



CATHOLIC EDUCATION
DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG

**St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School Warrawong
Transition to School Playgroup (2015)
Report**



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Executive Summary

Transition to School Playgroup

St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School Warrawong

Playgroup commenced Term 4, 2015 as a pilot project undertaken to meet accountabilities of National Partnerships, Low-Socio Economic Communities funding.

It provided an extended transition to school program for children and their families based on *Guidelines for Effective Transition to School Programs (Adapted from Dockett & Perry 2006)*.

Aims

- To develop familiarity and a sense of belonging for children and their families to the school community.
- To enhance children's social and emotional development through establishing and building positive and reciprocal relationships with teachers, school staff and peers.
- To enhance children's learning, social and communicative skills by providing developmentally appropriate play-based experiences.

Rationale

Learning in the context of play:

The learning experiences offered in the context of a transition to school playgroup will be through children's participation in play. Play is a leading context for children's learning and development and a rich site for literacy and numeracy learning and teaching. It has been credited with offering learning potential for young children across cognitive and social domains. As a result of children's participation in play activities scaffolded by adults, their thinking, imagination and communicative skills are advanced, as is their understanding of the world.

Structure

- Playgroup held twice a week for 1.5 hours from Week 4 to Week 9 of Term 4.
- Structured to build familiarity each week. The first few sessions were about letting the children, families and staff get to know each other, then gradually the children were introduced to the school environment e.g. visit to the classroom, library, canteen, etc.
- Program varied each session to meet the interests of the children but incorporated free play; structured and unstructured gross and fine motor activities; morning tea and group time.
- Parents/carers encouraged to interact with their child through play.
- Two sessions were compulsory to ensure that parents and children who could not attend all sessions still received relevant information some school orientation.
- All other sessions were optional but encouraged.
- Each session incorporated morning tea and brief information sessions for parents/carers.

Communication

A flyer mailed to all families followed by personal invitation via phone calls.

Cost

Staffing **\$4911**

(Teacher plus Early Childhood Educator)

Teacher release **\$1520**

(Kinder teachers released to attend playgroup to get to know children and families)

Physical resources **\$3500**

(play equipment, rugs, etc)

Hospitality **\$570**

\$10,501

What worked well

- Established **connection** and **sense of community for families**
- Enhanced **familiarity with the school** environment **for parents**.
- Enhanced **familiarity with the school** environment **for the children**.
- Enhanced **familiarity with the children and families** for the **school staff**.

Recommendations for future playgroups

- Conduct playgroup twice a week for Term 4 (8 weeks, 16 sessions, 1.5 hours per session) 2016. This will give children continuity and a chance to build relationships.
- Include several sessions where all families are strongly encouraged to attend e.g. for Best Start information and to enable all children to participate in the classroom visits and attend a playgroup session where the Kindergarten teacher is present.
- Provide information provided to parents with dates on acceptance of place at the school (end of Term 2) - personal invitation important.
- Preferably staff playgroup with an Early Childhood Educator and primary school teacher. If this is not available then a primary school teacher and a School Support Officer. The choice in personnel is crucial! It is important that the staff understand and support the philosophical base of the playgroup.
- Release allocated Kindergarten teachers to 'play' alongside the children in the playgroup for at least 5 sessions.
- Encourage parents to join in the play with children and mix socially with each other.
- Conduct short excursions to the Kindergarten classroom and other areas of the school in small groups.
- Conduct short information sessions (15 min) with parent/family groups throughout the weeks.
- Encourage P&F funding for playgroup resources.

Introduction

In Term 4, 2015 a transition to school playgroup commenced at St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School, Warrawong (SFA). The playgroup was a pilot project undertaken as an initiative to support the ongoing improvement in the education outcomes of students, an accountability of National Partnerships, Low-Socio Economic Communities funding.

The playgroup provided the 2016 Kindergarten cohort at SFA and their families with an extended transition to school program based on *Guidelines for Effective Transition to School Programs (Adapted from Dockett & Perry 2006)*. (Appendix 1).

The project surpassed expectations with good attendance and support from the school community and the relevant families for the playgroup.

This report provides a summary of how this playgroup was developed, established and resourced. It also provides feedback from school and families as well as recommendations and suggestions for establishing and running a similar transition to school program in other schools.

Background

In late Term 3, 2015 a project team was established at Catholic Education Office Wollongong to develop initiatives to continue the implementation of National Partnership Reforms at SFA in 2015-16 to meet accountabilities of School National Partnerships, Low Socio-Economic Communities funding.

One of these initiatives was to conduct an extended transition to school program for the 2016 Kindergarten SFA cohort (27 enrolled).

With a short turnaround Catholic Education Office personnel met with school staff (Acting Principal, Assistant Principal, Kindergarten teachers) in Week 1 of Term 4 and proposed the commencement of a twice weekly playgroup in the school hall to promote a positive transition from prior school settings to formal schooling for the children and their families

Aims

The St Francis of Assisi transition to school playgroup aimed to:

- develop familiarity and a sense of belonging for children and their families to the school community;
- enhance children's social and emotional development through establishing and building positive and reciprocal relationships with teachers, school staff and peers; and
- enhance children's learning, social and communicative skills by providing developmentally appropriate play-based experiences.

Rationale

Children bring their diverse experiences, perspectives, expectations, knowledge and skills to their learning as they enter the first year of formal school. They actively construct their own understandings and contribute to the learning of others. By viewing children as active

participants and decision makers, their agency is recognised and the possibility is opened up for teachers to move beyond pre-conceived expectations of what children can do and learn. This requires teachers to respect and work with each child's unique qualities and abilities (adapted from the Early Years Learning Framework).

Learning in the context of play:

The learning experiences offered in the context of the transition to school playgroup will be through children's participation in play. Play is a leading context for children's learning and development and a rich site for literacy and numeracy learning and teaching. It has been credited with offering learning potential for young children across cognitive and social domains. As a result of children's participation in play activities scaffolded by adults, their thinking, imagination and communicative skills are advanced, as is their understanding of the world.

Structure

The SFA playgroup was held twice a week on a Tuesday and Friday morning for 1.5 hours (9-10.30am) from Week 4 to Week 9 of Term 4, 2015. All attendees signed on at each session and name tags were available for the children and families. Average attendance was 11 children at each session (40% of cohort).

The aim of the program was to gradually build familiarity each week. The first few sessions were about letting the children, families and staff get to know each other, then gradually the children were introduced to the school environment e.g. visit to the classroom, library, canteen, etc.

The playgroup program varied each day to meet the interests of the children but incorporated:

- free play (kinetic sand, puzzles, trains, blocks, Duplo, balls, bubbles, play kitchen, hula hoops);
- structured and unstructured gross motor activities (parachute, obstacle course, hula hoops, catching balls, scooters);
- structured and unstructured fine motor activities (cutting with scissors, colouring, craft, painting);
- morning tea (children were taken to the school toilets to wash their hands and sat together for morning tea); and
- group time (music, stories).

Two sessions (highlighted in the Outline of Playgroup Sessions at Appendix 2) were compulsory (each child and a family representative to attend). This was to ensure that parents who could not attend all sessions still received relevant information and that all children had some school orientation.

All other dates were optional but encouraged.

Pre-school siblings were welcome to attend and a family member was required to stay with their child for the duration of the playgroup. During this time parents/carers were provided with morning tea and a chance to get to know each other. Opportunities for information sessions, questions and meeting staff were also incorporated as well as time for them to interact with their child through play.

All equipment was set up and packed away for each session. Year 5/6 students were helpful in assisting with this.

Resourcing

Staffing

A current **Early Stage 1/Stage 1 teacher** and an **Early Childhood Educator (ECE)** were employed to plan and facilitate the transition to school/playgroup program.

The use of educators from both the school and preschool settings was an innovative approach used for this project aimed at:

- allowing educators across settings (schools and preschools) to develop a deeper understanding of the needs of families and children at the centre of transition;
- providing support for the teacher in interacting with these young pre-schoolers via the knowledge and skills the ECE brings to the playgroup in terms of social and educational outcomes for this age group;
- having both staff working together to link the Early Years Learning Framework and the Early Stage 1 Syllabus;
- having two skilled educators involved to allow more comprehensive understanding of the needs of the children and their families, and via observations and note taking, provide comprehensive data for the Kindergarten teacher(s).

