardianship of the Minister for Education and Child Development.	DECD, Catholic Education SA and Independent <sup>4</sup>
<i>Individual Learning Plan (ILP)</i>	For all children with significant and complex needs. This should be developed before commencing full time preschool.	DECD, Catholic and Lutheran preschools
<i>Negotiated Education Plan (NEP)</i>	To record transition plans, accommodations and modifications to the curriculum.	DECD
<i>Personal Care Support Plan</i>	To guide staff members in dealing with the personal care needs of children including personal hygiene, continence care, eating and drinking, transfers and positioning and the use of therapeutic equipment. Health professionals may be consulted when developing individuals' plans.	DECD, Catholic Education SA and Independent

<sup>4</sup> Catholic Education SA and Independent schools are not obliged to use the Individual Education Plan for children under the Guardianship of the Minister but choose to use this document in most cases.

## Documents Used to Record Information in Early Childhood Care and Education Services

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<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>Purpose of the Document</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
<i>Action Plan</i>	To record transition plans, accommodations and modifications to the curriculum.	Catholic Education SA
<i>Health Care Plan</i>	To guide staff members in dealing with special health concerns for particular children. Families provide a Health Care Plan from a treating health professional.	DECD, Catholic Education SA and Independent
<i>Health Support Plan</i>	To record medically related health care needs requiring intervention. Staff members and families use Health Care Plans to develop Health Support Plans for school.	DECD, Catholic Education SA and Independent
<i>Individual Education Plan (IEP)</i>	To record the educational needs of children who are under the Guardianship of the Minister for Education and Child Development.	DECD, Catholic Education SA and Independent <sup>4</sup>
<i>Negotiated Education Plan (NEP)</i>	To record transition plans, accommodations and modifications to the curriculum.	DECD
<i>Personal Care Support Plan</i>	To guide staff members in dealing with the personal care needs of students including personal hygiene, continence care, eating and drinking, transfers and positioning and the use of therapeutic equipment. Health professionals may be consulted when developing individuals' plans.	DECD, Catholic Education SA and Independent
<i>Student Support Plan</i>	To record transition plans, accommodations and modifications to the curriculum.	Association of Independent Schools of SA (AISSA)

<sup>4</sup> Catholic Education SA and Independent schools are not obliged to use the Individual Education Plan for children under the Guardianship of the Minister but choose to use this document in most cases.

<sup>5</sup> Independent schools select their own planning documents but AISSA recommends the Student Support Plan or similar.