Cost of teacher:	\$3,711
Cost of ECE:	\$1,200 (8 sessions)

Total staffing cost:	\$4911
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Teacher release

Teachers allocated to Kindergarten for the new cohort were also released from class to attend playgroup for four of the sessions so that they could also get to know the children and their families and make their own observations.

Cost: (2 x 4 half days) \$1,520	
Total teacher release cost:	\$1520

Physical resources

The following resources were purchased:

Floor Rugs/Cushions
CD player/CDs
Books
Balls/Hula Hoops/ Bubble wands

Puppets/Dolls/Strollers/Dolls clothes
 Play Food Set/Cash register
 Wooden puzzles Hammer & Nail play sets/Pegboards/Pegs
 Crayons/Pencils/Markers/Paints/Paint Pots/Sponge Rollers/Brushes
 Paper (including coloured paper squares)
 Scissors/Glue/Glitter/Glitter Shakers/Crepe Paper/ Paddle Pop Sticks/Patty Pans
 Sand (Kinetic)
 Large Dice (soft)
 Small magnetic whiteboard & markers
 Mobilo construction set/Duplo brick set
 Jumbo lacing beads
 Jumbo truck set
 Parachute
 Storage boxes/bags (all resources were stored in plastic boxes and labelled so they could be stored in the hall)

Total cost of physical resources: \$3,500

In addition equipment already existing at the school was also used e.g. sporting equipment, mats, tables, chairs.

Hospitality supplies were also purchased to provide a healthy morning tea for the children and parents.

Food provided: fruit, cheese, crackers, pikelets, healthy slice etc

(Note: morning tea was organised and staffed by CEO admin staff in this instance. For future playgroups a School Support Officer or a parent may be able to coordinate this. Cost may also be minimised by asking parents to bring something to share.)

Total cost of hospitality supplies: \$570

Combined costs:

Staffing	\$4911
Teacher release	\$1520
Physical resources	\$3500
Hospitality	\$570
	<hr/>
	\$10,501

Communication

Flyer

An attractive, “fun” flyer was developed and mailed to all families (Appendix 3).

This flyer was also put on the website and in the school newsletter. Large poster size flyers were displayed at the front of the school.

Personal invitation

The mail out of the flyer was followed up by a phone call (made by a School Support Officer at the school) with a personal invitation to attend playgroup, answering any questions parents have, asking a few key questions (preschool name, etc) and welcoming the family to the school (if it was their first child). This personal contact provided a sense of welcome to each family as well as reinforcing the information about playgroup and its importance.

Follow up phone calls/emails were made at key points throughout the program to encourage increased attendance for particular events e.g. expo, billy backpack, Christmas celebration.

Other communication initiatives

At the conclusion a movie/slideshow from photos and film taken was produced. This was shown at the end of the final session and all families received a copy for the children to watch and re-connect before they started the new year at school.

Photos were taken (with permission) and some video to create a record. Interviews were held with the Principal and some parents on video to provide feedback.

What worked well

- Parents/families got to know each other gradually, and were able to make social connections before school started. This was particularly valuable to new families to the school and hopefully made their start in 2016 less stressful as they have already made connections with other parents. Existing parents were able to assist new parents with any questions or ideas. It was a great community building exercise.
- Parents/families became familiar with the school environment and staff, and were given opportunities to ask questions and feel comfortable. This enhanced the home-school partnership.
- The children grew familiar with each other and with their teachers and the school environment over an extended period.
- School staff were able to learn more about the children and their families prior to school starting.

Suggestions/recommendations

- Conduct playgroup twice a week for Term 4 (8 weeks, 16 sessions, 1.5 hours per session) 2016. This will give children continuity and a chance to build relationships.
- Include several sessions where all families are strongly encouraged to attend e.g. for Best Start information and to enable all children to participate in the classroom visits and attend a playgroup session where the Kindergarten teacher is present.

- Provide parents with dates and brief information when they accept enrolment (end of Term 2). Another flyer can be sent during Term 3 and followed up with a phone call explaining the purpose - personal invitation important.
- Include siblings. Their presence assists in building family connections with the school community.
- Staffing playgroup with an Early Childhood Educator and primary school teacher is preferable. If this is not available then a primary school teacher and a School Support Officer. The choice in personnel is crucial! It is important that the staff understand and support the philosophical base of the playgroup.
- Release the Kindergarten teachers allocated for the following year for time to 'play' alongside the children in the playgroup for at least 5 sessions out of the recommended 16.
- Encourage parents to join in the play with children and mix socially with each other (morning tea good vehicle for this).
- Include if possible a weekly "lesson" from one of the specialist teachers to engage the children in brief learning experiences in their discipline areas e.g. music/art/ PE/ language - the weekly music lesson provided by the school music teacher at SFA was a positive experience for the playgroup children. Not all children chose to engage but those that did enjoyed the experience.
- Conduct short excursions to the Kindergarten classroom in small groups.
- Conduct short excursions to other areas of the school, to become familiar with these areas, as well as to meet the personnel e.g. library to have a chance to borrow books, toilets, games in the playground, canteen and have a chance to order lunch, office etc.
- Conduct short information sessions (15 min) with parent/family groups throughout the weeks. e.g. office information- fees, absent notes, things parents can do at home to develop early literacy skills, information from speech pathologists, occupational therapists, how to pack a healthy lunch box. The content of these must to be advertised well in advance to enable families to attend.
- Give each family a school starter "passport" so they can mark off information as they go. (Basic sample used in this case at Appendix 4)
- Create opportunities for the children meet their Year 5 buddies over several playgroup sessions as well as buddies joining in on the last day to share morning tea.
- Have notebook available for field notes by educators.
- Include visit by Billy back pack (Illawarra Transition to School Project) - this worked well.
- Encourage P&F funding for playgroup resources.

The children enjoyed:

- The kitchen and supermarket (IKEA)
- The doll corner
- craft
- painting
- colourful pins activity
- the mixed media: for example placing the wooden blocks alongside the cars and the lego
- obstacle course for example mini trampoline, mats, tunnels
- Kinetic sand

- hoops
- soccer
- scooter day
- bubbles
- bouncing balls
- drawing on mini whiteboards
- nailing activity
- Music and dancing activities

Additional purchases - rugs and cushions rugs, easels for painting, paint rack, containers for storage, table cleaning products.

Other ideas

- Professional development to engage teachers in planning session for the first few weeks of Kindergarten using the information gathered at the playgroup (Appendix 5 provides an example of an English Session). For this project only written notes provided to teachers. (Sample at Appendix 6).
- Kindergarten teachers to visit Early Childhood Centres in the area to observe practice and pedagogy , talk to educators to build relationships and obtain information about incoming students. A reciprocal arrangement could also be made with Early Childhood Centre staff visiting Kindergarten classes to make observations regarding the expectations of children commencing Kindergarten.

Feedback from families

Parents were surveyed at the final playgroup session. (Feedback sheet at Appendix 7)

12 responses were given with overwhelmingly positive comments.

As a result of attending the playgroup:	Agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Disagree	Don't know
My child is more familiar with the school environment	10	2			
My child is more comfortable with their classmates for 2016	8	3			1
My child is more socially ready to start school	9	3			
My child is more emotionally ready to start school	9	2			1
As a parent I feel more familiar with the school environment	11	1			
I feel welcome and included at the school	10	2			
I feel better informed about the school	10	2			
I have made social connections which will help me feel more settled and comfortable at the school	10	1			1

What were the highlights of the playgroup for your child?

- Going to the classroom.
- Interacting with classmates/other children.

- Meeting and playing with friends before school starts.
- Playing games with the teachers.
- The people organising playgroup allowed my child to become comfortable and to get to know her friends.
- Meeting Billy Backpack.
- Meeting his new buddy.
- Taking part in all the activities that were organised.
- Becoming more comfortable with school environment.

As a parent, what were the highlights for you?

- Being comfortable that my child knows people when starting school.
- Meeting new people, watching the children play.
- Learning about the different programs the school runs.
- Making friendships with other parents and getting to know their children so I know that my child will be happy and comfortable.
- Knowing that because of playgroup my daughter is no longer nervous about starting Kinder.
- Meeting the teachers and going through the school.
- Meeting new parents and now have become friends.
- I am very happy that my child has a buddy to look after him when he starts.
- Everything – all invaluable!
- Watching my child interacting and playing.
- Orientation around the school.
- Lunchbox presentation.

Do you have any suggestions for improvements to the playgroup?

- No – I think it was fantastic!
- No – everything was done well, incredibly warm, friendly environment, very educational.

Other comments

- I wish I had a playgroup when I was growing up, so I could feel how everything would be fun and accepting. I recommend this playgroup to every school, because kids make friends as well as the parents.
- A wonderful way for my child to feel confident in starting school.
- We're sad it is over!
- Hope this playgroup will continue for future Kindergarten students. It is very useful and help them in making friends. Also for parents getting to meet each other.
- The educators and all involved have done a wonderful job getting the children involved, having fun and learning through play. Thank you!

Parents were again asked to provide feedback in Week 4 of Term 1 regarding how their child had settled into school.

There were 16 responses.

As a result of attending the playgroup:	Agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Disagree	Don't know
My child has settled quickly into school	9	4	1	2	
My child is more comfortable with their classmates	11	3	1	1	
My child is more comfortable with their teacher(s)	11	5			
As a parent I feel more familiar with the school environment and processes in these first few weeks.	10	5	1		
I have made social connections which have helped me feel more settled and comfortable at the start of the school year	11	4			
I feel welcome and included at the school	12	4			
I feel more able to approach the teachers having met them last year at playgroup	12	3			
I feel the teachers/school is more familiar with my child as a result of playgroup.	12	3	1		

Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

- Thank you for letting us join the playgroup – we had a great time and hope this will help next year's Kinder
- Was an excellent opportunity for the children to get to know each other and the parents also. Lots of information was shared. Highly commend all who organised the playgroup.
- Really enjoyed the activities at the playgroup and the information provided was really useful.
- I thought playgroup was a great idea but the break between Christmas and New Year is so long that my child forgot about friendships which may have formed.
- I think the break between playgroup and the start of Kindergarten was too long.
- Great idea for both our child and ourselves with the transition.

Not all families were able to attend playgroup at all or could only make a few sessions. These parents were asked what may have been some of the obstacles to attending. Only 5 parents responded but the main reason for not attending was work commitments for the parents, followed by their child already attending pre-school on the relevant days.

Feedback from Kindergarten teachers

Both Kindergarten teachers were asked for feedback in mid Term 1, 2016 with the following responses:

What worked well with playgroup?

- Both children and parents were able to get to know each other.
- The children became comfortable in and familiar with the school environment.
- The parents were informed about the school in an informal and friendly atmosphere.
- The activities allowed the children to play on their own or play with others as they became more familiar with each other.
- The activities were very user friendly and the children were able to interact with confidence.

What could be done better?

- Perhaps we could encourage the parents to join in with more of the activities
- I feel that we could ask the parents and children to pack up the activities at the end of the session.
- If the children brought in their own morning tea they could practise using a lunch box and opening things independently.

What do you see as the positive outcomes of having an extended transition to school program?

- We as teachers were able to get to know the children and parents in an informal setting which seems to have helped the parents to get their children started with little stress and very few worries about little things which can often seem like very big things.
- We were able to get a feel for the personalities of many of the children and we felt that the children got to know us a little and were able to recognise us and talk to us when they saw us in other situations.
- Many children got to know each other and began to develop relationships which certainly helped when they arrived at school and saw some familiar faces.

What have you observed in the children in the first few weeks of Term that may have been a result of playgroup?

- Most children arrived full of confidence and settled in quickly. The children have been very quick to settle into school routines
- Most children have coped well with the transition to playing in a big playground with so many other children around.
- The children have been very confident to come to us with questions and problems to enlist our help.
- In the classroom the children are very attentive as a group and they seem very motivated to learn.
- The children are keen to help each other and they have either continued friendships from the playgroup or they have made new friends easily.

Steps to plan an effective playgroup in other schools

Appendix 7 provides steps to plan and facilitate a school starter playgroup in relation *to the Steps to plan an effective transition to school program* (adapted from Dockett & Perry 2006). The actions outlined are based on the St Francis of Assisi project.

Guidelines for Effective Transition to School Programs

Transition to school is defined as:

‘A dynamic process of continuity and change as children move into the first year of school. The process of transition occurs over time, beginning well before children start school and extending to the point where children and families feel a sense of belonging at school and when educators recognise this sense of belonging’ (Educational Transitions and Change (ETC) Research Group 2011 p1)

This definition describes transition to school as time of both continuity and change for children and their families and one that may continue over an extended time period. It is important that in planning transition programs stakeholders provide a balance of continuity and change for children as they move into their new school setting. The children expect that there will be change and they generally look forward to the changes and the opportunity to learn new things in the more grown up environment of ‘big school’. However it is how the children and their families are supported to navigate the changes that will result in a positive or smooth transition into formal school.

Transition programs can promote a positive start to school, often described as a bridge from prior to school settings to school settings. Effective transition programs have the potential to help children and their families feel comfortable, valued and successful at school. Children and their families move from the familiar environment of home and prior to school educational settings where they have experienced, often, close relationships with educators in a setting where the child to adult ratio was very high. For many children this change in relationship and status can affect a positive transition to formal school. Kindergarten is a context in which children make important conclusions about school as a place that they want to be and about themselves as learners. It is essential that transition to school occurs in such a way that children and their families have a positive view of school and that children have a feeling of perceived competence as learners.

The following guidelines provide a framework for the establishment and evaluation of transition to school programs. Each guideline is accompanied by suggestions and questions for consideration when planning transition programs:

- 1. Establish positive relationships between children, parents and educators: Children and families need to feel connected to the school and the teachers, principal and support staff. Kindergarten teachers need to feel valued by their peers within the school and early childhood educators need to be recognised as partners in transition programs**
 - Make connections between the families and the school

- Make connections between early childhood educators and teachers. How can they collaborate as professional educators?
- How does the information get out to families?
- What strategies are in place to make the families feel welcome?
- How can we promote the educational partnership between families and school?
- How can we connect children to children (friendships)?
- How do staff throughout the school become involved in the transition programs

2. Facilitate each child's development as a capable learner: Effective transition programs recognise that children are capable learners that bring with them a vast array of learning experiences and expectations that may or may not reflect the knowledge, skills and understanding deemed important at school

- Find out about children's interests and abilities
- Visit prior to school settings
- Early childhood educator visits school
- Share documentation of children's strengths between families, early childhood educators and school
- Is the format for collecting information about children centred on identifying their strengths?
- Discuss ways this information can be used in planning
- What meaningful ways can children demonstrate these competencies at the beginning of the school year?

3. Differentiate between 'orientation to school' and 'transition to school'

Orientation: One day/half day or evening sessions where families are invited to visit the school with their child

- Familiarisation with school layout and facilities
- Visit to Kindergarten classrooms
- Presentations by Principal – school ethos etc....

Transition to School: A series of weekly 1½ hour sessions over 8–10 weeks providing a range of suitable play-based learning experiences for children for example:

- Developmentally appropriate play
- Many opportunities for spoken language interactions
- Hearing texts read aloud
- Engaging with songs, chants, rhymes
- Engaging in physical play

Considerations:

- Opportunities for two-way interactions in transition programs eg not just school staff telling families what needs to occur or school telling early childhood educator what they need to do to get students ready
- Who is involved in the Transition to School planning process e.g. children, families, prior to school educators, teachers and community members
- When can working parents attend?

4. **Draw upon dedicated funding and resources: A range of resources is required for transition programs to operate effectively. These include people, time, materials and space in which to operate the program**
 - Employ staff – teacher/early childhood educator
 - Utilise community resources
 - School venue – for example the school hall
 - Purchase resources – possible P & F funding

5. **Involve a range of stakeholders: Including early childhood educators, kindergarten teachers, teachers from other grades, support staff, out of school hours personnel, office staff, parent and friends personnel**
 - So ownership of the program goes across groups
 - Create a transition to school team
 - Who is involved in the transition team responsible for the program?
 - How can the community be involved?
 - Do families/children have input into the program?
 - How is the success of the program (or otherwise) evaluated?

6. **Plan and evaluate the program: Effective transition programs are based on detailed planning and have clearly defined aims and objectives, developed in collaboration with all stakeholders**
 - Provision to plan and evaluate the program
 - What resources are available for example time for consultation and planning with stakeholders
 - How can feedback be provided/collected?
 - How is feedback reported to stakeholders?

7. **Be flexible and responsive: Effective transition programs are responsive to the changing needs and interests of the participants. This means recognising that different groups of people require different ways of being involved in flexible and meaningful ways**
 - Are different people involved at different times?
 - Are programs offered when working parents can attend?
 - How does staff involved respond to requests for information or advice?
 - Are we responsive to the needs and interests of children and families eg opportunities provided for children to talk about issues, for families to ask questions, for early childhood educators and teachers to discuss issues related to children, curriculum and philosophy?

8. **Based on mutual trust and respect: Programs that evolve in a climate of trust and mutual respect open communication is likely to develop**
 - Opportunities to listen to children, families, early childhood educators, school staff
 - How is the climate of trust and respect generated and maintained?
 - Is there reciprocal respect between school staff and early childhood educators, families and children?
 - Is cultural diversity understood and respected?

9. **Rely on reciprocal communication among participants. Families as well as teachers know a great deal about the children they care for and teach. Children also have the right to be heard on matters that affect them and are well positioned to comment on their own interests and ways of participating in learning**
- How is reciprocal communication encouraged?
 - Are **all** children and families allowed to engage in reciprocal communication?
 - How does communication within the program indicate that the perspectives of all contributors are valued?
 - What policies and procedures are in place to ensure that communication is both ethical and professional?
10. **Take into account the contextual aspects of community and individual families and children. The responsibility for children to be 'ready' for school rests not just with the individual child but also with a community. The community context must be reflected in transition programs and the differences that exist also among individuals and families within a community must be recognised and valued**
- Ensure differences are not perceived as deficits
 - Focus on children's strengths rather than their limitations
 - Reflect aspects of the local community in the transition program
 - What professional development is available for early childhood educators and teachers to know more about working with children from diverse backgrounds?
 - How are other stakeholders involved eg community health workers, language teachers, speech pathologists, Aboriginal education assistants?

Appendix 2

Outline of Playgroup Sessions

Date	What the children were doing	Information sessions for parents (15-30 min duration)
Tues 27 Oct	Play activities	Introduction and playgroup information (longer session, introducing staff who will run playgroup, expectations, rationale etc)
Fri 30 Oct	Play activities	Parents taken on a tour of the school
Tues 3 Nov	Play activities Music time (with school specialist teacher)	Office procedures: Parents met school office staff who provided information on fees, procedures when child sick, pick up and drop off procedures etc.
Fri 6 Nov	Play activities	Kindergarten classroom: Parents met with Kindergarten teachers in the Kindergarten classroom and were given information on Best Start.
Tues 10 Nov	Small group visit classroom. Play activities for remaining children. Music time (with school specialist teacher)	Six children and their parent/carer attended Kindergarten class to take part in a Literacy lesson from 9.30am-10am.
Friday 13 Nov	Small group visit classroom Play activities for remaining children.	Six children and their parent/carer attended Kindergarten class to take part in a Literacy lesson from 9.30am-10am.
Tues 17 Nov	Children went to the Kindergarten classroom with their Year 5 buddies.	School transition "expo": <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome to families by the Principal • Welcome prayer by the REC and welcome from the Parish Priest • Introductions of key school staff • Brief session on preparing child for learning in numeracy and literacy (tips for parents) • Transition information distributed • Expo – parents free to visit various tables to obtain information from key school, diocesan and community groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - P&F - Canteen - School office staff - Parish representative (meet Father) - CEO (information and polices available) - CatholicCare - Bishops office representatives (advertising parish playgroups)

		etc) - Catholic Development Fund (Other ideas: community groups (e.g Cancer Council, after school care organisations (Big Fat Smile etc), speech pathologist, uniform shop are other suggestions for the expo). Finished with morning tea and time to socialise.
Fri 20 Nov	Small group visit classroom Play activities for remaining children.	Six children and their parent/carer attended Kindergarten class to take part in a Literacy lesson from 9.30am-10am.
Tues 24 Nov	Small group visit classroom Play activities for remaining children. Music time (with school specialist teacher)	Six children and their parent/carer attended Kindergarten class to take part in a Literacy lesson from 9.30am-10am.
Fri 27 Nov	Visit from Billy Backpack (refer Illawarra Transition to School Project). Visit school playground.	Parents introduced to school counsellor.
Tues 1 Dec	Play activities Music time (with school specialist teacher)	Health lunchbox presentation by Cancer Council.
Fri 4 Dec	Play activities Year 5 buddies visited and shared in morning tea.	Christmas gathering: parents asked to bring something to share. Official thank you to key staff and watched movie/slideshow. Parents/carers given a copy of the movie to keep. Parents completed written evaluation

***Other ideas for information sessions for parents/families may be:-**

- information on Religious Education Curriculum, Catholic life of the school;
- tips to help your child at home with early literacy and numeracy (modelling of reading with your child etc);
- What is the learning continuum - explaining the some of the “language” of education

Appendix 3

St Francis of Assisi Primary School, Warrawong
SCHOOL READINESS PLAYGROUP

MAKE FRIENDS

PLAY

LEARN



Let's get ready for
Kindergarten 2016



St Francis of Assisi Primary School, Warrawong SCHOOL READINESS PLAYGROUP

Address: 95 Flagstaff Road Warrawong 2502

Phone: 02 4274 3386

Email: info@sfawdow.catholic.edu.au

You and your child are invited to attend St Francis of Assisi Primary School Readiness Playgroup

It is a great opportunity for your child to:

- ✓ Get to know the school
- ✓ Meet their teachers
- ✓ Learn through play
- ✓ Make new friends
- ✓ Develop their readiness for school and learning

All families are required to attend two special meetings in the school hall

Tuesday 27 October Introduction and playgroup information
9:00am - 10:30am

Tuesday 17 November Meeting with parents and children to prepare for Kindergarten 2016
9:00am - 10:30am

Playgroup Dates

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Friday 30 October	9am-10.30am	St Francis of Assisi School, School Hall
Tuesday 3 November	9am-10.30am	St Francis of Assisi School, School Hall
Friday 6 November	9am-10.30am	St Francis of Assisi School, School Hall
Tuesday 10 November	9am-10.30am	St Francis of Assisi School, School Hall
Friday 13 November	9am-10.30am	St Francis of Assisi School, School Hall
Friday 20 November	9am-10.30am	St Francis of Assisi School, School Hall
Tuesday 24 November	9am-10.30am	St Francis of Assisi School, School Hall
Friday 27 November	9am-10.30am	St Francis of Assisi School, School Hall
Tuesday 1 December	9am-10.30am	St Francis of Assisi School, School Hall
Friday 4 December	9am-10.30am	St Francis of Assisi School, School Hall

Families are encouraged to try and have their child attend as many playgroup dates as possible to help them prepare for school. While the children play parents/carers will be provided with morning tea and opportunities for information, questions and meeting staff.


**Pre-school aged brothers and sisters are welcome*

***A parent, other family member or carer must attend with the child for the duration of the playgroup*

**Questions and more information,
phone the school to speak with Mrs Ransley or Mrs Palermo 02 4274 3386**



Appendix 4





We visited the Principals office	We know who to ring when our child is sick	We visited the Church and met the Parish Priest Father Emanuel	We visited the canteen and met the canteen helpers. We know how to order lunch
We know how to sign in	We visited the school office and met the school secretaries Mrs Ransley and Mrs Palermo	We visited the Library and met the Library staff	We visited the Kindergarten classrooms and met the Kindergarten teachers: Mrs McNamara and Mrs Mansfield
We Met the Principal for 2016 Ms Foldes	We met the Assistant Principal Mr Condon	<div data-bbox="842 1146 1299 1232"> <p>St Francis of Assisi Primary School, Warrawong</p> <p>SCHOOL READINESS PASSPORT</p> </div> <div data-bbox="839 1247 1201 1538"> <p>MAKE FRIENDS</p> <p>PLAY</p> <p>LEARN</p> </div> <div data-bbox="798 1312 1394 1971">  <p>Let's get ready for Kindergarten 2016</p> </div>	
We met the Religious Education Coordinator Mrs Madaschi	We visited the school playgrounds and toilets		

Appendix 5



English Session – Transition to Kindergarten

Term 1 – Week 1 – Days 1-3

Approximate timing	What the children are doing	What the teachers are doing	Links to the Early Years Learning Framework/ English Syllabus/Literacy Continuum
40 min	Play (parents welcome to stay) Open ended play materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing/drawing materials • Craft materials • Picture books/iPads • Play dough/kinetic sand • Construction materials • Puzzles • Socio-dramatic play materials (e.g. dress-ups, shops, library, doctors surgery, at the movies) 	Dialogue with children and families <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get to know children's interests and expertise • Extend children's language interactions • Extend children's concept development and vocabulary knowledge • Take field notes and photographs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use play to investigate, imagine and explore ideas • initiate and contribute to play experiences emerging from their own ideas • increasingly co-operate and work collaboratively with others • use symbols in play to represent and make meaning • use language and engage in play to imagine and create roles, scripts and idea • use the creative arts such as drawing, painting, sculpture, drama, dance, movement, music and storytelling to express ideas and make meaning • communicate with peers and familiar adults about personal experience (ENe-1A) • respond to simple questions either verbally or non-verbally(ENe-1A) • drawing on their experience of language and texts, begin to understand that writing and representing can be used to convey an idea or message (ENe-2A) • compose texts using drawings and other visual media to create meaning (ENe-7B) • Reading Texts 1st Cluster • Vocabulary knowledge 1st & 2nd Cluster

Approximate timing	What the children are doing	What the teachers are doing	Links to the Early Years Learning Framework/ English Syllabus/Literacy Continuum
20 min	<p>Listen to and view – quality picture book/ big book/IWB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share thoughts and opinions by responding orally with the teacher and with each other <p>Action rhyme – including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> movement/dance/ singing 	<p>Modelled teaching: Read to - quality picture book/ big book/IWB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate sharing of responses through open ended questions <p>Modelled teaching: (short, sharp, explicit) phonological experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contribute their ideas and experiences in small and large group discussions view and listen to printed, visual and multimedia texts and respond with relevant gestures, actions, comments and/or questions explore texts from a range of different perspectives and begin to analyse the meanings actively use, engage with and share the enjoyment of language and texts in a range of ways listen and respond to sounds and patterns in speech, stories and rhymes in context sing and chant rhymes, jingles and songs view and listen to printed, visual and multimedia texts and respond with relevant gestures, actions, comments and/or questions use interaction skills including listening while others speak, using appropriate voice levels, articulation and body language, gestures and eye contact (ACELY1784)   (ENe-1A) express a point of view about texts read and/or viewed (ENe-1A) contribute appropriately to class discussions  (ENe-1A) engage with and respond to a range of oral and aural texts for enjoyment and pleasure (ENe-1A) respond to the shared reading of texts for enjoyment and pleasure (ENe-1A) use music and/or actions to enhance the enjoyment and understanding of rhymes, poems, chants and songs  (ENe-6B)




Approximate timing	What the children are doing	What the teachers are doing	Links to the Early Years Learning Framework/ English Syllabus/Literacy Continuum
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • join in rhymes and chants (ENe-6B) • understand that spoken words are made up of sounds (ENe-4A) • begin to build personal vocabulary (ENe-4A) • know the meaning of commonly used words (ENe-4A) • Aspects of speaking 1st & 2nd Cluster • Comprehension 1st and 2nd Cluster • Phonemic awareness 1st & 2nd Cluster • Vocabulary knowledge 1st & 2nd Cluster • Concepts about Print 1st & 2nd Cluster
20min	Physical play – go outside to the playground, toilets.	Facilitate a game or organise equipment for free play as an example of what children may do in the playground during breaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engage in enjoyable interactions using verbal and non-verbal language • initiate and contribute to play experiences emerging from their own ideas • engage in increasingly complex sensory- motor skills and movement patterns
20min	<p>Listen and view – quality picture book/ big book</p> <p>Respond through the creation of visual texts and experimentation of written texts</p>	<p>Modelled teaching: Read to - quality picture book/ big book</p> <p>Model response to the text, using ‘think aloud’ to draw a simple sketch and write a label/simple text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the children’s independent text creations interact with them to ascertain their oral interpretation of the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the creative arts such as drawing, painting, sculpture, drama, dance, movement, music and storytelling to express ideas and make meaning • explore texts from a range of different perspectives and begin to analyse the meanings • actively use, engage with and share the enjoyment of language and texts in a range of ways • begin to understand key literacy and numeracy concepts and processes, such as the sounds of language, letter-sound relationships, concepts of print and the ways that texts are structured • begin to use images and approximations of letters and words to convey meaning • engage with shared stories and join in shared book activities on familiar and imaginary books

Approximate timing	What the children are doing	What the teachers are doing	Links to the Early Years Learning Framework/ English Syllabus/Literacy Continuum
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend children's concept development and vocabulary knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make connections between a text and own life (ENe-4A) create visuals that reflect character, setting and events (ENe-4A) drawing on their experience of language and texts, begin to understand that writing and representing can be used to convey an idea or message (ENe-2A) compose texts to communicate feelings, needs, opinions and ideas ENe-6B distinguish print from drawings ENe-8B understand that words can be spoken or written ENe-8B recognise that words and pictures have meaning and that words can be read aloud  ENe-8B share picture books and digital stories for enjoyment and pleasure ENe-10C Aspects of speaking 1st & 2nd & 3rd Cluster Comprehension 1st & 2nd Cluster Vocabulary knowledge 1st & 2nd Cluster Concepts about Print 1st & 2nd Cluster Writing 2nd Cluster Phonics 1st & 2nd Cluster
10min	Engage in song/chant/rhyme/PA game	Modelled teaching: Short, sharp, explicit, phonemic awareness lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> listen and respond to sounds and patterns in speech, stories and rhymes in context sing and chant rhymes, jingles and songs use music and/or actions to enhance the enjoyment and understanding of rhymes, poems, chants and songs  (ENe-6B) join in rhymes and chants (ENe-6B) understand that spoken words are made up of sounds (ENe-4A) Phonemic awareness 1st & 2nd Cluster


Approximate timing	What the children are doing	What the teachers are doing	Links to the Early Years Learning Framework/ English Syllabus/ Literacy Continuum
10min	Early preparation for morning tea	Guide children into morning tea routines	

Term 1 – Week 1 – Days 4-5

Approximate timing	What the children are doing	What the teachers are doing	Links to the Early Years Learning Framework/ English Syllabus/Literacy Continuum
30 min	Play Open ended play materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing/drawing materials • Craft materials • Picture books/iPads • Play dough/kinetic sand • Construction materials • Puzzles • Socio-dramatic play materials (e.g. dress-ups, shops, library, doctors surgery, at the movies) 	Dialogue with children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get to know children's interests and expertise • Extend children's language interactions • Extend children's concept and vocabulary knowledge • Take field notes and photographs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use play to investigate, imagine and explore ideas • initiate and contribute to play experiences emerging from their own ideas • increasingly co-operate and work collaboratively with others • use symbols in play to represent and make meaning • use language and engage in play to imagine and create roles, scripts and idea • use the creative arts such as drawing, painting, sculpture, drama, dance, movement, music and storytelling to express ideas and make meaning • communicate with peers and familiar adults about personal experience (ENe-1A) • respond to simple questions either verbally or non-verbally(ENe-1A) • drawing on their experience of language and texts, begin to understand that writing and representing can be used to convey an idea or message (ENe-2A) • compose texts using drawings and other visual media to create meaning (ENe-7B) • Reading Texts 1st Cluster • Vocabulary knowledge 1st & 2nd Cluster





Approximate timing	What the children are doing	What the teachers are doing	Links to the Early Years Learning Framework/ English Syllabus/Literacy Continuum
20 min	<p>Listen to and view – quality picture book/ big book/IWB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share thoughts and opinions by responding orally with the teacher and with each other <p>Action rhyme – including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> movement/dance/singing 	<p>Modelled teaching: Read to - quality picture book/ big book/IWB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate sharing of responses through open ended questions <p>Modelled teaching: (short, sharp, explicit) phonological experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contribute their ideas and experiences in small and large group discussions listen and respond to sounds and patterns in speech, stories and rhymes in context sing and chant rhymes, jingles and songs view and listen to printed, visual and multimedia texts and respond with relevant gestures, actions, comments and/or questions use interaction skills including listening while others speak, using appropriate voice levels, articulation and body language, gestures and eye contact (ACELY1784)  (ENe-1A) express a point of view about texts read and/or viewed (ENe-1A) contribute appropriately to class discussions  (ENe-1A) engage with and respond to a range of oral and aural texts for enjoyment and pleasure (ENe-1A) respond to the shared reading of texts for enjoyment and pleasure (ENe-1A) use music and/or actions to enhance the enjoyment and understanding of rhymes, poems, chants and songs  (ENe-6B) join in rhymes and chants (ENe-6B) understand that spoken words are made up of sounds (ENe-4A) begin to build personal vocabulary(ENe-4A) know the meaning of commonly used words (ENe-4A) Aspects of speaking 1st & 2nd Cluster Comprehension 1st & 2nd Cluster Phonemic awareness 1st & 2nd Cluster Vocabulary knowledge 1st & 2nd Cluster Concepts about Print 1st & 2nd Cluster

Approximate timing	What the children are doing	What the teachers are doing	Links to the Early Years Learning Framework/ English Syllabus/Literacy Continuum
20min	Physical play – go outside to the playground, toilets.	Facilitate a game or organise equipment for free play as an example of what children may do in the playground during breaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage in enjoyable interactions using verbal and non-verbal language initiate and contribute to play experiences emerging from their own ideas engage in increasingly complex sensory- motor skills and movement patterns
10min	Practise and apply phonics learning	Modelled teaching: Short sharp, explicit phonics teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce letters that are more useful before those that are less useful e.g. (a m t s i f g d) p 17 Literacy teaching guide: phonics. Introduce in quick succession – at least one per day (p 63 Literacy teaching guide: phonics) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> begin to be aware of the relationships between oral, written and visual representation (educators) talk explicitly about concepts such as rhyme and letters and sounds when sharing texts with children know that letters are used to represent sounds when writing words (ENe-5A) understand foundation movements that underpin NSW Foundation Style (ENe-3A) Phonics 1st & 2nd Cluster Identifies one/two or more letter that are the same in words Identifies letters that are the same in more than the context Names some letters in a given word Says one of the sounds for letters in a given word Writes approximate letters for some sounds
30min	Listen to and view – quality picture book/ big book/IWB	Modelled teaching: Read to - quality picture book/ big book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use the creative arts such as drawing, painting, sculpture, drama, dance, movement, music and storytelling to express

Approximate timing	What the children are doing	What the teachers are doing	Links to the Early Years Learning Framework/ English Syllabus/Literacy Continuum
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond through the creation of visual texts and experimentation of written texts 	<p>Modelled teaching: model response to the text, using ‘think aloud’ to draw a simple sketch and write a simple text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the children’s independent text creations interact with them to ascertain their oral interpretation of their text. Extend children’s concept development and vocabulary knowledge 	<p>ideas and make meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> begin to understand key literacy and numeracy concepts and processes, such as the sounds of language, letter-sound relationships, concepts of print and the ways that texts are structured begin to use images and approximations of letters and words to convey meaning engage with shared stories and join in shared book activities on familiar and imaginary books make connections between a text and own life (ENe-4A) create visuals that reflect character, setting and events (ENe-4A) drawing on their experience of language and texts, begin to understand that writing and representing can be used to convey an idea or message (ENe-2A) know that spoken sounds and words can be written down using letters of the alphabet and how to write some high-frequency sight words and known words (ACELA1758) (ENe – 2A) compose texts to communicate feelings, needs, opinions and ideas ENe-6B distinguish print from drawings ENe-8B understand that words can be spoken or written ENe-8B recognise that words and pictures have meaning and that words can be read aloud  ENe-8B share picture books and digital stories for enjoyment and pleasure ENe-10C Aspects of speaking 1st & 2nd & 3rd Cluster Comprehension 1st & 2nd Cluster Vocabulary knowledge 1st & 2nd Cluster Concepts about Print 1st & 2nd Cluster Writing 2nd Cluster Phonics 2nd cluster Phonemic awareness 1st & 2nd Cluster

Approximate timing	What the children are doing	What the teachers are doing	Links to the Early Years Learning Framework/ English Syllabus/Literacy Continuum
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phonics 1st & 2nd Cluster
10min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early preparation for morning tea 		

Term 1 – Week 1 – Days 6-10

Approximate timing	What the children are doing	What the teachers are doing	Links to the Early Years Learning Framework/ English Syllabus/Literacy Continuum
15 min	<p>Listen to and view – quality picture book/ big book/IWB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share thoughts and opinions by responding orally with the teacher and with each other <p>Engage in phonological experience e.g. isolating phonemes, recognising rhyme, identifying syllables</p>	<p>Modelled teaching: Read to - quality picture book/ big book/IWB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate sharing of responses through open ended questions <p>Modelled teaching: (short, sharp, explicit) phonological experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contribute their ideas and experiences in small and large group discussions listen and respond to sounds and patterns in speech, stories and rhymes in context sing and chant rhymes, jingles and songs view and listen to printed, visual and multimedia texts and respond with relevant gestures, actions, comments and/or questions use interaction skills including listening while others speak, using appropriate voice levels, articulation and body language, gestures and eye contact (ACELY1784)   (ENe-1A) express a point of view about texts read and/or viewed (ENe-1A) contribute appropriately to class discussions  (ENe-1A) engage with and respond to a range of oral and aural texts for enjoyment and pleasure (ENe-1A) respond to the shared reading of texts for enjoyment and pleasure (ENe-1A) use music and/or actions to enhance the enjoyment and understanding of rhymes, poems, chants and songs  (ENe-6B) join in rhymes and chants (ENe-6B) understand that spoken words are made up of sounds (ENe-4A) begin to build personal vocabulary(ENe-4A) know the meaning of commonly used words (ENe-4A) identify the beginning sounds in words (ENe-4A) Aspects of speaking 1st & 2nd Cluster Comprehension 1st & 2nd Cluster Phonemic awareness 1st & 2nd Cluster Vocabulary knowledge 1st & 2nd Cluster

Approximate timing	What the children are doing	What the teachers are doing	Links to the Early Years Learning Framework/ English Syllabus/Literacy Continuum
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concepts about Print 1st & 2nd Cluster
40 minutes	<p>Independent teaching: Play/literacy centres</p> <p>Must do activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonics activities introduced in whole class teaching <p>Choice activities (gradually replace with opportunities for children to practise literacy skills taught in modelled teaching):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing/drawing materials • Craft materials • Picture books/iPads • Play dough/kinetic sand • Construction materials • Puzzles • Socio-dramatic play materials (e.g. dress-ups, shops, library, doctors surgery, at the movies) 	<p>Guided teaching: Introduce small group teaching (full implementation by day 11)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided reading groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use play to investigate, imagine and explore ideas • initiate and contribute to play experiences emerging from their own ideas • increasingly co-operate and work collaboratively with others • use symbols in play to represent and make meaning • use language and engage in play to imagine and create roles, scripts and idea • use the creative arts such as drawing, painting, sculpture, drama, dance, movement, music and storytelling to express ideas and make meaning • read predictable texts, practising phrasing and fluency, and monitor meaning using concepts about print and emerging contextual, semantic, grammatical and phonic knowledge (ACELY1649) (ENe-4A) • identify the beginning sounds in words (ENe-4A) • know that letters are used to represent sounds when writing words (ENe-5A) • communicate with peers and familiar adults about personal experience (ENe-1A) • respond to simple questions either verbally or non-verbally(ENe-1A) • drawing on their experience of language and texts, begin to understand that writing and representing can be used to convey an idea or message (ENe-2A) • compose texts using drawings and other visual media to create meaning (ENe-7B) • Reading Texts 1st Cluster • Vocabulary knowledge 1st & 2nd Cluster • Comprehension 1st & 2nd Cluster • Phonemic awareness 1st & 2nd Cluster • Vocabulary knowledge 1st & 2nd Cluster

Approximate timing	What the children are doing	What the teachers are doing	Links to the Early Years Learning Framework/ English Syllabus/Literacy Continuum
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concepts about Print 1st & 2nd Cluster
10min	Practise and apply phonics learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole class phonics learning Independent phonics activities 	Modelled teaching: Short sharp, explicit phonics teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to introduce letters in quick succession – at least one per day (p 17 Literacy teaching guide: phonics) Once children have learned five or more letter-sound relationships, introduce them to words made up of these letter- sound relationships and show how to use blending skills to read them e.g. it, at, mat, sat, sit, pit, tip, tap, pat. Introduce children to independent phonics activities e.g Dominoes, concentration, flip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> begin to be aware of the relationships between oral, written and visual representation (educators) talk explicitly about concepts such as rhyme and letters and sounds when sharing texts with children Identify the beginning sounds in words (ENe-4A) know that letters are used to represent sounds when writing words (ENe-5A) <p>Phonics 1st & 2nd Cluster</p> <p>Identifies one/two or more letter that are the same in words</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies letters that are the same in more than one context Names some letters in a given word Says one of the sounds for letters in a given word Writes approximate letters for some sounds <p>Phonics 3rd Clusters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies all letters that are the same in more than one context Names most letters in a given word Says some of the sounds for letters in a given word Blends up to three sounds in words when reading Writes letters to correspond with single letter sounds

Approximate timing	What the children are doing	What the teachers are doing	Links to the Early Years Learning Framework/ English Syllabus/Literacy Continuum
		books, word shapes, cut and make (pp 64 – 66 Literacy teaching guide: Phonics)	
10 min	Observe and interact with the teacher during the composition and construction of a short written text linked to a familiar text or an experience.	Modelled teaching: Interactive writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model the composition and construction of a short text. Occasionally while making teaching points that help the students attend to various features of letters and words, invite students to come up and contribute a letter a word or part of a word. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use the creative arts such as drawing, painting, sculpture, drama, dance, movement, music and storytelling to express ideas and make meaning begin to understand key literacy and numeracy concepts and processes, such as the sounds of language, letter-sound relationships, concepts of print and the ways that texts are structured begin to use images and approximations of letters and words to convey meaning drawing on their experience of language and texts, begin to understand that writing and representing can be used to convey an idea or message (ENe-2A) compose texts using drawings and other visual media to create meaning (ENe-7B) identify the beginning sounds in words (ENe-4A) know that letters are used to represent sounds when writing words (ENe-5A) Reading Texts 1st Cluster Vocabulary knowledge 1st & 2nd Cluster Phonics 1st & 2nd Cluster Phonemic awareness 1st & 2nd Cluster Vocabulary knowledge 1st & 2nd Cluster Concepts about Print 1st & 2nd Cluster
40 min	Independent teaching: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children continue to write/draw continuing on from modelled teaching 	Guided teaching: Guided writing groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce small group teaching (full implementation by day 11) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use the creative arts such as drawing, painting, sculpture, drama, dance, movement, music and storytelling to express ideas and make meaning begin to understand key literacy and numeracy concepts and processes, such as the sounds of language, letter-sound relationships, concepts of print and the ways that texts are

Approximate timing	What the children are doing	What the teachers are doing	Links to the Early Years Learning Framework/ English Syllabus/Literacy Continuum
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children participate in 'must do' activities after they complete writing task Children participate in free choice activities after they complete writing task 		<p>structured</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> begin to use images and approximations of letters and words to convey meaning drawing on their experience of language and texts, begin to understand that writing and representing can be used to convey an idea or message (ENe-2A) compose texts using drawings and other visual media to create meaning (ENe-7B) identify the beginning sounds in words (ENe-4A) know that letters are used to represent sounds when writing words (ENe-5A) Reading Texts 1st Cluster Vocabulary knowledge 1st & 2nd Cluster Phonics 1st & 2nd Cluster Phonemic awareness 1st & 2nd Cluster Vocabulary knowledge 1st & 2nd Cluster Concepts about Print 1st & 2nd Cluster
5 min	Children sharing of their learning	Teaching reflection	

Appendix 6

Anecdotal Information from the St Francis of Assisi Transition to School Playgroup

Child	Interests	Teacher/Educator Observations	Attendance out of 12 days
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loved playing in the house corner 		11
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm animals His buddy B knows a lot about volcanoes from his aunt's phone Dad's a builder and B loves to hammer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mum wants a diagnosis of ASD He goes to a counsellor 'B' settled well into the Kinder room with mum not there 'B' was good with numbers 'B' didn't like to join in with the music 	10
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loved the obstacle course Would play in a group but preferred to work on his own projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EAL/D: 'C' speaking Macedonian with his mother Made a comment saying 'I can give people bad dreams if they are not nice to me' Slow to join in with others 'C' didn't like the loud music 	Most days
D		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separation issues with mum noted 	2
E		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible EAL/D. Mum came with an older sibling interpreter 	3
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enjoyed a range of activities 		9
G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loved creative activities/music activities Appeared to be not good at following directions She liked to do her own thing Not always good at taking turns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very curious – she often wandered off 	12

Child	Interests	Teacher/Educator Observations	Attendance out of 12 days
H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loved building towers Engaged well with books and listening to stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lovely family Younger twin siblings also attended. 	12
I		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'I' spoke rudely to his dad and teacher on one occasion He did not always use nice words with the other children He could be very immature when his father is around Dad is very nice 'I' was observed to lead 'L' to become uncooperative at times 	8
J	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liked art and craft 		2
K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enjoyed acting out the very hungry caterpillar 		2
L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liked musical instruments/the ukulele Enjoyed playing with the small bean bags 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'L' enjoyed everything but at times was distracted by 'I' 	9
M		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiet 	5
N		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appeared not to listen well at times 	4
P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liked to write words and can write 'cat' and her name Was slow to warm up each day but then enjoyed a range of activities Did not want to join in music activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food allergies Quiet at first and slow to warm but once she became familiar she showed a sense of humour and good general knowledge She liked to be helpful 	12
Q		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often came late but appeared quite happy to be there 	4

Child	Interests	Teacher/Educator Observations	Attendance out of 12 days
R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loved everything Made a four colour repeating pattern with the beads Appeared to be very strong willed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> She seemed quite bright as the youngest of older siblings 	12
S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loved everything 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appeared to do everything at 100 miles an hour Often said 'I can't' wanting someone to do things for her 	10
T	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> He was very patient working with craft and play dough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EAL/D: Speaks Vietnamese at home 'T' was very quiet and did not speak readily to the teachers or educator. 	10
U		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was very sweet and a good sharer 	9
V	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loved the sand Loved the home corner He waited until everyone had left an activity before doing it He liked to do things alone He did have dialogue with Elise during basketball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EAL/D: 'V' was very quiet but appeared to enjoy a range of activities 'V' was a new name given to him recently by his father. 	3
W			2
X			2
Y			2
Z			5

Appendix 7

St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School Warrawong Transition to School Playgroup

The following table shows the actions taken in planning and facilitating the St Francis of Assisi school starter playgroup in relation to the *Steps to plan an effective transition to school program* (adapted from Dockett & Perry 2006).

Steps to plan an effective transition to school program	Actions taken in planning and facilitating St Francis of Assisi School Starter Playgroup
<p>1. Establish positive relationships between children, parents and educators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make connections between the families and the school • Make connections between early childhood educators and teachers. How can they collaborate as professional educators? • How does the information get out to families? • What strategies are in place to make the families feel welcome? • How can we promote the educational partnership between families and school? • How to involve early childhood educators and school staff in Transition to School Program and Out of Hours School Care Program • How can we connect children to children (friendships)? • How do staff throughout the school become involved in the transition programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playgroup flyer was sent to all families enrolled for Kindergarten 2016 and displayed in the school entry • The flyer information was followed up by a phone call from school office staff to personally inform families of the school starter playgroup. This personal invitation helped in establishing relationships with the new families to the school • Playgroup educators welcomed families at the door as they came into the playgroup • Name tags were available for all children, siblings and family members attending the playgroup • Morning tea was available for children and families • A primary school teacher and an early childhood educator were employed to plan and facilitate the play experiences for the children in the playgroup context
<p>2. Facilitate each child's development as a capable learner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find out about children's interests and abilities • Visit prior to school settings • Early childhood educator visits school • Share documentation of children's strengths between families, early childhood educators and school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten teachers spent 4 sessions in the playgroup joining in play with the children and getting to know them personally as well as talking to parents to informally gain information about the children's strengths and interests • The children's particular interests and

Steps to plan an effective transition to school program	Actions taken in planning and facilitating St Francis of Assisi School Starter Playgroup
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the format for collecting information about children centred on identifying their strengths? • Discuss ways this information can be used in planning • What meaningful ways can children demonstrate these competencies at the beginning of the school year 	<p>strengths were documented as field notes by the teacher and educator who facilitated the playgroup</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pertinent information noted by the teachers and the educator was documented and passed onto the Principal and Kindergarten teachers to assist in planning for the beginning of Kindergarten 2016 • Professional development with teachers in using the information to plan for transitioning children in the beginning weeks of Kindergarten was envisaged but did not come to fruition due to time constraints • Visits to prior to school settings were envisaged however these did not come to fruition due to time constraints
<p>3. Differentiate between ‘orientation to school’ and ‘transition to school’</p> <div> <div data-bbox="164 1115 758 1429"> <p>Orientation: One day/half day or evening sessions where families are invited to visit the school with their child</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarisation with school layout and facilities • Visit to Kindergarten classrooms • Presentations by Principal – school ethos etc.... </div> <div data-bbox="164 1473 758 2022"> <p>Transition to School: A series of weekly 1½ hour sessions over 8–10 weeks providing a range of suitable play-based learning experiences for children for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmentally appropriate play • Many opportunities for spoken language interactions • Hearing texts read aloud • Engaging with songs, chants, rhymes • Engaging in physical play <p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for two-way interactions in transition programs eg not just school staff telling families what needs to </div> </div> <div data-bbox="786 1115 1380 2022"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The playgroup organisation included both transition as well as orientation experiences for the children and their families. For example the children were led in small groups for short visits to the Kindergarten classroom during the playgroup, also in using the school toilet facilities, canteen and playground areas • The school principal and Kindergarten teachers facilitated two sessions for families during the playgroup time specifically designed to orient the families to the school • Short Principal info session (15 min) with parent groups throughout the weeks. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Office information – fees, absent notes ◦ Things parents can do at home to develop early literacy skills ◦ Information from speech </div>	

Steps to plan an effective transition to school program	Actions taken in planning and facilitating St Francis of Assisi School Starter Playgroup
<p>occur or school telling early childhood educator what they need to do to get students ready</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is involved in the Transition to School planning process eg children, families, prior to school educators, teachers and community members • When can working parents attend? 	<p>pathologists, occupational therapists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ How to pack a healthy lunch box • The organisation of the school expo morning provided information about the school, parish and wider community services • The play experiences were organised each day by the teacher and educator according to the observed interests of the children • The teacher and educators engaged with the children during play experiences as well as organising activities that were optional for the children to join. For example book reading, directed craft activities, outdoor games, songs and musical games
4. Draw upon dedicated funding and resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ staff – teacher/early childhood educator • Utilise community resources • School venue – for example the school hall • Purchase resources – possible P & F funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The playgroup was funded by school allocated National Partnership low SES communities • A Primary school teacher and Early Childhood Educator were employed to plan the play experiences and facilitate the playgroup • The venue was the school hall where the bathroom and canteen facilities were used • Some school resources were borrowed for use in the playgroup. For example sports equipment used for the obstacle course – mini trampoline, mats, tunnels, balance beam • Resources were purchased using funding by school allocated National Partnership low SES community funding. They were labelled and stored at the school
5. Involve a range of stakeholders	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So ownership of the program goes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulation of transition to school team:

Steps to plan an effective transition to school program	Actions taken in planning and facilitating St Francis of Assisi School Starter Playgroup
<p>across groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a transition to school team • Representation from children, families, early childhood educators, school teachers • Who is involved in the transition team responsible for the program? • How can the community be involved? • Do families/children have input into the program? • How is the success of the program (or otherwise) evaluated? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ School Principal ◦ Kindergarten Teacher ◦ Early Childhood Educator ◦ Community Liaison person ◦ Education Officer Primary Support • Given the short time available to plan for the playgroup it was not possible to engage the range of stakeholders in the planning that was desired. However with more time available and the evaluation feedback available from this pilot project a more diverse group will be sought allowing the school to take more ownership of the transition to school playgroup
<p>6. Plan and evaluate the program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision to plan and evaluate the program • What resources are available for example time for consultation and planning with stakeholders • How can feedback be provided/collected? • How is feedback reported to stakeholders? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A meeting to evaluate the playgroup was attended by CEO organising personnel, the teacher and educator who planned and facilitated the playgroup • Parents were video recorded giving personal opinions of their experiences in attending the playgroup • The school principal and school kindergarten teachers were video recorded giving their perspective of the playgroup • A short survey was given to family members for feedback during the final day of playgroup • Evaluative comments were collated for the principal and for the CEO as feedback on the pilot project
<p>7. Be flexible and responsive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are different people involved at different times? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An evaluation meeting was attended by members of the transition team:

Steps to plan an effective transition to school program	Actions taken in planning and facilitating St Francis of Assisi School Starter Playgroup
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are programs offered when working parents can attend? • How does staff involved respond to requests for information or advice? • Are we responsive to the needs and interests of children and families eg opportunities provided for children to talk about issues, for families to ask questions, for early childhood educators and teachers to discuss issues related to children, curriculum and philosophy? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ School Principal ◦ Primary School Teacher ◦ Early Childhood Educator ◦ Community Liaison person ◦ Education Officer Primary Support • Children were asked to comment on the activities they enjoyed at the playgroup and their responses were videoed
8. Based on mutual trust and respect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to listen to children, families, early childhood educators, school staff • How is the climate of trust and respect generated and maintained? • Is there reciprocal respect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Families + early childhood educators → school staff, and ◦ School staff → families + early childhood educators? • Is cultural diversity understood and respected? 	
9. Rely on reciprocal communication among participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is reciprocal communication encouraged? • Are all children and families allowed to engage in reciprocal communication? • How does communication within the program indicate that the perspectives of all contributors are 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At an information session for families regarding the intent of the playgroup, opportunity was given for families to voice what they were hoping to gain for themselves and their children from their participation in the transition to school playgroup • Seeking the children's and families'

Steps to plan an effective transition to school program	Actions taken in planning and facilitating St Francis of Assisi School Starter Playgroup
<p>valued?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What policies and procedures are in place to ensure that communication is both ethical and professional? 	<p>personal perspectives of their playgroup experiences positioned them as valued members of the school community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The feedback and evaluative comments from all stakeholders will be considered for planning future transition to school playgroups
<p>10. Take into account the contextual aspects of community and individual families and children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure differences are not perceived as deficits • Focus on children's strengths rather than their limitations • Reflect aspects of the local community in the transition program • What professional development is available for early childhood educators and teachers to know more about working with children from diverse backgrounds? • How are other stakeholders involved eg community health workers, language teachers, speech pathologists, Aboriginal education assistants? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher and educator sought information from the children and families about their context and particular interests in informal ways during their interactions in the playgroup • The families' cultural identities were sought however there needs to be more explicit connection made to the cultural identities of the different families • Inclusion of the school Catholic identity needs to be more explicit in future programs • With more time available for the planning process, other stakeholders from community agencies will be sought to be included in the program 	